

INTUITION

Intuition



OLE KOKSVIK

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For Jo-Anne Weinman
who lived through it

Statement

This thesis is solely the work of its author. No part of it has previously been submitted for any degree, or is currently being submitted for any other degree. To the best of my knowledge, any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been duly acknowledged.

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As is the case almost everywhere, in Australia, half the population is effectively discriminated against. Numerous areas persist in which women occupy unequal positions in relation to men; being paid less and being underrepresented in nearly all places of power are just two examples.

Biased language encourages biased thought. It is therefore the clear responsibility of those whose work is the written word to ensure that bias is not perpetuated by our hand. This thesis is prepared with this in mind. Any remaining sexist use of language is unintentional, and regretted.

*

I acknowledge and celebrate the First Australians on whose traditional lands I have lived and worked while writing this thesis, on whose traditional lands the Australian National University is located, and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

OLE ANDREAS KLÆBOE KOKSVIK

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*

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Abstract

In this thesis I seek to advance our understanding of what intuitions are. I argue that intuitions are experiences of a certain kind. In particular, they are experiences with representational content, and with a certain phenomenal character.

In Chapter 1 I identify our target and provide some important preliminaries. Intuitions are mental states, but which ones? Giving examples helps: a person has an intuition when it seems to her that torturing the innocent is wrong, or that if something is red it is coloured. We can also provide an initial characterisation of the state by saying that it has representational content, often causes belief, and appears to justify belief. In addition, there is something it is like to have an intuition: intuition has a certain phenomenal character.



Some argue that intuition does not explain anything which cannot be explained by other mental states. One version of this view takes intuition to reduce to belief. In Chapter 2 I argue that this entails that agents are rationally criticisable in situations where we know they are not, and that such views are therefore untenable. A parallel argument shows that the corresponding approach to perception fails. This suggests a similarity in nature: both intuition and perception are experiences.

Others take intuition to reduce to a disposition to have a belief. In Chapter 3 I consider a line of argument against such views, find it unsuccessful, and present two new arguments. One is likely to be dialectically ineffective. The other suffers no such weakness: it shows that the proposed reduction fails. As before, the argument also applies to perception, and suggests that intuition and perception are both experiences.

In the remainder of the thesis I develop an account of intuition as an experience. I distinguish between content-specific and attitude-specific phenomenology, and argue that intuition lacks the former (Chapter 4), but has the latter (Chapter 5). This allows us to say what intuition is: it is an experience with representational content and with attitude-specific phenomenology of a certain kind.

In Chapter 6 I put this account of intuition to use. When a person has a perceptual or intuitional experience, I argue that simply having the experience is what makes the subject justified in believing what the experience represents. Moreover, what explains that intuition and perception can justify belief in this way is precisely their phenomenal character.

Note on Navigation

In the electronic version of of this thesis, internal hyperlinks have been inserted to facilitate navigation. Citations appear in [this blue colour](#), like so: ([Gettier 1963](#)). Clicking on the blue text will navigate to the relevant entry in the list of references. Other internal links appear in [this reddish colour](#): the [Argument from Rational Criticisability](#) occurs in Chapter 2. Clicking on the coloured text will navigate to the relevant part of the document. In both cases issuing a *back* command will navigate back to the point of origin. In most .pdf-readers this can be achieved by the key combination  + .

Contents

1 Preliminaries	1
1.1 First Steps	1
1.2 More Rigour	4
1.2.1 Content	4
1.2.2 Phenomenal Character	9
1.2.3 Justification	10
1.2.4 Relation to Belief	12
1.3 Aim and Approach	13
1.4 Views of the Nature of Intuition	18
1.4.1 Reductive and Anti-Reductive Views	19
1.4.2 The Importance of Phenomenology	21
1.4.3 Necessity and Etiology	23
1.5 Discussion	25
1.5.1 The Alleged Necessity of Intuition	25
1.5.2 Etiology	29
1.6 Concluding Remarks	34
2 Against Reduction to Belief	35
2.1 Introduction	35
2.2 Motivation	36
2.3 Different Doxastic Views	38
2.4 The Standard Case Against Doxastic Views	40
2.5 The Argument from Rational Criticisability	44
2.6 Perception, Belief and Rational Criticisability	50

2.7	Partial Belief	52
2.8	Doxastic Attitudes with a Different Content	57
2.9	The Significance of Rational Criticisability	60
3	Against Reduction to a Disposition to Believe	63
3.1	Introduction	63
3.2	Different Dispositional Views	64
3.3	Perception as a Disposition to Believe	66
3.3.1	Armstrong	66
3.3.2	Pitcher	70
3.4	Intuition as a Disposition to Believe	73
3.4.1	Ernest Sosa	73
3.4.2	Timothy Williamson	75
3.5	Jackson's Critique	77
3.5.1	The Critique	77
3.5.2	Evaluating the Critique	81
3.5.3	The Parallel Case for Intuition	83
3.5.4	False Positives?	85
3.5.5	Lingering Discontent	88
3.6	The Argument from Phenomenal Inadequacy	91
3.6.1	Phenomenology of the Here and Now	92
3.6.2	The Life-Cycle of the Phenomenology	93
3.7	Rational Criticisability Returns	95
3.8	Concluding Remarks	101
4	Content-Specific Phenomenology	103
4.1	Introduction	103
4.2	A Methodological Assumption	105
4.3	Thought	106
4.4	Knowability	108
4.5	Phenomenal Contrast	111
4.6	The Structure of Minimal Pair Arguments	113
4.7	Examples	115

4.8	A Minimal Pair Argument	119
4.8.1	An Invitation to be Resisted	121
4.9	Objections and Replies	122
4.9.1	Ostension	122
4.9.2	Stipulation	123
4.9.3	Memory	126
4.9.4	Thicker Explananda	127
4.9.5	A Different Common Ground	132
4.9.6	Proving Too Much?	132
4.9.7	Lessons Learned	133
4.10	Cognitive Phenomenology	134
4.11	Concluding Remarks	138
5	Attitude-Specific Phenomenology	141
5.1	Introduction	141
5.2	Methodology	144
5.3	Looking for the Wrong Thing	147
5.4	Phenomenology of Objectivity in Perception	148
5.4.1	Recognising Objectivity in Perception	152
5.4.2	Objectivity and the Content of Perception	156
5.4.3	Objectivity and Transparency in Perception	159
5.4.4	Challenges to Objectivity and Transparency	164
5.5	Phenomenology of Objectivity in Intuition	168
5.5.1	Recognising Objectivity in Intuition	168
5.5.2	Objectivity and the Content of Intuition	170
5.5.3	Objectivity and Transparency in Intuition?	173
5.6	Phenomenology of Pushiness	175
5.6.1	Recognising Pushiness	176
5.6.2	What Pushiness Explains	185
5.6.3	Pushiness Comes in Degrees	186
5.7	Valence	188
5.8	Belief	189
5.9	Objectivity, Pushiness and ‘Presentation’	193

5.10 What Intuition Is	198
6 Epistemic Consequences	203
6.1 Introduction	203
6.2 Liberalism and Dogmatism	205
6.3 Dogmatism for Perception Characterised	210
6.4 Pryor's Case for Dogmatism	217
6.5 Interlude	219
6.6 A Critique of Pryor's Argument	221
6.7 Explaining Justification	228
6.7.1 Pushiness and Objectivity Explain Justification . . .	229
6.7.2 Explaining Seeming Able to <i>Just Tell</i>	233
6.8 Liberalism and Dogmatism for Intuition	234
6.9 The Case for Liberalism for Intuition	237
6.9.1 Justification Without Seeming Able to <i>Just Tell</i> . . .	238
6.9.2 Pushiness and Objectivity Explain Justification . . .	241
6.10 An Argument for the Analogy	244
6.10.1 The Argument	245
6.10.2 The Disanalogy of Content-Specific Phenomenology	247
6.10.3 The Disanalogy of a Known Causal Mechanism . .	249
6.10.4 The Disanalogy of Valence	252
6.11 Taking Stock	252
6.12 Concluding Remarks	256
Conclusion	257
Appendices	263
A Objections to Dogmatism, and Replies	265
A.1 Introduction	265
A.2 The Baseline Intuition	267
A.3 Having the Experience Does Not Matter	268
A.4 Bootstrapping	271
A.5 Cognitive Penetration	275

<i>CONTENTS</i>	xix
A.6 Dissonance	280
References	283

CHAPTER ONE

Preliminaries

SOCRATES: Being able to cut things up again, class by class, according to their natural joints, rather than trying to break them up as an incompetent butcher might.

PLATO
Phaedrus

1.1 First Steps

Is torturing the innocent OK?

Just now something happened: it seemed to you (I shall assume) that torturing the innocent is wrong. This went on for a period of time, then it stopped. But what kind of thing happened?

You believe many things: that Paris is the capital of France, that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris, and that the currency in France is the Euro, for example. You also have hopes and fears, desires and preferences, and you see and hear various things. These are all *mental* states or events (hereafter simply 'mental states'). What happened is broadly speaking the same kind of thing as any of these: you were in a mental state.

But what kind of mental state were you in? What is the nature of such states? These questions are interesting in their own right. We want to know what the world is like, what the nature of reality is. Minds occupy an intriguing corner of reality. We inquire into the nature of beliefs, de-

sires, hopes and fears. In the same spirit, and for the same reason, we should also inquire into the nature of the mental state you were just in.

It is also interesting to ask what, if anything, mental states like this one can *do*. Perhaps you now believe that torturing the innocent is wrong *because* it just seemed to you that it is. If you do, that is on the face of things appropriate. A good question is whether it really *is* appropriate, and if so, why and in what way. Furthermore, 'seemings' like this one appear to play various roles, among them a significant role in the academic discipline of philosophy. It is interesting to ask whether seemings really do play the roles they appear to play, and if they do, whether that is appropriate.

Quite a lot of philosophical attention has recently been paid to questions like these last ones. Not quite as much attention has been paid to discovering the nature of mental states like the one you were just in. But this creature of the mind is an interesting one, well worth our attention. Moreover, understanding the nature of such states will help us to answer other questions about them. If you believe that torturing the innocent is wrong because it just seemed to you that it is, that seems appropriate. But it may or may not *really be* appropriate. This will depend on what the nature is of the state you were just in. The goal of this thesis is to advance our understanding of such states.

*

Let us consider some further examples. To many people it seems that if something is red it is coloured. To many it seems that a rational person cannot believe both that things are and are not a certain way. To many it seems that this sentence: "The boy the man the girl saw chased fled" is ungrammatical. To many it seems that if Ann is taller than Bob and Bob is taller than Cam, then Ann is taller than Cam. To many it seems that people generally prefer less pain to more. And to many it seems that if events A and B happened at the same time, and B and C did too, then A and C also happened at the same time.

All of these mental states seem to have certain things in common. Perhaps most obvious among them is that each of the states ‘says’ things which are *true or false*. It is *true* that if something is red it is coloured, and that people generally prefer less pain to more. But it is *false* that the sentence is ungrammatical, as most agree on reflection.¹

A second commonality is this: sometimes people come to believe that things are a particular way because that is how it seems to them. For each of the examples above, it is plausible that this could happen, indeed, it probably has happened many times. Of course, they may or may not hold this belief for very long. But still: people sometimes come to believe that so-and-so because that is how it seems to them.

Third, as we have mentioned, if a person believes that *p* because it seems to her that *p*, that seems appropriate. An example of this is if you now believe that torturing the innocent is wrong because it just seemed to you that it is. Moreover, it is not appropriate in any old way, but in a particular way. It may be a good idea for a sprinter to believe that she will win, even if her realistic chances are slim. But your belief is not appropriate because believing it serves some practical end. It seems simply appropriate for you to believe as you do, in and of itself.

Finally, there seems to be something in common between *what it is like* for people to be in these mental states. It feels a particular way when it seems that people generally prefer less pain to more, and there is something in common between what that is like, and what it is like when it seems that torturing the innocent is wrong. There is a felt ‘push’ to believe that that is how things really are.

These apparent commonalities appear to bind these cases, and others, together. Appearances could be deceptive. But if, after investigating this impression further, it still seems that the cases have these things in common, it will be reasonable to think that there is a class of phenomena here worth caring about. So these are the first steps of this thesis: a list of examples, a recognition that they appear to have certain things in common, and a preliminary description of these apparent commonalities.

1. The boy fled; the boy, that is, who was chased by the man, who, in turn, the girl saw.

1.2 More Rigour

The examples of seemings above would readily be accepted by most philosophers as ‘intuitions’. We shall have more to say about this later, but for now let us adopt this usage.

So far I have tried to use non-technical language to describe the apparent commonalities between these instances of intuition. But no terminology is innocent or pure, and one does not get far by trying to stay clear of commitment and controversy. I will therefore now say some of the same things again, in more detail, and using slightly more technical and (perhaps) committal language. This will make the starting point clearer. It will also clarify what I mean by some terms, and bring to light some of the assumptions that play a role in what follows. Though we will still be left with no more than a first pass characterisation of intuition, it is useful to have a little more meat on the bones, even at this early stage.

Before that, a small methodological point. In what follows I make unashamed use of intuition itself to characterise and discuss intuition. I can see no way around this, but also no reason not to. So I shall feel free to say things like: “It seeming to an agent as if things are a particular way *seems* to support her belief that things really are that way.”

1.2.1 Content

Suppose I believe that there is a person behind me. My belief might be true or false. In order for it to be true, the way things are must meet certain conditions, which they may or may not meet. I shall say that my belief *represents* that the way things are is one of the ways which satisfies those conditions. That is the *representational content* of my belief, or just its content, for short.

My belief has conditions which must be met for the belief to be true. But there are many aspects of the way things are which my belief places no conditions on. My belief does not specify whether Hang Seng is gaining or losing, whether deer-hunting is at the moment being carried out at some particular place, whether someone is playing Russian Roulette

wearing a red head-band, whether I have coins in my pocket, and so on. What it does specify is that there is a person behind me. For my belief to be true, the way things are could be any of the ways that are compatible with what my belief did specify: Tom is behind me and someone just lost Russian Roulette; Dick is behind me and I have ten coins in my pocket, Harry is behind me and I have no coins in my pocket, and so on.

My belief is a mental state which I am in. The belief has truth conditions. But *what* I believe is not truth conditions. As we have seen, there are many ways things might be which would satisfy the truth conditions. What I believe is that one of them is the way things are.²

Although we elaborated the notion of content using the example of belief, it generalises to other mental states. Suppose that I have the intuition that torturing the innocent is wrong. Again, I am in a mental state which has truth conditions: things have to be a certain way for the intuition to be true (we return to what way that is in Chapter 5). What the intuition represents is that the way things are is one of the ways such that those conditions are met. That is the representational content of my intuition, or just its content, for short.

The content of perception will also be of importance in what follows. Looking out of my window, I seem to see³ that a person is walking down the street. I am then in a mental state which has *accuracy* conditions: it is wholly accurate only if those conditions are satisfied by the way things are. What it represents is that the way things are is one of the ways such that those conditions are met; that is the representational content of the perceptual experience, or just its content, for short.

This, I take it, is one natural way to understand the notion of represen-

2. It is tricky to *say* this in a way that does not leave any room open for an interpretation on which the belief represents its own truth conditions, and that they are fulfilled by the way things are. To be clear: that is not the picture.

3. For me to *see* that a person is walking down the street, a person really has to be walking down the street: 'seeing that' is *factive*. However, like intuition and belief, perceptual experience can be inaccurate (or false). We signal that factivity does not hold by using 'seem to'.

tational content, and a useful one for present purposes.⁴ Other notions may be more useful for other purposes, and may equally well deserve the label ‘content’. One could, for instance, instead argue that we just have a grasp on what the content of our mental states are, and that the content can come apart from the way things are satisfying the truth or accuracy conditions of that state. But in what follows, I take the content of intuitions, beliefs and perceptual experiences to be that the way things are is a way that satisfies the truth or accuracy conditions of the state.

*

Three further points must be noted. First, it is striking that the accuracy conditions of a perceptual experience often appear to be rather more ‘demanding’ than the truth conditions of intuition and belief appear to be. For example, it is natural to think that I can believe simply that there is a cup on the table in front of me (we certainly often talk this way, especially in philosophy).⁵ But it is doubtful that I can *see* just that. If I see that there is a cup on the table in front of me I will typically see many other things as well: that the cup has a certain colour and shape, that it is a certain distance from the edge of the table, that it is in shadow or not, and so on. For my belief that there is a cup on the table to be true, there simply has to be a cup on the table. But for my perceptual experience to be wholly accurate, the cup must in addition have the colour and shape it is represented as having, and so on. We might say that perception is *rich* in content, in comparison with belief and intuition.

Some argue that perceptual experience is not only different from belief in how rich it is—in how stringent the conditions are which it imposes on the world, as one might say—but in what *kind* of content it has. They

4. It is of course not my invention: this is a common way to think about representational content, see e.g. [Siewert \(1998: 189–92\)](#), [Siegel \(2005/2010\)](#) and [Jackson \(2010: Lecture 2\)](#). Content which sorts the way things are that are compatible with the content from those that are not is also sometimes called *propositional* content. I shall not do so here.

5. It is possible that there is no belief state that has such simple truth conditions as that there is a cup on the table. It may be that belief is a ‘bogus plural’: I have one, big belief state, and not many small ones. We return to this issue later, in [§5.8](#).

argue that whereas belief has conceptual content, perceptual experience has *non-conceptual* content.⁶ This issue need not detain us here. Some might deny that we can literally believe what we see on the grounds that the content of perception is too different from the content of belief. But few would deny that we believe a number of things *on the basis* of what we see, and properly so. But within those things which we properly believe on the basis of perception we can distinguish between those which involve an amount of ‘jumping to conclusions’, and those that do not.⁷ For example, when I look down the corridor and see that nowhere is light shining out from under a door, in some sense I see that I am the only one in the department still working. But there is another sense in which that is *not* what I see, that is a conclusion I jump to based on what I actually do see.

So even those who think that the content of perception is very different from the content of belief need a notion very much like the representational content of perception.⁸ It is just that for some, this notion might have to be spelled out indirectly, in terms, perhaps, of the accuracy conditions of the beliefs which we properly hold on the basis of perception, but without ‘jumping to conclusions’. In what follows, therefore, I treat perception as having representational content of the same sort as intuition and belief do, with the understanding that the claims can be restated in whatever terms ultimately turn out to be correct, if required. That was the first point.

The second point is this. I shall assume that *if* there is a difference in kind between the content of perceptual experience and the content of belief—a question on which I take no stance—the content of intuition is like the latter, not the former. I will assume, that is, that intuition has conceptual content. As far as I am aware, no extant philosophical account

*Intuition has
conceptual
content*

6. Recent examples include Crane (1988a,b, 1992b); Evans (1982); Heck (2000); and Peacocke (1986, 1992, 2001).

7. Of course, this notion would have to be spelled out. I am not defending the view that perceptual experience has non-conceptual content, so I do not need to take on this task.

8. On this point, see e.g. Siegel (Forthcoming: §2).

of the nature of intuition contests this assumption.⁹ But more importantly, arguments intended to show that perception has non-conceptual content—such as Crane’s argument that one and the same experience has contradictory content, and that this shows that the content cannot be conceptual (1988b), or the ‘richness’ argument¹⁰ discussed by Richard G. Heck Jr. (2000) among others—seem to have no bite on intuitions. Though we have intuitions that together are contradictory, it is far from clear that there are *single* intuitions with contradictory content.¹¹ And there is no corresponding richness in intuition as in perception: we usually have little trouble articulating what we intuit.¹² So it is reasonable to assume that intuition has conceptual content. That was the second point.

Finally, we need to note that the representational content of belief and other mental states is often usefully characterised in the jargon of *possible worlds*. ‘The way things are’ includes, on its intended understanding, what we might also call ‘ways things might be’. A possible world is just a way things might be of a special kind: it is a *complete* way things might be. My belief that I have some coins in my pocket leaves all sorts of things open. But a possible world leaves nothing open, it settles all details. Using this jargon we will say that my belief that I have some coins in my pocket represents that the actual world, the one we all live in, is in the set of worlds that are such that I have some coins in my pocket. There are many such worlds; in some of them Hang Seng is up a 100 points,

9. I set aside *de re* intuition, which (if it exists) is a separate phenomenon; see n. 29.

10. “Yet my experience of these things represents them far more precisely than that, far more distinctively, it would seem, than any characterization I could hope to formulate, for myself or for others, in terms of the concepts I presently possess. The problem is not lack of time, but lack of descriptive resources, that is, lack of the appropriate concepts” (Heck 2000: 490). This does not exhaust Heck’s argument, of course, it is merely his initial statement of the problem.

11. Perhaps the most promising candidate is the **NCA** intuition discussed in Chapter 2, but auxiliary hypotheses seem to be required to produce the contradiction.

12. We return to this point in §5.3. I do not claim that there can be no dispute about exactly what the content of a certain intuition is, nor that we do not at times mischaracterise our intuitions: clearly both of these occur. Neither phenomenon indicates a too poor conceptual repertoire, however, in the way that our inability to describe our perceptual experience might seem to.

in some Russian Roulette is being played, etc. My belief represents only that the actual world is *one* of these worlds, one of the possible worlds in which I have coins in my pocket. This is just to say that the way things actually are is *one* of the ways consistent with my having coins in my pocket.

*

To sum up: intuition, the target of our investigation, has (conceptual) representational content. The content of an intuition is that its truth conditions are satisfied by the way things are. When a person has an intuition, what she intuits is that things are one of the ways they would have to be to satisfy those conditions; that is the content of her intuition.

1.2.2 Phenomenal Character

The examples of intuition with which we started appear united by what it is like to have one: the person who has it feels ‘pushed’ to believe that that is how things really are. That intuitions really are united in this way is one of the key claims of this thesis, which is given detailed defence in Chapter 5. But it may be useful to make the claim a little more precise even at this stage. To this end, let us introduce some vocabulary.

At any given time, there is something particular it is like to be a given conscious being. Imagine, for example, that one afternoon you stand on a beautiful beach, looking out at sea. Your bare feet are being lapped by small waves of chilly water, the sun and the breeze are on your face, the sound of sea gulls mixes with the sound of rustling leaves from tall gum-trees behind you. You are chewing on an apple. You may not stop to think about it, but it feels like something, right at that moment, to be you. There is *something it is like overall* for you to be you, right at that moment. Your overall experience has a particular *phenomenal character*.

There is also something it is like to taste an apple, hear a tree in the wind or a particular piece of music, to be embarrassed, elated, anxious, to have a tickle, a pain, or an itch. Of course, we do not have such local

phenomenal experiences in isolation. When I chew on an apple, many other things are also going on which make a difference to the character of my overall phenomenal experience. But if there is something it is like to taste an apple, then tasting an apple makes a difference to the character of the overall experience of the person who is tasting it.¹³ A particular local experience has a particular phenomenal character just in case it makes a particular *contribution* to the character of the overall or global experience of the person who is having it. That is, at any rate, how I shall understand these terms.

Above we said that there is something in common between what it is like to have various intuitions. We can now make this claim a little more precise. Having an intuition makes a particular contribution to the character of the overall experience of the person who is having it. As we shall see in Chapter 4, this claim can be understood in different ways, and not all of them render the claim true. But there is an important sense in which it *is* true, or so, at least, I shall argue in Chapter 5.

A cautionary remark: phrases like ‘the phenomenal character of experience’ sometimes carry heavy theoretical or metaphysical implications. But beyond what has just been outlined, the use of these words carry no further implications in this thesis.¹⁴

1.2.3 Justification

We noted that if a person believes that p because it seems to her that p , that seems appropriate. We also noted that it seems appropriate in a specific way, related to appropriate belief in and of itself, as opposed to what it may be useful to believe for some further reason.

13. It is possible that it does not make a difference to the overall character quite always; there may be rare exceptions where one contribution is ‘cancelled out’ by another. I set this possibility aside throughout.

14. Thus I take no stance, for example, on the question of whether phenomenal facts can ultimately be reduced to physical ones, or on whether the phenomenal character of experience is ultimately ineffable, or on the question of whether something general can be said about the relation between the phenomenal character of a mental state and its representational content (and if so, what).

A slightly more rigorous way of saying this is: when it seems to someone that things are a certain way in the way we outlined above, this appears to *epistemically support her belief* that that is the way things are. *Epistemic support of belief* As we saw, there are non-epistemic ways it can be good for someone to believe something; an athlete may be well advised to believe that she will win the race irrespective of her chances.¹⁵ In this thesis, however, such other good-making features of beliefs will rarely be at issue. In the absence of further specification, we are always interested in epistemic support.

We should not, of course, assume or accept from the outset that it seeming to a person that things are a certain way *really does* support her belief that things are that way. That is one of the questions that our theory should answer, not one we should assume to be settled at the outset. However, I am claiming that intuition *appears* to epistemically support belief, and that these appearances partly constitute a legitimate starting point for inquiry.

The notion of epistemic support I have in mind here is that of *justification*. The way this term is used here, it requires no sophistication: a subject can have justification to believe that *p* even if she is unable to defend her belief against epistemic challenge. Justification is simply much easier to acquire than to account for theoretically, or defend dialectically.

But that is not to say that the notion is at all mysterious. If my very trustworthy friend once in a blue moon tells me a lie, and I believe the lie, my belief is *justified*, even though it is not true. Even someone who has never heard the term used this way before will very likely be able to lock onto the target phenomenon from this simple example.¹⁶

One might try to use a more commonsensical term, saying, for instance, that when it seems to S that *p*, this ‘makes it OK’ for her to believe

15. Ernest Sosa (2007c) uses such examples to elucidate epistemic appropriateness of belief by means of contrast. I mentioned another example of false beliefs I am fond of in the Acknowledgements.

16. That is at any rate my experience.

that p .¹⁷ But I see no advantage in this approach. Again, no term is completely free of commitment or unfortunate connotation. That the notion of justification can so easily be explained to the un-initiated strongly suggests that it is minimally theoretically laden. It is a notion we have a solid grip on, even if there is disagreement around the edges.¹⁸ So my claim is that intuition appears to justify belief. I do not assume that these appearances are veridical, but in Chapter 6 I argue that they are.

Two short points. Before, it seemed to you that torturing the innocent is wrong. On the face of things, you now have some justification to believe that this is so. You have this justification even if you do not, in fact, believe this. What is at issue is *propositional*, not *doxastic* justification. You can have the former whether or not you believe. You have a doxastically justified belief that p if you have propositional justification to believe that p , and, moreover, your belief that p was formed in the right way.¹⁹

Second, justification comes in degrees, and I shall treat talk of having a lot of or a little justification as interchangeable with talk of the justification being strong or weak.

1.2.4 Relation to Belief

Whatever one's view of the justification acquired, no one should deny that people sometimes come to believe that p because it seems to them that p . The question is what we should make of this.

Some take the obvious fact that there is a fairly tight connection between intuition and belief as incentive to say that intuition *is* a belief. Some allow more room between the phenomena, and say instead that intuition is a *disposition* to believe. But I assume that everyone, including those who do not regard the connection between intuition and belief to be as tight as this, must be able to account for this feature of intuition.

17. Or: p has 'the property of being worthy of belief' (Bengson 2010: 30).

18. For example, one might wonder whether being justified in believing p is co-extensive with being epistemically *blameless* for believing p ; see e.g. Pryor (2004: 352).

19. See also §6.3, and n. 234 on page 216.

*

Let us sum up. Intuition as conceived here is a mental state with representational content, which often is the cause of belief, but which additionally appears to justify belief, and the instances of which share a particular phenomenal character.

1.3 Aim and Approach

The apparent commonalities between instances of intuition give us good initial reason to think that grouping the cases together will give us valuable explanatory purchase. It seems *significant* that the cases apparently share these features. We should seek to discover whether that is really so, but that there is a class of phenomena here worth caring about is a natural working hypothesis.

The primary aim of this thesis is to contribute to our understanding of mind and rationality by investigating whether these cases *really do* have something important in common, and if so, what exactly that is. Neither the list of examples nor the descriptions we have given are sacrosanct. The overall methodological approach I adopt is to let these two elements jointly constitute the starting point, with the expectation that amendments may be necessary as the investigation proceeds.

*

An often noted fact about intuition is that we many times use perceptual language to talk about it. George Bealer says about de Morgan's laws, for example: "you suddenly 'just see' it" (1992: 101, my emphasis).²⁰ The analogy such talk implies between perception and intuition is, I believe, worth taking seriously.

I hasten to add that I do not set out to defend a 'perceptual model' of intuition. I am not sure what it would take for an account of the nature of

20. Where the opposite is not explicitly noted, emphasis always occurs in the original.

intuition to count as a perceptual model, and I am keen to avoid verbal disputes here. What ‘taking the analogy seriously’ amounts to here is a methodological assumption: comparing intuition and perception is in many cases useful. That this is so I hope to demonstrate by example.

In Chapter 2, for example, I argue that the considerations that show that intuition is not reducible to belief also show that perception is not. I use an account of perception—that perception sometimes reduces to a *partial* belief—to develop and consider the corresponding view for intuition. In Chapter 3 I consider an objection raised against reductive views of perception, and that objection’s application to the case of intuition. And I argue that the considerations which in the end show that intuition cannot be reduced to a *disposition* to believe also show this for perception.

Although I do not set out to defend a perceptual model of intuition, the investigation herein reveals that intuition and perception share important features. Intuition and perception are both, I argue, *experiences* with representational content. That is a deep similarity in their natures.

In Chapter 4 I draw out what I take to be an important contrast between perception and intuition: a significant difference in what it is like to have perceptual and intuitional experience. But in Chapter 5 I argue that perception and intuition share other important features of their phenomenal characters: a part of what it is like to have an intuitional experience is *just the same* as what it is like to have a perceptual one. Because perception and intuition both have their phenomenal features essentially, these similarities are significant.

These features are relevant to the epistemic roles of perception and intuition. In Chapter 6 I argue, in particular, that the aspects of phenomenal character which are shared by perception and intuition are just those which allow them to provide the person who is in the state—the person who has the perceptual or intuitional experience—with a certain sort of justification. Perception and intuition are therefore in an important sense on equal footing, epistemically speaking. Thus I hope to show that there is a way to understand intuition where it is not “utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else” (Mackie 1977/1990: 38).

This conception of intuition also belies the dictum that intuitions are not “data of experience” (Bealer 2001: 3): there is, I argue, something which truly deserves the name *intuitional experience*.

*

I aim to give an account of the nature of intuition; to answer the question of what intuition *is*. The conception of intuition I advance is one according to which that mental state itself does some ‘heavy explanatory lifting’. It is, accordingly, of some importance to establish as firmly as possible that views which deny this are untenable. This is the task of Chapters 2 and 3, where I argue against reduction of intuition to belief, and to a disposition to believe, respectively.

The arguments I present are new. They rely on firm intuitions about agents being or not being *rationally criticisable* in certain situations. Such intuitions have about as good a claim to be pre-theoretical as intuitions ever do in philosophy: the concept of rational criticisability is in wide and constant deployment by the ‘folk’ (though not under that description, of course). Moreover, since these intuitions are not themselves about the nature of intuition, but instead about rationality, they are well placed to *support* a view of the nature of intuition. In particular, they support, but do not rely on, the view that intuition is an experience.

Negative work is often both fruitful and necessary. But it is also often fruitful to lay out a positive conception and let it be judged on its merits. I do not attempt to refute every other view of the nature of intuition there is. Such a project is unlikely to succeed: there are few refutations in philosophy. I aim instead to explore the possibility that there is a psychological kind which encompasses most of the examples we started out with and which has roughly the characteristics we discussed. I hope to put forward a plausible positive account of the nature of intuition, and to show that this account can be put to good use.

Many thinkers take the phenomenology of intuition—what it is like to have one—to be among the features that makes it the kind of state that

it is.²¹ They do so, I think, rightly. However, the important role assigned to phenomenology is not usually matched by a detailed description of it, or by an argument that intuition really does have that phenomenology.²²

The project of describing the phenomenology of intuition in detail, and arguing that intuition actually has the alleged phenomenal features, is of great importance. Unlike some, I think that significant progress can be made in this direction, despite some methodological difficulties.²³ A large part of this thesis is accordingly dedicated to enunciating a positive conception of intuition. I describe the phenomenal character of intuition in detail, and *argue* that intuition actually has this character (Chapters 4 and 5). Intuition is an experience of a certain type, and we can see that it has the phenomenal character that it does have not only through introspection, but because of what it allows us to explain.

*

Sometimes one's aims can be usefully clarified by noting what they are not. To that end, then, let me note that it is not an aim of this thesis to investigate the use of the word 'intuition' and its cognates in ordinary English. Uses of the word are highly varied, and of little value to the investigation of our target mental state.²⁴

21. George Bealer is among them. In various places he says that we can, on the basis of proper reflection on the phenomenology of intuition, distinguish intuition from belief, imagination, introspection, perception and memory (Bealer 1992: 102–3), from guesses, hunches, judgements and common sense (Bealer 1998b: 272). He also at times appears to suggest that we can on this basis distinguish *rational* from *physical* intuition (Bealer 1996a: 5; 1998a: 207); more on this below.

22. Chudnoff (2011b) provides some description of the phenomenology, as does, to a limited extent, Bengson (2010, Manuscript). We return to these thinkers in §5.9 below.

23. “[I]t would be wrong to deny the occurrence of states with such a phenomenology. While it might be nice to have a further understanding of it, I think that the combination of introspective ostension and distinction offered by Bealer is sufficient In fact, I’m inclined to think that this is all that can be done and that the sort of state at issue admits, like a pure phenomenal color, of no further analysis” (Pust 2000: 36).

24. Compare Thomas Grundmann, who notes:

In everyday language, we use the term “intuition” to refer to a broad range of phenomena: when a state of affairs strikes us immediately as plausible; when we suddenly have the unmistakable feeling that our judgment about something is

In philosophy, one can hear it said about someone that she has an intuition even though she is at that time clearly occupied with something entirely different, and so not in the mental state which is our target. This may rely on our knowledge that the person has had the intuition proper in the past, or on our confidence that she will have it again in the future, if she considers the question at issue. Thus it is felicitous for me to say of my colleague that she has the Gettier intuition, even though I am certain that she is at the moment not thinking about epistemology.²⁵

Similarly, having the intuition that p , comes apart from p being ‘intuitive’.²⁶ I may not have the intuition *there are sheep*, but regard that as ‘intuitive’. And perhaps I can have the intuition that p without p being intuitive to me. But nothing hinges on these questions here. The target of this inquiry is not the usage patterns of words, either in everyday situations or in philosophy. The target is the nature of intuition, the mental state picked out by giving examples and by the characterisation given.²⁷

Much recent philosophical attention to intuition has been focused on the role of intuition in philosophy itself. Central questions are whether intuition does play a role in philosophy, if so exactly what role it plays, and whether it can *legitimately* play such a role. Again, the aim of this thesis is not to contribute directly or explicitly to this debate.²⁸ Although

correct, although we cannot say what it is based upon—like when we predict the development of weather patterns or of the stock market, or when we suddenly foresee some future event, such as the death of a close friend or the success of our job application; when we have a sudden insight or idea; when we respond to a question automatically by giving a memorized answer; when we know exactly how somebody feels, but can’t say how we know (2007: 69).

25. Smith is justified in believing that Jones owns a Ford, because he has excellent evidence for that fact. He competently deduces that either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Barcelona, and is therefore justified in believing that. Unbeknownst to him, however, Jones has sold his Ford, but it just so happens that Brown is in Barcelona. So Smith has a justified true belief that either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona. But there is a strong intuition that Smith does not *know* that either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona (Gettier 1963). Let that be ‘the Gettier intuition’ throughout.

26. Many thanks to Anand Vaidya for helpful discussion.

27. Bengson (2010: §11) discusses similar issues and makes related points.

28. The literature here is extensive; see e.g. Bealer (1992, 1996a,b, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008); Bengson (Forthcoming); Cummins (1998); Earlenbaugh and Molyneux (2009); Goldman

the view I advocate in Chapter 6 will, if correct, have implications for the debate, that is not my focus. I take it that the more fundamental questions about intuition are what its nature is and what its epistemic import *in general* is. At any rate, those are the questions at issue here.

1.4 Views of the Nature of Intuition

Let us now consider some extant views of the nature of intuition. One view is that, in effect, there is none (Ayer 1956/1964: 33; Cappelen *Forthcoming*; Fumerton 1990: 6). According to such *eliminativist* views about intuition, the things we *call* intuitions belong to a motley class of phenomena, one whose members have nothing significant in common with one another. Consider, for example, Tara Smith's forceful statement:

[What] exactly *is* an intuition? One rarely encounters clear statements of their nature. If an intuition is a thought, why employ a term suggesting it is anything less than that? If intuition is a particular type of thought, what type? If an intuition is an emotion or feeling, what distinguishes intuition from ill-founded feelings? ... Are intuitions desires? Hunches? Stubborn convictions that a person refuses to surrender? The point is, we cannot be sure whether we have such things, let alone what role they play in providing moral guidance, until we know precisely what intuitions are. One suspects that the absence of definition, keeping intuition afloat as a hazy "something" between a thought and a feeling, may hide the fact that there are no such things. (Smith 2000: 23–4)

In this thesis I do not argue directly against eliminativism about intuition. The thesis is in large part an attempt to provide precisely that which Smith takes to be lacking: a clear statement of the nature of intuition. This in itself constitutes an indirect argument against eliminativist views. The

(1999); Goldman and Pust (1998); Grundmann (2007); Huemer (2005, 2007); Ichikawa and Jarvis (2009); Kornblith (1998, 2007); Liao (2008); Pust (2000, 2001, *Forthcoming*); Rawls (1971); David Sosa (2006a); Ernest Sosa (2006b, 2007a,c); Weinberg (2007); Weinberg, Nichols, and Stich (2001); Williamson (2004, 2007a,b); and Wright (2004).

statement of the nature of intuition provided herein vindicates the initial impression that the items on our list really do have something significant in common. I shall endeavour to leave the reader in little doubt that she really does have such mental states, that is, intuitions, and I shall also give reasons to think that having an intuition provides justification for belief. But more importantly, the reader will not be hindered from considering the justificatory status of intuition by the lack of a solid grasp of its nature. In what follows, then, I regard the challenge of eliminativism about intuition as answered by the positive account of intuition developed in later chapters.

*

The remaining views of intuition of concern here are in agreement that intuition represents that things are a certain way, that intuition has representational content.²⁹ In the remainder of this section, I discuss four choice-points or dimensions of variation which can be used to classify views of the nature of intuition.

1.4.1 Reductive and Anti-Reductive Views

We can distinguish between views according to which intuition *itself* plays an important role in our explanations, and those according to which it does not.

Some mental states are commonly invoked in our explanations: beliefs and desires (or preferences) are prime exemplars. Let us say that *reductive* views of intuition hold that what really does the heavy lifting with respect to explanation are some of these familiar denizens of the mind, either singly, in combination with one another, or in combination with other machinery, such as dispositions. By contrast, *anti-reductive* views hold that intuition itself does some heavy explanatory lifting that

*Reductive and
anti-reductive
views*

29. Whatever the merits of views according to which what we intuit is an *object* of some kind, they regard a different phenomenon (see e.g. [Pust Forthcoming](#) or [Parsons 1995](#) for discussion).

cannot be done by familiar denizens of the mind, singly, in combination with one another, or in combination with machinery such as dispositions.

There are other ways to use these notions, of course: these definitions are at least partly stipulative. As the terms are used here, one can be an anti-reductionist while still holding that intuition is an entirely physical phenomenon, for example.

An anti-reductionist claims that intuition does explanatory work that cannot be done by other mental states, singly or in combination, or with the aid of additional machinery. It is important to note that this commits her to the view that intuition is *not identical* to these other mental states, or to the combinations, since the two have different properties. The reductionist denies that intuition does such explanatory work. But she need not thereby be committed to the claim that intuition does not 'really exist', or that intuition exists in some lesser sense than familiar denizens of the mind do.³⁰

According to the anti-reductionist, if we do not acknowledge intuitions, we lose explanatory power. According to the reductionist we do not (although we may lose some brevity). A reductionist about intuition might, for example, say that intuitions are beliefs that arise spontaneously. On this view, our explanations can just as well be carried out by reference to the class of spontaneously arising beliefs as by reference to intuitions: nothing (save brevity) is lost by such substitution. By contrast, paying heed to intuition, the anti-reductionist thinks, will yield explanatory benefits which will otherwise be lost.

30. Which commitments someone who rejects that intuition does heavy explanatory lifting is in the end saddled with is a deep and subtle question of metaphysics, which it would take us much too far afield to try to settle here. For a quick and interesting discussion of moral realism and reduction, see [Schroeder \(2009\)](#). The connection between explanation and existence is often associated in particular with W. V. Quine, see e.g. [Harman \(1967\)](#) for discussion. [Lewis \(1994\)](#) discusses the ontological impact of reduction in the philosophy of mind. Thanks to John Cusbert for discussion here.

1.4.2 The Importance of Phenomenology

We have seen that a view of the nature of intuition can be classified as reductive or anti-reductive. We can also classify a view according to whether it takes the *phenomenology* of intuition to be among its essential features; the features that make it the kind of state that it is.

In practice, many anti-reductive views of intuition count its phenomenology among its essential features. Perhaps the best known proponent of such a view is George Bealer, who regards intuition as a “*sui generis*, irreducible, natural propositional attitude which occurs episodically” (1996a: n. 6; 1998a: 207; 2002: 74):

For you to have an intuition that A is just for it to seem to you that A. Here ‘seems’ is understood ... in its use as a term for a genuine kind of conscious episode. For example, when you first consider one of de Morgan’s laws, often it neither seems to be true nor seems to be false; after a moment’s reflection, however, something new happens: suddenly it *seems* true. Of course, this kind of seeming is intellectual, not sensory or introspective (or imaginative).³¹ (Bealer 1998b: 271)

And:

Intuition must also be distinguished from belief: belief is not a seeming; intuition is. ... Similar *phenomenological* considerations make it clear that intuitions are likewise distinct from judgements, guesses, hunches, and common sense.³² (Bealer 2001: 3–4, emphasis mine)

John Bengson (2010), Elijah Chudnoff (2011a; 2011b), Michael Hue-

31. In an early article, Bealer identified intuitions with non-inferential beliefs, or with states “having a strong modal tie” with such beliefs (Bealer 1987: 300). Otherwise, however, Bealer’s view of the nature of intuition has been very stable. For characterisations similar to the one given in this block quote, see his 1992: 101–04; 1996a: 4–7; 1996b: 123–4; 1998b: 271–2; 1998a: 207–13; 2001: 3–4; 2004: 12–13 and 2008: 190–1. In the main text I usually give a single reference for each point, but most of the characteristics Bealer attributes to intuition are discussed in several (or even most) of these places.

32. Phenomenal character being among the essential features of intuition is perhaps not the only interpretation of Bealer’s view, but it seems the most reasonable one.

mer (2005), John Pollock (1974) and Joel Pust (2000) also defend anti-reductionist views of intuition that count its phenomenal character among the features that make it the kind of state that it is.³³

On the other hand, Joshua Earlenbaugh and Bernard Molyneux (2009), Ernest Sosa (1996; 1998), and Timothy Williamson (2004; 2007a; 2007b) are reductionists about intuition who deny the importance of the phenomenology of intuition to making it the kind of state that it is.³⁴

Not all views, however, are as easily classified with respect to the importance assigned to phenomenology. Consider, for instance, Sosa's view in his 2007b and 2007c. On the one hand, he says that "we can *feel the 'pull'*" of a seeming (2007c: 47, emphasis mine), and that an intuition is:

... a representationally contentful *conscious* state that can serve as a justifying basis for belief while distinct from belief, not derived from certain sources, and possibly false.

(Sosa 2007b: 52, my emphasis)

But immediately thereafter he goes on to say that:

S intuits that p if and only if S's attraction to assent to <p> is explained rationally by two things in combination: (a) that S understands it well enough, (b) that <p> is true.

Here, the reference to what it is like to have an intuition is not present. My best understanding of this view is that the phenomenology of intuition is at most regarded as one of its non-essential features. Moreover, the focus seems to be on the fact *that* the attraction is conscious, and not on the particular phenomenal character associated with having an intuition.

Another view that is not straightforwardly classified on this dimension is Alvin Plantinga's. On the one hand, Plantinga downplays the importance of phenomenology (1993: 104–5), but on the other he appears to regard having an intuition as forming a belief, partially characterised

33. See also Steup (1996).

34. Sosa's and Williamson's views are discussed further in §§3.4 and 5.3.

by forming it “with that peculiar sort of phenomenology that goes with seeing that such a proposition is true” (1993: 106).

We can explain the noted co-variation between anti-reductionist views and views that regard the phenomenal character of intuition as among its essential features by noting that this is one of the most important *motivating* factors for resisting reduction of intuition to other familiar denizens of the mind. But it should also be noted that one need not combine these views. For one could adopt the view that forming or holding a particular belief,³⁵ or that being disposed to form a particular belief, is associated with a particular phenomenal character.³⁶

1.4.3 Necessity and Etiology

A view of the nature of intuition can be categorised according to whether it is reductive or non-reductive, and according to whether or not it takes the phenomenology of intuition to be among its essential features. A third way to classify a view is according to whether it takes the involvement of modality to be among the essential features of intuition, and a fourth is according to whether it regards the etiology of the state to be among them. In this section these distinctions are presented; they are discussed in the next.

Some thinkers regard the involvement of modality to be among the things that make intuition the kind of state that it is; or, at any rate, they take this to be so for the type of intuition of their concern. According to Bealer, ‘rational’ or ‘*a priori*’ intuition is a *sui generis*, natural propositional attitude³⁷ which has the feature of ‘presenting itself as necessary’:

35. Inspired, perhaps, by the account in Schwitzgebel (2002). Although the dispositional connection with phenomenology is emphasised in this paper, it is not clear how significant a break from traditional functionalism this constitutes—presumably functionalism always had the resources to allow for dispositional connections with phenomenal states.

36. It is possible to understand Sosa (1996, 1998) and Williamson (2007b) as defending this view. However, these positions seem to be more reasonably understood as attempting to account (at most) for the fact *that* intuition is conscious, and not for any particular phenomenal character that it might have.

37. Bealer has confirmed, in personal communication, that he takes *rational* intuition to be a *sui generis*, natural propositional attitude; a species of the genus of intuition.

[W]hen we have an *a priori* intuition, say, that if P then not not P, this presents itself as necessary: it seems that things could not be otherwise; it must be that if P then not not P.

(Bealer 1996a: 5)

Joel Pust also holds that ‘philosophical’ intuitions “involve an apparent necessity of some kind” (2000: 46), but doubts that all philosophical intuitions have modal content. He suggests a weaker involvement of modality: a person counts as having a philosophical intuition that *p* so long as “if S were to consider whether *p* is necessarily true, then S would have a purely intellectual experience that necessarily *p*” (2000: 35–9).

Alvin Plantinga also seems to take the involvement of modality to be among the essential features of intuition. He asks what *seeing* “that no dog is both an animal and a nonanimal” consists in, and answers:

It consists, first (I suggest), in your finding yourself utterly convinced that the proposition in question is *true*. It consists, second, however, in finding yourself utterly convinced that this proposition is not only true, but *could not have been false*.

(Plantinga 1993: 105)

And Laurence BonJour argues that:

... a priori justification is ultimately to be understood as intuitive grasp of necessity; a proposition is justified a priori when and only when the believer is able, ... to intuitively “see” or apprehend that its truth is an invariant feature of all possible worlds, that there is no possible world in which it is false.³⁸

(BonJour 1985: 192)

But Bengson (2010), Huemer (2001: 99–100, 2005: 101–2, 2007: §2.2), Chudnoff (2011a,b), and Lynch (2006) hold views of the nature of intuition where modality plays no essential role.³⁹

38. See also BonJour (1998: 16–16, 101, 114).

39. Thomas Grundmann argues that “rational intuitions have a modal content, but may not contain necessary facts” (2007: 73).

Finally, many thinkers require that, in order to count as an intuition, the etiology of a mental state must meet certain requirements. Some require that to count as an intuition, a mental state must not result from conscious inference.⁴⁰ Some demand that intuition must not derive “from enculturation . . . perception, introspection, testimony, or inferential reasoning, singly or in combination, not even through the channel of memory” (Sosa 2006b: 211). And some require that it does derive “from one’s understanding of one’s concepts” (Bealer 2004: 13, 2008: 191, see also Boghossian 2009: 119, and Bonjour 1998: 101).

1.5 Discussion

In this thesis I defend an anti-reductionist account of intuition, according to which its phenomenal character is among its essential features. In this section I want to suggest that neither necessity nor the etiology of intuition are among its essential features.

1.5.1 The Alleged Necessity of Intuition

Some thinkers argue that intuition ‘presents itself as necessary’. Bealer often says this about the type of intuitions of interest to him; what he calls ‘rational’ or ‘*a priori*’ intuitions. Michael Lynch similarly claims that “whether or not [that causes necessitate their effects] is necessarily true or even true at all, it certainly *presents itself* as necessarily true to the reflective mind” (2006: 229).⁴¹

40. Boghossian (2001: 636), Cohen (1986: 75–6), Gopnik and Schwitzgebel (1998: 77), Lynch (2006), Plantinga (1993: 106), Pust (2000: 44–5, *Forthcoming*); but compare Michael Huemer: “the function of arguments is to change the way things seem to one’s audience . . .” (2005: 101).

41. I shall assume that the involvement of *possibility* would suffice on these thinkers’ view, and take this as understood in what follows. (One might say that the relevant propositions are the ‘modally strong’, as Boghossian 2009 does, for example.) Note that Lynch also argues that not all philosophical intuitions present themselves as necessary, though some do. He also claims that some contents present themselves as *contingent* (2006: 229).

We can distinguish two claims:

- (a) there is a nearby class of mental states such that necessity is *not* among the essential features of such states, which constitutes a good candidate for a psychological kind; and
- (b) we lack reason to think that there is a nearby class of mental states such that necessity *is* among the essential features of such states, which constitutes a good candidate for a psychological kind

What is a psychological kind? Like natural kinds in general cut nature at its natural joints, I take a psychological kind to cut the mind at its natural joints. No further precision is required here.

It is important to note that the topic of this thesis is a class of mental states with representational content, which often is the cause of belief, which additionally appears to justify belief, and the instances of which share a particular phenomenal character. Necessity is thus not among the characteristics we use to pick out our topic.

Second, this thesis constitutes an extended defence of (a). I argue that there is a class of mental states which encompasses paradigmatic examples of intuition, such that the essential features of the states are that they have representational content and a certain phenomenal character (but not involvement of modality), and, moreover, that states in this class can play a certain distinctive epistemological role. This supports (a). Thus I aim to show that—whether or not there is a narrower psychological kind of rational or *a priori* intuitions, or what have you—there is a wider kind worth caring about, too.

I also believe, however, that we have quite good reason to believe that (b) is true. Let us consider this point briefly.

I take the claim that rational intuition is a “*sui generis*, irreducible, natural propositional attitude” (1996a: n. 6; 1998a: 207; 2002: 74, see n. 37) to amount to or entail the claim that rational intuition is a psychological kind. The question is therefore whether there is a nearby psychological kind characterised by necessity. It seems that we lack reason to think so.

Talk of the necessity of intuition can be understood as purporting to

describe a feature of the *attitude* of rational intuition, or a feature of its *content*. Bealer often discusses the alleged necessity of intuition under the heading 'Phenomenology of Intuitions' (e.g. in his 1998a), and he puts significant weight on intuition being distinguishable from other mental states by its phenomenology (see n. 21). A possible understanding of how modality is involved in rational intuition is thus that the necessity of intuition is a feature of its phenomenology, of what it is like to have one. I shall assume that if the necessity of intuition is a feature of the attitude, it is so in virtue of being a feature of the phenomenology of intuition.⁴²

However, it does not seem that the necessity of intuition is a feature of its phenomenology. To be sure, it can seem to me both that *if p, then not-not-p*, that *it is necessary that if p, then not-not-p*, and that *if it is true that if p, then not-not-p, then this is necessarily true*. But in none of these cases can I detect any *phenomenal* sense in which this 'presents itself as necessary': it simply seems that things are a certain way.⁴³

Of course, the significance of claims about what I can detect can be undermined by claims from someone else, who claims that they *can* detect the relevant feature. However, I am aware of no *argument* for the view that the necessity of intuition is a feature of the attitude. And here is an argument for the view that the modality belongs in the content, and nowhere else. First, we only have a reason to believe in a psychological kind if we need it for explanatory purposes. Second, we can explain all that needs explaining about intuition by including modal contents among the contents an intuition can have. So, we have no reason to believe that there is a psychological kind corresponding to intuition where its necessity is a feature of the attitude. These premises are both plausi-

42. After all, it is hard to see how else this could be. It could not be cashed out in terms of the functional role of typically bringing about belief in modal content, for example, for this would not distinguish it from the option where the necessity is in the content. One could of course define an attitude which one has just in case one has an intuition with modality in the content: let us not count this as necessity featuring in the attitude.

43. In Chapter 4 I argue that the content of an intuition never makes a difference to what it is like to have one. If so, then *a fortiori* modality being part of the content makes no difference to the phenomenology.

ble; an intuition with modality in the content can, for example, explain how a person might come to hold a belief with modal content.

Let us assume, then, that the alleged necessity of intuition is not a feature of the attitude. If necessity in the content does not demarcate a psychological kind, there is no psychological kind that has necessity among its essential features.

Bealer often explicitly acknowledges intuitions that do not qualify as rational ones, for example ‘physical intuitions’ such as that a house which is undermined will fall (e.g. in his 2001: 3). So Bealer regards rational intuition as a sub-class of intuitions, a species of the genus.⁴⁴ There are many other subclasses likewise singled out by content: [Hue-mer \(2005: 102\)](#) singles out ethical intuitions as those whose contents are evaluative propositions, for example.

The question is why we should think that each such subclass, or even just one of them, corresponds to a psychological kind. The simple fact that there is a difference in content is not sufficient on its own; since nothing otherwise stops us from thinking that there are psychological kinds restricted in content in arbitrary ways. And clearly there are not: there is no kind corresponding to fear of bicycles, for example.⁴⁵

Moreover, the characteristics we have outlined apply straightforwardly to the intuition about the undermined house, and to intuitions with evaluative propositions as their contents. When it seems to a person that a house that is undermined will fall, that state has representational content, it has a phenomenal character like the other examples we started with, it seems to justify belief, and it certainly often brings about belief. So there is good reason to believe that the psychological kind in the vicin-

44. Bealer has also confirmed this in interpretation in personal communication.

45. Michael Lynch raises this challenge:

If intuiting is a distinct kind of attitude, why can’t we, given the right circumstances, take up that attitude towards almost any proposition, in the way that, given the right circumstances, we can find ourselves hoping or fearing, or believing almost any proposition? Without argument, it is difficult to see how intuition would be restricted in a more comprehensive way than other attitudes (2006: 230).

ity includes cases that do not count as ‘rational’ intuitions.

It is reasonable to conclude that intuition, understood as a candidate for a psychological kind, is fully general with respect to the contents it admits. We have already excluded that necessity is a feature of the attitude of intuition, so it appears that (b) is true.⁴⁶ Its truth, although it does not on its own establish this, does make it more likely that the only psychological kind in the vicinity is the one that is the topic of this thesis.

1.5.2 Etiology

Some accounts stipulate that intuition cannot be the result of conscious inference. As above, we can distinguish two claims:

- (c) there is a class of mental states such that having a particular etiology is *not* among the essential features of such states, which constitutes a good candidate for a psychological kind; and
- (d) we lack reason to think that there is a nearby class of mental states such that having a particular etiology *is* among the essential features of such states, which constitutes a psychological kind

As before, note first that the topic of this thesis is a class of mental states characterised by features we have already encountered, and that having a particular etiology does not figure among them.

Second, this thesis constitutes an extended defence of (c). I argue that a class of mental states can be singled out in ways that make no reference to etiology, that the members of this class share important and interesting features, and that states in this class can play a certain epistemological

46. Note that the claim is not that intuition must be fully general with respect to the *kinds* of contents it admits. It is possible that there is a kind of content that intuition cannot have: non-conceptual content (§1.2.1). The claim is also not that there are ‘philosophical’ or ‘rational’ intuitions which do *not* have modality in their contents (a claim defended by Pust 2000: 36–9 and Lynch 2006: 228–30). I take no stance on this issue. The claim here is simply that modality is always *at most* in the content, never in the attitude of intuition, and that when it is in the content, it does not delineate a psychological kind. For a different argument against focus on ‘rational’ or ‘philosophical’ intuitions in the context of inquiry into the nature of the state, see Bengson (2010: §7).

role. This supports (c). So whether or not there is a narrower psychological kind, there is a wider one worth caring about, too.

I also believe, however, that we have quite good reason to believe that (d) is true. Let us consider this point briefly.

If indeed we are concerned with a candidate for a psychological kind which has something like the characteristics we have outlined above, it is hard to see that we have a reason to dictate from the outset how the state may arise. It is true, of course, that one can come to believe that p by reasoning one's way to p , and that this *need* not involve its coming to seem to one that p (see e.g. [Bealer 1992: 102](#)).⁴⁷ For instance, the [Argument from Rational Criticisability](#) below concludes that it is not the case that whoever intuits a proposition believes that proposition. I hope that the reader will come to believe this conclusion, but I do not expect it to *seem* to the reader (in the relevant sense) that that is how things are.

But why should we think that a process of conscious inference with p as its conclusion *cannot* result in it seeming to the agent that p ? If the interest is to delineate a good candidate for a psychological kind, there seems to be no reason to require an *absence* of conscious deliberation or conscious argument beforehand.⁴⁸

Indeed, such an exclusion would seem *ad hoc*. Even those who restrict their attention to rational or philosophical intuition do not ban antecedent *conscious deliberation* about the concepts involved in p immediately before the intuition arises. For example, no one thinks there should be a ban on thinking about the logical connectives, or about the law itself, before having the intuition that one of de Morgan's laws holds. As Bealer points out, it is precisely when you consider these things that the

47. It is a separate and interesting question whether one must have an intuition corresponding to *each transition* in a proof or argument, as Locke arguably thought ([Locke 1689/1996: §§4.2.1–4.2.7](#)).

48. Perhaps there would be a reason to do so if the target of one's investigation was an epistemological kind (though see the discussion which follows in the main text). But, first, the target of this investigation is a candidate for a psychological kind, and second, we can then subsequently ask about such a kind what epistemic roles it can play. That seems to be a reasonable order of inquiry.

law suddenly *seems* true to you. It is hard to see what reason one might have to allow the deliberation that goes on beforehand to take any form whatever, *except only* the particular form of an argument.

Joel Pust presents an argument for such a restriction:

[U]nless intuitions are non-inferential they cannot serve . . . as the ultimate premises in philosophical argumentation and analysis. Philosophical practice treats intuitions as basic, as not admitting of further inferential support, and this provides us with a reason for requiring of any genuine intuition that it not be the result of conscious inference. (Pust 2000: 45)

Similarly, L. Jonathan Cohen, to whom Pust attributes his argument, argues that “[i]f intuition is to provide the ultimate premises of philosophical argument, those premises should not themselves be the conclusions of further reasoning” (Cohen 1986: 76).

I want to make two comments about this argument. First, Cohen and Pust are concerned in particular with *philosophical* intuition. Given that project, perhaps it makes sense to limit the candidates for what we call ‘intuition’ according to the role intuition is thought to play in theory construction. If, however, the interest is in delineating a good candidate for a psychological kind, it is quite unclear what could motivate such a restriction.

But second, let us distinguish two senses of being ‘non-inferential’. In one sense, *S*’s intuition that *p* is non-inferential if it is not the result of— *Disambiguating*
in the sense of being *caused by*—conscious deliberation. In another, the *‘non-inferential’*
intuition is non-inferential just in case *S*’s justification to believe that *p* after having the intuition does not wholly rest on the support *p* receives in virtue of being the conclusion of an argument.

To provide foundational justification, intuition must be non-inferential in the second sense. But why think it must be non-inferential in the first sense? Perhaps because one thinks that the two senses do not come apart. But in fact, clearly they do. To see this, imagine that I do not grasp de Morgan’s laws, and that you set out to explain them to me:

Assume that it is not the case that p -and- q , which is to say that p -and- q is false. One way for that to happen is if p is false. In that case, p and q are obviously not both true (we just said that p is false). And if p and q are not both true, p -and- q is false. So one way for p -and- q to be false is for p to be false.

Naturally, another way to get the same result is for q to be false instead: the reasoning is just the same. And a third way is if p and q are *both* false. But if p -and- q is false, one of these three things has to be the case: either p is false, or q is false, or both p and q are false. There is no other way.

Now, $\text{not-}p\text{-or-not-}q$ is true in exactly those three situations; when either one of p and q is false, or both p and q are false. So, you see, if it's not the case that p -and- q , it is the case that $\text{not-}p\text{-or-not-}q$.

To be sure, this is not the snappiest of arguments. But it *is* an argument. It is valid, and one direction of one of de Morgan's laws is its conclusion. In a similar fashion, you could have explained the other direction to me. But it is surely possible that at the end of such explanations it comes to *seem* to me that the transformation in question is valid. After all, that seems to be the point of the entire affair. But if it really does seem to me that way, why should we think that this cannot provide foundational justification for that belief?

Had I been a little quicker I might have arrived at the point where I could 'just see' that the transformation holds, simply by staring at $\neg(p \ \& \ q) \leftrightarrow (\neg p \ \vee \ \neg q)$ for a while. But me being able to 'just see' can just as much be the result of your patient explanation (along with that of the other direction), a result of you *arguing* that the transformation holds. Why should the value of my being able to *just see* this depend at all on what took place just before? If I really do *just see* it, my justification for believing $\neg(p \ \& \ q) \leftrightarrow (\neg p \ \vee \ \neg q)$ does *not* rest wholly on the support this receives in virtue of being the conclusion of an argument. It rests in part on the fact that I *just see* it to be so, that I have the intuition that it is so.

If p is the conclusion of an argument, it cannot provide foundational justification if it is justified *only* because it follows from premises that

are also justified. But it is no bar to the intuition that p providing foundational justification for believing that p because p seems true, if what allows or prompts it to seem true is an argument. The question is simply whether the proposition seems true in the right way. If it does, what brought this about is neither here nor there, and, in particular, if it was a conscious deliberative process, that is no bar to the seeming providing justification.⁴⁹

*

I have just argued that if our goal is to develop a conception of intuition where it is a reasonable candidate for a psychological kind, we should not disqualify a mental state on the grounds that it has a certain etiology. For parallel reasons, we should not disqualify it for *lacking* some particular etiology, either.

As we have seen, some thinkers do demand just that. Bealer, for example, says that “rational intuition derives from one’s understanding of one’s concepts” (2004: 13; 2008: 191). I have argued that we have little reason to think that there is a psychological kind corresponding to ‘rational’ intuition. We can make the same point here in a different way. If intuition is a psychological kind, why must there be only this one way for it to arise? We can of course *define up* a notion of rational intuition, according to which a subject S has a rational intuition iff (i) S has the intuition that p , and (ii) the explanation of (i) makes essential reference to S ’s concepts, or something similar. But if this is accepted, we are in this case also talking about a sub-class of *intuitions*. Again, Bealer acknowledges that both ‘rational’ and ‘physical’ intuitions are species of the genus intuition, and notes that the former do not derive “from one’s understanding of one’s concepts” (2004: 13). And the mere fact that we can define up such a notion does not give us reason to think that there is a psychological kind which corresponds to this subclass.

49. For the related question of whether ‘cognitive penetration’ is a bar to acquiring justification from experience, see §A.5, where I argue that it is not.

It seems, then, that it is reasonable to conclude that intuition, understood as a candidate for a psychological kind, is not restricted by its etiology. So we have reason to believe that (d) is true. Although it does not on its own establish this, not even in conjunction with (b), the truth of (d) makes it more likely that the only psychological kind in the vicinity is the one that is the topic of this thesis.

1.6 Concluding Remarks

As you were reading the first words of this chapter, it seemed to you that torturing the innocent is wrong. This went on for a period of time, then it stopped. The goal of this thesis is to advance our understanding of the nature of the mental state you were in when this happened.

That state has commonalities with other instances of it seeming to someone that things are a certain way. Modality and etiology do not seem to be required; the states are united simply by having representational content, often being the cause of belief, apparently justifying belief, and by sharing a particular phenomenal character.

These commonalities give us good initial reason to think that grouping the cases together in this way will give us valuable explanatory purchase. We do not take it for granted that things are as they appear in this respect, but set out to discover whether the cases really do have something important in common, and if so, what exactly that is. But the starting point is that the similarities we have outlined are worth taking seriously: they are significant, and give us good reason to think that there is a psychological kind here worth investigating.

CHAPTER TWO

Against Reduction to Belief

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider whether intuition is reducible to belief.⁵⁰ I shall argue that it is not. That is not a new conclusion: certain stock examples are widely taken to establish it. I show, however, that the standard case against the reduction is inconclusive; the proponent has a straightforward answer (§2.4).

I present a new argument against the reduction of intuition to belief (§2.5). The proposed reduction entails that agents are rationally criticisable in situations where we know they are not. It is therefore untenable. Interestingly, the considerations that show this are precisely parallel to those that show that attempts to reduce *perception* to belief fail (§2.6).

One might have thought that an intuition that p is instead reducible to *partial belief* that p , or to a different belief, a belief in some proposition q , which is function of p . I argue that an intuition that p cannot be reduced to partial belief that p (§2.7). Moreover, I argue that an intuition that p cannot be reduced to a belief or partial belief that q for *any* q (§2.8).

That agents are not rationally criticisable in the relevant situations is

50. Views of this kind have been proposed by Lewis (1983), Plantinga (1993) and van Inwagen (1997), endorsed by Williamson (2007b), and one often also encounters sympathy with the view in conversation. See also Cummins (1998: 119) and Ichikawa and Jarvis (2009).

independently interesting. It is also important for our purposes, because it begins to shed light on the true nature of intuition and perception. In the final section of the chapter I discuss the significance of the argument I have presented for our understanding of the nature of intuition (§2.9).

I begin by considering how one might be motivated to attempt a reduction, before giving a taxonomy of different reductive views (§2.3).

2.2 Motivation

What might motivate one to give a reductive account of intuition or perception?⁵¹ It is clear that there is a connection of some kind between intuition and belief (§1.2.4). Some might say that the simplest way to account for the connection is to identify the two: intuitions just are beliefs.

Second, suppose that someone were attracted to the view that intuition and perception are constituted by a *grasp* of objective reality (understood factually). Neither perception nor intuition can simply consist in a grasp of reality, however, since both can be false, so the relation between the person and reality cannot be as simple and direct as that.⁵² A natural reaction might be to say that intuition and perception are both acquisitions of *beliefs* about reality, since beliefs can be true *or* false. So one thought motivating reduction to belief might be that it represents a small retreat in response to non-veridical intuition and perception.

Third, suppose that someone suggested a new mental kind, a propositional attitude that she claimed had so far been overlooked. It would be

51. The discussion is couched in terms of what might motivate one to attempt to reduce intuition or perception to *belief*, but the sources of motivation usually carry over to reduction to a disposition to believe. Such views are discussed in Chapter 3.

52. I am not suggesting that either relation should be understood as being *indirect*: I do not mean to imply that an intermediary object should be postulated. Thanks to Anand Vaidya for bringing this reading to my attention. George Bealer (1998a) argues that what he terms the ‘local’ fallibility of intuition is no bar to the hypothesis that it is strongly modally tied to truth. The tie holds in rather special circumstances, however: “Human beings only approximate the relevant cognitive conditions, and they do this only by working collectively over historical time” (202). Sosa (2007c: Chapter 3) discusses the fallibility of intuition and factive models.

reasonable to request a demonstration that the new kind plays a role in a psychological or philosophical theory that cannot be played by already acknowledged entities, singly or in combination, or in combination with other machinery, such as dispositions. Absent this, one would seem justified in denying that the putative new entity were real.⁵³

Belief and desire are propositional attitudes that strike many as having passed such a test. They both seem integral to folk-psychological explanation and prediction, and folk-psychology seems to be a very successful theory.⁵⁴ Moreover, belief and desire also seem to stand out by being ‘pure’ exemplars of opposite *directions of fit*.⁵⁵ A belief is ‘successful’ if it fits the world, a desire if the world comes to fit it. But other propositional attitudes do not seem to be ‘pure’ in this way: a fear is *actualised* if the world comes to fit it but *well founded* if it fits the world; hope is *realised* if the world comes to fit it, but *realistic* if it fits the world.

For these reasons one might be tempted to think that other propositional attitudes are reducible to some mix of belief and desire—or at least that such reductions are worth a shot. A fear that an avalanche will strike might be a mixture of some degree of belief that it will, combined with a desire that it does not. A hope that stocks will rise might be a mixture of some degree of belief that they will, combined with a desire that they do. So, perhaps intuition and perception are also in this way reducible. Since no role for desire seems to present itself, reduction to belief is the natural choice.

53. Note that this is not a point about burden of proof; it would be equally reasonable to react by attempting to demonstrate how already acknowledged entities, singly or in combination, could play the theoretical role claimed for the newcomer. Perhaps the new kind could earn its keep by simplifying the overall theory without strictly speaking playing a role that was not played before. We can safely ignore these complications here.

54. I regard this line of argument as persuasive, but my purpose here is not to support it. It is merely to explain a possible source of motivation for a reductive account. For opposing views regarding folk-psychology, see e.g. Churchland (1981). Sterelny (2003) is one of many who argues that belief has earned its keep in this way, but is more doubtful about preferences.

55. See Humberstone (1992) for discussion. Humberstone also traces the historical origins of the terminology.

A fourth type of motivation stems from epistemic concerns. Those who believe that intuition justifies belief would like an explanation of why that is so. Many believe that intuition is used as evidence in philosophy, and they might wonder whether an account can be given that validates such use.⁵⁶ But some might think that the only mental state which justifies belief in a way we understand is belief itself.⁵⁷ So if intuition justifies belief, the natural assumption for someone with this view would be that intuition is itself a belief, and that the account of how it justifies is just the same account as that which applies to belief. So someone with this combination of views would be motivated to attempt to reduce intuition to belief.⁵⁸

Finally, a doxastic account of intuition might also be motivated by broadly *logical* concerns. It might be thought that a reductive account best explains how intuition behaves, how we use it, and so forth.⁵⁹

2.3 Different Doxastic Views

We can distinguish between different reductive views of intuition in several ways (see Figure 2.1). First, we can distinguish according to whether the intuition is taken to be reducible to a disposition to have a doxastic

56. For arguments that intuitions are used as evidence in philosophy, see e.g. Pust (2000: Chapter 1) and Goldman and Pust (1998). Bealer (1998a) argues that intuitions are part of our 'standard justificatory procedure'. He has been interpreted by some as referring to *philosophers'* use of intuition (Earlenbaugh and Molyneux 2009: 91). I will not pursue this here, but it seems to me that Bealer is more naturally understood as claiming that use of intuition as evidence is part of a justificatory procedure that is standard in a wider sense; viz. standard relative to normal human life and inquiry. For arguments that intuition is *not* used as evidence in philosophy, see Cappelen (Forthcoming), Earlenbaugh and Molyneux (2009), and Williamson (2004).

57. See Pryor's discussion of the 'Premise Principle' (2005).

58. Timothy Williamson is clearly motivated at least in part by such considerations in his 2007b. Williamson wishes to reduce intuition to a disposition to enter into a doxastic state (more on this in Chapter 3), not directly to the doxastic state, but the motivation carries over. Richard G. Heck Jr. (2000: 507–8) spells out this type of motivation for the case of perception.

59. This motivation is operative in Earlenbaugh and Molyneux (2009). These authors argue for a disposition view, but the motivation applies in either case.

mental state, or to the state itself (or its acquisition).

We can also distinguish according to whether the intuition is thought to be reducible to a doxastic state itself, or to the *acquisition* of a doxastic state. Third, we can distinguish according to whether the doxastic state in question is an all-out belief or a partial belief. Finally, we can distinguish according to what the *content* of the reducing state is. On the one hand, the content of the reducing state could be the same as the content of the intuition; on the other hand, we might arrive at the content of the reducing state by performing a function on the content of the intuition.

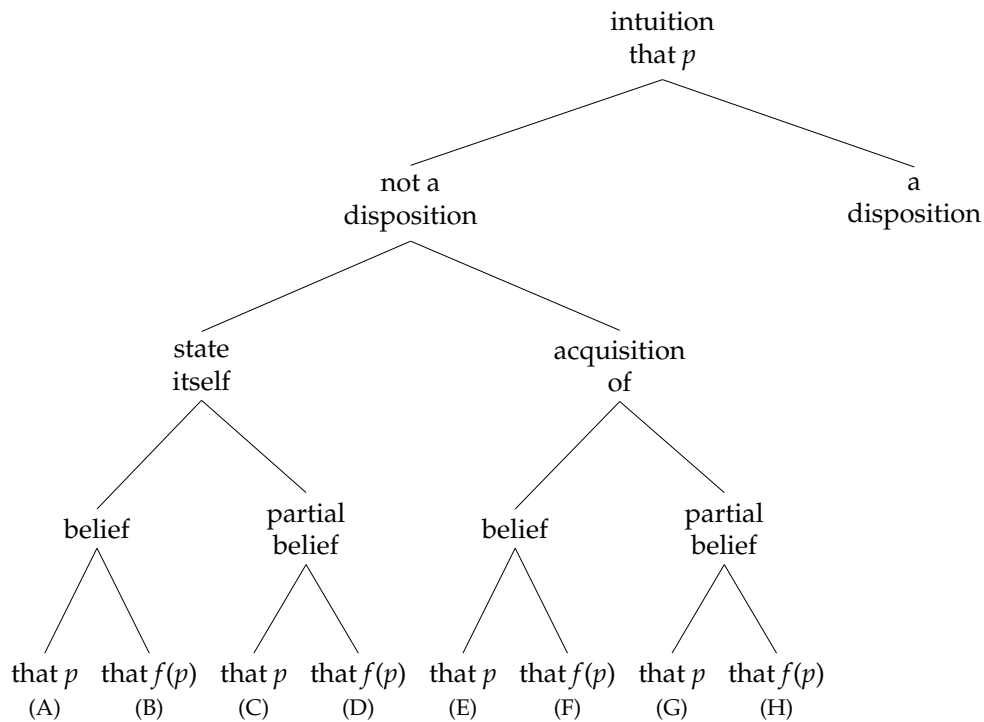


Figure 2.1: Doxastic Views of Intuition

In this chapter I discuss views (A) through (H), which I collectively label ‘doxastic’ views of intuition. Views that belong on the branch that has not been drawn here are treated separately in the next chapter.

I argue that a single line of argument deals decisively with all doxastic views. First I argue that the standard case against such views fails.

2.4 The Standard Case Against Doxastic Views

We begin with views of type (A), views according to which an intuition that p reduces to a belief that p . A simple view of this type is:

Equivalence: $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \leftrightarrow Bxp)$

Equivalence says that all and only those who intuit that p believe that p . **Equivalence** does not say that an intuition that p is identical to a belief that p , nor that the words ‘intuition’ and ‘belief’ are synonymous with one another, nor that the concept *intuition* is the same as the concept *belief*. But if any of these views are true, so too is **Equivalence**, so its falsity establishes the falsity of all these views.⁶⁰

And **Equivalence** clearly *is* false. There are many things I believe but which I do not intuit. For example, I believe but do not intuit that πr^2 yields the area of a circle, that (the northern) winter solstice is in December, that light travels faster than sound, that nothing travels faster than light does, and that if p , then p .

A natural next suggestion is that anyone who intuits that p believes that p , but not *vice versa*. An intuition that p could then be taken to be a particular type of belief that p . The suggestion is that an intuition that p is reducible to the conjunction of a belief that p with the obtaining of some other condition:

Ellipsis: $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \leftrightarrow Bxp \ \& \ \dots)$

Clearly there are ways to fill in the blank that render the view false. The question is whether there are ways to fill it in that render it true. Until we are told what is missing we cannot assess the view directly. But we can assess it indirectly, via:

Entailment: $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \rightarrow Bxp)$

60. Absent a reason to think that the properties of intuiting that p and believing that p could be necessarily coextensive but non-identical (*a la* that presented for *having three sides* and *having three angles* in Sober 1982) one might think that the *truth* of **Equivalence** would justify credence in the *identity* of belief and intuition. I do not pursue this here.

If **Entailment** is false, then **Ellipsis** is too, since the former is entailed by the latter.

Agents sometimes come to regard something they intuit as false. This is widely thought to show that such simple reductive views as **Entailment** are false (Bealer 1992, 1996a,b, 1998a, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008; Chudnoff 2011b; Earlenbaugh and Molyneux 2009; Huemer 2001, 2005, 2007; Kagan 1989; Katz 1981; Plantinga 1993; Pollock 1974; Pust 2000, Forthcoming; Sosa 1996, 1998, 2006b, 2007b,c; Williamson 2007b). An often noted example is the naïve comprehension axiom of set theory:

... I have an intuition—it still *seems* to me—that the naïve comprehension axiom of set theory is true; this is so despite the fact that I do not believe that it is true (because I know of the set-theoretical paradoxes).⁶¹ (Bealer 1998a: 208)

Call this ‘the standard case’ against doxastic views. To evaluate it, we need to know whether the naïve comprehension axiom is an example of something we intuit but regard as false. We need to know whether we really intuit the naïve comprehension axiom, and for that we need a formulation of it. Bealer does not offer one. Moreover, on some common formulations, it is questionable whether we do have the intuition.⁶² However, I think it is clear that most people have the following intuition:

NCA If anything which satisfies condition F satisfies condition G and *vice versa*, then the set of the things which satisfy F is identical to the set of things which satisfy G⁶³

61. The same formulation is found in Bealer’s 1992, 1996a and 1996b, and shorter references to the same example are in his 2002 and 2004. In his 2001 Bealer refers instead to “the naïve truth schema” and the Liar Paradox to make the same point.

62. For example: “For every predicate, there is a set of all and only the things to which the predicate applies”, or “To every intelligible condition there corresponds a class: its members (if any) are all and only the things that satisfy the condition” (Sainsbury 1987/2003: 109).

63. A useful paraphrase: if any F is a G, and any G is an F, then the set of the Fs *just is* the set of the Gs. In what follows I restrict the discussion to **NCA** as stated. Anyone who finds a different example more convincing—the conjunction of the premises in the Sorites paradox, perhaps—should feel free to substitute accordingly throughout. If it is

NCA is false, for from it is derivable the claim that for any F there is a set of all and only the things that satisfy F , and from this Russell's paradox follows.⁶⁴ What makes **NCA** such a good candidate for a counterexample to **Entailment** is precisely this fact, that it is *provably* false: learning of a proof that demonstrates that a proposition is false seems very likely to cause an agent to believe that it is.

Consider therefore an agent who has the intuition that **NCA** is true and as a result acquires the belief that it is. She then learns or comes up with a proof of its falsity. If **NCA** is to work as a counterexample to **Entailment**, two things must be true of her:

- (i) She keeps the *intuition* that **NCA** is true
- (ii) She sheds the *belief* that **NCA** is true

A belief is *shed* if it is non-accidentally lost in an appropriate way. In this instance it means that the agent loses her belief in **NCA** *as a result of* learning the proof that shows that **NCA** is false.⁶⁵

Are (i) and (ii) true? The answer for (i) hinges in my view on considerations about the agent's phenomenology, to which we shall return at some length in Chapter 5. I think the answer is positive, and I shall assume this in what follows. But what should we say about (ii)?

What is usually thought to show that **Entailment** is false is the fact that agents sometimes come to believe that p is false (for instance by learning the proof that it is) while still having the intuition that p . *But this does*

felt that this is not a formulation of the naïve comprehension axiom properly speaking, one should feel free to regard 'NCA' as a mere label, not an acronym.

64. Assume **NCA**: $\forall x \forall F \forall G [(Fx \leftrightarrow Gx) \rightarrow \{x : Fx\} = \{x : Gx\}]$. Substitute $x \notin x$ for both F and G : $\forall x [(x \notin x \leftrightarrow x \notin x) \rightarrow \{x : x \notin x\} = \{x : x \notin x\}]$. The antecedent is a tautology. Deduce the consequent and perform existential introduction, using the rule that anything which is self-identical exists. This yields $\exists x (x = \{x : x \notin x\})$. Call $\{x : x \notin x\}$ S . Is S a member of itself? Suppose it is. Then it must satisfy the condition for membership in this set, which is to not be a member of itself: $S \in S \rightarrow S \notin S$. Suppose it is not. Then it satisfies the condition for membership in S : $S \notin S \rightarrow S \in S$. So $S \in S \leftrightarrow S \notin S$. That is contradictory. So **NCA** is false.

65. Further complications are probably necessary to avoid wayward ways of 'being the result of', but here I assume that the story can be completed.

not yet constitute a counterexample to *Entailment*. Coming to believe that a proposition is false is not the same as shedding a belief that it is true. A defender of *Entailment* can therefore insist that the person who learns the proof *keeps* her intuition—that is to say, her belief—that *NCA* is true, and *also acquires* the additional and contradictory belief that *NCA* is false. She believes both *NCA* and its negation.

The proponent of such a view could with some justification complain that mere reference to *NCA* and similar cases does not suffice to *show* that there really are cases of intuition without belief. We have been given no *argument* for that conclusion, but merely been told to consider the cases and come to agree. This is a clear weakness of the dialectical situation.⁶⁶

The proponent of the view under consideration must claim that some of Bealer's higher-order beliefs are false: Bealer says that he has the intuition that the naïve comprehension axiom is true "despite the fact that *I do not believe* that it is true". On the proposal under consideration, Bealer *does* believe that *NCA* is true. It is just that he *also* believes that it is false.

There is a theoretical cost associated with saying that Bealer's higher-order belief is false. Here, however, the cost is small enough for the view to constitute a significant challenge. Notice, first, that Bealer is not here self-ascribing a mental state. He is saying that he is *not* in a certain mental state. While it is plausible that a person has some kind of authority with respect to which mental states she *is* in, it is less clear that she has authority over which states she is *not* in. Second, *believing that not-p* is just the kind of thing one could easily misidentify as *not believing that p*.⁶⁷ Third, the cost incurred is offset by the motivation for adopting

66. I am not suggesting that the lack of argument amounts to begging the question; what needs to be shown has not been *assumed*. Those who take such cases to demonstrate the falsity of the reductive view presumably rely on introspection to ascertain that they do not believe *NCA*, and intend their readers to do the same.

67. Chudnoff (2011b) argues that we should not say about Bealer that he has a conscious inclination to believe *NCA* even though he professes not to. It is implausible, he claims, that Bealer would overlook a conscious inclination to believe, if he actually has it. I do not find such oversights implausible, but in any case, the oversight here is smaller. How would the account under consideration deal with cases where, after intuiting that *p* an agent suspends judgement with respect to *p*? Such cases cannot be explained away as

a reductive view (§2.2). And finally, we know that people—even sensible people—occasionally hold contradictory beliefs. Why could they not hold them in the relatively few cases of agents regarding something they intuit as false?

Against this competing view, merely making reference to *NCA* does not suffice. We need a stronger case.

2.5 The Argument from Rational Criticisability

We are, of course, in some sense free to use words to mean whatever we want, and one could use ‘belief’ in such a way that the objections I shall raise lose their bite. However, as Jackson (1998) reminds us, if we want to have an audience we had better mean by our words what everybody else means by them. In what follows I rely on a concept of belief which I take to be that of sophisticated common sense (as it is by and large expressed in recent philosophy of mind), and which I thus take to be a concept shared by most of us.

Given this, the key to demonstrating that *Entailment* is false is to recognise that agents who hold contradictory beliefs are usually *ipso facto* (i.e. for that very reason) rationally criticisable.⁶⁸ There may be cognitive ‘positions’ one can be in relative to a pair of contradictory propositions, such that if one is in one such position, one is not rationally criticisable for believing these propositions.⁶⁹ And there may even be other factors

a confusion of *not believing that p* versus *believing that not-p*, since there is, *ex hypothesi*, no belief that *not-p* in these cases. A proponent could either deny that there really are any such cases—if the agent suspends belief with respect to *p* then she must have had *some* antecedent credence that *not-p*—or simply accept the cost of attributing this error (mistaken self-attribution of suspension of belief) to us in these rare cases, claiming that the cost is outweighed by the benefits of the view (§2.2).

68. I make no claims about blameworthiness.

69. Having a ‘compartmentalised’ or ‘fragmented’ mind are both candidates, see [Stalnaker \(1984: chapters 4 and 5\)](#), [Lewis \(1986: 30–9\)](#) and [Lewis \(1982\)](#). I am interested here in the core idea, and not in the uses these authors put it to. In particular, it is intuitively plausible that one can be shielded from criticisability for believing a pair of contradictory propositions if each belief resides in a different fragment or compartment.

or circumstances that shield one from rational criticisability. However, for **NCA** and its negation, one need be in no such position, and no such circumstances need obtain. (If there are no cognitive positions or other factors which shield one from rational criticisability, so much the better for this argument.) Therefore, if intuition implied belief, the agent who intuits **NCA** and believes not-**NCA** would be rationally criticisable. She is not. This shows that **Entailment** is false, and so, too, is **Ellipsis**.

This simple argument is powerful. It relies on the notion of rational criticisability, but that is not to its detriment. That notion has a better claim than most others to being pre-theoretical, and the application it is put to in the argument is on solid ground. Regimenting the argument makes it apparent how innocuous the premises are.

Argument from Rational Criticisability:

- (1) All who concurrently believe both a proposition and its negation are either *ipso facto* rationally criticisable, or they are shielded from criticisability by being in special circumstances
 - (2) Some people concurrently intuit **NCA** and believe not-**NCA**
 - (3) None of these are *ipso facto* rationally criticisable
 - (4) Some of these are *not* shielded by being in special circumstances
-
- (5) So, some of those who intuit **NCA** and believe not-**NCA** do not thereby believe both a proposition and its negation
 - (6) So, some who intuit **NCA** and believe not-**NCA** do not believe **NCA**
 - (7) So, it is not the case that whoever intuits a proposition believes that proposition

The premises here are all plausible.⁷⁰ (1) is clearly true, and if we are liberal about what counts as ‘special circumstances’, it is analytic. It

70. A formal version:

$$\forall x \forall y [(Bxy \ \& \ Bx\neg y) \rightarrow (Sx \vee RCx)]$$

For all x and y , if x believes y and its negation, then x is shielded or rationally criticisable

$$\exists x (IxNCA \ \& \ Bx\neg NCA \ \& \ \neg Sx \ \& \ \neg RCx)$$

Some x intuits **NCA**, believes \neg **NCA**, and is neither shielded nor rationally criticisable

presupposes that there are circumstances in which holding contradictory beliefs renders one open to rational criticism, and that such circumstances are not *too* rare. It is not clear how one can retain rational criticisability as a useful concept and still deny this.

(2) may be more contentious. The phenomenology associated with considering whether **NCA** is true is not completely unaffected by the acquisition of the belief that it is false. Some are tempted to say that the intuition vanishes. That seems to be an overreaction; the changes are insufficient for the intuition to be lost.⁷¹ Moreover, (2) only requires that *not all* those who learn the proof lose the intuition as a result.

(3) falls out of our ordinary understanding of rational criticisability. No one is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for concurrently intuiting a proposition and believing its negation, just as no one is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for a halfway immersed oar looking bent to them while they believe that it is not.

One might reasonably hold that a person who intuits that p but believes *not-p* fails to be rationally *ideal*: perhaps the ideally rational person has no false intuitions. But there is much distance between falling short of the ideal with respect to rationality, on the one hand, and being rationally criticisable, on the other. The judgement that an oar halfway immersed in water would not look bent to the ideally rational person seems to be on equal footing with the corresponding judgement about intuition: there is just as much (or as little) plausibility to saying that things *look* exactly the way they are to an ideally rational person as there is to saying that things *seem* exactly the way they are to her. (3) is, I think, non-negotiable.

Note also that (3) is not threatened by the claim that one might be

$\exists x [IxNCA \ \& \ Bx\neg NCA \ \& \ \neg \exists y (Bxy \ \& \ Bx\neg y)]$

So, some x intuits NCA, believes \neg NCA, and believes no pair of a proposition and its negation

$\exists x (IxNCA \ \& \ \neg BxNCA)$

So, some x intuits NCA but does not believe it

$\neg \forall x \forall y (Ixy \rightarrow Bxy)$

So it is not the case that anyone who intuits a proposition believes it

71. I discuss the phenomenology of intuition in detail in Chapter 5.

ipso facto rationally criticisable simply for having the intuition that **NCA** is true, as some suggest.⁷² That claim is false, I think, but even if true it would not show that (3) is false. From an agent being *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for intuiting **NCA** it does not follow that she is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for intuiting-**NCA**-and-believing-not-**NCA**.

We might say that *being ipso facto rationally criticisable for* is a *non-monotonic* two-place relation. A two-place relation is monotonic if, whenever two relata stand in the relation, then anything which entails the second relatum also stands in that relation to the first relatum, and non-monotonic otherwise. For example, *being entailed by* is a monotonic relation, since if p is entailed by q , then p is also entailed by anything which entails q ($q \& r$, for example). By contrast, *being provided strong inductive support by* is non-monotonic, since it is not true that, if p is provided strong inductive support by q , then p is also provided strong inductive support by anything which entails q : p may not be provided *any* inductive support by $q \& r$, for example.

A non-monotonic relation

Being ipso facto rationally criticisable for is non-monotonic. I may be *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for failing to listen to a local's advice about a hike in the mountains, but not for failing to listen while wearing a bowler hat, even though the latter entails the former.⁷³ I *am* rationally criticisable for failing to listen to the local while wearing a bowler hat, of course, but not *ipso facto* rationally criticisable. My bowler hat just has nothing to do with it. So even if an agent is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for intuiting that p , it does not follow that she is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for intuiting-that- p -and-believing-that-not- p . So the fact that no one is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for concurrently intuiting a proposition and believing its negation is not threatened by the possibility that one might be *ipso facto* rationally criticisable simply for *having* a particular intuition.

72. See Sosa (2007c). Sosa only aims to show that an intuition is rationally criticisable under certain conditions. To resist (3) on these grounds one would also need to show that all cases of intuiting **NCA** while believing not-**NCA** occur under these conditions. See also §A.5.

73. I might be rationally (or aesthetically) criticisable for *going* on a hike while wearing a bowler hat. That is a separate issue.

It should also be clear that, as (4) claims, some cases of intuiting that *NCA* and believing that not-*NCA* (and other similar cases) fail to occur in circumstances that shield one from rational criticisability. There may be cases where believing a pair of contradictory propositions does not render one rationally criticisable because the contradiction is hard to discover. This, however, is not one of them. It may be that even some believers of obvious contradictions are not rationally criticisable.⁷⁴ But whatever the correct account of these latter cases turns out to be, it seems that some notion of cognitive separation between the offending beliefs will play a key role. Intuitively, to escape rational criticisability, the agent must be barred from bringing them both under rational scrutiny together.

In our example there need be no cognitive separation of this kind, and usually there is none. The intuition that *NCA* and the belief that not-*NCA* can easily be held firmly in mind at the same time; the mental ‘spotlight’ can shine on both at once; the town is big enough for the both of them. By acquiring the belief that not-*NCA* the intuition that *NCA* is not straightaway relegated to another fragment or compartment.

One might instead be tempted to deny (4) by claiming that one *cannot help* believing what one intuits. Ought implies can, so it cannot be that agents ought to not believe *NCA*, and so they are not rationally criticisable.

But rational criticisability is not subject to ought-implies-can restrictions of this sort. A parent who has lost his child may not be able to help believing that the child is still alive even though he knows full well (and so believes) that the child is deceased. A person with a psychological illness may not be able to help believing that her food is poisoned even though she has compelling evidence to the contrary (and so believes that it is not).⁷⁵ If the parent’s and the patient’s minds are not compartmentalised—and perhaps also if they are—then they *are* rationally criticisable for so believing, however psychologically impossible it

74. See n. 69 above.

75. Thanks to Weng Hong Tang for this example.

may be to shed the beliefs.⁷⁶

Finally, if the reductionist simply insists that having an intuition shields one from rational criticisability without explaining why this should be so, the point being made is merely verbal. The concept of belief in use here does not allow for brute shielding from criticisability. One can be shielded by the contradiction being hard to discover, or by somehow being barred from bringing both beliefs under rational scrutiny together. Perhaps there are even further ways one can be shielded, which do not fit in either of these categories.⁷⁷ But if there are, we require an explanation of why the shielding occurs. To simply assert that it does is to change the subject. Premise (4) is true.

From these four premises it follows that **Entailment** is false; intuition does not imply belief. And from this it follows that **Ellipsis** is false, too.⁷⁸

*

The standard case claims that certain cases *directly show* that there is intuition without belief. It presents no argument, but simply indicates the

76. It is worth noting that the response in this paragraph is consistent with the admission that rational criticisability is subject to *some* ought-implies-can type restrictions. (Thanks to John Bengson for noting this point.) For example, it is plausible that we are not rationally criticisable for failing to deduce all the theorems of Peano arithmetic, and that this is at least partly because in some sense we *cannot*. What the cases in the text show, however, is that there is an exception to ought-implies-can restrictions to rational criticisability when it is clear to the agent what rationality requires. In the cases of complex theorems of Peano arithmetic, what rationality requires is beyond our ken; we simply cannot tell. But in the cases of the parent and the patient it is clear to the agents what is rationally required; they are just in some sense unable to comply.

77. Gilbert Harman suggests that there may be situations where “the best response [to discovering an inconsistency in one’s beliefs] may be to keep the inconsistency and try to avoid inferences that exploit it” (1986: 15). This claim is orthogonal to the issue at hand, since being rationally criticisable for holding obviously contradictory beliefs is consistent with the best response all things considered being to not revise one’s beliefs.

78. An alternative approach would claim that on learning the proof, the agent does not acquire the belief that **NCA** is false, rather she suspends belief, and believes neither **NCA** nor its negation. However, it is very plausible that learning the proof will usually cause the agent to believe not-**NCA**. In any case, all the above argument requires is that *some* agent concurrently intuits **NCA** and (for whatever reason) believes not-**NCA**. So this alternative strategy does not compete with the one presented here; at most it complements it.

cases in question and relies on introspection to support its view about them. By contrast, I have *argued* that the hypothesis that intuitions are beliefs entails that people are rationally criticisable in situations where they are not, and that it must therefore be rejected. The **Argument from Rational Criticisability** thus differs sharply from the standard case.

The argument was presented in terms of views of type (A), which say that an intuition that *p* is reducible to a belief that *p* (together with the obtaining of some other condition—I leave this implicit hereafter). But the argument generalises immediately to views of type (E), which say that an intuition that *p* is reducible to the *acquisition* of a belief that *p*.⁷⁹ If an agent who believes that *not-p* intuits that *p*, and if she thereby acquired the belief that *p*, she would immediately thereafter come to be in a position where she would be rationally criticisable. But we know that she does not. So the intuition that *p* is also not reducible—wholly or in part—to the acquisition of a belief that *p*.

2.6 Perception, Belief and Rational Criticisability

In the sixties and seventies David Armstrong and George Pitcher developed analogous views of perception to the positions about intuition we have just been discussing:

[P]erception is nothing but the acquiring of true or false beliefs concerning the current state of the organism's body and environment. (Armstrong 1968: 209)

Sense perception is the acquiring of true beliefs concerning particular facts about one's environment, by means of or by the use of, one's sense organs. (Pitcher 1971: 65)

79. Views of this type were advanced by David Armstrong and George Pitcher for perception. The motivation for speaking in terms of an *acquisition* of a belief is discussed in Chapter 3.

Perceptual experiences believed to be illusory constitute an obvious challenge for theories of this kind. In such situations, the perceiver believes that her perceptual experience is at least partly inaccurate.

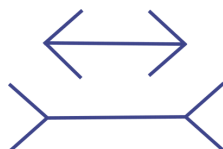


Figure 2.2: Müller-Lyer figure

In this well-worn example, the two lines appear to be of different lengths, but are not. A perceiver who has measured the lines (say), does not believe that they are of different lengths. Another useful example is looking at a wall one believes to be white through glasses which one believes have blue lenses (Jackson 1977: 39-49).

Perceptual experiences believed to be illusory need special attention from the perception-as-belief theorist. The perceiver does not believe what she sees, so how can perception simply be the acquisition of belief?

As before, however, this does not yet constitute a counterexample to the thesis that to perceive that p is to acquire the belief that p . For Armstrong and Pitcher *could* have said that when a subject perceives the lines she acquires the belief that they are of different lengths, while still believing that they are of the same length. In the case of the wall, the perceiver believes that the wall is white. Armstrong and Pitcher could have claimed that she acquires the belief that the wall is blue while still believing that it is white. Why do they not claim this? Why *should* we not make these claims?

The answer is that the account would then yield the verdict that subjects are rationally criticisable in situations where we know they are not. If a perceiving subject acquired beliefs corresponding to the contents of her perceptual experiences she would believe, for example, both that the lines are of equal length and that they are not, and both that the wall is

blue and that it is not. But then she would be *ipso facto* rationally criticisable, because whatever the circumstances are in which subjects are shielded from criticisability, these are not among them. But a person subject to an illusion is *not ipso facto* rationally criticisable for having the perceptual experience she does have while believing that it is illusory in certain respects. So the subject does not acquire a belief with the content of her perceptual experience.

It would be nice to give an account of rational criticisability which systematised these and other cases. I do not have a detailed account to offer, nor is one needed to sustain the argument I offer here. But here is a thought worth considering. Our epistemic states are ordered in a hierarchy, with belief on the highest level. When states on the same level contradict each other there is the potential for serious epistemic conflict. When states on different levels contradict each other, *ceteris paribus* the state which occupies a higher level will 'trump' the other. Rational criticisability arises when a conflict between states on the same level is not resolved by a state on a higher level. It does *not* arise when states on different levels are in tension. Classifying perception or intuition as belief brings about the mistaken prediction of rational criticisability precisely for this reason. It misclassifies the conflict, which is not between states on the same level (two beliefs), but between states at different levels (one belief and a perception or an intuition, respectively), and therefore not a serious epistemic conflict.

Whether or not this strikes one as a plausible account, there is no need to hold back from putting to use the observation that these agents are not rationally criticisable. We can be confident that that is right.

2.7 Partial Belief

In response to known illusions both Armstrong and Pitcher develop their accounts by saying that perception should sometimes be identified with

a partial rather than an all-out belief.⁸⁰ Thus Armstrong writes that in some cases of known illusions,

we may still half-believe, or be inclined to believe, that [the perceived object] is as it looks. ... What is an inclination to believe? I think it is nothing but a belief that is held in check by a stronger belief. We acquire certain beliefs about the world by means of our senses, but these beliefs are held in check by stronger beliefs that we already possess. So there is nothing here that is recalcitrant to an analysis of perception in terms of the acquiring of belief. (Armstrong 1968: 221)

And Pitcher writes that, when background beliefs cause an agent to be “suspicious” of what she perceives, she “half-believes, or ... is inclined ... to believe” it (1971: 91–2).

The solution Armstrong and Pitcher are proposing is that the content of the perception is given by the content of a partial belief, acquired on perceiving the illusion. The partial belief is not what we *believe* all things considered—other and stronger partial beliefs outweigh the one acquired through perception—but the correspondence between the content of perception and the content of an acquired belief is still maintained.⁸¹

One might think that a parallel move could work for intuition. I first show why this manoeuvre fails for the Armstrong/Pitcher line and then make the parallel point for intuition.

To simplify the presentation, let us for the moment understand a partial belief as a *credence*. This is not essential to the argument. We could make the points I make below using the simple facts that partial beliefs

80. This is at least the most natural interpretation of their accounts. Nothing here hinges on this question of interpretation: the partial belief view must be considered whether or not Armstrong and Pitcher held it. Both Armstrong and Pitcher go on to discuss a third and *distinct* set of cases, and argue that in those cases, perception is best understood as a *disposition* to believe. This is discussed in Chapter 3.

81. One could also speak in terms of middling credences. It is not clear that a framework that uses credences also needs a notion of all-out belief (Tang 2009). In the main text I speak as if a notion of all-out belief is needed, but my claims can easily be reformulated if required: we could say that the credences acquired through perception are not those we will act on, for example.

must come in different strengths: that some of them must be fairly weak, and that some must be fairly strong. Armstrong (and Pitcher) are committed to this: if a partial belief is to 'hold in check' another partial belief, it must be that the former is significantly stronger than the latter. But talking in terms of credences makes things easier.

A credence is a degree of belief, and the strength of a credence can be specified by numbers in the real interval $[0,1]$, where 0 indicates certainty that a proposition is false and 1 indicates certainty that it is true. On some usages, a person's credences by definition obey the probability axioms. We will not use the term in this way here.

Now, in some cases where we disbelieve our perceptual experience, we do so because of something about the experience itself. The heat illusion experienced in a desert is an example of this: a distant rock might look like it is subtly undulating, but we do not believe that it is. In many other cases, however, when we disbelieve our perceptual experience, it is because of some other fact. In the case of the Müller-Lyer figure, for instance, when I do not believe that the lines are of different lengths it is because I have measured them. Similarly, if I am looking at an oar which is partially immersed in water, and do not believe that it is bent, often I fail to believe this because of something that is not in the experience itself. There need be nothing in the experience itself which alerts me to the illusion: everything about the way things look can be perfectly ordinary.

It seems reasonable to impose a constraint on views that identify perception with the acquisition of a partial belief. The constraint is that when there is nothing about the perceptual experience itself which would make one think that it is illusory—when the experience itself is like the Müller-Lyer lines or the oar halfway immersed in water, and not like the rock in the desert—then the credence with which the perception is to be identified cannot be very low. Indeed, a stronger constraint is reasonable: if nothing about the experience itself seems 'not quite right', the credence should be *high*. But we only need the weaker version.

Now, my credence that the lines are of different lengths might be very high indeed. I may have measured them many times, asked others for

corroboration, and so on. Similarly, an agent looking at an oar halfway immersed in water may have encountered similar situations in the past, and may in those situations have run his hand along the oar and into the water, placed another object alongside it, and so on. His credence that the oar is straight will then be very high. But that means that, on the account under consideration, the agent would have credences in two contradictory propositions adding up to more than one. On standard views of rational constraints on credences he would then be rationally criticisable. But we know he is not. And that means that perception cannot be reduced to a partial belief in what is perceived.

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Let us now turn to the case of intuition. Here the question is whether all and only those who intuit that p have a credence in p :

Equivalence (credence): $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \leftrightarrow Cxp)$

As in the case of outright belief, it is easy to come up with cases of having some credence in the proposition that p without intuiting that p .⁸² But perhaps intuiting that p implies having a credence that p , *and* the obtaining of some other condition:

Ellipsis (credence): $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \leftrightarrow Cxp \ \& \ \dots)$

As before, we cannot assess **Ellipsis (credence)** directly. But we can assess the following, which is implied by it:

Entailment (credence): $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \rightarrow Cxp)$

If **Entailment (credence)** is false, then **Ellipsis (credence)** is false too, since the former is entailed by the latter.

And **Entailment (credence)** fails in analogous ways to how we saw that **Entailment** fails. To bring this out we make the following assumption:

82. That the economy will improve, that there is intelligent life on other planets, etc.

Correspondence: If an intuition is to be identified with a credence, whenever the intuition is *strong* the credence must not be very low

As in the case of perception, a stronger constraint would be reasonable: when the intuition is strong it would be reasonable to demand that the credence be *high*. But we only need the weaker version.

Consider again the case of **NCA**, discussed above (page 41). Many people have a strong intuition with that content. Fix on such an agent, and assume about her, also, that she knows and understands the proof which shows that **NCA** is false.

If **Entailment (credence)** is true, she will, given **Correspondence**, have a credence in **NCA** which is not very low. But she also has a very high credence in not-**NCA**: after all, she knows and understands the proof which shows this. But then she comes out as rationally criticisable, just as agents do under the assumption that intuition reduces to all-out belief. Agents who have credences that add up to more than 1 in contradictory propositions are on standard views *ipso facto* rationally criticisable.⁸³ But we know that this agent is *not* rationally criticisable. So **Entailment (credence)** is false.

Given that it is safe to assume that the agent's credence in not-**NCA** is very high, the credence with which the intuition that **NCA** is to be identified must be very low if this conclusion is to be avoided. But this fits very poorly with the point that the intuition in question is *strong*. So views of this kind fail.

We can make this point in a different way, by making the following plausible assumption:

No Change: If an intuition is to be identified with a credence, the credence does not change unless something about how things *seems* changes

83. Unless they are shielded. We bracket this here, but see the defence of premise (4) in the **Argument from Rational Criticisability** above.

Consider an agent who considers **NCA** for the first time, and to whom it seems true. On the view under consideration, her intuition is to be identified with a credence in **NCA**. So she has some credence in that proposition, but also (let us assume) some credence in not-**NCA**. Now she learns the proof of Russell's Paradox. It is incredible, surely, that her credence in not-**NCA** does not rise. But then the agent will either become rationally criticisable, or **No Change** will be violated. For learning the proof does not change how things *seem*.⁸⁴ The analogous point holds, *mutatis mutandis*, in the case of perception.

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So far we have considered views of type (C), which say that an intuition that p is reducible to a partial belief that p (together with the obtaining of some other condition). But the argument generalises to views of type (G), which say that it is reducible to the *acquisition* of a partial belief that p . If an agent who has a high credence that not- p intuits that p , and if she thereby acquires a high credence that p (or, indeed, anything but a very low credence that p), she would immediately thereafter come to be in a position where she would be rationally criticisable. But we know she does not immediately come to be in such a position. So intuition is not reducible—wholly or in part—to the *acquisition* of a partial belief that p .

2.8 Doxastic Attitudes with a Different Content

So far we have considered views which attempt to reduce an intuition that p to a belief or a partial belief *that* p , or to the acquisition of such a belief or partial belief. But what about views according to which intuition is to be identified with a belief or a partial belief *that* q , or to the acquisition of such a belief or partial belief? The **Argument from Rational Criticisability** uses the fact that reductive accounts are committed to agents being rationally criticisable in situations where we know that they

84. At least not significantly. We return to this point in §5.6.3.

are not. There is nothing blocking the application of this argument to the attempted reduction to a doxastic attitude with a different content than the intuition itself.

Consider the proposal that an intuition that p is reducible to a belief in some proposition q . To be even remotely plausible, such suggestions must hold that q is a function of p : $f(p)$. But *regardless* of what we take q to be, and therefore regardless of what the function f is, one can intuit that p while believing that *not- q* (that *not- $f(p)$*) without incurring *ipso facto* rational criticisability. So such proposals fail, *with complete generality*.

Consider, for instance, the suggestion that an intuition that p is reducible to the belief *I have some reason to believe that p* .⁸⁵ Suppose that I believe that there are no such things as reasons. I deduce from this that (*a fortiori*) there are no reasons to believe that p , and so that I have no such reason. So I now believe: *I have no reason to believe that p* . It is quite clear that it is compatible with this state of affairs that I nevertheless have the intuition that p , and compatible without *ipso facto* rational criticisability.

If, however, my intuition that p was reducible to the belief *I have some reason to believe that p* , I would now be in the state of concurrently believing that *I have some reason to believe that p* and *I have no reason to believe that p* . Whatever the circumstances in which subjects are not rationally criticisable even when holding obviously contradictory beliefs, these are not among them. So, if the reductive account were correct, I would be rationally criticisable. But we know that I would not, in fact, be rationally criticisable in this situation. So the reductive account is incorrect.

As in the other cases we have seen, this argument applies equally to the case of perception. I can just as much combine my experience of an oar halfway immersed in water with the belief that the oar does not look bent to me as I can combine it with any other belief, and without incurring *ipso facto* rational criticisability.⁸⁶ It is a strange belief, to be

85. A position very much like this one was advanced by Christian Nimtz at the 'Armchair in Flames' workshop at the University of Cologne in September 2008.

86. The argument is thus independent of whether perception has 'naïve semantics' or 'phenomenal' semantics (Glüer 2009).

sure, and one would have to work at coming up with a scenario that would implant such a belief in a person. But that does not change the basic facts of the case. Reduction of perception to a belief fails in the case of perception also, and with complete generality.

Returning to the case of intuition, imagine that someone objected in the following way. “It is true that you can intuit that p and hold some belief which you would *express* by saying ‘I have no reason to believe that p ’, yet still not be rationally criticisable. But no one really believes that there are no reasons. So even if you profess to believe that there are no reasons, that is not something you actually believe. You simply have some other belief, and express it badly. So you do not have the ingredients you need to establish your conclusion.”

I cannot see what could justify such a claim. As Williamson (2007b) urges, there is a big difference between *having* a concept, and fully *mastering* it.⁸⁷ Presumably, all it takes for me to have the belief in question is that I have the relevant concepts; it is not necessary that I master them. If that is so, why should I not be able to believe that *not-q* for *whatever q* the reductionist wishes to use, and to do so without incurring *ipso facto* rational criticisability for the combination of that belief with my intuition?

It is an open question, of course, whether as I intuit that p I can *correctly* believe that I have no reason to believe that p . Maybe intuiting that p always in fact gives me a reason to believe that p . But that I cannot *correctly* believe that *not-q* is no bar to my believing that *not-q*. If I can believe that *not-q*, then, whether or not I can correctly so believe, I can come to be in a position in which the reductionist is committed to saying that I am *ipso facto* rationally criticisable. But we know I am not *ipso facto* rationally criticisable in those situations. Therefore, *no matter* what the belief q is, I am never *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for intuiting that p and believing that q .

A fortiori, I am not *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for intuiting that p and believing that $f(p)$. If intuiting that p entailed believing that $f(p)$, however, I would be *ipso facto* rationally criticisable. So intuiting that p

87. See n. 104 on page 76.

does not entail believing that $f(p)$. This shows that views of type (B) fail. Applying reasoning we have already gone through we see that intuiting that p does not entail *acquiring* the belief $f(p)$ (type F), or having or acquiring a partial belief that $f(p)$ (types D and H). This completes the case against doxastic views.

2.9 The Significance of Rational Criticisability

The standard case against doxastic views *starts from* the existence of cases of intuition without belief. When what is at issue is the nature of intuition, this case is dialectically ineffective. Those who think that intuition is reducible to belief have little reason to accept the cases as described.

By contrast, the **Argument from Rational Criticisability** yields the existence of cases of intuition without belief as its conclusion. It makes use of the strong intuition that agents are not *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for intuiting that p and believing that $not-p$. This intuition is not itself about the nature of intuition: it is about rationality. It can therefore better support a conclusion about the nature of intuition than can the simple assertion that in the cases in question there is no belief. From it, an *argument* leads to the conclusion that intuition cannot be reduced to belief.

Moreover, that argument withstands scrutiny and challenge, for instance from the claim that the real explanation for the absence of rational criticisability is that an intuition is a belief one cannot help having (reply: rational criticisability is not subject to such ought-implies-can restrictions) and from the claim that the prediction of criticisability is correct and explained by the agent's being criticisable simply for having the intuition (reply: even if an agent were criticisable simply for having the intuition, she would not be *ipso facto* criticisable for having the intuition and believing its negation, since *ipso facto* rational criticisability is non-monotonic). And it generalises not only to all attempts to reduce intuition to belief, but to all attempts to reduce perception to the same.

The reasoning in this chapter is, I believe, revelatory of the nature of intuition and perception, and of their rational roles, in a way that goes beyond the mere production of counterexamples (cf. [Bratman 1987: 20](#)). Rationality makes demands on our doxastic attitudes, *inter alia* on their coherence.⁸⁸ But it makes no such demands on the mere combination of an *experience* with a doxastic attitude. There is no belief which combined with an experience renders a subject *ipso facto* rationally criticisable.⁸⁹ I have argued that the same is true of intuition and perception.

Above we noted that instances of intuition share a particular phenomenal character (§1.2.2). It is very plausible that instances of perception do, too.⁹⁰ When taken together with the reasoning in this chapter, this strongly suggests a positive lesson about what intuition and perception are. Perception and intuition are experiences.

88. Some think that the *only* rational requirements are coherence requirements. It is plausible, however, that there are also rational requirements for the adoption of doxastic attitudes on the basis of non-doxastic ones, e.g. the adoption of belief on the basis of perceptual experience. If I adopt the belief that there is a banana in front of me on the basis of a visual perceptual experience as of a tomato, it seems that I am usually thereby rationally criticisable. An experience must give me a *reason* to adopt the belief: “[E]xperience must provide us with justifications for our beliefs about the world and not just ‘exculpations’” [Heck \(2000: 500–1\)](#). But note that this is not a requirement simply on the combination of the belief and the experience; it is a constraint on *adopting* a belief on the basis of having an experience.

89. Rationality also does not require coherence between what a person supposes for the sake of argument and what she believes. I take it for granted that to intuit or perceive that *p* is not to suppose for the sake of argument that *p*. For one, supposing for the sake of argument that *p* does not justify belief that *p*, not even apparently.

90. Both these points are explored in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER THREE

Against Reduction to a Disposition to Believe

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that neither intuition nor perception are reducible to belief, or partial belief. The unifying thread was that taking perception or intuition to be thus reducible yields the prediction that agents are rationally criticisable in situations where we know they are not, and that these accounts are therefore untenable.

In the reductive accounts discussed, intuition and perception are either identified directly with a belief or a partial belief, or identified with the acquisition of a belief or a partial belief. It is natural to think that the challenge which the **Argument from Rational Criticisability** presents could be avoided if the relation between the intuition or perception, on the one hand, and the belief or partial belief, on the other, were loosened. This chapter explores accounts which show promise of avoiding the challenge in just this way.

The accounts in question take intuition and perception to reduce to *dispositions* to believe. I present a detailed examination of two such views of perception, and two of intuition. The former are those of George Pitcher and David Armstrong. These views were briefly discussed in Chapter 2, but here a more detailed examination is required: this is

carried out in §3.3. The latter are those of Ernest Sosa and Timothy Williamson, discussed in §3.4. The aim is to draw out structural similarities between the four accounts. These are independently interesting, but they also enable us to ask whether objections to the accounts of perception apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the accounts of intuition.

In §3.5 I present a critique raised by Frank Jackson against the views of Armstrong and Pitcher. Jackson argues that the views yield false negatives: cases that are mistakenly classified as not being instances of perception. I argue that Jackson's argument is ultimately unsuccessful, and that the considerations which show this also show that a false negatives objection against Sosa and Williamson will fail. Dispositional views, however, still leave us with a feeling of not achieving insight into the nature of the phenomena under scrutiny.

I then go on to present two additional arguments against dispositional accounts of intuition. In §3.6 I argue that such accounts are *phenomenally inadequate*: they do not explain facts about what it is like to have an intuition which any adequate theory of intuition ought to explain. This, I argue, gives us reason to believe that these accounts are false. In §3.7 I argue that dispositional views yield false predictions of rational criticisability, just as the accounts discussed in Chapter 2 do. This shows that such views are untenable. In §3.8 I explain what I think the considerations in this chapter tell us about the nature of intuition.

First, however, let us consider how one might distinguish between different reductive views of the type currently under consideration.

3.2 Different Dispositional Views

In Chapter 2 we considered several possible reductions of intuition to a doxastic propositional attitude. The claim was variously that S 's intuiting that p entails her either having or acquiring a belief or a partial belief, either in p itself, or in some other proposition, $f(p)$ (see figure 2.1 on page 39).

We can make similar distinctions in the case of dispositional views of intuition. Some of the distinctions collapse, however: it is plausible that a disposition to acquire the belief that p just is a disposition to believe that p . But some of the distinctions carry across: one could take the intuition that p to reduce to a disposition to have an all-out belief or a partial belief, variously in p or in a different proposition which is a function of p . Thus we can complete the taxonomy of views of intuition which reduce it to a doxastic mental state, either directly or via dispositions.

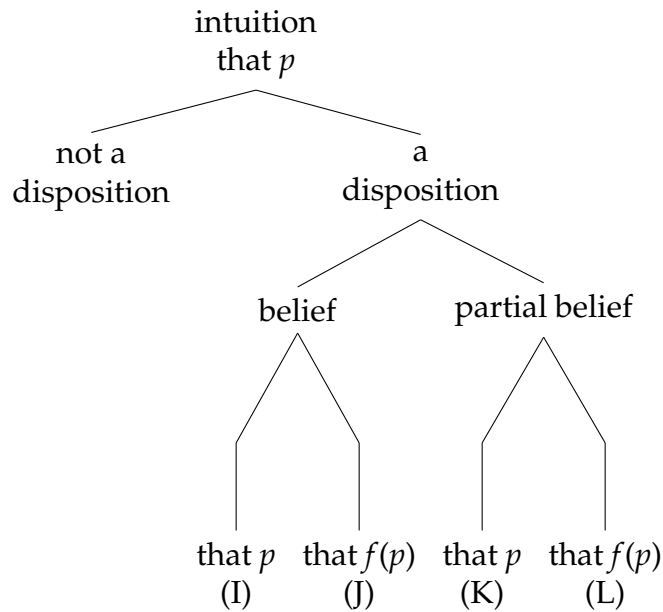


Figure 3.1: Dispositional Views of Intuition

A very simple view of type (I) would be the following:

Equivalence (disposition): $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \leftrightarrow DBxp)$

Here we read $DBxp$ as saying that x is disposed to believe that p . As in the cases we discussed in Chapter 2, however, it is easy to come up with counterexamples to such a view: there are many things I am disposed to believe but which I do not intuit.

A natural next suggestion is that anyone who intuits that p is disposed to believe that p , but not *vice versa*. An intuition that p could then be taken to be a particular kind of disposition to believe that p . The suggestion is that an intuition that p is reducible to the conjunction of a disposition to believe that p with the obtaining of some further condition:

Ellipsis (disposition): $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \leftrightarrow DBxp \ \& \ \dots)$

Of course, there will be many ways to fill out the ellipsis which render the view false. The question is whether there are any which render the view true. Until we have been told how to fill it out, we cannot assess this thesis directly. But as before, we can assess it indirectly, via:

Entailment (disposition): $\Box\forall x\forall p(Ixp \rightarrow DBxp)$

If **Entailment (disposition)** is false, then so, too, is **Ellipsis (disposition)**, since the former is entailed by the latter.

*

We now turn to our examination of views which seek to reduce either intuition or perception to a disposition to believe. We start with views which seek to reduce perception in this way.

3.3 Perception as a Disposition to Believe

3.3.1 Armstrong

“[P]erception”, writes Armstrong, “is nothing but the acquiring of true or false beliefs concerning the current state of the organism’s body and environment” (1968: 209).⁹¹ The acquired beliefs are ‘sub-verbal’: animals have perception and therefore also beliefs, and humans have beliefs with content that outruns our ability to put that content into words. But Armstrong does not commit himself to *non-conceptual* content; on his view

91. I take ‘acquiring’ and ‘acquisition’ to be synonymous in the contexts at issue, and I will use the latter in what follows.

believing that x is F entails having the concept F , but “there can be concepts that involve no linguistic ability” (1968: 210).⁹²

Armstrong takes beliefs to be enduring dispositional states. Perceptions, on the other hand, are events, and hence in Armstrong’s view identified with *acquisitions* of beliefs. This stands in *prima facie* tension with the fact that we can visually perceive a static landscape, say, over non-instantaneous and sometimes long stretches of time. Armstrong’s solution is to insert an indexical element into the acquired belief: the perceiver will first acquire the belief that the landscape is thus-and-so, and then later acquire the belief that, at every passing moment, the scene is *still* thus-and-so, that “the robin is still there at t_2 ”, for example (1968: 214).

An account of perception in terms of belief might seem to over-intellectualise the phenomenon: to portray it as being more cognitively complex, high-level, attention-involving, or otherwise cognitively demanding than it seems to be. Armstrong is well aware of this challenge: “To talk of beliefs may seem to be to talk in a very sophisticated and self-conscious way”, he says, a way which might seem incongruous with the “unsophisticated” phenomenon of perception (1968: 209).

Over-intellectualisation?

Armstrong’s sensitivity to the threat of over-intellectualisation might give one the impression that the criticism I shall later level at his view misses its target, because Armstrong is not really committed to perception involving the acquisition of *belief*, in the familiar sense of that word. That would be a mistaken impression. Armstrong considers various other formulations of his thesis (in terms of ‘judgement’, ‘awareness’, ‘mapping’) but rejects them all. Discussing what he takes to be the best candidate—‘information’—he writes:

[T]he word does have one misleading association. It is often natural to think of information or misinformation as something distinct from the true or false beliefs one acquires as a result of the information or misinformation. ... But when perception is spoken of in this work as the acquiring of informa-

92. For Armstrong’s view of the role of concepts in belief see also (1968: 339–43).

tion, it must be clearly understood that *no distinction at all* is intended between the information and the beliefs to which it gives rise. Information and beliefs are *identical*.

(Armstrong 1968: 210, my emphases)

One could hardly expect to find clearer evidence of Armstrong's commitment to perception as the acquisition of belief, properly speaking. But perhaps one should nevertheless keep the door somewhat ajar for a different interpretation. In any case, the view itself is the focus here, and not what Armstrong is or is not committed to. From now on I treat the exegetical question as settled, but this cautionary note should be kept in mind.

*

Recall that Armstrong responds to the problem of known illusions by saying that perception should sometimes be identified with a partial belief, rather than an all-out belief (§2.7).⁹³ He does not take that solution to be fully generalisable, however; there are cases of perception where *no* partial belief with the content of the perception is acquired. The example he considers is a person standing in front of a mirror in normal conditions. Not even a partial belief corresponding to the content of the visual perception is acquired in these instances.

In such cases, perception is on Armstrong's view to be regarded as the acquisition of a "potential belief", "an event which ... would be the acquiring of belief but for the existence of other, contrary, beliefs that we already hold" (1968: 223). In such cases, he says, we can

formulate a true counter-factual statement of the form 'But for the fact that the perceiver had other, independent, beliefs about the world, he would have acquired certain beliefs—the beliefs corresponding to the content of his perception'.

(Armstrong 1968: 222)

93. Strictly, with *the acquisition* of a partial belief. Throughout Armstrong's account, the function of using 'the acquisition of' is to pay heed to the episodic nature of perception (see the discussion just above). This part of the account plays no role here, so I often leave it out. The same holds for Pitcher's account, below.

Armstrong's 'potential belief' is most plausibly interpreted as a *disposition to believe* which is not in its conditions of manifestation. If we understand dispositions in terms of counterfactual conditionals, the above is exactly what we would expect Armstrong to say. If an object is disposed to Φ in conditions C , that just is to say, on this understanding, that it *would* Φ if conditions C *were* to obtain.⁹⁴ And that is what Armstrong *does* say: a belief *would have* been acquired—that is, the disposition would have manifested—if conditions C *had* obtained—if the perceiver had failed to have the other beliefs that he does have.

The fact that the person in front of the mirror does not acquire even a partial belief in the content of the perception is explained by the disposition not being manifested. That, in turn, is explained by the conditions of manifestation not obtaining. What are these conditions? This question is crucial, and we will return to it below. At a first pass, however, it might be natural to think that the conditions of manifestation in this instance is a very high degree of *naïveté* with respect to mirrors.⁹⁵

Armstrong's account of perception is thus a *three-tier* theory. In normal cases, perception is the acquisition of an all-out belief. In some more attenuated cases—notably in some cases of known illusions—a partial belief is acquired instead, but it is overridden, or 'held in check', by other, stronger beliefs. Finally, in still further cases the agent does not even acquire a partial belief with the content of the perception: she does not believe the perception to *any* degree. In those cases she acquires instead, on Armstrong's view, an unmanifested disposition to believe the content of the perception.⁹⁶

94. Fara (2008) calls this the 'Simple Conditional Analysis' of dispositions, and goes on to discuss problems for it at length. As we shall see (§3.5.2), the critique against dispositional views does not ultimately rely on any particular analysis of dispositions.

95. It is worth noting that Armstrong takes dispositions to have categorical bases (85–8). So, in the cases where a disposition (not in its conditions of manifestation) is acquired, Armstrong is still committed to an event taking place in the perceiver (1968: 223).

96. Note that we are concerned throughout with 'overtly dispositional' predicates, such as *being disposed to shatter when struck*, and not with 'elliptically dispositional' predicates, such as being fragile (Hawthorne and Manley 2005: 170–80). Questions about the relation between elliptically and overtly dispositional predicates therefore do not arise.

3.3.2 Pitcher

George Pitcher's account of perception is advanced in Part II of his book *A Theory of Perception*, published in 1971. There is, as we shall see, a very close similarity between the two accounts. Like Armstrong, Pitcher starts with a simple analysis, and goes on to modify it to account for troublesome cases. His starting point is the following:

Sense perception is the acquiring of true beliefs concerning particular facts about one's environment, by means of or by the use of, one's sense organs. (Pitcher 1971: 65)

Pitcher holds that the beliefs whose acquisition is identical to perception are non-conscious, and, like Armstrong, he takes belief to be a complex dispositional state, which will result in behaviour in various circumstances (1971: 70–1). Also like Armstrong, Pitcher takes the content of perception to be conceptual (1971: 94).

With respect to reconciling the episodic nature of an acquisition of a belief and the often continuous nature of perception, Pitcher argues that the cases in which I continuously perceive the same thing, and in which the content of my perception after the first moment is something which I already believe, should be understood as cases where I am continuously caused by the perception to hold the belief. The thought is that a cause can bring about the *maintenance* of a state of affairs, and this is what happens in continuous perception with uniform content. Of course, there may be other causes for holding the belief as well—memory, perhaps—but the perception is nevertheless one of the causes.

Cases of veridical perception—Pitcher calls these 'First Cases'—are to be treated as follows (1971: 87).

A sentence such as

- (1) It looks to Smith as though there is a tree outside the window

is to be analysed as

- (2) By using his eyes, Smith is caused to have the perceptual belief that there is a tree outside the window⁹⁷

It is an often remarked-on feature of sense-perception that it cannot look to someone as though p is the case without it also looking to that person as though many other things are also the case. For it to look to Smith as though *there is a tree outside the window*, for example, it has to look to Smith as though the tree has a large range of properties: branches arranged in a certain way, leaves in various positions, and so on. In contrast, for Smith to believe that there is a tree outside the window, a common thought is that he need not believe anything about the arrangement of the branches, the colour of the leaves, or anything else about it. It thus seems as though the truth-conditions of (1) are very different from those of (2), and this presents another *prima facie* problem for the belief theorist.

Pitcher rejects the difference in truth conditions. He argues that the *perceptual* belief that there is a tree outside the window—unlike an ordinary belief that there is a tree outside the window—*does* require that many other propositions are also true (1971: 88). A perceptual belief is “a belief that corresponds exactly, in its content and in the degree of richness (or complexity), to the state of [the perceiver] whereby it looks to him” the way which it in fact does look to him (1971: 90); it includes, “as integral and essential parts, a variable set of subsidiary beliefs” (1971: 88).

Pitcher’s ‘Middle Cases’ are those in which a perceiver’s background beliefs cause her to be suspicious of what she perceives; she “half-believes, or ... is inclined ... to believe” what she perceives (1971: 91–2). There is no further clarification of what this amounts to. It will be recalled that Armstrong talks about partial beliefs ‘held in check’ by stronger partial beliefs. I will understand Pitcher’s half-beliefs in the same way.⁹⁸

97. (1) is a quote; (2) is a simplified version of what Pitcher presents.

98. The similarity in expression is notable. Armstrong: “If a thing looks to be a certain way, although we know on independent grounds that it cannot be that way, we may still half-believe, or be inclined to believe, that it is as it looks” (1968: 221). Pitcher:

Suppose, for example, that an inexperienced automobile driver sees something up ahead on the road—something that looks like a pool of water, let us say. He

The ‘Last Cases’ are those where the content of the perception is not mirrored even in the content of a partial belief. In such cases Pitcher argues that the perceiver is caused to have “a suppressed inclination to have a (perceptual) belief” with the content of the perception (1971: 93).⁹⁹ What a suppressed inclination to believe amounts to is not explained, a point Jackson remarks on in his critique. He argues that Armstrong’s counterfactual account of suppressed inclinations to believe is “the only way to make good sense” of Pitcher’s proposal (1977: 40). I think he is right; we should interpret Pitcher’s account by the lights of Armstrong’s, and take suppressed inclinations to believe to be dispositions to believe.

*

To sum up: on Armstrong’s view, a perception is the acquisition of a belief in the normal case, the acquisition of a partial belief overridden by a stronger one in middling cases, and, when not even a partial belief is acquired, the acquisition of a suppressed inclination to believe, that is to say, a disposition to believe which is not in its conditions of manifestation. Pitcher ends up with the same tripartite view: “the same causal input can produce a perceptual belief”, “an inclination to that belief” or “a suppressed inclination” to that belief, depending on which background beliefs the perceiving agent has (1971: 93).

may be strongly tempted to think that there is a pool of water in the road ahead, but at the same time be suspicious of it, since everything else in the vicinity is dry and parched. The driver, we may say, half-believes that there is a pool of water on the road ahead, or, as I shall prefer to put it, that he is inclined, or has an inclination, to believe that there is such a pool (1971: 91–2).

99. Pitcher is not here discussing the fully general case, as my addition of “with the content of the perception” might, perhaps, seem to indicate. I think I do him no injustice, however, since he acknowledges that the case he does discuss, that of it looking to someone “as though there is an *x* at place *u*” is the *easiest* case for his view to handle, but assumes that an essentially similar analysis can be provided for the harder cases (1971: 85–6).

3.4 Intuition as a Disposition to Believe

We have considered in some detail two accounts which in some cases regard perception as the acquisition of a disposition to believe. We want to know whether criticism against these accounts transfers to theories on which *intuition* is a disposition to believe. Here I concentrate on two prominent advocates of such a view: Ernest Sosa—who has put forth versions of the view at least since 1996—and Timothy Williamson—whose view of intuition is spelled out most fully in his recent book (2007b).¹⁰⁰

3.4.1 Ernest Sosa

In his “Minimal Intuition”, Sosa argues that a subject *S* has an intuition that *p* at time *t* iff:

- a) if at *t* *S* were merely to understand fully enough the proposition that *p* (absent relevant perception, introspection and reasoning), then *S* would believe that *p*;
- b) at *t*, *S* does understand the proposition that *p*; and
- c) the proposition that *p* is abstract¹⁰¹

(Sosa 1998: 259)

100. Dispositional accounts of intuition are also advocated by Boghossian (2009), Cohen (1981), Earlenbaugh and Molyneux (2009); Lynch (2006); and van Inwagen (1997). See also Sosa (1996) for formulations similar to those discussed here.

In his 2007c, Sosa says that intuitions “are not factors *that attract us to assent* They are rather the attractions themselves. When such attraction is exerted by one’s entertaining a proposition, with its specific content, then the attraction is intuitive” (Sosa 2007c: 54). Similarly, in his 2007b, Sosa argues that intuitions are conscious attractions to assent to propositions, that arise in a particular way. I am not certain how to understand these proposals. However, on my best understanding they constitute a variety of the dispositional view Sosa presents in the passages discussed in the main text, perhaps a very similar variety. For this reason I do not treat them separately. Chudnoff (2011b: n. 4) also endorses this interpretation of Sosa 2007c.

101. Sosa formulates his account in terms of it being *intuitive* to *S* that *p* at *t*, but his target is “seemings or appearances”, and he explicitly allows for adding to his definition a fourth clause, d), which says that “at *t*, *S* thinks occurrently of the proposition that *p* (in propria persona, not just by description)” (1998: 259). So it is reasonable to understand Sosa’s view here as a definition of what it is for *S* to have the intuition that *p* at *t*.

Let us consider this proposed analysis. The crucial notion in clause a) is *mere understanding*, and the bracketed part of the clause is best understood as an explanation of this phrase. We can then read it as saying that, if at *t* *S* were to merely understand the proposition that *p*—*that is to say* that *S* would not have any relevant perception, introspection and reasoning—then *S* would believe that *p*.¹⁰²

Of course, it is rather rare that we *merely* understand a proposition in this sense. When we believe or are disposed to believe a proposition, we are usually in a situation in which we have ‘done more’ than merely to understand it, and often there is more than the mere understanding of the proposition affecting our belief about its truth-value. We might perceive that *p*, remember that *p*, introspect that *p* or reason our way to *p*, and it is often this which brings about the belief: if not for it we would not believe the proposition. But a disposition to believe counts as an intuition that *p* just in case the subject’s merely understanding *p* constitutes the disposition’s conditions of manifestation.

The rationale for this is to weed out *false positive* cases, so that they do not improperly count as intuitions. Suppose that I perceive a cup in front of me, and that I am disposed to believe that there is a cup in front of me. I understand the proposition that there is a cup in front of me, of course, but I do not *merely* understand it, in Sosa’s sense. I have a perception with relevant content, and it is the perception which explains my belief; were I not to have it I would not believe the proposition. Mere understanding of the proposition that there is a cup in front of me is thus not sufficient for believing the proposition. The case thus does not count as my intuiting that there is a cup on the table, on Sosa’s account. That is the right result.¹⁰³

Conversely, we sometimes *fail* to believe the proposition that *p* in cases where we ‘do more’ than merely to understand it, for example when we

102. Elsewhere, Sosa adds that the introspection, perception and reasoning is excluded “singly or in combination”, “even through the channel of memory” (Sosa 2006b: 213; Sosa 2007b: 52); I shall take this as read throughout.

103. This particular proposition would of course fall foul of condition c) as well.

perceive that *not-p*, remember that *not-p*, introspect that *not-p* or reason our way to *not-p*. The 'mere understanding' phrase is also intended to deal with these *false negatives*: it may be what comes in addition to the mere understanding that prevents the belief. We may still be disposed to believe the proposition on merely understanding it, and so still qualify as having the intuition. This also seems to be the right result.

It is clear that Sosa intends being in a state of merely understanding a proposition to also exclude having reasoning which takes the proposition as a premise. The agent who has reasoning leading to the belief that **NCA** is false (page 41) therefore does not count as merely understanding it, and this is what ensures that she has the intuition even when she does not believe. Given b), a person only has an intuition if that person understands that proposition, but even with b) satisfied it is still an open question whether the person *merely* understands it. Sophisticated cognisers, who have reasoned their way to disbelief in the intuited proposition, may still have the intuition on this account, because it is true of them that were they to (somehow) come to be in a state of mere understanding of the intuited proposition, they would believe it. This is the truth-maker for the claim that they have the intuition, on this account.

So much for clause a). The function of clause b) is to avoid overgeneralisation; to avoid the implausible result that I intuit a plethora of propositions I have never entertained, in virtue of the fact that were I to understand them, I would believe them.

Sosa does not define what it is for a proposition to be abstract, but suggests that "abstract propositions abstract away from any mention of particulars", though they might be "quite specific and determinate in the properties or relations that they involve" (1998: 358).

3.4.2 Timothy Williamson

Another proposal along similar lines is due to Timothy Williamson. Williamson's view of intuition appears both in his "Philosophical 'Intuitions' and Scepticism about Judgement" (2004) and in his more recent

book, *The Philosophy of Philosophy* (2007b). The relevant section of the book is based on, but goes further than, the paper (2007b: xiv), so here I focus exclusively on the presentation in the book.

Williamson argues that intuition is not a special mental or epistemological state (2007b: 216). Having an intuition is, on his view, just a manifestation of ordinary capacities for applying concepts.¹⁰⁴ Williamson rejects, in particular, the view of intuition as an intellectual seeming, and adopts instead the view that what are usually *called* intuitions are to be understood as dispositions to believe:

I am aware of no intellectual seeming beyond my conscious inclination to believe Naïve Comprehension, which I resist because I know better. I can feel such an inclination even if it is quite stably overridden, and I am not in the least danger of giving way to temptation These paradigms provide no evidence of intellectual seemings, if the phrase is supposed to mean anything more than intuitions in Lewis's or van Inwagen's sense. (Williamson 2007b: 217)

The references here are to Lewis's statement that "'intuitions' are simply opinions" (1983: x) and van Inwagen's view that intuitions are beliefs, or "in some cases the tendencies that make certain beliefs attractive to us, that 'move' us in the direction of accepting certain propositions without taking us all the way to acceptance" (1997: 309).

There is no indication of what Williamson takes the inclinations to believe to be. However, it is very natural to interpret a 'quite stably overridden' inclination to believe as a *disposition* to believe, but one which in a stable or reliable way is not in its conditions of manifestation. On this interpretation, Williamson's account is similar to Sosa's; but with less detailed specification of the conditions of manifestation.

104. It is important for Williamson's broader project of arguing against 'philosophical exceptionalism' that the 'skill in applying' a concept be sharply divorced from, and extend well beyond, the mere conditions for having that concept. According to Williamson, one can have a concept and count as being competent with it (to a significant enough extent) without having the skill required to apply the concept in certain cases.

3.5 Jackson's Critique

3.5.1 The Critique

We now turn to a critique of Armstrong's and Pitcher's views, found in Frank Jackson's book *Perception* (1977). Jackson considers 'looks-statements': statements such as 'It looks as if p ', 'It looks like a cow' and 'It looks red' (1977: 30, 31, 33). He takes these to be three different kinds of uses of 'looks': the epistemic, the comparative and the phenomenal use, respectively. What interests us is Jackson's argument that phenomenal uses of 'looks' cannot be analysed in terms of *belief*. Though the discussion is couched in terms of analysis, the aim is ultimately metaphysical: to establish that there is a *phenomenon*—its phenomenally looking to a subject S that x is F —which is *irreducible* to another phenomenon— S 's belief, partial belief, or disposition to believe that x is F .¹⁰⁵

We saw in the previous chapter that perceptual experiences believed to be illusory need special attention from the perception-as-belief theorist (§2.6), and that Armstrong and Pitcher respond by saying that we acquire a partial belief corresponding to the content of perception. But Armstrong and Pitcher both admit that this solution does not generalise fully; there are cases when we do not even acquire a partial belief (§3.3). They respond that in some cases we acquire something more attenuated. I have argued that we should understand this as a disposition to believe the content of the perception, one which is not in its conditions of manifestation. We can therefore read Jackson as addressing this question:

Where F ranges over terms for colour, distance or shape, is it true that, whenever it phenomenally looks to a subject S that x is F , then S is at least disposed to believe that x is F ?¹⁰⁶

We can read him as arguing for a negative answer by considering

105. Jackson has confirmed this interpretation in personal communication.

106. 'At least', because according to Armstrong, the perceiving subject usually acquires a belief, and failing that, a partial belief (see §3.3.1). It is only when both these fail that what is acquired is a disposition to believe. In what follows I leave this implicit.

candidate manifestation conditions, pointing out for each candidate that, while it is clear that in those conditions it could phenomenally look to S that x is F, it is *not* true that the subject would come to believe that x is F.¹⁰⁷

Jackson uses two examples: the Müller-Lyer illusion (figure 2.2 on page 51) and that of looking at a white wall with blue-tinted glasses on. In the first case one line *looks* longer than the other, in the second the wall *looks* blue, and in neither case are things as they look to be.

When a person perceives the Müller-Lyer figure while believing that the lines measure the same length with a ruler, or when she perceives the wall while believing that her glasses have tinted lenses, does she at least have a disposition to believe that things are as they seem? Jackson notes that the suggestion looks promising at first. In both cases we think we understand what prevents the disposition from manifesting. So perhaps we could, as Armstrong suggests, formulate a true counterfactual of the form 'but for the fact that the perceiver believed ... he would have acquired the belief that ...'.

However, the devil is in the details, Jackson argues, because:

there will ... be sentences ' p ', ' q ', such that, in the case of the wall, 'If p , then I would believe that the wall were blue' and 'If q , then I would believe that the wall were white'; and the wall does not (and cannot) look both blue and white.

(Jackson 1977: 40)

The claim is that we cannot take it for granted that the details really can be filled out to render a true counterfactual. Indeed, Jackson argues that we *cannot* provide a true (and non-circular) counterfactual, and that Armstrong's analysis therefore fails. Understanding his project the way we do, this would mean that the reduction to a disposition would fail.

Perception, Jackson argues, yields belief only when the subject believes that things are as they look to be. Let us say that when things are as they look to be the *appearance–reality link* ('AR-link') *holds*, and when

107. Again, these are not the terms in which Jackson carries out his discussion, but it is an interpretation of the text which he endorses.

they are not, that link is *severed*. Jackson's claim is that perception yields belief only when the perceiver believes that the AR-link *holds*. Accordingly, the closest we can get to a true (and relevant) counterfactual is:

Had the agent not had the countervailing belief she actually has, and had she believed *that the AR-link holds*, she would have formed beliefs corresponding to the content of her perception.¹⁰⁸

As Jackson points out, this is a hopeless—because blatantly circular—analysis of 'looks'. The AR-link holds when things are as they look to be, so this candidate makes use of the notion to be analysed in the proposed analysis.

How does this bear on the reduction of its phenomenally looking to a subject that x is F , to the subject's being disposed to believe that x is F ? Well, one part of what makes a disposition the particular disposition that it is, is its having the manifestation conditions that it does.¹⁰⁹ So a disposition's manifestation conditions are among its essential properties. It is therefore reasonable to think that the reductive project cannot succeed if part of what *constitutes* the disposition is its phenomenally looking to S that x is F . If conditions C are that S believes that things are as they phenomenally look, then its phenomenally looking to S a certain way is

108. This is a simplified version of a counterfactual Jackson suggests (1977: 41).

109. Here is an argument for this claim. Suppose I own four items: two wine glasses, one ray gun and one hammer. One of the wine glasses is made of glass, the other is made of steel. Suppose that, if hit with the hammer, the wine glass made of glass is disposed to break in a particular way. If hit with the ray gun both wine glasses are disposed to break in exactly that same way. But if hit with the hammer, nothing happens to the wine glass made of steel. It is clear, I think, that the two wine glasses do not have the same disposition, even though what they are disposed to do—break in a particular way—is exactly the same. One is disposed to break when hit with a hammer, the other is not. That is enough on its own to show that the two do not have the same disposition. (One could say that the item has two dispositions: the disposition to break when struck with a hammer, and the disposition to break when struck with a ray gun. Or one could say that it has the single disposition to break when struck with a hammer or a ray gun. I have used the latter way of speaking, but the point can easily be restated the other way: the fact that one item is disposed to break when hit with the hammer and the other is not suffices to show that the first has a disposition the other lacks, even though there is a different disposition they both have.)

among the things that makes the disposition the particular disposition that it is. And then the thing purportedly reduced is a part of the purported reducer, and reduction fails. So such 'circularity' blocks reduction.

But why should we think that the counterfactual which Jackson suggests is the best we can do? When a subject does not believe what she sees, we often think we know which belief actually stopped that from happening. As Jackson points out, however, we cannot specify the counterfactual merely by stipulating that the agent should lack *that* belief. We cannot, for example, merely stipulate that the agent looking at the wall must fail to believe that the lenses of her glasses are tinted. For the agent may hold many other beliefs that would also block the belief that the wall is blue from forming; his not forming that belief might be *over-determined* (Jackson 1977: 41). If so, removing this one belief would not on its own do the trick.

But might we not specify a *class* of beliefs, such that if the perceiver failed to have *any* belief which is a member of the class, she *would* form the relevant belief? Jackson does not argue against this suggestion, but we can easily enough recreate an argument on his behalf. Specifying the relevant class seems hopeless, because it may be that *nothing unifies* the offending beliefs except for the fact that they stop the perceiver from forming the belief that the wall is blue. If so, no non-circular specification of the class can be given.

One might wonder whether this is true. In particular, a natural thought is that no belief about the *holding* of the AR-link is required; the *absence* of belief to the contrary is enough. Against this suggestion, Jackson argues that there are cases that fulfil these criteria in which it is still plausible that the agent would not form the relevant beliefs.

In support, he offers the following example. In a psychological experiment there are two distinct experimental conditions: in one but not in the other the lighting distorts colour-appearances. Test subject Susie knows about the two conditions, knows she is in one or the other, but does not know and cannot discover *which* of the two she is in. What, Jackson asks, will Susie believe about the colour of the wall she sees in

front of her at the beginning of the experiment? The answer is clear—*she will not form any belief about the colour of the wall*. However, the wall of course still *looks* a certain way to her, it looks blue, let us suppose. So stipulating the absence of a belief about the AR-link being severed does not suffice, Jackson argues, to specify true conditions of manifestation for the supposed disposition to believe (Jackson 1977: 41–2).

3.5.2 Evaluating the Critique

Jackson says that in the imagined experiment, Susie

will be in, precisely, the situation where [she has] no belief one way or the other about whether the circumstances are such that objects look the colour they are. (Jackson 1977: 42)

It is true that Susie does not have an *all-out* belief that the AR-link is *severed*. But a challenge to Jackson's critique is that she *does* have a substantial *credence* that it is. So if the suggestion is that the subject must lack belief or *non-negligible credence* about the AR-link either way, that suggestion is still left standing. The experiment is not a situation where conditions C obtain but where the belief is not formed.¹¹⁰

The correct response to this challenge is, I believe, to concede. For all the example of the experiment shows, an absence of non-negligible credence that the AR-link is severed will suffice to ensure that the disposition manifests, and that the subject believes, say, that the wall is blue.

To Jackson's overall line of argument, however, this objection is not very serious. For it still seems hard to rule out the possibility that some other belief might block the belief that the wall is blue from forming. And the challenge is still to specify the set of beliefs which the perceiver must fail to have in a non-circular way.

A second challenge to Jackson's critique is that he relies on an unwarranted assumption, namely that for the reduction to go through, there has to be a true counterfactual such as the one Armstrong suggests. That

110. Thanks to Jessica Brown for very helpful discussion here.

suggested counterfactual, however, arises out of an overly simple analysis of dispositions, which we have independent reason to believe will fail (Fara 2008; Lewis 1997). A better analysis can avoid the critique.

In response, Jackson could plausibly contend, however, that he does not rely on the simple conditional analysis of dispositions, nor on any other analysis of dispositions, for that matter. He asks to be told what the manifestation conditions of the disposition are simply because he wants a determinate opposing account to evaluate. Until we are told *which* disposition is a candidate reducer we cannot adequately evaluate an account. And for that we must be told what the manifestation conditions are of the purported reducing disposition. For, recall, the manifestation conditions of a disposition are among the features which make it the particular disposition that it is.

A much more serious challenge to Jackson's critique is that the whole line of argument relies on a mistaken assumption about what it takes to show that a dispositional claim is false. We have taken Jackson to address the question of whether its phenomenally looking to S that x is F entails that S is (at least) disposed to believe that x is F. We have also read him as arguing for a negative answer by considering candidate manifestation conditions and searching for counterexamples: situations such that it is clear that it would phenomenally look to S that x is F, but it is not true that the subject would come to believe that x is F.

However, the challenger here responds that the existence of instances where x is in C but does not Φ *does not show* that x is not disposed to Φ in C. For x 's having the disposition to Φ in C is consistent with something *blocking* that disposition from manifesting on a particular occasion.

This challenger meets the demand of giving a determinate account. In the case at hand, she might, for example, say that whenever it phenomenally looks to a subject S that x is F, S is disposed to believe that x is F in the absence of non-negligible credence that the AR-link is broken.

Suppose now that a case is given in which the subject lacks non-negligible credence that the AR-link is broken (and thus is in conditions C) but still does not form the belief that the wall is blue (does not Φ). The

challenger currently under consideration rejects the claim that this shows her analysis to be false. All she has to do, she maintains, is to point to a *blocker*—something which explains why the disposition did not manifest on this particular occasion.

The challenger maintains that if she can point to a blocker for each example, nothing further can be demanded of her. Moreover, she does not accept a demand to specify *in advance* what the blockers are, and so she avoids the challenge of how to give a non-circular specification of the beliefs the subject must fail to have. The blockers may be multifarious, she agrees, but so long as she can find one for each putative counterexample, her account survives.

This challenge makes the outlook for rejecting a dispositional account on the basis of false negatives bleak. For whatever the situation we find in which the disposition does not manifest, it seems likely that the proponent of a dispositional view will be able to point to something which she regards as a blocker.

3.5.3 The Parallel Case for Intuition

What would the outcome be of applying a Jackson-style critique to dispositional accounts of intuition? Jackson objects to the reduction of it phenomenally looking to S that x is F, on the one hand, to S's disposition to believe that x is F, on the other. For intuition, the parallel question is whether, for every case when it is true that an agent has an intuition, she has a certain disposition to believe.

On a view which competes with the dispositional account of intuition, intuition is an irreducible kind of experience with representational content, such that for someone to have an intuition that p is for it to *seem* to that person that p (where this cannot be reduced). The similarity between the dialectical situations becomes apparent when we substitute statements about its phenomenally looking to a subject that x is F, with statements about it *seeming* to her that things are a certain way. Is it true that whenever it seems to S that p , S is (at least, see n. 106) disposed to

believe that p ? As we saw in §3.4, this is the view of Ernest Sosa and Timothy Williamson.

As Pitcher did in the perception case, Williamson offers little detail when he addresses the question of what intuition is. In the cases where we do not believe what we intuit we should understand intuition as an inclination to believe, he says, but one to which we are not in any risk of giving in (Williamson 2007b: 216–17).

Should an inclination to believe be understood in a commonsensical or in a technical way? Suppose that a person has the *NCA* intuition (page 41), and that she also knows the proof which shows *NCA* to be false (n. 64). Suppose that the intuiter understands the reasoning involved in the proof, understands the rationale for the inference rules, believes them to be truth-preserving and believes, furthermore, that the (other) premises are true. On a commonsensical understanding of being inclined to believe, it is hard to imagine a clearer case of a person *not* being inclined to believe a proposition she has entertained. So, on a commonsensical reading of inclination to believe, the identification of the intuition with an inclination to believe appears to simply be false.

Given this, we must look for a technical understanding of what it means to have an inclination to believe. The obvious candidate is a disposition to believe. But the manifestation conditions of a disposition are among its essential properties, so no disposition has been specified unless its conditions of manifestation are given. In Williamson gives no guidance as to what the conditions of manifestation might be. Sosa, on the other hand, has provided an account of these conditions.

The conditions of manifestation on Sosa's account is that the intuited proposition is abstract, that the subject understands the proposition, and that were the subject merely to understand the proposition—that is to say, were she to not have any relevant perception, introspection or reasoning—she would believe it. How might a Jacksonian argument fare against such a view?

Suppose we objected to this account in a Jacksonian spirit. When I have the *NCA* intuition but do not believe what I intuit, that is because

I know the proof of Russell's paradox. But removing this belief does not ensure that I come to believe **NCA** since, just as in the case of perception, the blocking of this belief arising could easily be over-determined.

Just as in the case of perception, it may be that nothing unifies the beliefs which could stop me from coming to believe **NCA**. The prospects of specifying, in a non-circular manner, a set of beliefs that have to be absent, are therefore as dim in the case of intuition as they were in the case of perception.

But this does not show that the dispositional account fails. Should we find a case in which a subject is in Sosa's conditions of manifestation, and it clearly seems to the subject that p , but in which the subject still does not form the belief that p , it is open to Sosa to reject the contention that this shows the disposition to be absent. For what explains the absence of the manifestation may simply be that a blocker is present. So long as Sosa can point to a blocker for each case, the account remains standing.

3.5.4 False Positives?

So far we have been considering the possibility of *false negatives*, cases which the account mistakenly judges to *not* be cases of intuition, or of it phenomenally looking to a person that x is F. There is also a possibility of a challenge from *false positives*. According to such a challenge, dispositional views will categorise as cases of intuition, or as it phenomenally looking to a person that x is F, cases which in reality are not of this type.

Jackson raises such an objection.¹¹¹ Consider my belief that there is a yellow cup in front of me. I can, Jackson notes, acquire a such belief in a number of ways, and in many of them it will not look to me as if there is a yellow cup before me. I might wake up and remember that there is a yellow cup in front of me before I open my eyes, thus in some sense acquiring at least the conscious belief that there is. Or, I might

111. Again, while Jackson conducts his discussion in terms of relations between statements, his aim is to establish a metaphysical conclusion. See also (Siegel 2005/2010) for discussion, and Crane (1992b: 150–1).

hear someone saying that there is a yellow cup in front of me while I am keeping my eyes closed; I might read a note to that effect, and so on. In all these cases I acquire the belief *there is a yellow cup in front of me*, but it does not *look* to me as if there is.

One might have thought that such overgeneralisation can be avoided by making reference to normal use of sense organs.¹¹² But such restriction is insufficient. I use my eyes in the standard way when I read a note, yet a belief that there is a yellow cup in front of me acquired in this way does not ensure that it looks to me as if there is, and usually it ensures that it does not look to me that way.

Another response starts from an observation we have already discussed, namely that perception has rich content. When perceiving that *there is a cup on the table* one also perceives a large number of other things. Pitcher thinks that the belief the acquisition of which he identifies with perception is very importantly different from beliefs such that *there is a red wall in front of me*: the former is thought to have content comparably rich and complicated to the contents of perception (Pitcher 1971: 87–89). This makes it possible to say that, while acquisition of a belief that *there is a yellow cup before me* does not imply its looking to me as if there is, the acquisition of a belief that properly corresponds to the content of the perception—a belief with much richer content, what Pitcher calls a *perceptual belief*—*does* have this implication (Pitcher 1971: 90).

As Jackson points out, there is little hope for a solution from this direction. Why should we think that such very complex beliefs cannot be acquired in different ways, even by means of using ones eyes in the standard visual way? Jackson suggests that this applies quite generally, that it is always possible to recapture in a description the information contained in perception: “the note [I read] might have been much longer”, he says (Jackson 1977: 43).

112. Pitcher describes visual perception as the subject of the perception being caused to acquire a belief “by means of using his eyes in the standard visual way” (Pitcher 1971: 90); Armstrong seems willing to classify as perception possible (alien) cases where sense organs are *not* involved; he says that reference to sense organs “although helpful, has not a full right to appear in a definition” of perception (Armstrong 1968: 212).

This position may be implausible in full generality, but that is not important here. There are very simple ways things can look. For example, it can look to me as if there is a white, point-sized patch of light on an otherwise completely dark surface about three metres in front of me in an otherwise completely dark space, not flickering and approximately of the strength of a candle. It seems that I can acquire a belief with that content from reading a note (or, since it is dark, by hearing the note read out). And then the problem re-emerges for Pitcher, since if I acquired the belief by reading a note it would not thereby *look* to me as if there was a white point-sized patch of light on a wall in front of me.

Do parallel points apply in the case of intuition? Sosa's conditions of manifestation are:

- a) if at t S were merely to understand fully enough the proposition that p (absent relevant perception, introspection and reasoning), then S would believe that p ;
- b) at t , S does understand the proposition that p ;
- c) the proposition that p is an abstract proposition; and
- d) at t , S thinks occurrently of the proposition that p (in propria persona, not just by description)

(Sosa 1998: 259)

Sosa adds this fourth condition explicitly for the purpose of catering to those that might think, as he does not, that it is important that intuition is an occurrent, episodic phenomenon. This was not important above, but it is now, so we include it in our discussion here.

In evaluating whether this account yields false positives, a lot will hinge on what it means to understand a proposition, and on what it means to think of a proposition occurrently. But given the initial characterisation of intuition given in Chapter 1, it seems that this account would yield false positives. If our initial characterisation of the phenomenon is correct, a person's overall phenomenal experience must have a particular character if a mental state she is in is to count as intuition. And nothing in the description ensures that this will be so. For it seems that a person

could simply be ‘wired’ in such a way that were she to merely understand the abstract proposition that p , she would believe it. If such a person understood the proposition, and thought about it in *propria persona*, her overall phenomenal experience might still not have the phenomenal character in question. So—with the proviso that a demanding account of what it takes to understand a proposition, and what it takes to think about it *in propria persona* might somehow rule this out—it seems that there will be cases where it is true of a person that were she to merely understand the proposition fully enough she *would* believe it, but where she did not have the intuition.¹¹³

3.5.5 Lingering Discontent

Where does this leave us? The argument that attempts to establish the extensional inadequacy of a dispositional analysis of intuition fails in its attempt to establish that there are false negatives—the possibility of appeal to blockers ensures this. And the conclusion that there are false positives rests on taking a certain phenomenal character to be among the essential properties of intuition. Not all agree with this, and in particular, neither Sosa nor Williamson do.

How plausible a dispositional account is depends on the conditions of manifestation it specifies for the reducing disposition. The conditions Sosa specifies may be understood as imposing on intuition a particular etiology, that the mental state be rooted in understanding. I have argued that if our interest is in specifying a good candidate for a psychological kind, such a restriction is implausible (§1.5.2). Inasmuch as this interpretation of Sosa is correct, then, this counts against Sosa’s view. But I need

113. Chudnoff (2011b) presents a related argument against dispositional accounts of intuition from what it is like to have one. Chudnoff simply *asserts*, however, that “[n]o matter the etiology of a judgment, or an inclination to make a judgment, so long as it is a judgment, or an inclination to make a judgment, it will not have presentational phenomenology, and so will not be an intuition”. As I have just intimated, it is not clear that we can simply assume that this is so. Bealer (1998a: n. 8) also argues that a dispositional analysis of intuition produces false positives.

not belabour this point here, since, as we shall see (§3.7), I believe a single argument can decisively deal with all dispositional accounts.

Among the more plausible dispositional accounts is one which specifies that the perceiving subject does not have a substantial credence in the AR-link being broken. There is something undeniably attractive about such views. In at least a large number of cases, when I perceive that *p* I come to believe that *p*, and we often seem to have a grasp of why the relevant belief fails to form, in the instances when that happens. Dispositional accounts seem to capture this.

All of this notwithstanding, I suggest that the discussion so far should leave us with a lingering discontent with dispositional views. We can legitimately insist that we be given the conditions of manifestation of the disposition to which intuition supposedly reduces.¹¹⁴ Even accounts which satisfy this requirement, however, such as Sosa's (but not Williamson's), still seem to fall short of providing us with genuine insight into the nature of the phenomenon.

In the case of Sosa's account, this is partly because the conditions of manifestation for the disposition are very alien. It is doubtful that we are ever in a position of *merely understanding* a proposition, in a situation where we do not have *any* perception, introspection and reasoning which is relevant to the proposition we understand and are occurrently thinking about. The potential role of blockers adds to this impression. If an account is to avoid false negatives it seems that it must allow for the possibility that blockers may be both numerous and multifarious. But

114. After all, the conditions of manifestation of a disposition are parts of its identity conditions. The anti-reductionist claim is that reduction will leave something out, because the phenomenon in question is genuinely irreducible, so an account that is not specific enough to ascertain whether that is the case does not take the anti-reductionist challenge seriously enough. Joshua Earlenbaugh and Bernard Molyneux, who argue that intuitions are dispositions to believe, consider an objection of this kind, and reply that "it is possible to informatively classify a species as belonging to a genus without giving a full specification of its nature" (2009: 89). The problem with this reply is that there are very many dispositions to believe that *p* which we know a person who intuits that *p* does not have. So the account must at minimum be specific enough to rule out these dispositions.

if blockers are in this way disunified, it is hard to feel that one has become any wiser about the nature of the phenomenon under scrutiny. We still do not *really* know in what kinds of cases the disposition supposedly manifests. And we knew antecedently, of course, that when a person intuits that p , she often thereafter comes to believe that p ; this was part of the characterisation I gave at the very beginning of this thesis.

A driving force behind the attempt to demonstrate extensional inadequacy of dispositional accounts was presumably the intuition that the connection to belief might be severed entirely, and that both perception and intuition would still remain. I might be a bizarre agent indeed, one that has a whole host of beliefs, each capable of blocking a belief with the content of the perception or intuition from forming. In the case of perception, none of this will stop the wall from looking blue to me. Similarly, in the case of intuition, it is natural to think that however improbable it became that I would form the belief that p , I could still have the intuition that p . There is even strength to the thought that forming the belief that p might be impossible for one—perhaps because one is incapable of forming *any* belief, perhaps because just this belief is somehow ruled out—and one could still have both perceptions and intuitions.¹¹⁵

*

Of course, none of this constitutes solid argument. But it is hard to shake the feeling that dispositional accounts of perception and intuition do not tell us what these phenomena really are.

This view is further supported by the argument in Chapter 5. There I argue—*pace* Sosa and Williamson—that there really is a genuine intuitional experience to be found. Sosa and Williamson did not find it be-

115. This claim is also lent strength by the identification of a genuine intuitional experience in Chapter 5. Susanna Siegel raises this objection for dispositional views of perception in her 2005/2010. Joel Pust raises the related worry that it seems possible to have an intuition without having the ability to form beliefs about one's dispositions, and argues that the dispositionalist requires such belief-formation to account for our knowledge of what we intuit (Pust 2000: 42–3). Bealer similarly argues that it is implausible that a subject can have the relevant seeming only if she can also be aware of having the relevant disposition (1998a: n. 8).

cause they were looking for the wrong thing. A part of the initial description we gave of the target of inquiry was that instances of intuition have a commonality in phenomenal character. This part of the initial characterisation is vindicated by the identification of a genuine intuitional experience. And this lends additional weight to the claim that dispositional views yield false positives.

In the next two sections I present two additional arguments against the dispositional account of intuition. The first again relies on phenomenal character being an essential feature of intuition. Since some deny this, the argument does not stand on its own, but depends on support from the case made in Chapter 5. The second, however, is that, just as attempted reduction of intuition to a belief or partial belief yields false predictions of rational criticisability, so too does the view that intuition reduces to a disposition to believe. And this last argument, which finally shows that dispositional views are untenable, is completely independent of questions about phenomenology.

3.6 The Argument from Phenomenal Inadequacy

One part of the initial characterisation we gave of our target was that there is a commonality in phenomenal character between each instance. Something in what it is like is shared by different instances of having an intuition. Given this, a reasonable constraint on a theory of intuition is that it must be phenomenally adequate. A phenomenally adequate theory of intuition does not yield false predictions about what it is like to have one.

In this section I argue that the account of intuition as a disposition to believe fails this requirement. Here we do not need a full account of the phenomenology of intuition; the focus is on some features which matter for phenomenal adequacy.

3.6.1 Phenomenology of the Here and Now

I have the **NCA** intuition; I intuit, that is, that if anything which satisfies *F* satisfies *G* and *vice versa*, then the set of the *F*s just is the set of the *G*s. At the same time I am also aware of the proof, and I firmly believe that not-NCA. Reflecting on what it is like to be in this state, something which stands out is that the phenomenology seems very much to be of the *here and now*. What seems to be happening is that right now I am being pushed to accept the proposition intuited. The proposition is ‘slamming its fist’, demanding to be heard, *now*.

If the account of intuition as a disposition to believe were true, it is mysterious why my phenomenal experience should have this character. For in that case, when I have the opposing belief, what makes it true that I have the intuition is that in some non-actual (and in some cases quite far-fetched) circumstances I *would* believe that **NCA**. As a concrete example, consider Sosa’s suggestion, that were I to *merely* understand the proposition in question, I would believe it. But my phenomenology does not seem to be that of imagining what it would be like to merely understand the proposition.¹¹⁶ Suppose I have known the proof of Russell’s paradox for ten years, I rehearse it often, and can call it to mind at a moment’s notice. It is not clear that I should even be able to imagine the situation in which I merely understand the intuited proposition.

The phenomenology of having the **NCA** intuition is *not* that of me being about to do anything, or being about to believe something. It is about that proposition ‘demanding to be heard’, right now. And it is not about some counterfactual situation, where important facts about me are very different.

This seems sufficient to show that the account of intuition as a disposition to believe is phenomenally inadequate. But we can mount an additional argument for the same conclusion.

116. The imagination in question is *non-iconic* imagination; see §4.3 below.

3.6.2 The Life-Cycle of the Phenomenology

Consider the following plausible ‘life-cycle’ of the **NCA** intuition. To begin with, I have a loose conversation with someone about sets, and start thinking about sets formed out of entities which satisfy some condition. Then, at time t_1 , I have the **NCA** intuition. The intuition is strong and impressive. There is something it is like to be me at t_1 , and what it is like is partly determined by the fact that I have the intuition.

Enthusiastic about my newfound insight I buy a book about set theory, and start reading. Early on, the author drops hints that something is wrong with **NCA**. I do not believe that there could be, but alarm bells are going off in the distance. What it feels like for me overall when I have the intuition at t_2 is different from what it was like to be me at t_1 .

I arrive at the section in the book that concerns Russell’s paradox. I find it tough going, and after having read it through, I do not understand the proof. But the alarm bells are loud and clear now. The intuition is still there, and I believe **NCA**. But I am having some doubts about it. What it is like to be me at t_3 is different from what it was like at both t_1 and t_2 .

On the second reading through the relevant section of the book, I understand the proof, and as a result shed my belief that **NCA**. What it is like for me overall when I have the intuition at t_4 is different from what it was like at all the other points.

At t_5 some years have passed. I do not believe that **NCA**, I remember that there is a proof, but I cannot bring it to mind. At such a point, t_5 , I have the intuition again. What it is like at this point is different to all the previous occasions. Before I reappraise myself of the proof I spend much time reading Graham Priest’s argument that some things are both true and false. When at t_6 I can again call the proof to mind, when I understand and endorse it again, what it is like for me overall is again different from what it was like in all the previous cases.

According to the account of intuition which I favour, an intuition is an experience with representational content, and which has the phenomenology of pushiness, objectivity and valence (Chapter 5). On this account,

this life-cycle is easily explained. For one, pushiness comes in degrees: what we call a strong intuition is an intuitional experience with a high degree of pushy phenomenology. But for another, the contribution an intuition makes to the character of a person's overall phenomenology depends on the overall cognitive situation of the agent. If she has no beliefs either way about the content of her intuition, having the intuition will make a certain impact on her overall phenomenology, if she has a contrary conscious belief it will make a different impact. The phenomenal life cycle above is plausibly explained by these factors in combination.

On the other hand, it is hard to see how the account of intuition as a disposition to believe can account for this life-cycle. At t_1 through t_3 , I am still, on this view, in the conditions of manifestation for the disposition to believe: after all, at these three points in time I *do* believe that **NCA**. Similarly, t_4 through t_6 are alike in that either I am *not* in the conditions of manifestation of my disposition to believe, or there is a blocker. But what it is like to be me varies in these situations. The account of intuition as a disposition to believe seems to lack the resources to explain why. Thus we have the

Argument from Phenomenal Inadequacy:

- (1) The phenomenal inadequacy of an account of intuition gives us reason to believe that it is false
 - (2) A phenomenally adequate account of intuition must account for its phenomenology being of the here and now, and for the fact that it can go through life-cycles
 - (3) The account of intuition as a disposition to believe seems incapable of accounting for either of these facts
-
- (4) So, we have reason to believe that the account of intuition as a disposition to believe is false

I have already argued for premises (2) and (3), so it only remains to provide support for premise (1). I will not go in to great detail on this, for I take the relevant point to be reasonably uncontroversial.

The basic point is just this: the phenomenology of having an intuition is one of the facts about it. It is one of the things that needs to be explained. An account need not preserve appearances in the sense of vindicating our initial view of the phenomenology. But there is pressure to *either* do that, or to explain the appearances *away*: to explain why appearances are misleading. The problem with the dispositional account is that it does not seem capable of doing either.¹¹⁷

Important though I think this argument is, one must acknowledge that arguments of this kind are likely to be of limited dialectical effectiveness. They depend on a shared appreciation of the phenomenology of intuition. It is not unreasonable to think that those who defend doxastic or dispositional views of intuition do so at least in part because they do not recognise the target phenomenal character. This underscores the importance of describing the character of intuitional experience in detail, a project which I undertake in Chapter 5. This is important for its own sake, of course, but also because, in arguments against reductive accounts of intuition, considerations about the phenomenal character of intuition play an important role.

3.7 Rational Criticisability Returns

The above argument relies on phenomenology. However, we can present an argument against dispositional accounts that does not.

Consider Tom, who has the **NCA** intuition, and who comes to believe **NCA** (see page 41). He goes on to learn the necessary theory, and to

117. Chudnoff (2011b: 12–14) and Bengson (2010: 14–15) also argue against dispositional accounts of intuition from its phenomenology. Both these arguments have significant problems. The latter simply posits (in the presentation of ‘the ardent physicalist’ (2010: 13)) the distinction between a conscious inclination to believe and an intuition, and so can do little to support it. The former argument relies on the claim that intuition has ‘presentational’ phenomenology Chudnoff (2011b: 17). I argue against the claim that intuition has presentational phenomenology below. George Bealer refers to the phenomenology of intuition to distinguish it from sensory seeming (i.e. perception), imagination, introspection, guesses, conscious beliefs and hunches in his 1992 and elsewhere.

appraise himself of the proof that shows that NCA is false (n. 64). As a result, he sheds the belief. Tom, however, still has the intuition.

On the account of intuition under consideration, he has a disposition to believe NCA in certain conditions C. Suppose that Tom believes this account, and believes, moreover, that he could take easy steps to stamp out the disposition. Tom, however, takes no such steps. If all of this is true of Tom, it seems that he is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable.

When we consider Tom's situation described in a theory-neutral way, however, we can see that he is not rationally criticisable. Tom has the intuition that NCA, believes that NCA is false, and that he could take steps to rid himself of the intuition. But he takes no such steps. Clearly, Tom is *not ipso facto* rationally criticisable for *this*. And that, in turn, means that an intuition that *p* is not a disposition to believe that *p*. Thus we have the

Second Argument from Rational Criticisability:

- (1) All who concurrently believe (i) that they are disposed to believe that *p*, (ii) that *p* is false, (iii) that they can take easy steps to rid themselves of this disposition, but who (iv) do not take such steps, are either *ipso facto* rationally criticisable or shielded from rational criticisability by being in special circumstances
 - (2) Some people concurrently intuit NCA, believe not-NCA, believe they could take easy steps to rid themselves of the intuition, but do not take such steps
 - (3) None of these are *ipso facto* rationally criticisable
 - (4) None of these would become *ipso facto* rationally criticisable by coming to hold a true belief about the nature of intuition
 - (5) Some of these are not shielded by being in special circumstances
-
- (6) So, an intuition that *p* is not a disposition to believe that *p*

The premises are all plausible. Let us go through them.

To see that (1) is true, it may be helpful to consider some analogies. Suppose, first, that a person is disposed to get angry with people who

dress poorly. After various social situations have been affected the person realises this; he comes to believe that he has the disposition. He realises that getting angry with people for this reason is not justified, that he harms people because of the anger, and he also believes that he could rid himself of the disposition if he wanted to. Nevertheless he does not, he responds instead by increasing his efforts to ensure that he is, at all times, surrounded by people with good dress sense. In this way he attempts to ensure that the manifestation conditions of the disposition do not obtain.

Second, consider the contrast between two conceptions of *freedom*: as non-interference or as absence of dominance.¹¹⁸ If a slave master is benign and placid, he may never actually impose on the will of a slave. All the while, however, the master still dominates the slave, since were the master to wish to so impose, he could. And this is incompatible with freedom, even if it is very unlikely that the master would impose his will on the slave (Pettit 1997).

The relevant lesson is that in normative matters, principle often matters a lot even if practical effects are unlikely. Even if the hypothetical self-appointed fashion-police is unlikely to run into those that will agitate him, that he does nothing about his disposition makes him morally criticisable. Even if it is very unlikely that the master will impose his will, slavery is still an evil. For parallel reasons, the agent who does not take steps he believes will stamp out a disposition to believe a falsehood exposes himself to rational criticism.

Here is another consideration in favour of (1). Those in (1) are by their own lights needlessly exposing themselves to epistemic risk: they choose to gamble that the disposition will not manifest even though (they think) they do not have to. They can take easy steps to rid themselves of the disposition. They are therefore rationally criticisable.

It is plausible, of course, that *how* criticisable they are depends on how severe they take the risk to be, and that depends on how likely they take

118. Thanks to Nicholas Southwood for alerting me to this example.

it to be that they will end up in the disposition's conditions of manifestation. The risk might be quite low. But the risk being low does not mean that they are not rationally criticisable. Agents should not accept any epistemic risk unnecessarily. And we can stipulate that they believe that it is possible to come to be in the conditions of manifestation. For example, they may have initially come to believe that p because they had the intuition that p , something they would explain by saying that their disposition to believe that p at the time was in its conditions of manifestation. So they are still rationally criticisable, even if the risk is low.

Turning now to premise (2), the phenomenology associated with having the intuition that **NCA** is not wholly unaffected by coming to believe that it is false. It is very plausible, however, that the change is small enough to be consistent with the intuition obtaining.¹¹⁹ So it is very plausible that the first two conjuncts of (2) are true. Let the last two conjuncts be true by stipulation.¹²⁰

As regards (3), I argued in §2.5 above that it simply falls out of our ordinary understanding of rational criticisability that no one is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for concurrently intuiting a proposition and believing its negation, just as no one is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for a halfway submerged oar looking bent to them while they believe that it is not. It seems clear that if a subject in addition believes that she can take steps to rid herself of the intuition, but does not, she is not *thereby ipso facto* rationally criticisable, either. After all, if the subject attracts *no* rational criticism for having the intuition while believing its negation, how could she be under *any* rational obligation to rid herself of the intuition if she comes to believe that she can? She could not, unless it was specifically that she *could not help* believing what she intuited which exempted her from rational criticisability in the first place. But it was not: I argued in §2.5 that rational criticisability is not subject to ought-implies-can re-

119. We return to this question in Chapter 5.

120. Obviously, the actual existence of such people is immaterial, what matters is that they could exist. The argument is phrased the way it is to ease exposition, and to draw out the resemblance with the argument discussed in §2.5 above.

strictions of this sort.

Accordingly, our subject must *either* have initially attracted some rational criticism simply for intuiting that p and believing that $not-p$, or she does not now become rationally criticisable. But it is non-negotiable that one can intuit that p and believe that $not-p$ without being rationally criticisable. So the agent does not now become rationally criticisable. (3) is true.

As before, there is room to think that a person as described in (2) falls short of being rationally *ideal*. But first, there is distance between falling short of the ideal with respect to rationality and being rationally criticisable. Second, it seems likely that what makes such a person fall short of the rational ideal is simply the first conjunct being true of her: it is quite plausible that a rationally ideal person does not have any false intuitions. Finally, even if, by not attempting to rid herself of the intuition this person in some sense fails to take steps toward the rational ideal, it does not follow that she fails to take steps that she is rationally required to take. Again, if she attracted no rational criticism for intuiting that p and believing that $not-p$, *she cannot be rationally required to take such steps*. The analogy with the halfway submerged oar is again helpful: a person who does not attempt to rid herself of this appearance may fail to take steps toward the rational ideal. But she does not fail to take steps which she is rationally required to take.

Recall also that (3) is not threatened by the possibility of being *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for having a false intuition. I think one never is, but even if one could be, it would not follow that the person described in (2) is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable, since 'being *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for' is a non-monotonic relation (§2.5).

Given this defence of (3), (4) should be unproblematic. If a person attracts *no* rational criticism for intuiting that p and believing that $not-p$, adding a true belief about the nature of intuition can make no difference. *Either* the person is rationally criticisable simply for having the intuition and the contrary belief, or she does not become rationally criticisable when she acquires the belief about intuition. But she is not rationally

criticisable for having the intuition and the contrary belief. So she do not become rationally criticisable on acquiring a true belief about the nature of intuition.

Premise (5) in the **Second Argument from Rational Criticisability** is the analogue of premise (4) in the argument discussed in §2.5 above. I argued at some length for that premise there, and I shall not reiterate those considerations here: they largely transfer across. But it is worth making two quick notes. First, recall that it was argued that a notion of cognitive separation would play a key role in any account of the special circumstances that are capable of shielding an agent from rational criticisability. As was the case with having an intuition that p and believing that $not-p$, there need be no such separation in this case either, and typically there will be none. Second, there are some further shielding conditions to be excluded here, that were not on the table in Chapter 2. If Tom believed that the steps he could take to stamp out his disposition partly consist in his Φ -ing, and if he believed himself to be prevented from Φ -ing, it is plausible that he would be shielded from rational criticisability. But in our example, Tom believes that he could take easy steps to stamp out the disposition: he believes the steps to be available to him.

The premises in the argument are all plausible. If they are true, intuition is not a disposition to believe. So the argument gives us good reason to think an intuition that p does not reduce to a disposition to believe that p . Moreover, the argument is equally effective (*mutatis mutandis*) against views of types (J)–(L) (§3.2). It therefore completes our case against all dispositional views of intuition.¹²¹

The argument applies equally to the case of perception. A person is not *ipso facto* rationally criticisable if an oar looks bent to her, she believes that it is not bent, that she could take easy steps to rid herself of the relevant appearances, but she does not do so. So the **Second Argument from**

121. One simply needs to change premise (1) so that, first, the subject believes that she has the disposition the account alleges that she has, and, second, she believes that the relevant proposition—the one she would, on the account in question, end up believing if the disposition manifested—is false.

Rational Criticisability shows that perception is also not reducible to a disposition to believe.

*

We noted that the **Argument from Phenomenal Inadequacy** has a dialectical weakness. But arguments from rational criticisability have a corresponding dialectical strength. These arguments do not rely on any particular view about the nature of intuition, and should therefore be equally acceptable regardless of one's view on the matter. What they do rely on are firm intuitions about when an agent is rationally criticisable and when she is not. Such intuitions have a strong claim to being pre-theoretical: the concept of rational criticisability is in wide ordinary use. Moreover, since these intuitions are not themselves about the nature of intuition, but instead about rationality, they are well placed to *support* a view of the nature of intuition.

3.8 Concluding Remarks

In Chapter 2 I argued that, for both perception and intuition, there is no belief such that a combination of the belief with the perception or intuition renders the person having these mental states *ipso facto* rationally criticisable. I argued that this is strongly suggestive of the nature of these mental states. For any experience, there is no belief such that a combination of that belief and the experience makes the agent *ipso facto* rationally criticisable. So the discussion in Chapter 2 already strongly suggests that perception and intuition are experiences.

In this chapter I have argued that even though it is hard to find clear cases of extensional inadequacy on the part of dispositional accounts, there is a lingering discontent with such accounts, a feeling that they do not get to the heart of the phenomena. This feeling is increased by the possibility of false positive cases: cases where the phenomenology is absent, but where the dispositional accounts yield the verdict that a perception or intuition is occurring.

Relying as it does on the acknowledgement of the importance of phenomenology in intuition, this argument is not independent of the view that there really is a genuine intuitional experience. But *given* such a view, we can raise further criticism against dispositional views: they do not adequately account for the phenomenology being of the here and now, nor for the life-cycle of the phenomenology of intuition.

I argued that dispositional accounts of intuition yield false predictions of rational criticisability. A person who intuits that p , believes that *not- p* , believes that she could rid herself of the intuition but who takes no steps to accomplish this is *not ipso facto* rationally criticisable. The dispositional account entails that she would be. This, I argued, shows that the dispositional account of intuition is untenable in any variety, and that dispositional accounts of perception are, too.

One of the ways we supported the first premise in that argument was to note that those described therein are by their own lights needlessly exposing themselves to epistemic risk. This contrasts sharply with the strong intuition that the perceiver or intuiter attracts no such rational criticisability. What this tells us is that intuition and perception are the kinds of mental state that carry with them no inherent rational risk. It is, as one might say, what a person does with such mental states that matters for rationality.

It is plausible that instances of intuition share a particular phenomenal character, and that instances of perception do, too. In Chapter 2 we said that, when taken together with the reasoning in that chapter, this suggests that intuition and perception are experiences.

We can make the same point here. Experiences are mental states which share the characteristic of not carrying inherent rational risk. So the considerations of the previous chapter and those in this chapter point to the same conclusion: perception and intuition are experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

Content-Specific Phenomenology

4.1 Introduction

I have argued that intuition cannot be reduced to belief, nor to a disposition to believe. The arguments that lead to these conclusions also suggest that intuition is an experience. In the remainder of the thesis I develop this suggestion. The account I develop allows us to explain important facts about intuition and about the rational role it can play, and this supports the view that intuition should be understood in this way.

If intuition is an experience, what sort of experience is it? We know that it has representational content (§1.2.1).¹²² But what is it like to have an intuition? What is the *phenomenal character* of intuitional experience?

Each of us has a multitude of experiences each day: gustatory, olfactory and visual experiences; moods, emotions, and bodily sensations. Each has a phenomenal character; there is something it is like to have it. There is also a global phenomenal character, something it is like *overall* to be a particular conscious being at a particular time. To say that there is an intuitional experience, that intuition has a phenomenal character, is to say that a person's having an intuition contributes to the phenomenal character of her overall experience (§1.2.2).

Contribution to overall experience

What sort of contribution does intuitional experience make? We can

122. We need take no stance on the vexed question of whether all experiences have representational content.

Content-specific and attitude-specific phenomenology

distinguish between two different ways such contributions can be determined. On the one hand, the contribution a mental state makes can depend on the *content* of that mental state. Suppose that if I perceive something red, this makes a different contribution to the character of my overall phenomenal experience than perceiving something green does. In that case, perception has *content-specific phenomenology* (and if not, it does not). On the other hand, it may be that *whatever* I visually perceive, the fact that I am having *a* visual perceptual experience makes a contribution to the character of my overall phenomenal experience: perhaps it contributes a certain ‘visualness’ (Grice 1962/1989). In that case I shall say that perception has *attitude-specific phenomenology*. Of course, perception may have, and indeed actually does have, both attitude-specific and content-specific phenomenology. It is true both that perceiving something red makes a different contribution to the character of my overall experience than perceiving something green does, and that whatever I visually perceive, a certain ‘visualness’ is contributed.

The terms ‘content-specific phenomenology’ and ‘attitude-specific phenomenology’ are not perfect. For one, ‘attitude-specific phenomenology’ might make it sound like the phenomenology suffices to distinguish one attitude from another. As I will be using the terms, this is a substantive question, and in fact I shall argue that intuition and perception *share* aspects of their attitude-specific phenomenology.

The terms may also suggest that the ultimate *origin* of the phenomenology is in the content, or in the attitude, respectively. However, the issues here are subtle, and the terms are intended to leave questions of origin open. It is possible, for example, that a certain attitude only admits content of a particular kind. Some think that perception is like this; it admits only non-conceptual content.¹²³ Suppose that it does, and further that non-conceptual content always makes a different contribution to the character of a person’s overall phenomenal experience than conceptual content does. But suppose that, contrary to fact, no-matter what

123. See n. 6 on page 7 and the text to which it is attached.

the content is, the contribution is always the same. In that case, the way the terms are used here, perception would have attitude-specific phenomenology but not content-specific phenomenology, even though the origin of the phenomenology is in the content. Thus the terms are intended to indicate *variation with*, rather than *ultimate origin in*, content and attitude (although, again, two different attitudes can share aspects of their attitude-specific phenomenology).

We can now more precisely pose the question of what contribution intuition makes to a person's overall experience. We can ask, in particular, both whether intuition has content-specific phenomenology and whether it has attitude-specific phenomenology. In this chapter I argue that intuition does *not* have content-specific phenomenology. In Chapter 5 I argue that it *does* have attitude-specific phenomenology, and I go on to argue, in Chapter 6, that the attitude-specific phenomenology intuition has allows it to play a certain significant epistemic role.

4.2 A Methodological Assumption

In addressing the question of whether intuition has content-specific phenomenology, I will adopt the methodological assumption that intuition has such phenomenology just in case cognition does. That is, I will assume that there is content-specific phenomenology of intuition just in case there is content-specific phenomenology of *thought*.

Why think that this is true? For two main reasons. First, it seems that intuition and perception have the same kind of content. If there is a distinction between the kind of content which thought and belief have, on the one hand, and the kind of content which perception has, on the other (conceptual and non-conceptual content, respectively), it seems clear that intuition has the kind of content which thought and belief have, and not the kind which perception has. Nothing pushes us to think that intuition has non-conceptual content: there is no apparent richness in the content of intuition which it seems that our concepts fall short of capturing, for example (§1.2.1). Moreover, it is as plausible for intuition as it is for belief,

that to have the attitude to a particular content, a person must possess the concepts involved in that content: I can no more intuit that if something is red it is coloured without possessing the concept of colour than I can believe that if something is red it is coloured without possessing that concept.¹²⁴

Second, while there is a difference in the phenomenology of intuition and belief, it seems that there cannot be content-specific phenomenology in one but not in the other. If intuition had content-specific phenomenology but belief did not, then coming to believe what one intuits should be associated with a loss of complexity in phenomenal character. But there is no such loss. Nor is there any gain in complexity, so it is equally unlikely that intuition lacks, but belief has, content-specific phenomenology. For these two reasons, the methodological assumption is a safe one to make.

4.3 Thought

I just made reference to the phenomenology of conscious belief. But is not the topic of the cognitive phenomenology debate the phenomenology of *thought*? Clearly some remarks about the target of investigation are in order. In short, I take the target to be a mental state which we designate in various ways, *inter alia* by saying that we believe that *p* or think that *p*.

Suppose you ask me what I am thinking, and that I answer: “that yesterday was a warm day”. That would be truthful if what I was doing was remembering the sensation of warmth I felt the day before. So one way we use the word ‘thinking’ latches on to the act of remembering ‘in a sensory way’. We remember in sensory ways corresponding to all the sensory modalities, of course, including in the ways corresponding to proprioception (the sense of the location of one’s own body parts) and kinaesthesia (the sense of the way one’s body moves). Thus I may

*Remembering in
a sensory way*

124. Anand Vaidya argues that “it is constitutive of phenomenal intuition that the subject having the intuition possess and understand the concepts that the intuition involves” (*Manuscript*).

truthfully answer your question by saying that I was thinking that it was raining yesterday if what I was doing when you asked was to remember seeing the rain falling yesterday; I might truthfully answer that I was thinking that yesterday's thunderstorm was loud if I was remembering the auditory experience, and so on.

It should be clear that this sense of thinking is not the one at issue in the question of cognitive phenomenology. That thinking in *this* sense contributes to the character of a person's overall phenomenology is not controversial: it clearly does. Parallel considerations hold for bodily sensations, moods and emotions. One way for me to think that I was sad yesterday is for me to remember the feeling of sadness, but again this is not the sense at issue when we ask whether there is something it is like to think that *p*, since remembered bodily sensations, moods and emotions clearly contribute to the character of a person's overall phenomenology.

Suppose you ask me what I am thinking, and I reply: "that gunshots are probably much louder than they appear to be on TV". I would be answering truthfully if, when you asked, I was *imagining* the sound of a gunshot and comparing it with an impression from the TV. Just as we can remember in ways corresponding to all the sensory modalities, it seems that we can *imagine* in ways corresponding to all sensory modalities, and we sometimes use the word 'thinking' to capture this. We can also imagine bodily sensations, moods and emotions. Again, this is not the sense at issue when we ask whether there is something it is like to think that *p*, since it is uncontroversial that imagining in ways corresponding to sensory modalities, bodily sensations, moods and emotions contributes to the character of a person's overall experience.¹²⁵

It is (or should be) uncontroversial that all these mental activities exist, and it is plausible that these are all activities which we sometimes

125. Imagining is often used in a way that involves the imaginer disbelieving what she imagines. I set this part of the meaning aside throughout (or, if you think it is not part of the meaning but merely one of the connotations of the word, I bracket this connotation). In my sense, I might think that it is raining outside by imagining rain outside, even if I firmly believe that it is raining outside.

refer to with the word ‘thinking’ (and its cognates). But there is also a sense of the word that latches on to an activity that does *not* involve remembering or imagining in ways corresponding to sensory modalities, bodily sensations, moods or emotions. *This* is the sense at issue when we ask whether there is something it is like to think that *p*, because this is the sense of ‘thinking’ for which it *is* controversial whether thinking contributes to the character of a person’s overall phenomenology.¹²⁶ It will be useful to have a word to designate this way of thinking. I know of no uncontroversial label, but I will adopt Charles Siewert’s term ‘non-iconic thought’ for this purpose.¹²⁷ This designator for the way of thinking now singled out by exclusion is to be read in as neutral a way as possible.

A question well worth considering is whether there is attitude-specific phenomenology of thought. This is a good question, and one to which we return in §5.8, but it is not the one at issue in this chapter. The debate I intend to participate in here is about the question of whether there is *content*-specific phenomenology of thought; whether thinking that *p* makes a different contribution to the character of a person’s overall phenomenology than does thinking that *q*. For the reasons given I take an answer to this question to be an answer to the question of whether there is content-specific phenomenology of *intuition*.

4.4 Knowability

There are two main lines of argument for the conclusion that there *is* content-specific phenomenology of thought. The first is that we could not know the content of our thoughts in the particular way we do unless there is such phenomenology: the ‘knowability’ argument. The second is that we can come to see that there is content-specific phenomenology of thought via the method of *phenomenal contrast*. In this section I con-

126. Levine (Forthcoming) and Robinson (2005: 534–5) reach very similar conclusions about the topic of the cognitive phenomenology debate as I do here.

127. See Siewert (1998: 263). The way I draw this distinction owes much to Siewert.

sider the first argument; the bulk of the rest of the chapter is devoted to showing why the the second argument should be rejected.

The knowability argument has recently been forcefully advanced by David Pitt:

Normally . . . one is able, consciously, introspectively and non-inferentially . . . to do three distinct . . . things: (a) to distinguish one's occurrent conscious thoughts from one's other occurrent conscious mental states; (b) to distinguish one's occurrent conscious thoughts each from the others; and (c) to identify each of one's occurrent conscious thoughts as the thought it is (i.e., as having the *content* it does). . . . [O]ne would not be able to do these things unless each (type of) occurrent conscious thought had a phenomenology that is (1) different from that of any other type of conscious mental state (proprietary), (2) different from that of any other type of conscious thought (distinctive), and (3) constitutive of its (representational) content (individuating). (Pitt 2004: 7)

The claim of interest to us here is (2), that cognitive phenomenology is *distinctive*, a claim which is, I take it, equivalent to the claim that thought has content-specific phenomenology.¹²⁸ The question, then, is whether a person could know what the content of her thought is, in the way that we do, even if thought lacks content-specific phenomenology.

I do not have much of consequence to add to the case that we *can* know the content of our thought even though thought lacks content-specific phenomenology, so here I mainly advocate the case presented by others. One can argue that we can know the content of our thought even if thought lacks content-specific phenomenology by presenting an explanation of how that could be so. Here is one such explanation, due to Joseph Levine:

128. To see that this is the correct interpretation, note that Pitt says:

I shall argue that what it is like consciously to think a particular thought is (1) different from what it is like to be in any other sort of conscious mental state (i.e., proprietary) and (2) different from what it is like consciously to think any other thought (i.e., distinctive) (2004: 4).

What it is to have knowledge of what one is thinking is to token a mental representation—a mentalese sentence—that expresses the fact that one is thinking what one is thinking. What makes this [immediate] is the fact that this sentence tokening is not the result of an inferential process, but rather an immediate causal result of the first-order thought state itself¹²⁹ (Levine Forthcoming)

When this process is reliable, Levine suggests, the tokening of the higher-order thought can count as knowledge.

Recall that Pitt claims that we know our thoughts ‘consciously, introspectively and non-inferentially’. One might object that the requirement that the knowledge be conscious has fallen out from Levine’s explanation. But as he points out, to require that the knowledge be conscious in a sense stronger than that it be *access-conscious* (Block 1995) begs the question. If to know the content of her thought in ‘the right way’ a person has to know it in precisely the way she knows about her phenomenal experiences, then the conclusion that thought has content-specific phenomenology has been built in from the start. So this objection to the alternative explanation of our knowledge fails. And nor is a regress looming, for to know the content of the higher-order thought, one need not think yet another thought that ‘interprets’ the first one: “[t]o . . . know what one is thinking is just to think it with understanding” (Levine Forthcoming).

I think this answer is basically correct, and I will only make three small points about it. The first is that commitment to mentalese seems orthogonal to Levine’s response. All that is needed is an internal system of representation in which we can ‘think with understanding’; whether it is language-like in a strong sense is besides this point.¹³⁰

129. William Robinson (2005), by contrast, suggests that it is the ubiquitous accompaniment of inner speech to thought which—together with different dispositions to ‘go on’ in various ways, “inferring this and rejecting that” (544)—explains the difference in thought between thinkers. In my view, Robinson overestimates the occurrence of inner speech. Moreover, he significantly *underestimates* the knowability challenge, for it is not clear what role my dispositions to infer or reject can play in giving me *non-inferential* knowledge of the contents of my thoughts.

130. If the system does not need to be language-like in a strong sense to count as mentalese I have no objection to the label, of course.

The second point is that it is unclear why ascendance to the level of higher-order thought is needed. If it is possible—as I think it is—to simply *think with understanding*, then this is surely equally possible ‘on the ground floor’ as it is at a higher level. Put a different way, thinking with understanding is equally possible when the thought does not represent what the content of another thought is, as when it does. It is also unclear why ascendance should be required to ensure *knowledge*; if reliability of ascendance can provide what is required, then so, too, surely, can simply the reliability of thinking with understanding. For, one might say, while we perhaps sometimes think without understanding, the process which gives rise to the good case is surely highly reliable.

But third, let me note that at this point, a stalemate appears to threaten. To some, the possibility of simply ‘thinking with understanding’ in a way that does not involve content-specific phenomenology seems perfectly intelligible. To others, it is anathema. I suspect that this situation cannot be overcome through consideration of the knowability argument. For *if* I can simply think with understanding without content-specific phenomenology, then the knowability argument cannot establish its conclusion, yet if I cannot, it can.

To break the stalemate we seem well advised to focus instead on the other line of argument, to which we now turn.

4.5 Phenomenal Contrast

Phenomenal experience is important to us in our everyday lives. But it is also important in our attempts to understand the world and our place in it. In psychology, subjects’ reports of phenomenal experiences are used as data, both in experimental and clinical settings.¹³¹

Phenomenal experience is also important in philosophy. Some argue,

131. The importance of phenomenal experience to psychology is widely but not universally acknowledged. It was explicitly acknowledged by Elizabeth Spelke, distinguished professor of psychology at Harvard, at a conference there on spatial perception, in October 2010.

for instance, that the phenomenal character of experience allows perceptual beliefs to be immediately justified (Pryor 2000); others that it seeming to someone that such-and-such is the case (partly a phenomenal notion) is the *only* thing that can justify a belief, and that ‘seemings’ can justify beliefs whether they be sensory, mnemonic, intellectual or introspective (Huemer 2005, 2007). Some claim, as we have seen, that phenomenal experience is necessary for us to have immediate knowledge of the content of our own thoughts (Pitt 2004); others that justification supervenes on phenomenology (Smithies 2006); that phenomenal experience is part of what makes certain beliefs infallible (Chalmers 2003); or that it is what makes the content of thought and speech determinate (Horgan and Graham Forthcoming). And many argue that the character of perceptual experience is closely related to its content (see Chalmers 2004 for an overview). And, of course, our ability to determine the character of phenomenal experience is important for the current project, since determining the phenomenal character of intuition is a part of the project of determining its nature.

The problem is that we lack good and authoritative methods for answering questions about the character of phenomenal experience. Widespread stalemate therefore threatens: two parties might agree on what follows from phenomenal experience having a particular character, but disagree about whether or not it does.¹³²

In recent years, however, an optimistic consensus has begun to arise, according to which use of *phenomenal contrast* can provide answers about the phenomenal character of experience.¹³³ One of the things it has been thought that such arguments can establish is that thought has content-

132. This well-known example can serve to highlight the problem:

[T]here is always to be remembered that famous session of the Society of Experimental Psychologists in which Titchener, after hot debate with Holt, exclaimed: “You can see that green is neither yellowish nor bluish!” And Holt replied: “On the contrary, it is obvious that a green is that yellow-blue which is just exactly as blue as it is yellow (Boring 1946: 176).

133. For explicit discussion see Siegel (2006a), Kriegel (2007a) and Kriegel and Horgan (Forthcoming). Others signal their agreement by using such arguments; numerous examples follow.

specific phenomenology. If that were correct, we would, given the methodological assumption we made in §4.2, be ready to answer the question of whether intuition has content-specific phenomenology in the affirmative.

However, while I share the yearning for a method that can determine the character of phenomenal experiences, I do not share the optimism. Against the growing consensus I argue that important facts about human mental lives systematically block a large class of uses of phenomenal contrast from achieving their aim, and that these *minimal pair* arguments (as I will dub them) therefore fail, quite generally (§4.8). Not all uses of phenomenal contrast amount to minimal pair arguments, but many do (§4.7 and 4.9.1). If I am right, and if significant objections can be rebutted (§4.9), the growing optimism is to a large extent unwarranted.

Our specific goal is to answer the question of whether intuition has content-specific phenomenology. But to get clear on the status of minimal pair arguments, it is useful to consider such arguments in more general terms. In the next few sections that is what we shall do.

4.6 The Structure of Minimal Pair Arguments

Any argument in which a significant role is played by the claim that two or more situations differ from each other with respect to phenomenology could be said to employ phenomenal contrast. The class of minimal pair arguments, on the other hand, is quite restricted: it is unified both in aim and method.

The aim of such arguments is to rationally persuade us that a particular mental feature *M* contributes to the character of experience.¹³⁴ For instance, pain is widely acknowledged to be a contributor, but other mental features are more controversial. Whether thinking that *p* makes a different contribution than thinking that *q* does has been the subject of many

134. An intuitive understanding of ‘contributing to experience’ is good enough. See also Peacocke (1998).

minimal pair arguments, but, as we shall see, such arguments have been advanced for other conclusions as well.

As for the method, minimal pair arguments proceed by describing a pair of situations in which a person might find herself. There are three desiderata for this description. First, the situations should of course differ from each other with respect to the crucial mental feature **M**, the one which the proponent of the argument seeks to establish is a contributor. Unless the proponent blunders badly this desideratum is always fulfilled, usually by stipulation. Second, the situations should approximate a *truly minimal pair*: situations which differ *only* in **M**. Finally, the description should produce a clear reaction that what it would be like to be in one of the described situations is different from what it would be like to be in the other: the character of a person's overall phenomenal experience would differ in the two cases.

In the ideal case the audience has no doubt about this: the person's overall phenomenal experience would be different in the two cases. Because the pair is truly minimal, no explanation of this fact can be given in terms of differences in *acknowledged contributors*, mental features which both sides take to be contributors. This gives rise to pressure to acknowledge a new contributor. Since **M** is the only difference between the two situations, **M** must be it.

Actual instances of minimal pair arguments are not ideal. In particular, the second and third desiderata pull in opposite directions, and pro-
A tension ponents must seek a compromise between the two. The closer we come to a truly minimal pair, the less certain we are that there really would be a difference in the character of the person's overall experience. The more certain we are that there would be, the further we are from a truly minimal pair, and the less pressure there is, consequently, to conclude that **M** really is responsible for the difference. I claim that no compromise position leaves minimal pair arguments rationally persuasive.

But before defending this claim, I want to present a more formal version of the (non-ideal) argument:

Minimal Pair Argument:

- (1) If a person were to find herself in the two situations described, the character of her overall phenomenal experience would be different in the two cases
 - (2) The person would also differ with respect to **M**
 - (3) That **M** contributes to phenomenal experience is the best explanation for the difference in overall experience
-
- (4) So, we have good reason to believe that **M** contributes to phenomenal experience

Here the tension is between premises (1) and (3): as the plausibility of (1) increases the plausibility of (3) diminishes, and *vice versa*.

4.7 Examples

In addition to being used to argue that there is cognitive phenomenology, minimal pair arguments have been used to argue that there is *not* cognitive phenomenology, that high-level properties (being the face of a parent, agency, membership in natural kinds, subject independence, perspectival connectedness, causation, ...) are represented in perceptual experience, that understanding has phenomenology, and more besides. Here I discuss four examples from the literature, and show how they fit the structure I have outlined. In so doing I impose a particular interpretation on the texts, and other interpretations are of course possible.¹³⁵ But the interpretations I give are reasonable, and I think the passages are usually understood in the way that I outline.

Cognitive Phenomenology. In *The Significance of Consciousness*, Charles Siewert argues that there is cognitive phenomenology:

135. I consider the significance of several alternative interpretations in §4.9.

[O]n some occasions someone utters a sentence, and you momentarily understand it one way . . . and then are struck by the realization that the speaker meant something else altogether. . . . [O]ne can note a difference in the way it seems to understand it, depending on which way one takes the story. And this is so even if one does not picture anything differently, or picture anything at all, as one interprets it differently.¹³⁶

(Siewert 1998: 278–9)

Here is how I understand Siewert. A person could find herself in two very similar situations, such that in one she understands a recent utterance in one way, and in the other she understands it a different way. The content of her thought (M) would then be different in the two situations. What it would be like to be her would also be different; the character of her overall phenomenology would differ (so premise 1 is true). This would be so even if she did not visually imagine different things in the two situations. The best explanation for this is that thinking a thought with one content makes a different contribution to the character of overall phenomenology than thinking a thought with a different content. So, we have good reason to believe that this is so.

Recognitional Capacities. In “Which Properties are Represented in Perception?”, Susanna Siegel argues that exercising one’s ability to recognise a tree of a certain kind contributes to the character of one’s overall experience:

136. On content, see §1.2.1, and also Siegel (2005/2010) and Siewert (1998: §§6.2 and 8.4). Minimal pair arguments play an important role in Siewert’s argument (see especially his §8.3), but do not exhaust it. Pitt (2004) might also appear to argue in this way for content-specific cognitive phenomenology, but has confirmed in conversation that his intention is to draw attention to the type of phenomenology he claims exists (see §4.9.1), and that he does not regard the discussion in his §4 as an *argument*. (See, however, n. 144 below.) Horgan and Tienson (2002); Horgan and Graham (Forthcoming), Kriegel (2003) and Peacocke (1998) can also be understood to use minimal pair arguments to support the claim that there is content-specific cognitive phenomenology. In contrast, Jacob (1998) argues that there is *not* cognitive phenomenology; Tolhurst (1998) that there is a distinction between a ‘mere desire’ and a ‘felt demand’, and Kriegel (2007a) that there is non-sensory phenomenology (see also Kriegel 2003).

Suppose you have never seen a pine tree before, and are hired to cut down all the pine trees in a grove containing trees of many different sorts. ... [Y]our disposition to distinguish the pine trees from the others [gradually] improves. Eventually, you can spot the pine trees immediately. ... Gaining this recognitional disposition is reflected in a phenomenological difference between the visual experiences you had before and after the recognitional disposition was fully developed.

(Siegel 2006b: 491)

Here is how I understand Siegel. A person might find herself in two very similar situations, such that in one but not the other a capacity to immediately recognise pine trees (M) is exercised. If she did, the character of her overall phenomenology would differ in the two cases (premise 1). The best explanation for this is that exercising a capacity to immediately recognise pine trees contributes to phenomenal experience (premise 3). So we have good reason to believe that this is so.¹³⁷

Phenomenology of Agency. In “The Phenomenology of First Person Agency”, Horgan, Tienson and Graham argue as follows:

Suppose that you deliberately perform an action—say, holding up your right hand and closing your fingers into a fist. ... [The experience of doing that] is certainly not like this: first experiencing an occurrent wish for your right hand to rise and your fingers to move into clenched position, and then passively experiencing your hand and fingers moving in just that way.

(Horgan, Tienson, and Graham 2003: 327–8)

Here is how I understand these authors. It is possible for a person to find herself in two very similar situations, such that in the first but not the second she takes herself to perform certain actions voluntarily (M). What it would be like to be her would be different—the character of her overall phenomenology would differ (premise 1). The best explanation

137. Kriegel (2007a) argues that ‘being mommy’s face’ is represented in experience; Siegel (2006a) that subject independence, perspectival connectedness and causation are.

for this is that taking oneself to perform an action voluntarily contributes to phenomenal experience (premise 3). So we have good reason to believe that this is so.¹³⁸

Understanding. In *Mental Reality*, Galen Strawson argues that there is something it is like to understand a sentence:

[D]oes the difference between Jacques (a monoglot Frenchman) and Jack (a monoglot Englishman), as they listen to the news in French, really consist in the Frenchman's having a different experience? ... It is certainly true that Jacques's experience when listening to the news is very different from Jack's. And the difference between the two can be expressed by saying that Jacques, when exposed to the stream of sound, has what one may perfectly well call ... 'an understanding-experience', while Jack does not.

(Strawson 1994/2010: 5-6)

Here is how I understand Strawson. It is possible for a person to find herself in two very similar situations, such that in the first she hears a sentence without understanding it, whereas in the second she does understand it (M). If she did, what it would be like to be her would be different in the two cases—the character of her overall phenomenology would differ (premise 1). The best explanation for this is that understanding a sentence contributes to overall phenomenology (premise 3). So we have good reason to believe that this is so.¹³⁹

138. The authors say they wish to 'bring into focus' the aspect of phenomenology they are interested in, perhaps indicating an ostensive use of phenomenal contrast (§4.9.1), but the passage is also naturally understood as an argument. (Terry Horgan has indicated in discussion that he thinks that phenomenal contrast arguments are just fine as arguments.) See also Searle (1983: Chapter 3).

139. There are a number of points to note here. First, that Strawson uses two different people in his presentation is of course immaterial. Second, I interpret Strawson as taking as his explanandum the existence of a difference in overall phenomenology. This is important (see §4.8). But it is possible to understand him otherwise; in particular the surrounding text might lead one to interpret him as claiming that a certain kind of experience cannot be explained by other contributors. I discuss this possibility in §4.9.4 below. Third, it would be natural to understand Strawson as defending attitude-

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I have given an informal explanation of minimal pair arguments, explained how a tension arises between two desiderata for such arguments, given a more formal version of the argument, and shown how some prominent examples of phenomenal contrast can be understood as minimal pair arguments. I next offer my critique of such arguments.

4.8 A Minimal Pair Argument

Suppose you encounter someone who doubts what I presume seems obviously true to you: that perceiving something red makes a different contribution to experience than does perceiving something green. How might you rationally persuade her? Suppose you tried the following

Cinema Screen Argument:

Imagine that you are sitting in a comfortable seat in the middle of a dark movie theatre. You are not in pain, you are not hungry or thirsty, and you are sitting still. The screen turns a uniform green. You stare at the screen, concentrating on it. This is the first situation. You relax, closing your eyes. When you open them again, the screen is a uniform red. You stare at it, concentrating on it. This is the second situation. Clearly, the character of your overall phenomenal experience would be different in the two situations. The best

specific phenomenology here (see §4.1). But Strawson does not seem to think there is attitude-specific phenomenology *or* content-specific phenomenology of understanding. He seems to think that understanding makes a difference to the character of a person's overall phenomenal experience, but not necessarily the same one each time:

To talk of understanding-experience, then, is not to commit oneself to the implausible view that there is some single qualitative type of experience that anyone who has understanding-experience must have. It is not to commit oneself to the view that particular qualitative experiences invariably go with understanding particular sentences (Strawson 1994/2010: 7).

The Jack–Jacques passage is sometimes understood as an argument for content-specific phenomenology (see e.g. Horgan and Graham Forthcoming: n. 6), but it seems clear that this is not the author's intention.

explanation for this is that perceiving something green makes a different contribution to experience than does perceiving something red.

I do not deny that this argument *seems* convincing. But I claim that it is in fact not rationally persuasive: we should resist the pull and not be convinced. To see why, we need to note two important truths about our mental lives:

Richness: At most times there is a lot going on in our mental lives: several remembered, occurrent and imagined bodily sensations, moods and emotions usually occur at the same time (or near enough), and many thoughts go through a person's head. Our mental lives are *rich* with activity.

Flux: Many (or most) of these goings-on are evanescent; a remembered bodily sensation may last only a fraction of a second, and what we attend to changes often. Our mental lives are in constant *flux*.

An argument may be rationally persuasive given agreement on one set of facts (actual agreement, or merely for the sake of argument), but not given another. Let us suppose that you and your interlocutor agree that *occurrent*, *remembered* and *imagined* bodily sensations, moods and emotions all contribute to the character of a person's overall phenomenology. You also agree that there is content-specific cognitive phenomenology (thinking that *p* makes a different contribution than thinking that *q*) and that attention makes a difference *to the difference* each of these contributors makes.¹⁴⁰ Together, these claims constitute your common ground, call it CG₁.¹⁴¹

Since human mental lives are *rich* with activity, a large number of the contributors acknowledged by CG₁ will obtain at any given time. Given

140. One could classify attention as itself a contributor, but it seems more natural to regard it as something which modifies the contribution other contributors make.

141. In §4.9.5 below I consider what happens if we choose a different common ground.

Flux, the set will be different at any other time, barring a massive coincidence. The explanandum in a minimal pair argument is the existence of a difference in overall experience. But all these differences in contributors between the two situations provide possible explanations of that datum. Each of them is as good as all the others, and each explains the datum as well as the hypothesis that **M** is a contributor. That hypothesis is therefore not the best explanation of the datum. Premise (3) is false.

There is no denying that a difference in overall phenomenology really is the explanandum in the **Cinema Screen Argument**. As I have shown, the examples given above are also reasonably understood in this way. The critique against the **Cinema Screen Argument** therefore applies with equal force to all those arguments. **Richness** and **Flux**, these two important facts about our mental lives, show that none of them can rationally persuade us of their conclusions.

4.8.1 An Invitation to be Resisted

The **Cinema Screen Argument** specifies that the subject is not in pain, not hungry or thirsty, and is sitting still. The purpose of this is of course to exclude pain, hunger, thirst and the feeling of the seat against the subject's body as possible explanations for the difference in overall phenomenology.

Similar specifications are common in minimal pair arguments; we saw some examples above. They are rhetorically important. With differences in pain, hunger, thirst and the feeling of the chair against the body excluded, there is still a strong reaction that there would be a difference in overall phenomenology. As we have seen, we can only be rationally persuaded that **M** is a contributor if all the other potential explanations of the difference in overall phenomenology are out of the picture. Therefore, by listing *some* exclusions, the proponent must be understood to invite us to think that the list could be extended until all acknowledged contributors are excluded, with no difference in the result.

That invitation should be resisted. The list of contributors acknowl-

edged by CG_1 is long, and the listed exclusions give us no reason to believe that none of the other contributors differ between the situations. Occurrent bodily sensations (apart from pain, hunger and thirst), occurrent moods and emotions, remembered and imagined bodily sensations, moods and emotions; thought and attention, all these are in play. Our mental lives are characterised by **Richness** and **Flux**, so we have every reason to believe that many of these will differ between the two situations. Each difference makes possible an explanation as good as every other. Again: premise (3) is false. The minimal pair argument fails.

4.9 Objections and Replies

In this section I consider and reply to a number of objections.

4.9.1 Ostension

One can distinguish two quite different ways of using phenomenal contrast. On the one hand, phenomenal contrast can be used as a way of ‘pointing’; on the other hand it can be used in an effort to rationally persuade someone. Call these ‘ostensive’ and ‘argumentative’ uses, respectively.

Ostensive uses It is natural to understand ostensive uses as targeting a particular audience, namely those who are in at least approximate agreement with the proponent with respect to contributors. Such uses can also be understood to have a particular aim, namely to assist the audience in focusing attention on certain features of phenomenology, or to make those features easier to notice and appreciate.

Argumentative uses For argumentative uses, the audience is those who disagree with the proponent about what kinds of phenomenology there are, or at least those who are undecided on the matter. The goal is to rationally persuade the audience that a claim about phenomenal experience is true.

The **Cinema Screen Argument** is most naturally understood as, precisely, an argument, and §4.8 above proceeds from this perspective. But

the case could also be used ostensively, perhaps with the aim of acquainting the audience with a difference in phenomenology that the author believes would obtain. And it is in general possible to understand at least some uses of phenomenal contrast as ostensive.¹⁴² However, as we have seen (§4.7), many uses of phenomenal contrast are reasonably understood as presenting arguments properly speaking.

It is possible that my argument should also give one pause about ostensive uses.¹⁴³ But nothing here hinges on this. If someone responds to my argument by saying that their use of phenomenal contrast was never intended to rationally persuade, then they do not contest my conclusion. I therefore set aside ostensive uses in what follows.¹⁴⁴

4.9.2 Stipulation

One way to attempt to resist the argument in §4.8 is to claim that there is a difference in overall phenomenology *even though* none of the other contributors differ between the two situations. On this line, **Richness** and **Flux** do not bar one from showing that something is left unexplained by acknowledged contributors. There are two main ways to go here: via stipulation or memory. I deal with these in turn.

Suppose someone said the following:

142. It is significant, for example, that many of those who use phenomenal contrast to argue for content-specific cognitive phenomenology also seem to hold the view that a difference in the content of thought would *metaphysically necessitate* a difference in phenomenology. Perhaps most of the argumentative weight is placed on the considerations presented in favour of that view. See [Horgan and Tienson \(2002\)](#) and [Pitt \(2004\)](#). That claim of necessitation is usually restricted to narrow content, and Siewert seems to hold that most though not all differences in narrow content necessitate a difference in phenomenology, see his 1998 §§8.4–8.5, esp. 287–9. See also [Kriegel and Horgan \(Forthcoming\)](#). For a recent argument that this restriction is unnecessary, see [Farkas \(2008\)](#).

143. I consider this question in §5.2. Thanks to Jonathan Farrell for discussion.

144. David Pitt has suggested that *showing* a person that a certain feature contributes to overall phenomenology might count as a legitimate way to convince him of this. He suggests we might call this ‘experiential persuasion’, and mentions smacking someone who does not believe in pain phenomenology as an example. However attractive this option may at times seem, I do not count it as a method of rational persuasion.

I do not need to *invite* my opponent to believe that there are no other relevant differences between the first and the second situation; I simply *stipulate* that there isn't. I add to the description that there is no difference in occurrent bodily sensations, in remembered or imagined bodily sensation, mood or emotion, and no difference in thought or attention. This allows me to establish my conclusion.

If indeed there were no differences in *any* of the contributors acknowledged by CG_1 but there clearly would be a difference in the character of overall experience, the cinema screen argument would give non-negligible support to the view that there is content-specific phenomenology of perception. Still, I think we can easily see that this strategy does not get one far.

First, it is very far from clear that the intuition that there would be a difference in the character of a person's overall phenomenology between the two situations actually survives this stipulation. I doubt that it does. When I really try to imagine that there is *no* difference between the two situations other than the difference in the colour projected on the screen, attempting to exclude one by one all the other contributors, the situation soon becomes too alien. My mental life is characterised by **Richness** and **Flux**, and in the situation I am trying to imagine these deep facts about me no longer hold. The result is that I fail to have any intuition about overall phenomenology at all.

That the cinema screen argument has a plausible conclusion must not be allowed to muddle our judgement. I agree that there is content-specific phenomenology of perception; indeed I take myself to know that there is. And it is of course legitimate for anyone pondering the case to *apply* her existing knowledge to it. If I know that there is content-specific phenomenology of perception and that the situations have different perceptual content, I can come to know that the situations differ in phenomenal experience. But this knowledge does not *arise* from the minimal pair case, and such considerations are of no help when the aim is to rationally persuade someone who lacks this knowledge. What is needed is a clear in-

*Knowledge
applied vs.
knowledge
arising*

tuition *about the case as described*. That is what I am reporting that I lack.

Second, if someone were to report such an intuition, I think we have little reason to trust it. Our intuitions about what it would be like to be in a certain situation are likely to be heavily influenced by our previous experiences. Since our mental lives are characterised by **Richness** and **Flux**, it is overwhelmingly likely that nearly all our experiences are from situations that differ from each other in *many* contributors—only a truly astronomical coincidence could bar this.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, even if we try to respond to the case as described, it is likely that our past experience will overwhelm our attempts, so that our judgements reflect that past experience rather than the case. So even if we had intuitions about such cases, we lack good reason to give them weight.¹⁴⁶ So stipulation offers no help.

We can begin to understand why minimal pair arguments *seem* persuasive by noting that, when we consider them, we naturally consider counterfactual conditionals. And this conditional is, of course, *true*:

If a human being were to find herself in situations such as those originally described (before extra stipulation was brought in), there would be a difference between the first and the second situation in the character of the person's overall phenomenology

In close possible worlds human beings are much like us, so their mental lives are substantially characterised by **Richness** and **Flux**. Between any two situations there are for them, just as there are for us, differences in many contributors. So the counterfactual is true.

The claim is that we in effect respond to the above counterfactual, even if we try to consider a case where all the acknowledged contributors are excluded by stipulation. And in most cases, of course, one does

145. I take it to be possible, but extremely unlikely, to find oneself in two situations differing in only one contributor. This possibility does no damage to my case. It can still be true, of course, that the vast majority of our experiences are from situations which differ from each other in a range of contributors.

146. This does not lead to wholesale skepticism about intuition, since there is a special reason here to suppose that our intuition results from past experience.

not even make an effort to exclude all acknowledged contributors, but contents oneself with thinking about a case where just a few of them are excluded.

4.9.3 Memory

One might instead claim that one can *remember* situations that differ only in what is visually perceived and in overall phenomenology. To see why this response fails we need to make a further note about our mental lives:

Poor Identification and Remembrance:

A large proportion of the episodes that contribute to the richness of our mental lives are of short duration, and are typically not paid much notice. Partly as a consequence of not paying attention, but also because our introspective abilities are just not that acute, our mental goings-on are often poorly identified. A mental goings-on not identified at the time of occurrence is unlikely to be correctly remembered later. Many of those that are correctly identified at the time will also not be committed to memory. So our mental goings-on are usually poorly remembered later.¹⁴⁷

If **Poor Identification and Remembrance** is true, that there are pairs of situations *between which* one can only remember the difference in, say, perceived colour and overall phenomenology, does not provide one with good evidence for the belief that those *really were* the only differences between the two situations. Given **Richness** and **Flux**, we have every reason

147. For example: earlier in the day I was irritated after having spent, I thought, far too long in a queue. (This happens a lot.) Various things can now remind me of this emotion, without thereby making me irritated again. When I remember this emotion, this changes the character of my overall phenomenology. I may well fail to recognise this episode of remembering for what it is. I might, for instance, easily misidentify the episode as frustration with my current progress in writing. (We might instead say that I do get irritated again when I am reminded of my former irritation, but only very mildly. This difference does not matter for our purposes, and may be merely terminological.)

to believe that we experience no such pairs, and so do not remember any. So this response fails.¹⁴⁸

Finally, it is worth noting that, while we also often fail to notice and remember changes in our overall phenomenology, we are comparatively better at recognising such changes than we are at determining which contributor(s) is (are) responsible for them. This, of course, is precisely what makes arguments which start with a difference in overall phenomenology attractive to begin with.

4.9.4 Thicker Explananda

The two replies above claim that there is a difference in overall phenomenology even when no acknowledged contributor differs. A different strategy is to accept that there will always be differences in acknowledged contributors, but to claim that the variance in M is nevertheless needed for adequate explanation. What needs explaining, it might be claimed, is not merely *that there is* a difference in overall phenomenology, but something more. I consider four such responses.

The first claims that the *magnitude of difference* in phenomenal expe-

148. Some might worry that **Richness**, **Flux**, and **Poor Identification and Remembrance** are jointly self-undermining. If we are so bad at identifying and remembering our mental goings-on, how can we know that our mental lives are characterised by **Richness** and **Flux**? Here is how.

We do not usually focus our attention on our phenomenology, but we can. The **Richness** of the experience is then revealed to us, and its fluctuating character likewise. Even just within tactile phenomenology, for example, there is a lot going on, and there are rapid changes. In one moment I am strongly aware of the feel of the soles of my feet, a moment later my typing fingertips dominate the tactile phenomenology, then a slight back-pain, the feeling of the arm-rest under my arm, the feeling of my body making contact with the chair, and so on. As I shift my attention around, what is in focus comes to make a more significant contribution to the character of my experience.

One can easily see that the same goes for other types of perceptual phenomenology by switching one's attention to, say, auditory phenomenology. If contributors do not contribute to overall phenomenology only when in focal attention—which I assume without argument—we also come to know that there are contributions that we do not recognise at the time, and so do not remember. So, many contributors go unnoticed and without being remembered, not just one or a few. So **Richness**, **Flux**, and **Poor Identification and Remembrance** do not undermine each other.

rience is greater than can be accounted for by differences in other contributors. To explain the entire difference in experience we need to make reference to variance in *M*. Call this 'the magnitude reply'.

A second response argues that the difference in overall phenomenology is partly *of a kind* such that the differences in other contributors cannot explain (a certain aspect of) it. There are differences in other contributors, but they leave a particular kind of difference unexplained. Call this 'the kind reply'.

A third response claims that if we iterate the cinema screen experiment with different colours, the person will be aware that the differences are not the same in each case. Call this 'the different difference reply'.

Finally, one might claim that if we repeat the original cinema screen setup numerous times while systematically varying other features of the situations, the person will be able to recognise an aspect of the overall difference each time. That aspect is the real explanandum. Call this 'the persistent difference reply'.

*

The first reply fails because it relies on implausibly denying **Poor Identification and Remembrance**, and on claiming that we can accurately estimate magnitudes of change in overall phenomenology and magnitudes attributable to various contributors. If **Poor Identification and Remembrance** is true, there is no way to support the claim that the amount of difference overall cannot be accounted for by acknowledged contributors, since in each instance there will be contributors that were not correctly identified initially, or that were since forgotten.

The magnitude reply also implausibly relies on abilities to accurately estimate magnitudes of difference in our overall phenomenology, to accurately estimate the magnitude of difference attributable to a certain specific contributor, and to accurately 'add together' several instances of the latter. If we cannot do these things, how could we tell that the difference in phenomenal experience is larger than what can be accounted for by differences in acknowledged contributors? The very least that would

be required are abilities to classify an overall change as too large to be accounted for by changes in certain other contributors. But there is no reason to think that we have such abilities. So the magnitude reply fails.¹⁴⁹

The kind reply, on the other hand, begs the question. The proponent wishes to show that the acknowledged contributors cannot explain the difference in phenomenology, and that reference to *M* is therefore needed. If she takes as her *datum* that there is phenomenology of a kind that the other contributors cannot possibly explain, then she has assumed what she set out to demonstrate.

It should be clear that taking a different difference as one's starting point does not help. Our minds are characterised by *Richness* and *Flux*, so this datum is easily explained without reference to variance in *M*.

In the persistent difference reply, the alleged datum is an aspect recognised across iterations of the setup. Can the existence of this alleged datum be adequately supported? To say that we *remember* a common aspect though various pairs of situations is to place a strong bet on our abilities to identify, separate out, and remember detailed aspects of our phenomenology. We have good reasons to doubt that we have such abilities: things often taste, feel, sound and look very different from what we seem to remember.

Can we perhaps *intuit* that an aspect of what changed from one situation to the next would be invariant across iterations of the setup? I could not reply to *that* claim as before, by saying that our intuitions are overwhelmed by previous experience and not responsive to the situation described. Our experience is characterised by *Richness* and *Flux*, so there is no persistent difference in our experience to 'overwhelm' our intuitions of the case. So my account predicts that the intuition should not obtain.

Fortunately, there is no intuition of sufficient strength and clarity to create a problem.¹⁵⁰ We can, as before, apply previous knowledge to the cases, and in this way come to know that there would be a persistent

149. Thanks to Clas Weber for helpful discussion. Of course, I need not and do not claim that we have *no* such abilities whatever.

150. This is even clearer in the case of cognitive phenomenology, discussed in §4.10.

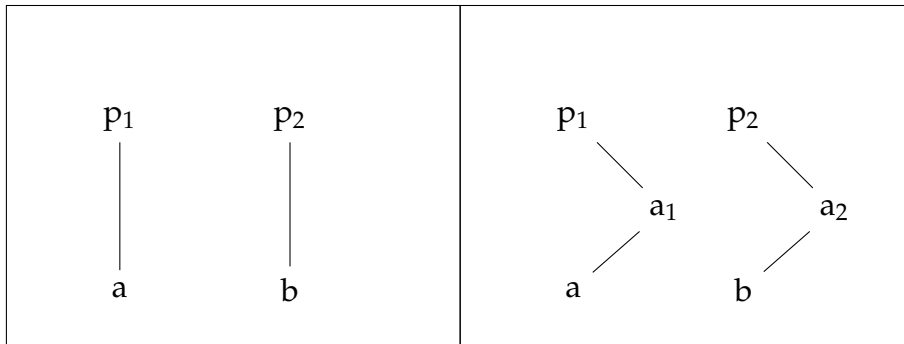


Figure 4.1: Associated states blocking the inference

difference. But we must distinguish this from an intuitive reaction to the case as described. The latter would support the minimal pair argument, but the former could not.

Would the proponent have what she needed if we bracketed this concern, and granted the purported datum? Not obviously. In Figure 4.1, p_1 and p_2 are two different characters of overall phenomenology, a and b are perceptions with different content (a green screen and a red screen, for example), a_1 and a_2 are associated states, and $a_1 \neq a_2$. The proponent wishes to establish that what is perceived *directly* contributes to the character of a person's overall phenomenology; it makes such a difference *by itself*. She thus wishes to endorse the picture on the left but reject the picture on the right. But remembering a persistent difference is not enough for this.

If associated states intervene between the content of perception and the character of overall phenomenology, the question of whether the difference in overall phenomenology is attributable to perception in the correct way depends on what those states are. If the intervening states themselves are acknowledged contributors, the conclusion cannot be established. Moreover, it is plausible that the common ground must *rule out* the intervening states as contributors for the conclusion to be established. If it is an open question whether the associated state is a contributor, how could the argument establish that it is **M** which explains the difference?

Let a_1 and a_2 be slight emotional reactions. A green colour may be stably associated with one emotional reaction (a_1) and a red colour with another (a_2). On CG_1 emotions are contributors, so the datum could be explained without appeal to M .¹⁵¹

For the persistent difference reply to work, then, two significant hurdles must be overcome. First, the existence of the datum must be established. Second, an intervening state that is itself a contributor must be ruled out. But there is no reason to think this can be accomplished.¹⁵²

Could we make the datum even thicker? Could we combine the alleged memory of a persisting difference with a memory of associated states *not* obtaining? Proponents of minimal pair arguments sometimes appear to claim that this can be done. For example, in arguing that there is content-specific cognitive phenomenology, Siewert claims that we can exclude differences in imagined or remembered visual perception: “clearly [the difference in overall phenomenology] does not have to do with whether or not it seems to us as it does to image different things. For there may be no difference of that kind” (1998: 276).

This much is true: we can sometimes check for imagination of some particular thing; we can tell whether we are currently visually imagining a pink rhinoceros, for example. But that does not show that we can exclude a contributor wholesale. I think we cannot do that. Suppose we agree, for instance, that the person in the cinema can be certain that she feels no hint of anger. To exclude the picture on the right she would have to exclude *any* other emotional reaction, as well any other acknowledged (or even: not ruled out) contributor being stably related to the perceptual states. It is not plausible that this can be done.

151. These considerations also apply if the purported datum is a magnitude of phenomenal difference or a difference of a kind that cannot otherwise be accounted for.

152. It is crucial to keep in mind the distinction between an argument, capable of rationally persuading through conscious deliberation, and a process that happens at the sub-personal level. If I know that there is content-specific phenomenology of perception I must have come to know that somehow. One possibility is that this comes about through sub-personal abstraction from a large number of experiences. Keeping the door open for this possibility does nothing to undermine the point made here.

4.9.5 A Different Common Ground

One might complain that CG_1 is implausibly comprehensive, and that a minimal pair argument would do better against a thinner common ground.

The common ground for the cinema screen argument was not arbitrarily chosen, for it mirrors the common ground operative in the cognitive phenomenology debate. What is at issue there, is here part of the common ground, and *vice versa*, otherwise the two are identical. The failure of the cinema screen argument therefore rather directly shows that minimal pair arguments fail in the cognitive phenomenology debate, too.

Secondly, slimming down the common ground will not help. If *no* mental feature is acknowledged as a contributor by both parties, it will, of course, be easy to show that a particular difference in overall phenomenology is not explained by an acknowledged contributor. But that is of no help if the goal is to establish a particular feature as a contributor.

Suppose we aim for something in between, and subtract, say, cognitive phenomenology from CG_1 . Then, not only does the proponent have to convince her audience that there is no difference in occurrent, remembered or imagined bodily sensations, moods, emotions and attention, but still a difference in the character of overall phenomenology. Should she manage that formidable task there would now be (at least) two candidate explanations for the difference in overall phenomenology, and she would have to make the case that her favourite is the most plausible one.

4.9.6 Proving Too Much?

Besides begging the question, another problem with the kind reply is that the interlocutor will not grant the existence of the explanandum. She will deny that there is a kind of difference in phenomenal experience that the other contributors are not suited to explain. But is there not something wrong with such a person? And am I not committed to denying this?

I do deny that her *failing to be convinced* by the minimal pair argument shows that something is wrong. She is right to not be convinced by that

argument. This is of course entirely compatible with the possibility that *the fact that she does not already know* shows there is something wrong with her. That may be.

Some worry that the cinema screen argument is *obviously* correct, so there must be something wrong with my argument. I answer that the argument merely *seems* rationally persuasive, probably because we already know that the conclusion is true, and because applying the knowledge to the case is so quick and easy. But applying knowledge is not the same as that knowledge arising from the case in question. The argument in §4.8 shows that it does not.

If a medical doctor presses my chest twice and gets an angry “Ow!” the second time, is she not entitled to conclude that I experienced pain? Am I not committed to denying this? She is so entitled, but I am not thus committed. That bodily sensations contribute to the character of experience is part of the common ground which the doctor and I share. The issues I raise therefore do not arise.

Am I committed to rejecting all manner of apparently good explanations, because there is always the possibility of confounding factors? No. I have not merely presented the possibility of a confounding factor; I have argued that factors will almost certainly be present which can explain everything that needs explaining. If that situation is found elsewhere the conclusion should be the same, even if the arguments initially seem worthwhile. So my argument does not prove too much, nor does it commit me to denying the obvious.

4.9.7 Lessons Learned

The discussion has concerned a particular example and a particular common ground. But the conclusion is general: minimal pair arguments cannot rationally persuade us.

Because our mental lives are characterised by *Richness* and *Flux*, on any reasonable common ground there will be many differences in acknowledged contributors between two situations. Each of these can ex-

plain a difference in overall phenomenology. We cannot stipulate that there are no differences in these contributors, because if we do, the intuition that there is a difference in the overall phenomenal experience is likely to vanish, and is in any case not to be trusted. Claiming to remember such a situation is of no help, for a situation about which one can only remember the difference in a certain feature does not provide good evidence that that actually was the only difference.

We cannot salvage the argument by claiming phenomenology of a special kind: that begs the question. We cannot claim that the magnitude of difference in overall phenomenal experience is greater than what the acknowledged contributors can explain, for we cannot detect magnitudes of phenomenal differences to the required level of accuracy. We get no help from the different difference reply: that the difference should vary is precisely what the argument predicts. And we cannot adduce a persistent difference across iterations, for this alleged datum cannot be established either by memory or by intuition, and would anyway not rule out that associated states distinct from *M* are really responsible.

The conclusion stands.

4.10 Cognitive Phenomenology

I have presented a critique of minimal pair arguments, considered a range of objections, but found that the conclusion stands: minimal pair arguments cannot rationally persuade us. But our concern here is not first and foremost with philosophical methodology in the abstract, but with its application to the case of cognitive phenomenology. For we are using the case of cognitive phenomenology to draw conclusions about whether or not intuition has content-specific phenomenology. And many philosophers have advanced minimal pair arguments for content-specific phenomenology of cognition. We already saw a case of this in §4.7 above; let us now consider some further examples.

Ambiguity: Many sentences in English are ambiguous. Examples include ‘Wake up, time flies!’ (motivational speech, or reprimand to an official at the insect races); ‘Don’t be mad!’ (plea not to be angry, or crazy); and ‘This curry is hot!’ (exclamation about degrees centigrade, or chilli-content). Suppose I record myself uttering these sentence, and play each recording to you twice. I give you a paper with the sentences on it, and ask you to read along. Suppose you are aware of one meaning the first time, and the other the other. There is a difference in the content of your thought (M), and a difference in your overall experience. The best explanation for the latter is that M contributes to experience. So we have good reason to believe that this is so.¹⁵³

Hidden Meaning: Some sentences in English are difficult to parse. Examples include ‘The boat sailed down the river sank’ (the boat, which someone sailed down the river, sank); ‘The boy the man the girl saw chased fled’ (the boy, who was chased by the man who the girl saw, fled); ‘Dogs dogs dog dog dogs’ (Dogs which are such that other dogs dog (chase) them, dog (chase) yet other dogs).¹⁵⁴ I present such sentences to you as before. You are unable to parse each the first time, but able to do so the second. There is a difference in the content of your thought (M), and a difference in your overall experience. The best explanation for the latter is that M contributes to experience. So we have good reason to believe that this is so.

Understanding: I read a story to my nephew. I start thinking about something else, but go on reading. Later I become aware that my thoughts have wandered, and start paying attention to what I am saying again. It takes me a few seconds to become aware of the meaning of my words. I double-take, and pronounce a (part of a)

153. The examples are from [Siewert \(1998: 278-82\)](#) and [Horgan and Tienson \(2002: 523\)](#). Here as in some of the cases that follow, I have modified the examples slightly to remove unimportant problems.

154. These examples are from [Pitt \(2004: 27-8\)](#), but see n. 136.

sentence twice, understanding what I say the second time but not the first. There is a difference in the content of my thought (M), and a difference in my overall experience. The best explanation for the latter is that M contributes to experience. So we have good reason to believe that this is so.¹⁵⁵

Sudden Thought: Suppose you are driving toward a green traffic light. Suddenly you become aware that the light may be about to change, and you wonder whether you should speed up. You do not say, out loud or to yourself, ‘The light may be about to change’, nor do you visualise the change. There is a difference in the content of your thought (M), and a difference in your overall experience. The best explanation for the latter is that M contributes to experience. So we have good reason to believe that this is so.¹⁵⁶

Most discussants agree that occurrent, remembered and imagined perceptions, bodily sensations, moods and emotions contribute to the character of overall phenomenology, so I take this to be the relevant common ground. Call it CG₂.

Just as in the cinema screen case, these examples are designed to exclude a small number of contributors that easily come to mind. **Ambiguity**, for example, is obviously built to exclude auditory phenomenology as responsible for the difference in the character of overall phenomenology. It seems that you can become aware of the different meanings without there being anything different about the way the sentence *sounds*. (This can be disputed; I grant it here.) You also read the sentence, so the visual contribution to your overall phenomenal experience appears to be the same. Parallel considerations hold for **Hidden Meaning** and **Understanding**. **Sudden Thought** is superficially different, since contributors that stay the same are not expressly described. But the description is de-

155. A similar example occurs in Siewert (1998: 275-6), but this version avoids differences in attention present there. See also Strawson (1994/2010) and Kriegel (2007a).

156. The example is from Siewert (1998: 277).

signed to rule out plausible candidates for differences in them (overt or inner speech, visualisation).

As before, we are invited to think that the list of exclusions can be extended to all the acknowledged contributors, and we should resist that invitation. But the examples can be resisted at an even earlier stage.

It is easy to accept that the *dominant* part of your auditory phenomenology in the first two examples will be the sound of my voice as it is played back to you. But this does not show that this will be all your auditory phenomenology consists in. The sounds in the background will likely differ between the two cases, and even if not, your attention to background sounds probably will. These are candidate explanations. Similarly, the dominant visual phenomenology stemming from seeing the written sentence does not imply that that is all your visual phenomenology consists in. If you attend slightly to something in your peripheral vision in one case but not in the other, this may explain the difference in experience. In the last example, what the person hears and sees changes as the car moves. This may well account for what difference there is between the cases. So, even before moving beyond visual and auditory phenomenology we have found reason to doubt these arguments.

There are, of course, many other contributors of the occurrent variety that could also account for the difference. Occurrent perception in the other modalities is likely to change. There will likely be occurrent emotional reactions triggered by coming to think a content that was not thought before. For example, understanding ‘Don’t be mad!’ as being about anger seems perfectly likely to trigger an emotional reaction.

In his discussion of **Sudden Thought**, Siewert notes that the traffic light thought need not be associated with any great emotional highs or lows. True. But emotions contribute to overall experience even if they are short-lived and not of great intensity. So emotion may well explain what difference there is in overall phenomenology. If you have experienced severe peak-hour traffic, the thought may be associated with at least a weak annoyance or frustration for you. And so on.

We have considered occurrent versions, but contributors also include the remembered and imagined varieties. In *Ambiguity*, when becoming aware of the reading that corresponds to a reprimand at the insect races, you may briefly imagine the way buzzing insects sound on a summer day, or faintly remember an experience of that sound. You might imagine a different sound altogether, maybe the starter's gun at a different type of race comes to mind, via memory or imagination. You might imagine or remember the feeling of the sun warming your skin on a summer day, the faint smell of honey on the sandwich that attracted the buzzing bees, or some other perception altogether. And there are countless other possibilities, just among perceptual experiences. In addition, you might remember or imagine bodily sensations (a bee sting, the feeling of being over-full after too many honey sandwiches, ...), or moods or emotional reactions (fear of bees, delight of impending honey-consumption, ...).

What is needed, then, is not only that the difference in experience cannot be accounted for by differences in occurrent perceptions, bodily sensations and moods and emotional states, or differences in the way the subject focuses on one or more of these. The friend of cognitive phenomenology also needs to establish that there is likely to be no difference in *remembered* or *imagined* perceptions, bodily sensations, moods and emotional states, nor (arguably) a difference in the vivacity with which any of these are remembered or imagined, nor a difference in the attention the subject affords either of these things. I hope it is becoming apparent just how monumental a task this would be.

Some might be tempted to apply one of the manoeuvres considered in §4.9 above to the case of cognitive phenomenology. But they fail, for reasons exactly parallel to those outlined there. So minimal pair arguments cannot rationally persuade us in the case of cognitive phenomenology.

4.11 Concluding Remarks

I have argued that minimal pair arguments systematically fail to rationally persuade us of their conclusions. Above we reviewed the knowa-

bility argument for cognitive phenomenology, and found that wanting, too. Where does this leave us?

It leaves us, I suggest, with the conclusion that thought does *not* have content-specific phenomenology. Consider the case of perception, which does have content-specific phenomenology. That phenomenal character is ‘front and center’ of our conscious mental lives: we cannot miss it. By contrast, it is widely agreed that *if* thought has content-specific phenomenology, this is a very *unobvious* fact. Even those who argue that there is content-specific phenomenology of thought do not deny this.¹⁵⁷

The elusiveness of the alleged content-specific phenomenology of thought establishes a clear presumption against it. We need an argument to establish that there is such phenomenology, and if no argument succeeds, we have good reason to believe that thought does *not* have content-specific phenomenology. But we have just, after careful consideration, found the main lines of argument defective. That supports the conclusion that thought does not, after all, have content-specific phenomenology. And if that is right, the methodological bridge between content-specific phenomenology of thought and content-specific phenomenology of intuition (§4.2) allows us to conclude that intuition also does not.

In what sense, then, can intuition be an *experience*? The next chapter addresses this question.

157. Terry Horgan has admitted this in conversation. David Pitt has a section (entitled ‘Shut Up and Pay Attention’) in a manuscript acknowledging and addressing this worry (Pitt Manuscript). Again, it *is* obvious that perception has content-specific phenomenology. We know this. That we do might be thought to constitute a special challenge for me, since someone might claim that minimal pair type reasoning is what teaches us that there is content-specific perceptual phenomenology. But, as we have seen, that argument does not work. So there can be no particular challenge here; how we know what we do about experience is, as the saying goes, everyone’s problem.

I suspect the solution most likely lies in ‘abstractable aspects’ of overall experience (Horgan and Tienson 2002). It seems that we somehow manage to ‘distill’ some information about specific contributors from the many experiences we have. I suspect that this happens at the sub-personal level. Of course, this raises further questions. How does the abstraction take place? What are good conditions with respect to it? And what is the epistemic status of claims that rely on it? These are likely to prove fruitful avenues for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

Attitude-Specific Phenomenology

... the peculiar 'phenomenal force'...our experiences have ...

JAMES PRYOR

The Skeptic and the Dogmatist

The only events that can conceivably be regarded as data for a conscious, reasoning subject are *seemings*—events, that is, already imbued with (apparent) objective significance

GARETH EVANS

The Varieties of Reference

5.1 Introduction

Consider the following commonplace example of perception:

- (1) There is a small cardboard box before Susan
- (2) Susan has a visual experience as of a small, brown, cubical object
- (3) Susan believes that a small, brown, cubical object is before her

In cases like this, it is natural to say that Susan's experience mediates in two different ways between her belief and the way things are. First, the experience mediates *causally*: it is plausible that there is a causal relation between the cardboard box in (1) and Susan's experience (2), and

between the experience and Susan's belief (3). Second, the experience mediates *rationally*: there is a rational relation between the experience and the belief.¹⁵⁸

Above we noted that intuition appears to epistemically support belief (§1.2.3). Consider a paradigm example of this: Susan's belief that one plus one equals two. A significant challenge to the view that intuition actually does support belief is the claim that in intuition, there is no experience to even serve as a *candidate* for the role of rational mediation between belief and the way things are:

- (a) One plus one equals two
- (b) ...?
- (c) Susan believes that one plus one equals two

The absent experience challenge We might call this *the absent experience challenge* to intuition supporting belief. Ernest Sosa is one who raises this challenge. He argues that "no sensory experience mediates between fact and belief, nor does anything *like* sensory experience play that role" (2006b: 209).¹⁵⁹ Similarly, Timothy Williamson in several places notes that intuition typically lacks the rich phenomenology of perceptual experience (Williamson 2004: 117; 2007b: 216–17). About the Gettier case he writes:

I am aware of no intellectual seeming beyond my conscious inclination to believe the Gettier propositions. Similarly, I am aware of no intellectual seeming beyond my conscious inclination to believe Naïve Comprehension, which I resist because I know better. ... These paradigms provide no evidence of intellectual seemings, if the phrase is supposed to

158. Here I am following Ernest Sosa's presentation of the situation (Sosa 2006b). The nature of the rational relation is not at issue here; what matters is that it is very plausible that there is such a relation. For interesting discussion see Richard Heck Jr. on McDowell (Heck 2000: 500–2).

159. See also Sosa (2007c: 46; 48; 54; 55; 62), and (2006b: 209). In the latter he says that "there are no experience-like intuitive seemings". It is not always clear how important or unimportant Sosa takes the phenomenology associated with having an intuition to be; see n. 100 on page 73.

mean anything more than intuitions in Lewis's or van Inwagen's sense. (Williamson 2007b: 216–17)

Since Lewis and van Inwagen take intuition to be belief, or a disposition to believe (see Chapters 2 and 3), it is clear that Williamson takes the absence of rich phenomenology in the case of intuition to show that there is no genuine intuitional experience.¹⁶⁰

Now, the alleged absence of an experience is of course not the only reason for doubt about intuition's ability to epistemically support belief about the way things are. Many hold that intuition cannot support belief unless we understand how we can be in contact with the way things are, and that realist construals of the subject-matters of mathematics and logic, for example, make such contact unintelligible (Benacerraf 1973; Devitt 2005; Dretske 2000; Field 2005; Hart 1977).

However, the absent experience challenge arises *regardless* of what one takes the subject matter of beliefs supported by intuition to be. It is, for example, just as much a challenge to the view that intuition provides us with justification for beliefs about our own conceptual structures (Goldman 1999; Goldman and Pust 1998) as it is to the view that intuition provides us with justification for mathematical or logical beliefs. In that sense, it is a more fundamental challenge.¹⁶¹

160. Alvin Plantinga also notes the difference between perception and intuition in his discussion of the phenomenology of the latter: "I note nothing phenomenologically like, say, clearly seeing the color of Paul's shirt (seeing it in sunlight, from up close, with an unobstructed view), or seeing sunshine on the grass or water" (1993: 105). Michael Lynch (2006: 228–30) argues that Sosa's failing to find an experience in introspection ought to dissuade him from taking intuitions to be attractions to believe.

161. There are connections: some might take the absence they see of an experience in intuition to be well explained by the absence of a causal connection with the way things are. However, we can consider whether there is a candidate experience without considering how, if it is there, it might be connected with the way things are. Indeed, we need not even consider whether the demand for an account of that connection is *itself* reasonable. If we come to regard that demand as reasonable we can later ask, for any candidate experience, whether it is connected to the way things are in a way which allows it to support belief. But we need not settle that question preemptively.

Against Sosa and Williamson I argue that intuition is an experience similar to perceptual experience in important respects.¹⁶² I will be defending the following thesis:

Intuition as Experience: Intuition is an experience which shares aspects of its attitude-specific phenomenology with perceptual experience

Defending **Intuition as Experience** leaves me owing an explanation of how someone carefully examining intuition could overlook the experience I claim really is there. In §5.3 I repay this debt by arguing that Sosa and Williamson are looking for the wrong kind of experience. What they are looking for is not there, but intuition is still a genuine experience.

Most of the rest of this chapter is devoted to demonstrating that perception and intuition share certain aspects of their phenomenology. I shall argue, in particular, that they both have phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness. In §5.4 I argue that perceptual experience has phenomenology of objectivity, and in §5.5 I defend that claim for intuition. In §5.6 I argue that perceptual experience and intuitional experience both have phenomenology of pushiness. In the remaining sections, I discuss an additional attitude-specific feature of the phenomenology of intuition: its valence (§5.7), the way the features I attribute to intuition help distinguish it from belief (§5.8), and the merits of my account over an account of intuition in terms of ‘presentation’ (§5.9). Before getting started, however, a brief note about the methodology of this chapter is in order.

5.2 Methodology

Increasing our knowledge about the character of our phenomenal experience is difficult, but not impossible. We can, for example, take an indirect approach, by arguing that the character of our experience being a cer-

162. There may be a conception of what it takes for one experience to count as being ‘like’ another, according to which a certain threshold of similarity has to be reached. I do not intend to enter a dispute about whether intuitional experience is ‘like’ perceptual experience in *this* sense. My claim is simply that there are certain important similarities.

tain way is either the only or the best explanation for some other fact. In Chapter 4 we saw two examples of this: the knowability argument and the minimal pair argument.

Like all abductive arguments, how well these arguments fare depends on the extent to which the purported fact is uncontroversial or can be established, and the extent to which a case can be made that the explanation offered is really the only possible, or the best available. In the previous chapter I reviewed an argument which I take to show that thought having content-specific phenomenology is not the only, nor the best, explanation for our knowledge of its content (§4.4). And I argued that minimal pair arguments fail, because other, equally good explanations are systematically available (§§4.6–4.10).

In particular I argued that minimal pair arguments are systematically incapable of rationally persuading us of their conclusions. It is much less clear how *ostensive* uses of phenomenal contrast fare (§4.9.1): such uses may be better off than their argumentative counterparts in general. But it is in any event clear that ostensive use of phenomenal contrast is significantly more likely to be successful when used to indicate *attitude*-specific phenomenology than when used to indicate *content*-specific phenomenology.

To see the asymmetry, consider the critique of minimal pair arguments for cognitive phenomenology in §4.10. The essential point was that a plethora of contributors are likely to differ between the two situations in the contrast cases described (*Hidden Meaning*, *Sudden Thought*, etc.), and that each is capable of explaining the difference in overall phenomenology. But most of these confounding contributors arise because of the content of the state, and are equally likely to arise when one *considers for the sake of argument* that *p* as when one *thinks* that *p* (§4.3), and so on.

As a result, when two distinct attitudes with the *same* content are contrasted, there is significantly less likelihood that the true explanation of the difference in overall phenomenology is that confounding contributors obtain in one case but not in the other: the same ones are likely to obtain in both cases. This only goes so far: it is probably more likely that

an emotional reaction arises if one *believes* that p than if one supposes that p for the sake of argument, for example. But the difference is general and significant enough to make the use of phenomenal contrast for attitude-specific phenomenology much more likely to be successful than uses aimed at content-specific phenomenology.

Phenomenal contrast will occasionally be employed for attitude-specific phenomenology in this chapter. The use is always ostensive, never argumentative: the purpose is to aid recognition. Ostensive use for attitude-specific phenomenology is, I think, as good as phenomenal contrast ever gets. But I am not certain that it is ultimately successful.

Fortunately, it does not need to be. Phenomenal contrast is only one of the methods employed in this chapter. A very *good* reason to acknowledge a certain aspect of the character of one's phenomenal experience is that one recognises it. By carefully describing the target phenomenology I hope to enable the reader to do just that. I also present extensive abductive arguments, starting from widely acknowledged and well supported facts about perception and intuition. Acknowledging the target aspects of phenomenal experience allows us to explain things that need explaining. That counts strongly in favour of acknowledging them.

All this notwithstanding, one could well wish for stronger arguments than those that are available. We simply do not have an agreed-on and powerful method for establishing truths about the character of phenomenal experience. Abductive inference is accepted, but, as in other areas of philosophy, it is never uncontroversial that the proposed explanation is the best one for the phenomenon at hand. A difficulty of perhaps unusual severity where phenomenology is concerned, is that the facts to be explained are also often under contention. The facts I claim to explain—facts about the transparency of experience and about its content—are in pretty good standing. But no such case is bulletproof.

Yet it should not be forgotten that we have excellent reason to think that understanding phenomenal experience is absolutely central to understanding the mind (§4.5). The dialectical situation is what it is. We must proceed with what we have, and go as far as it can take us, paying

heed to the challenges without despairing of them. I think the arguments below can take us a fair way. I hope the reader will come to agree.

5.3 Looking for the Wrong Thing

I claim that intuitional experience is similar in important respects to perceptual experience. But I do concede that it is dissimilar in other important respects. In Chapter 4 I introduced the distinction between attitude-specific and content-specific phenomenology (§4.1), and argued that we have good reason to believe that intuition does *not* have content-specific phenomenology (§4.11). But *perception does*: what it is like to see something green makes a different contribution to the character of a person's overall phenomenal experience than does seeing something red.¹⁶³

Sosa and Williamson report that they do not find an experience in introspection when they consider cases of intuition. I think this is because they are looking for the wrong thing. They are looking for an experience with content-specific phenomenology, and they correctly note that there is no such experience in intuition. But they overlook the possibility of an intuitional experience with attitude-specific phenomenology, which is just what intuition is. So they do not find intuitional experience in introspection, even though it is there to be found.¹⁶⁴

Before turning to the defence of *Intuition as Experience*, a brief aside. Does the claim that intuition lacks content-specific phenomenology commit me to the claim that what it is like to intuit that p is just the same as what it is like to intuit that q , for any p and q ? It does.¹⁶⁵ That may seem

163. I assume this without argument. As discussed in n. 157 on page 139, *how* we know this is not clear, but this is also not a special challenge to the present view.

164. Note that even if intuition did have content-specific phenomenology there would still be a significant phenomenal difference between perception and intuition, since a typical case of perception has much richer content than a typical case of intuition. See also Chudnoff (2011b: §3) and Bengson (2010). In reply to the absent experience challenge, Bengson writes: "it must be borne in mind that to find a given state or feature via introspection, the introspector typically must know what to look for, and in particular how to single it out or recognize it under the description in question" (2010: 56).

165. On the assumption that the two are of the same valence, and that the pushiness is equally strong in both cases. These issues are discussed in detail in what follows.

implausible, but this worry can fairly easily be allayed.

If what it is like to intuit that p is the same as what it is like to intuit that q , then intuiting that p makes the same contribution to overall phenomenology as does intuiting that q . This is compatible, however, with the overall phenomenology differing between the two cases, both in any particular case, and typically. In Chapter 4 I argued that our mental lives are characterised by **Richness** and **Flux**. At any one time a number of things contribute to the character of a person's overall phenomenal experience: occurrent, remembered and imagined perceptions, moods, emotions and bodily sensations all play a role.

But *what* a person remembers or imagines, and which emotional reactions she has, will very likely be influenced by the content of the intuition she is having, by whether she intuits that p or that q . If she intuits that torturing the innocent is wrong she will imagine and remember something different than if she intuits that if something is red it is coloured, and she will very likely have different emotional reactions in the two cases too. So it is very likely that the character of her *overall* experience will differ in the two cases, even though what it is like to intuit that p is just the same as what it is like to intuit that q . The view that intuition lacks content-specific phenomenology therefore does not commit me to the consequence that what it is like *overall* to intuit that p is just the same as what it is like *overall* to intuit that q . That is the counterintuitive consequence to be avoided. Stripped of this implication, that what it is like to intuit that p is the same as what it is like to intuit that q is itself innocuous.

5.4 Phenomenology of Objectivity in Perception

I now turn to my defence of **Intuition as Experience**. The first feature which I believe that perception and intuition have in common is *phenomenology of objectivity*. Accordingly, I will defend the following two claims:

P-objectivity: Perception has phenomenology of objectivity

I-objectivity: Intuition has phenomenology of objectivity

In this section I focus exclusively on **P-objectivity**; **I-objectivity** is defended in §5.5.

What is the scope of these claims? I take these to be plausible *conceptual* claims about perception and intuition: on reflection we would not count something as an instance of either perception or intuition unless there is phenomenology of objectivity. Here, however, I aim only to show that phenomenology of objectivity helps to single out categories of genuine explanatory value: it helps to single out psychological kinds. So the claims I defend are *existential*: there are psychological kinds partly singled out by phenomenology of objectivity. I take these kinds to be good deservers of the labels ‘intuition’ and ‘perception’ (and I will speak of them in this way), but nothing much ultimately hinges on this.

Thus the possibility of mental states quite a bit like the ones of interest here, but which lack phenomenology of objectivity, is of no threat to the claim I am making. Nor should I protest too strongly if someone wished to call such states ‘perception’ or ‘intuition’. My claim is that there are important classes of mental states that have phenomenology of objectivity (and, later: that have phenomenology of pushiness), that these classes answer well to our use of ‘perception’ and ‘intuition’, certainly capturing the paradigmatic cases, and that these classes are *interesting* ones, and likely to be of explanatory value to us. (This last claim is further substantiated in Chapter 6.) In virtue of being psychological kinds, these classes of states are good deservers for the honorifics ‘perception’ and ‘intuition’, and it will probably serve us well to reserve these terms for these classes. But again, not much hinges on this verbal issue.

For an experience to have phenomenology of objectivity it must purport to represent objective facts. Moreover, *that it so purports must be an aspect of the very phenomenology of the experience*, and, in particular, an attitude-specific aspect.

Phenomenology of Objectivity: That the experience purports to be about objective facts is itself an aspect of the attitude-specific phenomenology of the experience

What are the conditions for qualifying as ‘objective facts’ according to this definition? The notion of objectivity of relevance here is *Independence from the subject* independence from the subject of the experience.

One might have thought that a better contender is *mind*-independence. After all, I can have a perceptual experience that includes my own hand, and this experience does not have a particular phenomenal quality that is usually not present in visual perceptual experience, nor does it lack a quality that is usually present. As I look at my hand on the desk in front of me, it seems to be as much part of the objective world as is the computer screen, the keyboard, the papers, and so on. But my hand is not independent of me (it is a part of me) and it might seem odd to claim that perceptual experience in some sense says that is is.

But in visual perceptual experience, what is salient in the phenomenology is simply that the world I seem to see seems to be independent of *me*. There is no feeling of independence from my mind. And this is generally the case in perception (and, I will argue, in intuition): the phenomenally salient point is independence from the subject. How, then, do we account for the fact that the phenomenology is present when I am looking at my own hand? The answer seems to be that the subject does not always equate itself with the body: the hand seems to be just as much a part of a subject-independent world as does the desk it is resting on.¹⁶⁶

Does this account over-intellectualise the phenomenon of perception? The worry is that the view seems to require the deployment of a concept of *self*, and that we have good reason to think that perception takes place

166. Arguably, this is at the root of the Cartesian intuition that I could exist without my body. Note that the claim I make here is entirely compatible with the view that as I am *moving* my hand around, there is some phenomenology of agency (Horgan et al. 2003), and even with the view that when I am not exercising that agency, still my ability to do so is somehow phenomenologically present to me.

in creatures who lack this concept (or the ability to deploy it): infant human beings and animals, for instance.

In response, note that in order to represent subject-independence, there is no reason to think that a person or an organism needs to be able to represent general conditions under which subject-independence would obtain, nor the fact that such conditions are fulfilled in any particular case (see [Burge 2009](#)). Attributing *those* capacities to all perceiving creatures would be a gross over-intellectualisation. But it is not necessary to do so.

Second, although the concept of self in adult human beings is quite a substantial one, that which is required by the present account is quite minimal. Consider a cat gracefully jumping onto a chair. In the explanation of the cat's ability to do this it seems that a representation of the cat's own location will have to figure:

When a cat perceives a chair ...it sees something that is located in a certain relation to itself and something onto which it can jump. ... Its location in relation to the chair must figure in its perception for it to be able to flex its muscles so as to land on the chair. ... The point is only to show that the representation of the perceiver's location is understood practically in a way that is not only unproblematic to ascribe to cats, but moreover necessary to ascribe to cats to explain what cats do.
([Schellenberg 2007](#): 620)

Let us bracket the claim that the animal's location must be a part of the perceptual content. Here the point is simply that, in the explanation of animal behaviour, the deployment of a minimal concept of self is already presupposed. A cat is also able to detect foreign influence on its body and to respond appropriately and with much flexibility; by retracting a limb, jumping away, swiping at or turning to the influencer, and so on. It is plausible that this, too, requires self-representation: foreign influence must be represented as impacting on the body of the animal itself.

An animal's concept of self may be nothing more than a more or less integrated collection of ingredients such as these, ingredients that we

have solid independent reason to think are present. Of course, that each of these ingredients must be present does not guarantee their integration, but such integration would obviously have significant advantages. In any case, once it is acknowledged that such ingredients must be present, the claim that to assume that they can be usefully integrated is to over-intellectualise has very little plausibility.

So, the concept of self at play in phenomenology of objectivity can range from ‘thin’ concepts consisting of integrated ingredients such as those just noted, to a ‘thick’ concept of self, such as that present in normally functioning adult human beings.

*

Let us now address why one should accept **P-objectivity**. I give three reasons. First, I am hopeful that we can recognise phenomenology of objectivity in perceptual experience (§5.4.1). Second, **P-objectivity** explains certain facts about the contents of perceptual experiences (§5.4.2). Third, **P-objectivity** explains another widely accepted thesis about perceptual phenomenology, namely its *transparency* (§5.4.3).

5.4.1 Recognising Objectivity in Perception

Consider the visual perceptual experience you are currently undergoing. The experience purports to be about various things that surround you; one of them is this sheet of paper. The experience represents various of its features: its shape, size, position, colour and so on. But your experience also represents that the world of which the paper is a part is not a figment of your own imagination. It exists independently of you, objectively. And this is part of the very phenomenology of the experience.¹⁶⁷

Perceptual experience has content-specific phenomenology: perceiving a white sheet of paper makes a different contribution to overall phen-

167. Compare William Tolhurst: “Some seemings purport to be experiences of an object independent of the person having the experience” (1998: 300). Tolhurst’s account (discussed further in §5.6.1 below) otherwise differs quite a bit from mine.

omenology than does perceiving an orange sheet of paper. But the phenomenology of objectivity is not content-specific phenomenology, it is *attitude*-specific phenomenology. It is not to be found at the same level as the whiteness of the sheet of paper. It is not, for instance, the phenomenology of a 'marker' attached to the experience of the sheet (and also to all the other elements of the experience), proclaiming it to exist objectively, or anything of that nature. Rather, it is an *overall* feature of perceptual phenomenology. **P-objectivity** is a fact about the *entirety* of perceptual experience (in a modality). After all, in the case of visual perceptual phenomenology, for example, the phenomenology is that of an objective world being represented, not that of individual objects being represented as objective. One might say that phenomenology of objectivity is a feature of the entire visual *gestalt*.¹⁶⁸

It is plausible that phenomenology of objectivity is also present in the other perceptual modalities. After all, when touching the edge of a table, it seems to be an aspect of the phenomenology of the tactile experience that what is being perceived is part of a world independent of the perceiver. In auditory perception, determining the content of the experience is not straightforward. Perhaps it is that there is a source of sound nearby, perhaps something else. But the experience seems to be characterised by phenomenology of objectivity: it is part of the phenomenology of that experience that the source or the sound (or whatever) is independent of the perceiving subject.

Among the best reasons one can have to believe that there is pheno-

168. It is compatible with what has been said so far that phenomenology of objectivity 'trickles down' from the overall experience to the individual elements, so that objectivity is felt with respect to some but not all of the individual objects represented in experience, and to some but not all of the represented properties. Farid Masrouf ([Forthcoming](#)) argues that phenomenology of objectivity is felt of some but not all of the properties of objects represented in perceptual experience. It is also compatible with what has been said that phenomenology of objectivity attaches *only* to the visual *gestalt* as a whole, and to *none* of the individual objects. This is my view. As we shall see, it allows for explanation of certain features of the content of perception. (Note that the claim is not that individual objects have phenomenology of mind-dependence, merely that phenomenology of objectivity fails to be felt of each of them, but is instead felt overall.)

menology of objectivity is that one recognises it in one's own experience. I hope the above remarks have sufficed to enable the reader to do so. In an attempt to promote this goal further I will now employ phenomenal contrast. I am not certain that this will help focus attention on the correct feature (§5.2). But it might, so it is worth the attempt.

In the auditory case, one salient contrast arises between the experience of a beeping sound sometimes had in the absence of an external sound source, and similar experiences had when there is an external source of the beeping sound. (This is related to the affliction of tinnitus, which involves, I understand, constant auditory experiences of the former kind.) Sometimes when an auditory experience arises in the absence of a sound source, one cannot tell; one must ask others whether they also experience the sound. But there are times when it seems clear from the experience *itself* that there is no external sound source; one does not feel the need to ask others to make sure. In those cases the experience lacks phenomenology of objectivity.¹⁶⁹

Another salient contrast obtains between perception and imagination. The type of imagination of interest here is iconic imagination, the kind which intuitively corresponds to perception in a sensory modality: pictorial imagination, auditory imagination, olfactory imagination, and so on.¹⁷⁰ Iconic imagination is similar in various ways to perceptual experience. It has content-specific phenomenology, for example: imagining a red cottage makes a different contribution to the character of the imaginer's overall phenomenology than does imagining a blue cottage. But at least as a rule, iconic imagination lacks phenomenology of objectivity. Consider, for example, my visual imagination of a small, red cottage in a forest. It is no part of my phenomenology that the cottage is a part of a world independent of me. Similarly, if I auditorially imagine a piece of

169. If the conceptual claim discussed at the beginning of §5.4 is true, this will not count as a perceptual experience.

170. The terms 'iconic' and 'non-iconic' are introduced in §4.3. It is a substantial question whether there is such a thing as non-iconic imagination, but we need not enter this debate here.

music, this experience does not have the phenomenology of objectivity.

Visual and auditory imagination is often fleeting and vague. I am more likely to be left with a vague impression of the visual ‘feel’ of the imagined cottage than with a sharp image rich in detail. But one can improve one’s capacity to visually imagine. It might be possible to come to imagine a small, red cottage in a forest in detail as great as that which is present in perceptual experience, and *mutatis mutandis* in the other cases.

Iconic imagination is often voluntary, and some argue that taking oneself to perform an action voluntarily contributes to phenomenal experience (Horgan et al. 2003). But imagination need not be voluntary: witness how images one decidedly does *not* want to enjoy can be conjured up by conversation, for example.¹⁷¹ So, we may suppose that, though improving one’s ability to visually imagine may require voluntary effort, once that improved proficiency has been achieved, the resulting iconic imaginative experiences can also arise without a voluntary effort.

Suppose, then, that as I am walking in the forest, I spontaneously—that is, not as a result of an act of will—visually imagine this cottage, and then, cresting a small hill, I come to have a perceptual experience exactly alike in content-specific phenomenology as that which I just had in visual imagination. Many are inclined to say that there would be a difference in phenomenology between the two experiences. If so, this would have to be a difference in attitude-specific phenomenology: *ex hypothesi* there is no difference in content-specific phenomenology. I claim that the difference would partly consist in the absence of phenomenology of objectivity in the case of imagination and its presence in the perceptual experience. The analogous point holds in the auditory case, and in the other cases.¹⁷²

The first reason for accepting **P-objectivity**, then, is that we can recognise phenomenology of objectivity in our own perceptual experience.

171. Horror stories and tales of violent or gruesome crimes are good examples of this.

172. Note that the claim is *not* that the imaginative experience has phenomenology of subject-dependence: it merely lacks phenomenology of objectivity.

5.4.2 Objectivity and the Content of Perception

A second reason to accept **P-objectivity** is that phenomenology of objectivity explains features of the content of perceptual experience. In particular, it explains both the fact that objectivity is part of the content of perceptual experience, and more detailed facts about how exactly objectivity figures there.

That objectivity is part of the content of perceptual experience is independently plausible.¹⁷³ For a perceptual experience to be accurate things have to be a certain way. According to the notion of content in use in this thesis, what the perceptual experience represents, its content, is that things are that way (§1.2.1). It is very plausible that objectivity is part of the content of perceptual experience, on this notion of content. For there is a very strong intuition that if there is no objective world, perceptual experience is inaccurate. If it turns out that the world is but an aspect of my mind, perceptual experience is not veridical. At any rate this is a commitment I am happy to (and do) take on. I am currently having a visual experience as of a computer screen, a messy desk, and so on. If, objectively speaking, there are no desks, no computer screens and no mess, if these things do not exist except in my mind, this is enough to show that my perceptual experience is inaccurate.¹⁷⁴

My perceptual experience represents that things are a certain way. But

173. Jackson takes there to be ‘a causal element’ in the content of perceptual experience: “When I hear a sound as being, say, behind and to the left, my experience represents the sound as *coming from* this location” (2003: 270). I take Jackson’s view about the content of perceptual experience to entail, but not be entailed by, my view of it.

174. Another possibility is that objectivity is merely entailed by the content, for example by being ‘built in to’ our concepts of ordinary objects and the like, though not a part of the content proper. The thought might be that something just does not qualify as a table unless it is objective. I believe that the claims in the main text can be translated into claims posed in these terms should that be required; but I also think objectivity is really in the content proper, in the stronger sense. Also, we can set aside the question of whether there not being any desks, computer screens or mess objectively speaking suffices to show that my experience is *wholly* inaccurate. Finally, that we seem to see a subject-independent world in perceptual experience is widely acknowledged. Indeed, this fact is arguably reflected in the popularity of such positions in the philosophy of perception as direct realism and disjunctivism.

it represents something more than that, namely that they are this way in a world which is independent of me, a world which exists *objectively*. This is well explained by **P-objectivity**: in virtue of phenomenology of objectivity being an aspect of perceptual experience, it itself 'tells me' that the represented way things are is a part of an objective world. Because perception has phenomenology of objectivity, when I have a perceptual experience, that is how it seems to me.

*

P-objectivity explains the fact that objectivity is part of the content of perceptual experience. It also explains more detailed facts about exactly how objectivity features in that content. In particular, it explains why, although perceptual experience is committed to the existence of a subject-independent world, it does not seem to be committed to anything more substantial, demanding or specific than this.

In perception, the world seems to be independent of me. But what does it mean for an entity to be independent of another? This is a substantive question of metaphysics. But perceptual experience does not take a stance; it is not committed to any one particular understanding of such independence. It is committed to the world being independent of the perceiving subject, but it does not seem to take a stance on what that amounts to.

Why not? To answer this question, consider the following passage from Charles Siewert's book *The Significance of Consciousness*:

Suppose that, driving to work ...it suddenly occurs to me (wordlessly) that I left my briefcase at home. ...At least, an episode of noniconic thought occurred, and this is how I am first inclined to report it. But was that really the precisely correct report of what I thought? Perhaps it would have been more accurate to say the thought that occurred to me was: that my briefcase was at home (not that I *left* it at home). Am I sure that my *leaving* it there, as opposed to its simply *being* there, was part of my thought? And I said that I left the briefcase at

home. Couldn't this be distinguished from thinking that I left it at my house? (Siewert 1998: 287)

Siewert believes that there is content-specific phenomenology of thought. But we can easily bracket that point, and focus instead on a point that generalises: that phenomenal experience is often not specific enough to distinguish between various different options for the content of a mental state.

I suggest that the fact that perceptual experience is committed to the world being independent of the perceiving subject but not to anything more specific fits well with the commitment to objectivity arising from the phenomenology. It is a general feature of phenomenal experience that it does not suffice to narrow down the content of a mental state completely. So if, as I have suggested, objectivity is part of the content of perceptual experience because perceptual experience has phenomenology of objectivity, this is exactly what we should expect.¹⁷⁵

We can compare two types of accounts of the content of a subject's perceptual experience as of a white cup. On one view, the content can be glossed as: *a subject-independent cup subject-independently instantiates the subject-independent property of whiteness*. On the other account, the content can be glossed as *objectively: the cup is white* (where 'objectively' is understood as subject-independence).¹⁷⁶ The latter account is more plausible than the former, and again this is well explained by the present account. The phenomenology of objectivity is *attitude-specific* phenomenology not content-specific phenomenology: it is a feature of the overall visual perceptual experience. It cannot plausibly give rise to a content such as the former. But it can give rise to a content such as the latter.

175. What one says from there on will depend on one's overall view of content. One might say that this shows that the content of the mental state is itself indeterminate, or one might say that, while the content of the mental state is fully determinate, the phenomenal character of the experience is not enough to specify that content.

176. Thanks to Nicholas Silins for helpful discussion. Again, on another view, the content can be glossed as: *the cup is white*, but the concepts involved entail objectivity, without objectivity being part of the content proper; see n. 174 above.

To sum up, perceptual experience having phenomenology of objectivity explains both why the objectivity is part of the content of perceptual experience, and more specific facts about the role of objectivity in that content. This constitutes a reason to believe that **P-objectivity** is true.

5.4.3 Objectivity and Transparency in Perception

In recent years, an alleged feature of perceptual experience described as its ‘transparency’ has received much attention. Michael Tye gives an accessible statement of the issue:

Focus your attention on a square that has been painted blue. Intuitively, you are directly aware of blueness and squareness as out there in the world away from you, as features of an external surface. Now shift your gaze inward and try to become aware of your experience itself, inside you, apart from its objects. Try to focus your attention on some intrinsic feature of the experience that distinguishes it from other experiences, something other than what it is an experience *of*. The task seems impossible: one’s awareness seems always to slip through the experience to blueness and squareness, as instantiated together in an external object. ... [I]ntrospection does not seem to reveal any further distinctive features of the experience over and above *what* one experiences

(Tye 1995: 30)

This description makes the datum sound stronger than I believe it is. It seems to me that numerous examples show that we *can*, even though we typically do not, focus on aspects of our experience. Suppose, for example, that you experience a dizzying array of colours. You can be aware that your visual experience has this feature; it is dizzying. (This need not mean that you become dizzy.) But there is no sense in which the array itself is dizzying.¹⁷⁷ You can also become aware of the very ‘visualness’ of your visual experience, and *mutatis mutandis* for the other perceptual

177. The same is true for heights: it is the experiences of them that can be dizzying.

modalities.¹⁷⁸ You can become aware of the auditory part of your experience dominating your overall experience, or the visual part dominating. Or suppose that you shift your attention to the slight humming of the computer, back to the whiteness of the computer screen, and so on, back and forth. If you do this rhythmically, you can become aware that your overall experience has a ‘pulsating’ character. But you are not aware of anything pulsating. Nothing is, nor does it seem to you that way.

I need not belabour this point, however, for it seems clear that Tye has overlooked the possibility of attitude-specific phenomenology. Tye asks us to focus on a feature of an experience which “distinguishes it from other experiences”. If objectivity and pushiness (on the latter, more below) are, as I claim, attitude-specific aspects of perceptual phenomenology, they do not, of course, distinguish particular perceptual experiences from other perceptual experiences: the claim is precisely that all perceptual experiences *share* these features. There may even be aspects of phenomenology which are shared by *all* phenomenal experiences, perceptual or non-perceptual.¹⁷⁹ An inability to focus on features of our experiences which distinguish them from other experiences therefore does not suffice to show the truth of transparency.

Moreover, even if Tye is right that we cannot become aware of any content-specific features of our experience (because if we try, we always ‘slip through’ to the world), from this *nothing follows* about our ability or inability to become aware of attitude-specific phenomenology. Transparency may hold for content-specific phenomenology but fail for attitude-specific phenomenology.

It seems, in fact, that Tye *presupposes* the truth of **P-objectivity**: “Intuitively, you are directly aware of blueness and squareness as *out there in the world away from you*, as features of an *external surface*” (my emphases). Here Tye seems to refer to the *phenomenal character* of your experience.¹⁸⁰

178. This point is usually attributed to Grice (1962/1989), see also Crane (2001: 144).

179. Uriah Kriegel (2007b: 129) suggests two candidates: phenomenology of expectancies (for which he cites Noë 2004) and ‘for-me-ness’ (Kriegel 2004).

180. I read “intuitively” here as (more or less): ‘it seems from experience that ...’.

About that he is right: it *is* a feature of perceptual experience that what we seem to perceive is ‘out there’ in the subject-independent world: perceptual experience has phenomenology of objectivity.

Because phenomenology of objectivity is a feature of our experience of which we can become aware, the transparency thesis stated in full generality is false.¹⁸¹ It appears that Tye cannot deny this: his statement of the transparency thesis for content-specific phenomenology relies on perceptual experience having this aspect of attitude-specific phenomenology. What is more, our appreciation of the truth of transparency for content-specific phenomenology (to the degree that it is a truth) relies on our ability to become aware of precisely this aspect of attitude-specific phenomenology.¹⁸²

I believe that this is no accidental feature of Tye’s statement. **P-objectivity** is the deeper fact about perceptual experience, an underlying truth of which transparency is but a symptom. **P-objectivity** *explains* the transparency datum for perceptual experience.

Consider first the question of what transparency is purportedly a fact *about*. It is plausibly interpreted as a fact about *attention*.¹⁸³ But many (Tye included) talk about it as a fact about *awareness*. Does this come to the same thing? No. Suppose that whenever I perceive something, its features ‘grab my attention’ in much the same way a sharp pain grabs one’s attention, or a sudden movement in peripheral vision does. If so, one might think that we would usually be unable to *attend to* features of

181. We do not become aware of this *by* becoming aware of some feature of the world.

182. Objection: Tye is only committed to spatial relations being part of the content of perceptual experience, to content like ‘two metres in front of me’. Reply: the way spatial relations between the perceiver and perceived objects appear to the subject is equally a content-specific feature of visual imaginative experience, and this experience lacks phenomenology of objectivity, and transparency. Although there is internal organisation to visual imaginative experiences, and one can imagine the way an object would look if partly occluded by another object and so on, the entirety of what is visually imagined—the visual imaginary *gestalt*—does not have phenomenology of objectivity.

183. David Chalmers argues that “the central datum of transparency is that when we attempt to introspect the qualities of our experiences (e.g. phenomenal redness), we do so by attending to the qualities of external objects (e.g. redness)” (2004: 176).

our experiences, but we might still be capable of being *aware* of them. For it is far from obvious that one cannot be aware of things that are outside attention. Indeed, peripheral vision and related phenomena seem to suggest that we can.¹⁸⁴

Construed as a fact about attention, I take the transparency datum to be that focusing attention on features of experiences apparently does not come easily, and that it often appears to us that we focus attention on features of experiences *by* focusing attention on something else, namely on that which we experience. Taken as a fact about awareness I will construe the transparency datum to be that awareness of features of our experiences apparently does not come easily, and that we are apparently usually aware principally of features of that which we experience.

In either case, **P-objectivity** explains the datum. The key is that when I have a perceptual experience, *because* the experience has phenomenology of objectivity, *the experience itself 'tells me'* that what I am attending to or aware of is a part of a world which exists independently of me.

Consider the case of attention. Suppose that, as I am visually perceiving a chair in front of me, I try to attend to a content-specific feature of my experience. If perception has phenomenology of objectivity, then *experience itself tells me* that the feature I am attending to is a part of a world which exists objectively. It does so irrespective of whether a) I am *in fact* primarily attending to a feature of the experience and only derivatively or secondarily, or even not at all, attending to a feature of the chair, or b) I am *in fact* primarily attending to a feature of the chair, and only derivatively or secondarily, or even not at all, attending to a feature of my experience, or c) I am *in fact* somehow attending equally both to a feature of the experience and a feature of the chair.

Similarly, consider the case of awareness. If perception has phenomenology of objectivity, then, as I try to become aware of a content-spe-

184. This is an area of intense debate, which I will not enter into here. Although discussion is usually conducted in these binary terms it is plausible that attention comes in degrees. The point can then be restated: it is plausible that we can be aware of features to which we do not pay full attention.

cific feature of my experience, *experience itself tells me* that the feature I am aware of is a feature of a world which exists objectively. Again, it tells me this irrespective of whether d) I am *in fact* primarily aware of a feature of my experience and only derivatively or secondarily, or even not at all, aware of a feature of the chair, or e) I am *in fact* primarily aware of a feature of the chair, and only derivatively or secondarily, or even not at all, aware of a feature of my experience, or f) I am *in fact* somehow equally aware both of a feature of the experience and of a feature of the chair.

In either case, if perceptual experience has phenomenology of objectivity it will appear to me that I am attending to, or aware of, a feature of the objective world, not a feature of my experience. So **P-objectivity** explains the datum of transparency on either interpretation.

The claim that **P-objectivity** explains transparency can be further supported by consideration of what things would be like if perceptual experience did not have phenomenology of objectivity. It seems that attending to features of experience itself would then come with ease. By attending to any content-specific aspect of my experience, I would seem to accomplish attending to a feature of the experience itself.

Some agree that objectivity is a feature of perception, but reject the view that it is a feature of the phenomenology.¹⁸⁵ By the same reasoning we can see that this view is unpromising. For when I attempt to become aware of (or attend to) an aspect of my content-specific phenomenology, if *experience itself* did not tell me that what I am aware of (attending to) is a feature of the objective world I would not appear unable to be aware of (attend to) features of the experience itself. It is because objectivity is a feature of *the phenomenology* that we appear to 'slip through' perceptual experience and out to the objective world.

185. Or they remain uncommitted to it. See e.g. [Burge \(2009\)](#).

5.4.4 Challenges to Objectivity and Transparency

I now consider some challenges to the view I have been advancing about phenomenology of objectivity and transparency. The first challenge is that objectivity and transparency are merely one and the same phenomenon described in two different ways.

There are, I think, good reasons to think that the two are not identical. For one, since phenomenology of objectivity is attitude-specific phenomenology, **P-objectivity** is a fact about the entirety of perceptual experience in a modality. By contrast, I have argued that transparency is not—and cannot be—a fact about attitude-specific phenomenology. To the degree that transparency is a truth, it is a truth about individual features of our content-specific phenomenology.

Second, **P-objectivity** is a fact about the phenomenal character of experience. Transparency is not. Transparency is a fact about our apparent abilities or inabilities to attend to or be aware of certain properties of our experience. **P-objectivity** is a fact about the phenomenal character of certain experiences; transparency a fact about *experiencers*.

This not only indicates that the two are distinct, it also speaks in favour of the explanation I have offered. For surely our abilities or inabilities to attend to or be aware of certain properties of our experience ought to be explained at least partly in terms of intrinsic properties of those experiences. The explanation I have offered does this.

The second challenge is that one might think that perceptual constancy reveals a problem for the view I have presented. Perceptual constancy is the phenomenon at work when, as the distance between me and an object in my field of vision diminishes, the object looks to maintain a particular size. What might be thought difficult to account for on the present view is that the object also in some sense looks larger as it gets closer. It appears that that aspect of experience lacks phenomenology of objectivity ([Masrour Forthcoming](#)).

The claim has been that it is part of the phenomenology of visual perceptual experience that the experience *as a whole* represents the objective

world. The claim is *not* that my perceptual experience says about *each individual aspect* of the perceptual experience that things are objectively the way that aspect says that they are. I am not committed to saying that the object appears to become objectively larger as the distance between it and me diminishes. Indeed, the very contrast between the sense in which the object seems to become larger and the sense in which it does not depends on the object itself appearing to be part of an objective world. And in being aware of the sense in which the object looks larger it does not appear to me that I am aware of a feature of the objective world; for the object does not appear to become larger (that is precisely what the phenomenon of perceptual constancy is).¹⁸⁶

A third challenge is the claim that **P-objectivity** cannot explain transparency because there can be transparency without phenomenology of objectivity. The basic objection is that such a situation is conceivable. But one might try to flesh out the challenge by claiming that a version of the sense-datum theory describes such a situation. I try to attend to a property of my experience, but appear to end up attending to a property of an object: a mind-dependent object, a sense-datum.

However, as we have already seen, my *in fact* being aware of or attending to a sense-datum is no threat to transparency, the transparency datum is that it *seems* to me that I am attending to an external world object. And it could seem that way to me even if I were in fact attending to (aware of) a sense-datum. Indeed this is the reasonable position: it is not as if the sense-datum theory is self-evident from the character of our per-

186. It is true that the view here presented does not explain why some individual features of our perceptual experience do not purport to inform us about subject-independent reality. But the aim has not been to explain all aspects of phenomenology of experience, nor even all aspects of objectivity in perception. The aim has been to single out an aspect of the attitude-specific phenomenology of perception, describe it, and show that we have good reason to believe that it exists.

The aim has also not been to give an account of the causal mechanism responsible for phenomenology of objectivity arising in perception. It is reasonable to interpret Masrouer (Forthcoming) as having precisely that aim. The only way I can see of interpreting Masrouer's view as a challenge to the view advocated here is by understanding him to claim not only this, but also that phenomenology of objectivity can *only* arise in the specific way he outlines (a view which would challenge **I-objectivity**, defended below).

ceptual experience. If so, phenomenology of objectivity still explains the transparency datum. For the same reason, it is also not enough for there to merely be a failure of *belief* in objectivity, as there might be if I believed the sense-datum theory to be true. Transparency may be explained by phenomenology of objectivity even if I do not believe what this aspect of my phenomenology tells me.

For there to be a challenge, the claim would have to be that it both appears to me that I am failing in my attempt to attend to a property of my experience, and that my experience really lacks the phenomenology of objectivity. But as we have noted, it seems that if perceptual experience lacked phenomenology of objectivity, attending to features of the experience would come with ease. It is the very fact that the experience itself ‘tells me’ that the features I am aware of are features of the objective world which gives rise to transparency when it does arise. If experience told me the exact opposite (or if it were silent on the matter) I would not appear unable to attend to or be aware of a property of my experience.

A fourth challenge stems from an example presented by Susanna Siegel (2006a). She asks us to imagine a case where an object, a doll, appeared to be ‘stuck’ to one’s visual field, irrespective of movement of the head and of the eyes, and such that it is impossible to occlude, either by closing one’s eyes or in any other way.¹⁸⁷ This example would pose a problem for the view I have been advancing if transparency still holds for the ‘doll-esque’ experience (Siegel’s term); if it seemed to the experiencer that she is primarily attending to properties of the doll when attempting to attend to the relevant aspects of her experience. On the view defended here, however, the case is misdescribed. While we could have phenomenology much like this, it would not seem as if an *object* were stuck in one’s visual field. In this situation the perceiver would appear to be aware of a very peculiar aspect of *her experience*, namely that it had a doll-esque

187. Siegel argues that normal perceptual experiences *do* represent, but this experience would *not* represent, ‘Subject Independence’: the expectation that if the subject changes the position of her visual apparatus (normally her eyes) relative to a perceived object, the object will not thereby move (2006a: 358).

aspect that she could not get rid of.

Finally, it has been suggested that phosphenes pose a challenge to the claim I have been defending. When one rubs one's eyes with eyelids closed, a visual experience can occur, somewhat reminiscent of sparks against a dark night sky. One might be tempted to claim that these cases are also characterised by transparency, though not by objectivity.

Here, however, I can detect no impression that I am attending to or aware of something other than the properties of my visual experience. So in this case it seems to me that transparency simply fails.

In all, then, none of the challenges against the view that **P-objectivity** explains transparency are successful.

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I have given three reasons to accept **P-objectivity**. First, we can recognise phenomenology of objectivity in our experience. Second, **P-objectivity** explains salient facts about the content of perceptual experience. Third, it explains the transparency of perceptual experience. I now wish to note that we have good reason to formulate and interpret **P-objectivity** the way we have done, given the theoretical context.

In particular, when considering a thesis such as **P-objectivity** we have theoretical reasons to adopt a fairly minimal notion of objectivity. For **P-objectivity** might very well be false if interpreted in light of a very substantial notion of objectivity, but true on a less demanding notion. The notion of objectivity I have argued for gives us a good chance to discover whether the thesis is true on some interpretation, while still keeping it a substantial claim. The notion also offers a good chance to discover commonalities in attitude-specific phenomenology between perception and other mental states. Unnecessarily demanding notions might obscure such commonalities from view. Since commonalities are likely to be theoretically important if they exist, it is important that we discover them if we can. So a fairly minimal notion of objectivity is theoretically appropriate here. There is a constraint, of course: the data from experience must

be captured. In §5.4.1 and §5.4.2 I argued that the notion of objectivity I have articulated fits this bill well.

5.5 Phenomenology of Objectivity in Intuition

In this section I defend the claim that intuition has phenomenology of objectivity. For this to be so, intuition must purport to represent subject-independent facts. Moreover, that it so purports must be an aspect of the very phenomenology of the experience.

Why accept **I-objectivity**? I give two reasons. First, we can recognise phenomenology of objectivity in intuition, just as in perception. Second, **I-objectivity** also explains facts about the content of intuition, and this constitutes another reason to accept it. I argue, however, that there is no analogue of transparency in the case of intuition, so this reason for accepting that a state has phenomenology of objectivity does not apply to intuition.

5.5.1 Recognising Objectivity in Intuition

Consider a Gettier scenario (note 25, page 17). Does Smith know? When you have the Gettier intuition, that Smith does not know feels like a fact that is independent of you. The experience purports to represent an *objective* fact, and this is an aspect of the very phenomenology of the experience. It is part of what it is like to have the intuition.

Or consider the intuition that torturing the innocent is morally wrong. I assume that it seems to you that this is so. When it does, it is part of the phenomenology of the experience that this is so objectively. Finally, if you have the intuition that people generally prefer less pain to more, it seems to you that most people *really do*, objectively speaking, have that preference. It is a part of the very phenomenology of the experience that this is a subject-independent fact. Unlike perception, intuition does not have content-specific phenomenology. But that is no hindrance for phen-

phenomenology of objectivity, since phenomenology of objectivity is attitude-specific phenomenology.

One of the best reasons one can have to believe that intuition has phenomenology of objectivity is that one recognises it in one's own experience, and I hope you do recognise it. Attempting to promote this goal further, I now employ phenomenal contrast.

Not all mental states which we might designate using the 'seeming' locution are intuitions. Suppose a person was in a mental state which she would describe by saying that it seems to her that cold, bright autumn days are better than warm, overcast ones. It need be no part of her phenomenology that this is the way things are objectively speaking. Rather, this 'better' can just seem to the subject as a preference of her own.

Similarly, it might seem to me that all tight rope performers are recklessly endangering their lives. But this may not seem to be the way things are objectively speaking. It may merely be an output of my irrational fear of heights, one that has not managed to penetrate deeply enough to make it seem to me that that is the way things are independently of me. Indeed, it may seem to me that there surely must be *some* tight rope walkers who operate within sensible margins of risk, objectively speaking.

Finally, it may seem to me that siblings ought not to sleep with each other even if they cannot conceive, are both consenting adults, and the liaison will remain a secret, without it seeming to me that that is the way things are, independently of me. For this may seem to me as a mere aesthetic preference, akin to a preference for cold, clear autumn days.¹⁸⁸

Of course, I might instead *intuit* that siblings ought not to sleep with each other.¹⁸⁹ If so, my mental state would have phenomenology of

188. Compare Maurice Mandalbaum, who argues that "the demands which appear to an agent to be 'moral demands' are seen by him to be objective and independent of his desires" (1955: 57). And earlier:

[A] demand is experienced as a force. ... It is my contention that the demands which we experience when we make a direct moral judgment are always experienced as emanating from 'outside' us, and as being directed against us. They are demands which seem to be independent of us, and to which we feel that we ought to respond (1955: 54).

189. Or, indeed, that cold, bright autumn days are better than warm, overcast ones. More on this theme in the [Conclusion](#) of this thesis.

objectivity. I might still not come to believe this, perhaps because I have arrived at the considered opinion that there are no subject-independent truths about this matter. Or perhaps I believe that there is a subject-independent truth about this, but my intuition is not good evidence for it. Or perhaps I take myself to be influenced unduly by some non-moral factor (maybe my aesthetic preference). All of this is possible. But it is *also* possible that it does not seem to me to be subject-independently true to begin with. It is between this state and an intuition that the relevant contrast obtains.

5.5.2 Objectivity and the Content of Intuition

A second reason to accept **I-objectivity** is that phenomenology of objectivity explains features of the content of intuitional experience. In particular, it explains both the fact that objectivity is part of the content of intuitional experience, and more detailed facts about how exactly objectivity figures there.

That objectivity is part of the content of intuitional experience is independently plausible. For an intuitional experience to be accurate things have to be a certain way, what the experience represents, its content, is that things are that way (§1.2.1). It is very plausible that objectivity is part of the content of intuitional experience, on this notion of content. For there is a very strong intuition that if there is no objective way things are with respect to the subject matters of a given intuition, that intuition is inaccurate.

Consider for instance my intuition that *if p, then not-not-p*. If there is no way things are with respect to logic independently of me, that suffices to show that the intuition is inaccurate. Or consider my intuition that torturing the innocent is wrong. If there is no objective moral truths, that intuition is at least partly inaccurate.¹⁹⁰

My intuitional experience represents that things are a certain way, ob-

190. We can set aside the question of whether these intuitions are wholly inaccurate.

jectively speaking. This is well explained by **I-objectivity**. In virtue of phenomenology of objectivity being an aspect of intuitional experience, it itself 'tells me' that the way things are with respect to what I intuit is how things are objectively speaking. In virtue of intuitional experience having this attitude-specific phenomenology, that is how it seems to me.

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I-objectivity explains the fact that objectivity is part of the content of intuitional experience. It also explains more detailed facts about exactly how objectivity features in that content. In particular, it explains why, although intuitional experience is committed to the existence of a subject-independent world, it does not seem to be committed to anything more substantial, demanding or specific than this.

In intuition, the way things are represented as being seems independent of me. But what it means for an entity to be independent of another is a substantive question of metaphysics. Intuitional experience does not take a stance: it is committed to the way things are being independent of the subject, but not to any particular understanding of what that means.

Consider my intuition that people generally prefer less pain to more. This intuitional experience seems to be committed to the existence of an objective world in just the same way perceptual experiences are. If, objectively speaking, there are no desks, no computer screens and no mess, if these things do not exist except in my mind, this is enough to show that my perceptual experience as of a messy desk is inaccurate. Likewise, if, objectively speaking, there are no people and there is no pain, my intuition is false or inaccurate. Similarly, consider my intuition that torturing the innocent is morally wrong. If there are no moral truths except in the sense that *I myself* am disposed to approve of certain acts or states of affairs and disapprove of others, it is plausible that my intuition is false.

It is a general feature of phenomenal experience that it does not suffice to narrow down the content of a mental state completely. So if, as I have suggested, objectivity is part of the content of intuitional experience *because* that experience has phenomenology of objectivity, that intuition

is committed to objectivity, but not to a more substantial specification of this, is exactly what we should expect.

Finally, we can compare two accounts of the content of a person's intuitional experience that torturing the innocent for fun is morally wrong. It is plausible that the accuracy conditions of my intuition is *objectively: torturing the innocent for fun is morally wrong*. But it not plausible that it is *what objectively qualifies as torture of those that objectively qualify as being innocent objectively instantiates the objective quality of being morally wrong*, or anything similar. The phenomenology of objectivity is *attitude-specific phenomenology*. It can give rise to a content such as the former, but it cannot plausibly give rise to a content such as the latter.

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At this point we must pause briefly to consider a difficulty. It seems that we might have intuitions about mental states. So far so good; contents like *intuitions are more similar to perceptions than to beliefs*, for example, are straightforwardly subject-independent. But could one not have intuitions specifically about *one's own* mental states, such as *my intuitions are more similar to my perceptions than to my beliefs*? Witness, for instance, Joel Pust's response to the claim that intuitions have meta-linguistic content (e.g. *the word "knowledge" does not apply to this situation*):

It seems to me, however, that this account of intuitions is clearly mistaken. It is as clear to me as anything is that my intuitions do not seem to me to be about the applicability of various English words. My intuitions *seem to me* not to be about *English words*, but about knowledge, justification, personal identity, meaning, just action, logical implication, etc..

(Pust 2000: 48)

Intuition, I have argued, carries a commitment to objectivity. So it appears that intuitions about one's own mental states cannot both be characterised by the phenomenology of objectivity *and* be wholly veridical if subject-independence is the right notion of objectivity.

One possible response is to replace subject-independence with independence from the current episode of perception or intuition. But this is an unattractive move, for two reasons. First, it entails unacceptable sacrifice of phenomenal adequacy. When a person perceives, her experience purports to tell her about a world that is independent of *her*, not about one that is independent of her current perceptual episode. The very same phenomenology is present in intuition: when it seems to me that if *p*, then *not-not-p*, this seems to be a fact independent of *me*, not of this intuitional experience. Second, there may be *self-referential* intuitions ('this very intuition is self-identical'), so the move does not help anyway. Indeed, the consequence is *inevitable* so long as objectivity is understood as independence from some *x*. Since we should not restrict intuitions on the basis of content (§1.5.1), regardless of the value of *x*, there can be intuitions regarding it.

Should we take 'objectivity' as a primitive? No; this would merely obscure the problem, and not solve it. We do far better to accept the consequence. We formulate objectivity in the terms that yield the best overall phenomenal and theoretical adequacy, and just accept that some intuitions cannot, as a result, be wholly accurate. I have argued that the phenomenology points clearly to independence *from the subject* herself. Intuitions always carry a commitment to subject-independence, and inasmuch as they are about the intuiter's own mental states, or self-referential, they are by necessity partly inaccurate.¹⁹¹

5.5.3 Objectivity and Transparency in Intuition?

I argued above that **P-objectivity** explains a widely acknowledged datum about perceptual experience, namely its transparency. Michael Huemer has suggested that transparency also characterises intuition. If this were right it would be natural to argue from the transparency of intuition to

191. Another possibility is that the *truth* of the content is subject-independent. On this line, the existence of *my* intuition *this intuition is self-identical* depends on me, but its truth does not: it is true in virtue of the structure of logical space.

I-objectivity. But I do not think intuitional experience is transparent.

What is Huemer's claim? "Transparency", he says, is the view that

... the way we determine the properties of our sensory experiences is by looking at the objects we're perceiving; when we try to look at our experiences, we just 'see through' them to the objects they represent. ... Likewise, in ethical intuition, as a point of phenomenological fact, we find ourselves presented with moral properties and relationships, not with mental states. (Huemer 2005: 121–2)

It is true that, as in the case of perception, when a person has an intuitional experience, her attention is not usually on the properties of the mental state. It is also true that when I intuit that torturing the innocent is wrong, that is the way things seem to me to be. But there is no more substantial sense than that in which I am 'presented with' moral properties and relationships in moral intuition, nor a more substantial sense than that in which I am 'presented with' logical properties and relationships in logical intuitions.

Transparency is a property of content-specific phenomenology, one that obtains *because* an experience has attitude-specific phenomenology of objectivity. But intuition *does not have* content-specific phenomenology. So there is no analogue in intuition of the transparency datum for perceptual experience, namely that it often appears to us that we focus attention on, or become aware of, features of experiences *by* focusing attention on, or becoming aware of, that which we experience. There are no features of our intuitional experience which we could become aware of (attend to) in this way.¹⁹²

192. Even if intuition did have content-specific phenomenology, I doubt we could find an analogue of the transparency datum. When I attend to a property of an object in the subject-independent world, the colour of a chair, say, it is easy to make sense of the idea that I become aware of a property of my experience by being aware of a property of the chair. There is a 'fit' between the kinds of properties my experience has, and the kinds of properties I can become aware of by attending to a subject-independent object. But there does not seem to be a corresponding way to understand becoming aware of a property of my experience by becoming aware of a property of *two plus two equals four*, or of *if p, then not-not-p*. There appears to be a lack of 'fit' between the properties of the experience and the properties of the content of the experience.

5.6 Phenomenology of Pushiness

The second feature which I believe that perception and intuition have in common is *phenomenology of pushiness*. I defend the following two claims:

P-pushiness: Perception has phenomenology of pushiness

I-pushiness: Intuition has phenomenology of pushiness

What is the scope of these claims? I take these to be plausible *conceptual* claims about perception and intuition: on reflection we would not count something as an instance of either perception or intuition unless there is phenomenology of pushiness. Here, however, I aim only to show that phenomenology of pushiness helps to single out categories of genuine explanatory value: it helps to single out psychological kinds. So the claims I defend are *existential*: there are psychological kinds partly singled out by phenomenology of pushiness. I take these to be good deservers of the labels ‘intuition’ and ‘perception’ and will speak of them in this way, but ultimately not much hinges on this.

For an experience to have phenomenology of pushiness it must not represent the content *neutrally*, as a possibility for her or his consideration. It must ‘push’ the subject of the experience to accept its content. Moreover, *that it does so must be an aspect of the very phenomenology of the experience*, and, in particular, an attitude-specific aspect.

Phenomenology of Pushiness: That the experience pushes its subject to accept its content is itself an aspect of the attitude-specific phenomenology of the experience

Why should one believe **P-pushiness** and **I-pushiness**? First, I am hopeful that we can recognise phenomenology of pushiness in our experiences. Second, phenomenology of pushiness explains a crucial feature of perception and intuition, namely that it purports to *inform* the subject.

5.6.1 Recognising Pushiness

Perceptual experience purports to represent a world that is independent of the perceiving subject. But perceptual experience does not represent the objective world in any old way. It does not offer for the subject's consideration the *possibility* that things might be a certain way in the objective world. Instead, perception *pushes* the subject to believe that things really are that way. That it does so is an aspect of the very phenomenology of the experience, an attitude-specific aspect.

Similarly, intuitional experience represents things being a certain way independently of the subject. But intuitional experience does not offer for the subject's consideration the *possibility* that things might be a certain way independently of the subject. Instead, intuition *pushes* the subject to believe that things really are that way. That it does so is an aspect of the very phenomenology of the experience, an attitude-specific aspect.

I am neutral about the truth or falsity of many propositions. There are many I have never considered, and many about which I regard myself to have no evidence either way. Let one of these be the proposition that *p*. If I now have a perceptual experience that *p*, something changes. I can no longer remain neutral with respect to *p*; I must take some kind of stance. This does not mean that I must come to believe that *p* or that *not-p*: I can still suspend belief. But I am pushed to believe that *p*. Not believing it, or even suspending belief, involves a feeling of resisting the phenomenal *push* from the experience.

I am at the moment neutral with respect to whether there is a black bicycle parked at the bike rack outside my office. Should I care to, there are many ways I could check, and one of them is by visual inspection. If, after walking outside, I have a visual experience as of a black bike in the appropriate place, I can no longer remain neutral with respect to whether there is a black bicycle parked at the bike rack. The perceptual experience *pushes* me to believe that this is so.¹⁹³

193. Some thinkers place great emphasis on the idea that what we believe on the basis of experience is just what we see (McDowell 1994/1996, see Heck 2000 for discussion).

The same is the case if I have an intuition that p . Let p be *if my shoes are by the door, then they are not not by the door*. Suppose I have never considered this proposition. But now I do, and it comes to seem to me that if my shoes are by the door, then they are not not by the door. I can no longer remain neutral with respect to the proposition: I am *pushed* to believe it. Not believing it, or even suspending judgement, involves the feeling of resisting the phenomenal push from the experience.

Or consider again the Gettier intuition (note 25). When you have the intuition that Smith does not know, this seems to be the way things are independently of you, and this is a feature of the phenomenology. But it also feels like something you are *pushed* to believe. This is a part of the phenomenology of the experience, a part of what it is like to have it. The same is true for the intuition that torturing the innocent is wrong, and that people generally prefer less pain to more. If you have these intuitions, they seem to be about objective reality. But they do not seem to be about features of objective reality neutrally represented, as a mere possibility. If you have these intuitions you are *pushed* to believe that things actually are that way, and this is an aspect of the very phenomenology of the experience.

An analogy with conversation may be helpful. In conversation, I could ask you to consider the possibility that things may be a certain way. On the other hand, I could also *assert* that they are that way. Perception and intuition are not analogous to the first of these things, but they are analogous to the second, and they are so in virtue of having phenomenology of pushiness.¹⁹⁴

But all must acknowledge that we do not generally believe *all* that we see: perceptual experience is much richer than what is committed to belief. (“A typical judgement *selects* from the content of the experience on which it is based . . .” McDowell 1994/1996: 49, n. 6.) So there are things we see but do not believe, though not because we resist them. My claim in the text is fully consistent with this.

194. Richard G. Heck Jr. also uses a conversational analogy to characterise perception. His focus is on the epistemic properties of perception. To understand how perception justifies (and not merely causes) belief, we cannot, he argues, think of perception as being “like a little voice telling me, ‘Consider the [possibility] that there is a desk in front of you’”. We must recognise that “perception is *more* like a little voice saying, ‘there

Note that it would be misleading, however, to say that perceptual experience ‘says of itself’ that its accuracy conditions are fulfilled. Phenomenology of pushiness is not analogous to something that *is said* at all. Rather, it is analogous to something being said *in a particular way*.

Consider the contrast between assertions and questions in speech. I might utter the very same sentence in two similar contexts, but if my intonation differs in certain ways in the two cases, the result can be that one utterance constitutes an assertion and the other a question. The assertiveness arises from the tone of the entire sentence, and that the sentence is assertive is usually something of which we are immediately aware. Analogously, phenomenology of pushiness impacts not on its content, but on how its content is conveyed.¹⁹⁵ In this way it may be contrasted with phenomenology of objectivity, which *does* impact on the content of the experience.

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I emphasise that, like the claims about objectivity, **P-pushiness** and **I-pushiness** are claims about *the phenomenal character* of perceptual and intuitional experiences, and not about their functional roles. When I say that I am pushed to believe that there is a black bike there, I mean that the phenomenology of having this experience is that of *experiencing* a push

is a desk in front of you” (Heck 2000: 507; 508 n. 26). While I think the analogy is useful, I take it to be best employed to aid in the recognition of a feature of the phenomenology of perception. (I take the epistemological role of perception and intuition to follow from their phenomenology; these issues are explored in Chapter 6.) Heck goes on to say that perception *and belief* share this feature; both, he says, both have “assertoric force” (2000: 508). As discussed in §5.8 below, in my view, the aspect of attitude-specific phenomenology which we can home in on using the conversational analogy is one which perception and intuition do *not* share with belief: belief does not have phenomenology of pushiness. Michael Huemer (2001: 53–4) also uses a perceptual analogy, but also takes belief to share the crucial feature, so I resist his view, for the same reason.

195. One might reasonably think that the contents of an assertoric utterance and an inquisitive one are different, even if the same words are used. I am using a simpleminded view of the difference between assertoric and inquisitive utterances, on which the content is the same (at least in some cases), but *how* what is said is said, differs. It does not matter whether this is ultimately correct; my purposes here are to illustrate.

to believe that that is the way things are. Although perceptual and intuitional experience often give rise to belief, they are independent of it (Chapters 2 and 3). More importantly for present purposes, however, we can make claims about the phenomenology of experience irrespective of claims about its functional role.

Consider the characteristics of intuition we started out with (§§1.1–1.2). One of them was that intuition often leads to belief; another was that intuition is characterised by a certain phenomenal character. A possible outcome is that we were right about the latter but wrong about the former. If we came to discover that, contrary to appearances, intuition very rarely gives rise to belief, that would not *in itself* cast doubt on the claim that intuition has the phenomenology I claim that it does have.

Our language for talking about phenomenal experience is rather underdeveloped, and there is therefore often a need to coin new terms for aspects of phenomenal experience. We usually do this by appropriating terms from other parts of the language. We could use neutral terms instead, ‘type 2 phenomenology’, or whatever. But more evocative terms can aid in the recognition of the relevant phenomenology, and are also easier to remember. Of course, terms are evocative precisely because of connotations they carry from other uses, and in this case, no doubt, some of those connotations are functional. That can be distracting when the term is used to single out an aspect of phenomenal experience. But stipulating a strictly phenomenal reading is still possible. That is what I am doing. And the functional connotations can also be useful, in homing in on the correct aspect of phenomenal experience.

*A strictly
phenomenal
reading*

*

As a description of an aspect of experience, the term ‘pushiness’ must of course be understood metaphorically; pushing in the literal sense is done by hands or by people, not by experiences. I take the metaphor to be apt, and evocative of the correct aspect of experience. But the term is still far from perfect, indeed it is not even clearly superior to all nearby alternatives. For one, in addition to its functional connotations (which

I take to be helpful when considered with the stipulated phenomenal reading in mind), the term 'pushiness' also has associations of etiquette (or courtesy). If a person is pushy, then she is to some degree *rude*.¹⁹⁶ And this does not fit with perceptual experience: there is no sense, not even a metaphorical one, in which perceptual experience is rude.

The important point here is not to establish the propriety of a label, but to lock on to a real attitude-specific aspect of perceptual and intuitional experience. There are other terms we might have used instead, some of which would have been just as good. Making note of what is right about these other terms, and what is not, can aid in the recognition of the correct aspect of experience.

One might instead characterise the target phenomenology as 'coercive'. But coercion is a success term: if I coerce you to Φ , it follows that you Φ . The target aspect of perceptual experience is real, but it does not guarantee success: I can fail to believe what I seem to see, in known illusions, for example. And I can fail to believe what I intuit. As with pushiness, this term also has negative connotations: to be coerced is not a good thing, and again this does not fit with the phenomenal character of perceptual or intuitional experience. But all in all, to say that perception and intuition have coercive phenomenology seems like quite an apt description, and were it not for the implied success, this would, I think, be the term we should choose.¹⁹⁷

We might also characterise the target aspect of experience by calling it 'insistent'. Saying that perceptual and intuitional experience insist on their content being accepted does seem to be on the right track: perhaps my bicycle-experience insists that I believe that there is a bicycle there. Unlike coercion, insistence is not a success term: I can insist that you Φ without you Φ -ing (you might not care what I want). Perhaps the conno-

196. Thanks to Fiona McPherson for reminding me of this.

197. M.G.F. Martin, who also discusses the 'non-neutrality' of perceptual experience, says: "it seems inconceivable that one should be in a mental state phenomenologically just the same as such a perceptual experience and yet not feel coerced into believing that things are the way that they are presented as being" (2002: 390).

tations of exerted force are a bit weak, but again this is a good contender.

Frank Jackson uses the term ‘badgering’ to denote what may well be the aspect of perceptual experience which I have called pushiness.¹⁹⁸ The problem with ‘badgering’ is that it has the whiff of *repeated* or continuous insistence: if I badger you to Φ , I talk to you about Φ -ing incessantly, and use every opportunity to tell you that you should by all means remember to Φ . But perceptual and intuitional experience is not at all like this. Each time you have one it pushes you to accept the content of *that* experience, but there is no one content that experiences keep going on about. Even when you look steadily at an unchanging scene, the phenomenology is not like that.

None of these terms, then, are perfect for the job. Let ‘pushiness’ be understood as an evocative but imperfect label for the aspect of the phenomenology which we have hopefully managed to home in on.

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Other thinkers have discussed the phenomenology of intuition or perception in ways which seem to indicate that their view of the character of such experience is similar to the one offered here. When James Pryor notes “the peculiar ‘phenomenal force’” of perceptual experience (2000: n. 37), for example, this may be intended as a description of phenomenology that is quite similar to phenomenology of pushiness: if perceptual experience has phenomenal force, then perhaps it can *push* me to accept its content, and *vice versa*.¹⁹⁹

Similarly, Michael Huemer describes perceptual experience as being ‘forceful’:

[Y]ou would never confuse seeing a tomato with imagining one. The reason lies in what I call the “forcefulness” of perceptual experiences: perceptual experiences represent their contents as actualized; states of merely imagining do not. When

198. Not so far in print, but often in presentations.

199. There is more than this to Pryor’s view of the phenomenology of perceptual experience; we return to it in detail in Chapter 6 below.

you have a visual experience of a tomato, it thereby seems to you as if a tomato is actually present, then and there.

(Huemer 2001: 77)

If Huemer intends to pick out the same character of experience by his term ‘forcefulness’ as I do by pushiness, then I agree that *a* difference between imagining and perceiving a tomato is that perceptual experience has phenomenology of pushiness. However, the difference between imagining and perceiving (when we bracket differences in the detail of representational content) also partly consists in the absence of phenomenology of objectivity in the case of imagination and its presence in perceptual experience. And it seems that Huemer does not, after all, have the same character in mind, since he seems willing to say that belief shares the relevant phenomenal feature (see n. 194). In my view, belief does not have phenomenology of pushiness. (We return to this in §5.8 below.)

Ernest Sosa has described the phenomenology associated with intuition by saying that one can “feel the ‘pull’ of conflicting considerations” when one has a seeming of the relevant kind (Sosa 2007c: 47).²⁰⁰ This may well be the same feature which I have called phenomenology of pushiness.

William Tolhurst discusses what he takes to be a general class of seemings, a class which incorporates perceptual and intuitional experiences. “[S]eemings”, he says, “are mental states in which the subject experiences a felt demand to believe the content of the state” (1998: 298). Again, what Tolhurst is noting here seems closely related to phenomenology of pushiness. For perhaps there is a sense in which, when one is pushed to believe that *p*, so believing seems to be demanded. Tolhurst even notes that a subject can feel “pressured” and “pushed” by felt demands (1998: 298). So there may be a close similarity between the aspect of experience which is the target of Tolhurst’s descriptions, and the target of mine.

Finally, the thought that perceptual experience has phenomenology

200. See n. 100 for discussion of the importance or otherwise of phenomenology in Sosa’s view of intuition.

of pushiness may not have been foreign to David Hume. In the *Treatise*, he writes:

The difference [between impressions and ideas] consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thoughts and consciousness Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name *impressions*²⁰¹

(Hume 1739/2007: 1.1.1.1)

I make no claim to Hume scholarship. However, the contrast between episodes²⁰² which enter consciousness with force (and ‘violence’) and those that do so to a significantly lesser degree does seem to bear resemblance to the distinction I have been drawing between experiences that have the phenomenology of pushiness and those that do not.

Of course, not all who discuss the phenomenology of seemings or of perceptual or intuitional experience acknowledge phenomenology of pushiness. Some characterise the phenomenology of perception and intuition in terms of *presentation*: we return to these cases below. George Bealer, in many places (as we have seen) emphasises that intuitions—or, at any rate, the intuitions he is interested in—‘present themselves as necessary’. I argued, however, that this should not be understood as a feature of the *phenomenology* of intuition (§1.5.1), so there is no room to in-

201. Here I follow the recommendation of *Hume Studies*, and use the recent Clarendon Press edition, not the older Selby–Bigge–Nidditch edition, previously considered standard. The quoted passage is in Book 1, Part 1, Section 1 and at Paragraph 1. Hume also here mentions the ‘liveliness’ of impressions and ideas, and he goes on to later discuss how the liveliness can also vary. It is not clear whether the liveliness of an impression or idea is a distinct feature from its force. Some later passages seem to indicate that they are one and the same feature. For example:

[It is] evident at first sight, that the ideas of the memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination When we remember any past event, the idea of it flows in upon the mind in a forcible manner; whereas in the imagination the perception is faint and languid . . . (1739/2007: 1.1.3.1).

202. ‘Perceptions’ is Hume’s catch-all term for mental states; on this see e.g. Huemer (2001: 78). The point here is that Hume seems to have been concerned with a similar phenomenal feature as that which I am attempting to describe, and not to which mental episodes he wishes to attribute these features.

interpret this aspect of Bealer's account as noting in intuitional experience the same feature which I have described here. And Bealer also does not say anything else which indicates that he believes intuitional experience is characterised by something like phenomenology of pushiness. Nevertheless, Bealer does put great weight on the phenomenology of intuition in distinguishing intuition from a range of other mental states (§1.3), so his account is at least not incompatible with the one I have urged here.

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One of the best reasons one can have to believe that there is phenomenology of pushiness is that one recognises it in one's own experience. I hope the above discussion has sufficed to enable this to happen. But we can also consider phenomenal contrast.²⁰³

We have already seen one relevant contrast: between perception and imagination. Above we considered a person who has improved his capacity for visual imagination, and who, as he is walking in a forest, suddenly comes upon a small, red, cottage, exactly similar to one he had just imagined. The contrast between the two experiences would, I argued, partly consist in the presence in the latter case of the phenomenology of objectivity. The contrast would also partly consist in the presence in perceptual experience and the absence in visual imaginative experience of phenomenology of *pushiness*. Imagination does not push the imaginer to accept its content, but perceptual experience does. Since pushiness and objectivity go together here, the utility of the contrast is somewhat limited, but taken together with the foregoing discussion it can still perhaps be useful.

A more useful contrast is between perceptual or intuitional experience, on the one hand, and conscious belief, on the other. In belief, there is phenomenology of objectivity. When I consciously believe that **NCA** is false, for instance, I believe that this is the way things are independently of me, objectively speaking, and this is a feature of the very phenom-

203. As before, the remarks in §5.2 should be kept in mind.

ology of conscious belief. But I do not feel a 'push' to believe that **NCA** is false. Rather, the phenomenology is that of already being committed to the falsity of **NCA**. To continue the conversational analogy, belief, when it is conscious, is not at all like an *assertion* that such and such is the case. It is like a reminder of what I have already agreed is the case. Conscious belief has phenomenology of already present *commitment*, not of pushiness.

This contrast is not so easy to elicit in the case of perception, for my conscious belief usually has far simpler content than the content of a perceptual experience. But there are very simple ways thing can look. It can look to me as if there is a white, point-sized patch of light on an otherwise completely dark surface about three metres in front of me in an otherwise completely dark space, not flickering and approximately of the strength of a candle. Presumably I could consciously believe that content. It is plausible that there would still be a difference in the character of the experience, and the difference would partly consist in the presence in perception, but the absence in conscious belief, of phenomenology of pushiness.²⁰⁴

5.6.2 What Pushiness Explains

We can recognise the phenomenology of pushiness in perceptual and intuitional experience. But this aspect of the attitude-specific phenomenology of these states can also *explain* a feature of perception and intuition in which we have solid independent reason to believe. It is clear that perception and intuition appear to *inform* the subject about the way things are. Few deny that perception can in fact inform us about the way things are; many more deny this for intuition. But no one should deny that the intuition *appears* to inform us about the way things are (§§1.1 and 1.2.3).

This fact about perception and intuition is well explained by phenomenology of pushiness. Indeed, the case for this has already been made

204. We return to these themes in §5.8 below.

in the above discussion: let us here simply remind ourselves what it is. Perceptual and intuitional experiences experience do not, as we have noted, offer up the possibility for consideration that things might be a certain way. Perceptual and intuitional experiences *push* the subject to believe that they actually are that way. It is in virtue of doing this that the experiences appear to *inform* the subject that things are the way they represent them as being. Unlike phenomenology of objectivity, phenomenology of pushiness is *not* reflected in the content of perceptual experience. What phenomenology of pushiness explains is that perceptual and intuitional experience purports to *inform* us about the way things are. Recalling the conversational analogy, it is not a feature about what is uttered, but about how it is uttered: assertively.

5.6.3 Pushiness Comes in Degrees

An often noted fact about intuitions is that they come in different strengths. On my view, this is accounted by the fact that phenomenology of pushiness comes in degrees: the push can be weaker or stronger. A strong intuition is one where the phenomenal push is strong. A weak intuition is one where the phenomenal push is weak. And in general intuitions can be ordered according to their strength, that is, according to the strength of the phenomenology of pushiness.

This commits me to the view that perceptual experience can also push a person to believe the content of the experience to various different degrees. I embrace this commitment. However, it is worth noting that it is compatible with this view that the majority of perceptual experience has phenomenology of pushiness of approximately equal strength. I think that is so, and this explains why, while the varying strength of intuitions is often noted, the varying strength of perception is not.

To see that perception really does push to different degrees, consider the following example:

Blizzard: Ann is standing stationary on a flat, snow-covered plain in a blizzard. The wind is whipping snow around in all directions, and no features of the landscape are visible. Ann can barely see her own knees, and she cannot see the tips of her skis.

Someone approaches very slowly from the direction in which Ann is looking. At first she is completely unable to distinguish the approaching person from patterns randomly forming and dissipating in the snow. As the person approaches, Ann's perceptual experience changes, the human figure gradually appears more and more clearly.

A plausible way to describe this case is to say that from very early on, Ann's perceptual experience represents that there is a person there, but that, as the person approaches, she is pushed ever more strongly to believe that this is so. So, just like intuition, perception also pushes the experiencer to believe that things are as they are represented as being with various different strengths.

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In §2.4 we considered the questions of whether a person who acquires the belief that *NCA* is false, (i) keeps the *intuition* that *NCA* is true, and (ii) sheds the *belief* that *NCA* is true. I said there that I take the answer to (i) to hinge on considerations to do with the agent's phenomenology, but I assumed a positive answer.

We can now see that a positive answer is indeed the correct one. Intuition has phenomenology of pushiness. That means that when a person has an intuition that *p*, this makes a certain contribution to the character of the person's overall phenomenal experience. It is plausible that acquiring a belief that *not-p* will result in the overall phenomenal experience being characterised by pushiness to a lesser extent. But it is *not* plausible that the phenomenology of pushiness vanishes altogether. And so long as it is still there, so long as the intuitional experience pushes

the experiencing subject to believe that p to *some* degree, there is still an intuition that p . There is, after all, such a thing as a very weak intuition.

This also lends credence to my claim that **I-pushiness** is a conceptual truth about intuition. For, while it is plausible that an intuition remains if the push is diminished, it is *not* plausible that there is still an intuition if the phenomenology of pushiness vanishes altogether. Similarly, in **Blizzard**, it is plausible that the experience is only correctly characterised as a *perceptual* experience inasmuch as phenomenology of pushiness is part of the attitude-specific phenomenology. If there is no pushiness at all, there is no perceptual experience.

5.7 Valence

We have noted three very important similarities between intuition and perception: both have representational content, and both are characterised by the attitude-specific phenomenologies of pushiness and objectivity. We have also noted an important *disanalogy* between the two states: perception does, but intuition does not, have content-specific phenomenology. It is time now to note another salient difference between the two states: intuition has *valence*, but perception does not.

By this I mean that in intuition it can seem *false* that p , just as it can seem *true* that p . In perception, however, there is no corresponding phenomenon: it cannot perceptually seem false that p .²⁰⁵

Suppose I ask you to consider the proposition that people are usually indifferent between pleasure and pain. I assume that this seems false to you. But that does not mean that what happened is that it seemed true to you that people usually prefer pain over pleasure, or that it seemed *true* that it is false that people are usually indifferent between pleasure and pain. That people usually prefer pain over pleasure entails that they are not indifferent between the two, of course. And you might at other

205. Note that I am not taking a stance on the question of whether absences are perceptually represented: it is consistent with what is claimed in the text that one can see that Tom is not in the room, for example.

times have either of these two other intuitions. But you can also have an intuition with the content *people are usually indifferent between pleasure and pain*, but with negative valence.²⁰⁶

So, when it seems false to you that *p*, I do not mean to suggest that it seems to you *that it is false that p*. The content of the mental state is simply that *p*. You can have an intuition with that content with *negative valence*. That is what I mean when I say that *p* seems false to you.

It is worth noting that intuitions with negative valence are not as easily reported using the ‘*x* intuits that ...’ way of talking. If I say that you intuit that it is false that such and such, it is not clear whether I am referring to a mental state with the content *such and such* or one with the content *it is false that such and such*. My report can be made true both by your having an intuition with the former content but with negative valence, but also by your having an intuition with the latter content and with positive valence. When we are interested in valence, therefore, we do well to make this explicit.

I take the valence of intuition to be an aspect of its attitude-specific phenomenology. What it is like for something to seem true to a person is not the same as what it is like for that same thing to seem false to that person: the two make different contributions to the character of the person’s overall phenomenology.

I am unsure whether to say that perception does not have valence, or to say that it does have valence, but it is only ever positive. At present I do not know how to decide between the claims. But for now it suffices to say that perceptual experience never has negative valence, and that is true in either case.

5.8 Belief

I claim that the phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity can help to single out perceptual and intuitional experience from other mental states.

206. I am leaving ‘objectively’ suppressed. Our reports are often elliptical in this way.

In particular, I claim that this phenomenology manages to distinguish perceptual and intuitional experience from *belief*. In Chapter 2 I argued that intuition is distinct from belief on independent grounds. But the claim about phenomenology is still important. An account which identifies intuition partly by its phenomenology, and which shows that the phenomenology is had by intuition but not by belief, is a fully fledged competitor view to such reductionist views of intuition.

It is clear, of course, that intuition cannot be thought to share attitude-specific phenomenology with beliefs generally. Standing belief *has no* phenomenal character; there is nothing it is like to have a standing belief. So the question of whether intuition can be distinguished from belief by reference to attitude-specific phenomenology is at least restricted to occurrent belief. One can question whether all occurrent beliefs are conscious beliefs, but I bracket this issue here, and focus exclusively on the class of conscious beliefs.²⁰⁷

It is a very widespread assumption that there is a straightforward sense in which one and the same belief can be either standing or conscious. We often speak and write as if the states of standing and conscious belief, and the connection between them, are all well understood. This is, I think, a mistake. What answers to the term 'conscious belief' is, I think, rather multifarious, and it is not always something that corresponds to a standing belief in a straightforward way.

One indication of this is that, while it is possible that 'beliefs' is a bogus plural where standing beliefs are concerned (Lewis 1994: 423, 1986: 32), this does *not* seem to be possible where *conscious* beliefs are concerned. The accuracy conditions of everything I believe put together are much more demanding than the accuracy conditions of a single conscious belief, and the accuracy conditions of single conscious beliefs are not identical to each other. Conscious beliefs are at least partly individu-

207. A functionalist about belief might think that a belief counts as occurrent in virtue of the belief being deployed in occurrent reasoning or decision making processes. Since not all reasoning and not all decision making processes are conscious, a belief could count as occurrent without being conscious.

ated by their contents, so there must be many different conscious beliefs. But it is possible that there is no more than one standing belief.

This does not show, of course, that no notion of conscious belief is in good standing, but it does indicate that we are well advised to be clear about our subject matter when discussing conscious beliefs. Once we do, we can see that the phenomenologies of objectivity and pushiness can help to distinguish intuition from conscious belief.

In §4.3 it was remarked that, in order for the question of whether there is content-specific cognitive phenomenology to be interesting, it must be interpreted a certain way. I might truthfully answer your question “what are you thinking?” by saying “that yesterday was a warm day” if what I was doing at the time you were asking was to *iconically remember* the feeling of warmth. That thinking in *this* sense contributes to the character of overall phenomenology is not controversial. An analogous point holds for iconic memory in all the other sensory modalities, for memory of moods, emotions and bodily sensations, and for iconic *imagination*, as well as imagination of moods, emotions, and bodily sensations. It is not controversial that thinking in this sense contributes to overall phenomenology. Once all of this has been ruled out, we are left with an interesting question, of whether non-iconic thought—identified by exclusion in this way—has content-specific phenomenology. I argued in Chapter 4 that we should answer this in the negative.

But we could still wonder whether enough has been said about the sense of thinking at issue. Some authors argue that thinking in the sense at issue is not a propositional attitude, but a ‘mere holding in mind’.²⁰⁸ For my own part, I do not have a good grasp of what this is supposed to mean. It seems to me that whenever I am related to some proposition I take *some* attitude to it (an attitude stronger than the ‘mere holding in mind’, if that counts as an attitude). I might consider it slightly more likely to be true than to be false, consider it a strange proposition, consider it a surprising proposition, or whatever. At the very least, I vaguely

208. See e.g. David Pitt (2004: 2–3).

wonder whether it is true or false. But I do not think that I ever merely 'hold a proposition before the mind'.

But one thing I do do is to give a proposition what we might call 'mental assent': I do the analogue of 'saying' to myself—though no inner speech need be involved—"yes, that seems right"; I give the proposition a mental 'tick'. If the proposition is p , then this is, I think, one of the phenomena that answers to the phrase 'thinking that p '.

Reflection on such cases may be what lies behind the temptation some have to say that belief shares the aspects of attitude-specific phenomenology which I have attributed to intuition. For cases of giving a mental 'tick' to p not only answer to the phrase 'thinking that p ', they are also, I think, sometimes what we have in mind when we say that a person *consciously believes that p* .

Now, I agree that cases described in this way are generally characterised by phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness. It is also obviously true the state has content. But this does not weaken my position by making it incapable of distinguishing intuition from conscious belief. For such episodes *just are* occurrences of intuition. When you consider whether p and have the reaction I have described, then it *seems* to you that p : you are having the intuition.

We have already noted that uses of 'intuition' in English are highly varied, and not of great value to our investigation. Similarly, we should not expect natural language to make all the important discriminations. So it is no great surprise if ' x consciously believes that p ' is at times used in cases that really are cases of x 's having the intuition that p .

Not all cases that we commonly classify as cases of conscious belief are like that, however. A person, call her Susan, can be said to consciously believe that p at a time even though it does not *seem* to her that p at that time. Susan might consciously believe, for example, that first order propositional logic is sound and complete without it *seeming to her* that first order propositional logic is sound and complete.

So far the description is compatible with several distinct states of affairs. One of the things that might be happening is that Susan is conscious

of having the standing belief that first order propositional logic is sound and complete. But this is an introspective state: the sense of 'conscious of' is that of being *aware* of. It is not a straightforward counterpart of her standing belief, it is not merely a case of a standing belief now having been made conscious. The contents of the two states are different. The content of the standing belief is: *first order logic is sound and complete*. The content of the candidate for being a conscious belief, however is: *I believe that first order logic is sound and complete*.

Another thing that might be happening here, however, is that Susan's experience is characterised by her *being committed* to first order logic being sound and complete. I do not mean that she is having another introspective state, the content of which is *I am committed* Rather, the content of her state is *first order logic is sound and complete*, but she is related to the content 'committedly'. The attitude is one of *being on board with*, and there is an associated attitude-specific phenomenology. This is one sense of 'conscious belief'. But it is also one to which there is, I think, no temptation to think that phenomenology of pushiness applies (although the state is characterised by phenomenology of objectivity). Being in such a state is very different from being pushed to believe a content.

5.9 Objectivity, Pushiness and 'Presentation'

There are other thinkers who emphasise the similarity between the phenomenologies of perception and intuition. Some of them rely on the notion of 'presentation', where this is at least partly understood as a phenomenal notion. How is the notion of 'presentation' related to objectivity and pushiness?

Before going on to critical points, let me note that the disparity between the accounts in terms of 'presentation' and the view I have put forward here should be seen against the background of deep and substantial agreement. That is at least an impression conversation about the phenomenology of intuition can often bring about. Presentation theorists and I both agree that there are important similarities between perception

and intuition, and that a part of the similarity is in the phenomenology of these mental states. And in discussions of what it is like to have an intuitional experience, there is often much we agree on. Moreover, the lack of well established methods for arriving at precise conclusions about the nature of our phenomenal experience, and the fact that our vocabulary is often imprecise or underdeveloped may contribute to give the appearance of disagreement where there is none. That said, however, it seems to me that the account of the phenomenology of intuitional experience in terms of 'presentation' either hyper-intellectualises the phenomena, or constitutes a less perspicuous—and therefore less informative—way of describing the phenomenology than that which has been offered here.

As I have described the phenomenology of intuition, it is not a highly intellectual or complicated affair. The intuitional experience *pushes* me to accept what it represents, just as perceptual experience does. That is part of the very phenomenology of intuitional experience. And it is also part of the phenomenology of the experience that what I am purportedly informed about is independent of *me*. Both of these notions are uncomplicated and straightforward, and there can be little doubt that phenomenology with this character could be present in quite simple creatures.

For comparison, consider now the explication of 'presentational phenomenology' given by Elijah Chudnoff:

(Presentationality of Intuition) Whenever you seem to intuit that p , there is some q (maybe = p) such that—in the same experience—you seem to intuit that q , and you seem to be intellectually aware of an item that makes q true.

(Chudnoff 2011b)

One way to understand this talk of seeming to be aware of an item that *makes* the proposition p true is as asserting nothing more than it seeming that p , with some force. If so, Chudnoff could be understood as saying that when I have an intuition that p , I feel *pushed* to accept that p . If so, then I will of course regard his description as correct but incomplete: intuition does have phenomenology of pushiness, but it also has pheno-

menology of objectivity (and valence).

A second interpretation has it that the talk of being aware of an 'item', a truth-maker for the content of one's intuition, is to be understood as the intuition having in addition the phenomenology of objectivity. Perhaps Chudnoff means by what he says much the same as what I mean when I say that in intuition, as in perception, I am purportedly informed about the way things are independently of me, and that this is part of the very phenomenology of intuitional and perceptual experience. If so, naturally I have no objections, other than that I take my description of the phenomenology to be rather more perspicuous than that offered by Chudnoff.

But there is a third interpretation, according to which Chudnoff is making a much stronger assertion. On this interpretation, when a person has the intuition that p , it seems to her that she is in contact with—aware of—some truth-maker for p , and moreover, of the fact that it makes p true. This strikes me as so obviously phenomenally inadequate that I am tempted to simply point to the interpretation, and set it aside as too implausible.

It is just false that I seem to be aware of a truth-maker for p when I have the intuition that p . It is even more obviously false that I seem to be aware of the truth-maker *as* a truth-maker. What would it be like to seem to be in contact with a truth-maker for a mathematical claim *as* a truth-maker for the claim? That depends, obviously, on what mathematical claims are *about*. But we do not get information about the nature of mathematical objects that directly from our intuition. If it seemed to me that I was in contact with 'an item that makes q true', should I not be able to say *something* about the properties that 'item' has? But I am not; nothing like that goes on in intuition at all. It simply seems to me that two plus two equals four.

Yes, it also seems that this is an aspect of how things are independently of me. Perhaps all Chudnoff intends is that when it seems to me that p , it seems that that is how things are objectively speaking, independently of me. That *is* true. In this limited sense intuition seems to put me

in touch with a subject-independent reality. *But not in any more substantial sense than this.* It does not seem to me that I am aware of any object when I have the intuition that if p , then *not-not- p* . What object would that be? What would it be like to seem to be aware of it? There are no acceptable answers to these questions that do not leave the phenomenology of intuition hyper-intellectualised.²⁰⁹ Still less are there answers that escape that charge, while making sense of being aware of an object *as* the truth-maker of (the content of) an intuition.

It is true that it seems to me that things really are a certain way, independently of me. But there is nothing in the phenomenology of intuition that seems to reveal what this consists in in *any* more substantial or demanding sense than that this is the way things are.

So the view that intuition has ‘presentational phenomenology’ might amount to the claim that intuitional experience has phenomenology of pushiness; in which case it is true but incomplete, since it leaves out phenomenology of objectivity. It might also amount to the claim that intuitional experience has phenomenology of objectivity *and* phenomenology of pushiness (and valence); in which case it is true, but not perspicuously formulated.²¹⁰ And it might amount to the claim that intuitional

209. Boghossian 2001: 637–8 raises a similar challenge against BonJour 1998, for similar reasons.

210. Understood this way I regard ‘presentation’ as somewhat of a black box in what is sometimes called the ‘boxology’ of the mind. I think it arises in this way: we note that we have very good reason to believe that a certain function is carried out: in this case I take the function to be the bringing about of the appearance of justification from perception and intuition. We then draw a box in the place of that function, and we give it a name. In this way arise, I suspect, both ‘presentation’ and ‘acquaintance’. But clearly this manoeuvre does not necessarily advance our understanding. Compare Boghossian’s criticism of BonJour (1998): “We are left staring at the problem with which we began, rather than feeling that we have been placed on the path to real enlightenment” (2001: 637). If we already knew that the function is carried out, drawing a box around it and naming that box does not improve our understanding.

In contrast, in Chapter 6 I argue that the fact that perceptual experience has pushy and objective phenomenology *explains* why it can support belief in the way that it does. Identifying and separating these aspects of attitude-specific phenomenology thus takes our understanding further with respect to this question than does appending the name ‘presentation’ to what is happening. It allows, for instance, for the possibility that we can come to understand why other mental states *fail* to provide such support for belief in a nuanced way. Perhaps this is because the state lacks objective phenomenology (as in wishful thinking), perhaps it is because it lacks pushy phenomenology (as in conscious belief), or perhaps it lacks both (as in imagination).

experience consists in awareness of the truth-makers of the contents of intuition in some more substantial sense than that it merely seems that that is the way things are objectively speaking. In this latter case it is, I think, clearly false.

John Bengson also argues that intuition and perception share the feature of being 'presentational'.²¹¹ I find much to agree with in Bengson's view, most particularly the view that "intuition is similar to perceptual experience *in epistemically significant respects*" (Manuscript: 2), and the view that at least part of the similarity consists in similarities in what it is like to have a perceptual and an intuitional experience.²¹²

Bengson's seeks to isolate the phenomenal feature he takes perception and intuition to share by contrasting those states with what he terms 'merely contentful' mental states and 'merely representational' mental states. The main example of 'merely contentful' mental states is imagination, and the main example of 'merely representational' states is belief. ('Presentational' mental states like intuition and perception are representational, but not *merely* representational.)

As is clear from the foregoing discussion, there is significant agreement between Bengson's view and mine in where the fault lines are to be drawn. I agree that there is an important contrast between imagination and perception or intuition. However, I have characterised that distinction in detail: imagination lacks *both* phenomenology of pushiness and phenomenology of objectivity. Moreover, iconic imagination is similar to perception, but dissimilar from intuition, in having content-specific phenomenology; non-iconic imagination the other way around.

Bengson and I also agree that there is an important distinction between intuition and perception, on the one hand, and belief on the other. I have characterised this by saying that intuition and perception have

211. In two places: in his PhD thesis (2010: §§3–4), and in an unpublished manuscript. The discussion is quite similar, though somewhat extended in the manuscript.

212. That the 'presentationality' of perception and intuition is intended as (at least partly) a phenomenal feature is perhaps not one hundred percent clear from the texts, but Bengson has confirmed this interpretation of his view in conversation.

phenomenology of pushiness, which belief lacks. I confess that I find this rather more elucidatory of the phenomenal character of perception and intuition than it is to say that belief ‘merely represents’, whereas intuition and perception ‘*present*’. Intuition and perception *push* me to believe that things are thus and so; belief at most reminds me of previous commitments. This, it seems to me, gets closer to the actual phenomenal character of perceptual and intuitional experience. Similarly, I do not find Bengson’s distinction between ‘having’ and ‘being under’ an impression elucidatory. Both of these evoke a force being applied, so this talk, in my view, obscures rather than clarifies the distinction between intuition and perception, on the one hand, and belief, on the other.

To reiterate, there is important agreement here. But I do find reason to complain about the view on the grounds that it fails to distinguish two importantly different characteristics of the phenomenology of intuition and perception (and as a result, of course, is rather less perspicuous in its description of the phenomenology than I believe it ought to be). I hope the above discussion has revealed that we can do better.²¹³

5.10 What Intuition Is

The discussion so far leads us to the following conclusion. There is a class of mental states, which have representational content, which are characterised by attitude-specific phenomenology of objectivity, pushiness, and valence, but which do not have content-specific phenomenology. This class of states, this class of *experiences*, is a good candidate for constituting a psychological kind, and thus of interest to anyone with an interest in understanding the basic make-up of the mind. As we shall see (in Chapter 6), it plays an important epistemological role.

This class of experiences is a good deserver of the label ‘intuition’. It answers well to our use of that term, certainly capturing the paradigmatic cases. It also enables relevant distinctions to be drawn, for example

213. See n. 210 above.

between intuition and conscious belief. Because the class is a good candidate for a psychological kind, it is likely that it will serve us well to reserve the term 'intuition' for members of the class. But not much ultimately hinges on this verbal issue.

The class of experiences I have singled out fits well with what we have seen that intuition is *not*. Intuition is not a belief (Chapter 2), nor is it a disposition to believe (Chapter 3). We also noted that intuition often gives rise to belief (§1.1). This is well explained by the account of intuition as an experience with the characteristics I have argued that it has.

When an experience has phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity, the experience purports to inform the experiencer that things *actually are* a particular way, objectively speaking. If it seems to an experiencer that she is informed that things are a certain way, objectively speaking, it is surely plausible that she will often come to believe that they are that way. So the conception of intuition as an experience respects and accounts for the fact that intuition and perception often lead to belief, while upholding the distinction between the two. As we shall see in Chapter 6, the attitude-specific phenomenology of intuition and perception is also important to the epistemic features of these states. In particular, the account vindicates the appearance that intuition and perception justify belief.

*

The characteristics given uniquely characterise intuition. As we have seen, the term conscious belief is sometimes used for intuition itself. But when it is not, it designates a state that lacks phenomenology of pushiness. (It has instead, I have suggested, the phenomenology of already being committed to a content.) So intuition can be distinguished from conscious belief by the fact that intuition has, but conscious belief lacks, phenomenology of pushiness.

Intuition is also distinguishable from what some term 'memorial seemings'. Memory may be iconic or non-iconic. Intuition is distinguishable from the former, since the former has, but intuition lacks, content-specific phenomenology: what it is like to iconically remember some-

thing blue is different from what it is like to iconically remember something green. Intuition is furthermore distinguished from memory of both the iconic and the non-iconic kind, since intuition has, but memory lacks, phenomenology of pushiness.

Perception, on the other hand, *does* have phenomenology of pushiness. Perception also has phenomenology of objectivity. But perception is still distinguishable from intuition on the present account. For, first, perception has but intuition lacks content-specific phenomenology. Second, intuition has, but perception lacks, (negative) valence. Finally, visual perceptual experience has a certain ‘visualness’, and perceptual experience in the other modalities has corresponding features.

Finally, intuition is distinguishable from wishful thinking. If I wishfully think that p , my phenomenology may have phenomenology of pushiness. But it does not have phenomenology of objectivity: there is no feeling that p is the way things are independently of me.

*

Is this really an answer to the question of what intuition is? First, there is a verbal question in the vicinity which we have been careful to avoid. What we decide to use the term ‘intuition’ for is not of great importance. But even when we restrict our attention to the metaphysics of the interesting class of mental states I have singled out, a form of the same challenge can be raised. Have I really given an account of the nature of these states?²¹⁴

I have no hesitation in admitting that it is not a complete answer. Had we found that intuition has content-specific phenomenology, that what it is like to intuit that p differs from what it is like to intuit that q , the claim would be open to us that intuition has ‘phenomenal intentionality’: intentionality “constitutively determined by phenomenology alone” (Horgan and Tienson 2002; see also e.g. Pitt 2004). We would then have been able to claim that intuition is a purely phenomenal state. But we

214. I am grateful to John Bengson for helpful discussion here.

should go where the arguments take us, and, I have argued, that is not where they lead: we have good reason to think that intuition does *not* have content-specific phenomenology (Chapter 4).

This leaves us with the view that although phenomenal character is *important* to the nature of intuition—it is an essential feature of it—phenomenal character does not exhaust its nature. We also need an account of what it is in virtue of which an intuition has the particular content it has: of what it is in virtue of which it is the intuition that *p* and not the intuition that *q*.

If the argument in Chapter 4 is correct, we need such an account anyway. For even if some mental states have phenomenal intentionality, there are many contentful mental states that do not. When I *think* that *p*, there is something in virtue of which I think *that*, and not instead that *q*. But that something is not the phenomenal character of the state.

To complete the picture of the nature of intuition, we need an account of representational content. What we have provided is an account which, coupled with that account, will answer the question of what the nature is of the mental states in the class we have identified. That constitutes a significant advance in our understanding of the nature of intuition.

CHAPTER SIX

Epistemic Consequences

McDowell likes to say that, in experience, we are saddled with content. But what is important is not just *that* we are saddled, but *how*.

RICHARD G. HECK JR.

Nonconceptual Content and the "Space of Reasons"

6.1 Introduction

Intuition cannot be reduced to all-out or partial belief, because such reduction predicts rational criticisability where there is none, and neither can perception, for the same reason (Chapter 2). False predictions of rational criticisability also show that intuition and perception are not reducible to a disposition to believe (Chapter 3). In both cases the arguments moreover suggest that intuition and perception are experiences.

Developing the conception of intuition as an experience we found that, unlike perceptual experience, intuitional experience does not have content-specific phenomenology (Chapter 4), but like perceptual experience, intuitional experience has attitude-specific phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness (Chapter 5).

It is natural to wonder whether the similarities in nature between perception and intuition result in similarities in the epistemic roles intuition

and perception can play. In this chapter I argue that there are, indeed, such epistemic consequences.

When a subject S has a perceptual or intuitional experience with the content p ('an experience that p '), what consequences does this have for what the subject is justified in believing? A very natural answer is that having the experience justifies S in believing that p .

This attractive thought leaves a lot open, however. We can make it more precise by saying that having the experience is what *makes* S justified in believing that p .

Liberalism: For experiences of certain kinds, if certain conditions are met, then S 's having an experience that p is what *makes* her justified in believing that p

Let us say that a subject's justification β to believe q is independent of her justification α to believe p just in case S could have β even if she did not have α . A subject who has a perceptual or intuitional experience ϵ that p , will usually have independent justification to believe many other propositions. An immediate consequence of **Liberalism** as stated here is that when certain conditions are met, S 's having independent justification to believe these other propositions is no part of what *makes* S justified in believing p : simply having ϵ makes her justified in believing p .²¹⁵

Liberalism can be understood as a claim about the epistemic powers of certain experiences. Some experiences are such that, if certain necessary conditions are met, S 's having such an experience can *make* her justified in believing what the experience represents, without 'requiring assistance' from S 's being justified in believing some other proposition.

Singlehanded justification Let us say that if **Liberalism** is true for experiences of a certain type, then experiences of that type *singlehandedly justify* the subject in believing the content of the experience.

215. Here I am more closely following Nicholas Silins (2007) than James Pryor (2004), but note that my use of the term 'Liberalism' differs from both Silins' and Pryor's uses. (It is not too far from Boghossian's use in his 2009.) Silins adapts the term from Pryor, but uses it for his own purposes.

If **Liberalism** is true for perception, no part of what *makes* a perceiver justified in coming to believe what her experience represents is that she has justification to believe that her experience is not isolated from the ways things are, for example because she is a brain in a vat. If **Liberalism** is true for intuition, no part of what *makes* an intuiter justified in coming to believe what her experience represents is that she has justification to believe that her experience is not isolated from the ways things are, for example due to the nature of the things which her intuitions are about.

My primary aim in this chapter is to argue that, on the assumption that the account of the nature of intuition developed in Chapters 4 and 5 is correct (an assumption adopted here), intuition and perception are on a par with respect to **Liberalism**. By this I mean that Liberalism is as reasonable for intuitional experience as it is for perceptual experience and *vice versa*: we should accept Liberalism for intuition just in case we accept it for perception. Let us refer to this claim simply as ‘the analogy’.

6.2 Liberalism and Dogmatism

Liberalism as thus understood is separable from the claim that S *does not need to have* justification to believe other propositions in order to be made justified in believing that *p* by having *E* (Silins 2007). One can reject *that* claim while still claiming that *E* singlehandedly justifies S’s belief. For example, a supporter of **Liberalism** can hold that, when S has a perceptual experience that *p*, S’s having justification to believe that she is not a brain in a vat is among the conditions that must be met for her experience to make her justified in believing that *p*.²¹⁶ But the supporter of **Liberalism** need not take that justification to be in any way involved in *making* the subject justified. Consider the analogy: it is no part of what makes

216. Arguments for such views can be found *inter alia* in Cohen (2010); Davies (2000a,b); Silins (2007); Wright (1985, 2000, 2002, 2007). A *conservative* view would on my use of the words be a view affirming that a part of what *makes* an experience justify belief includes the perceiver having some independent justification to believe other propositions (cf. Silins 2007: 111). Again, this differs from Pryor’s use of the terms (2004).

me justified in believing that there are three pens on my desk that I am not distracted by a deafening noise: having a certain visual perceptual experience is what makes me justified. But my not being distracted by a deafening noise is a necessary condition for my being justified by my visual perceptual experience. This simply reflects a general distinction between necessary conditions in a wide sense, and the things involved in making certain things so.

A supporter of **Liberalism** could in addition defend:

Dogmatism: **Liberalism** is true, and S's having independent justification to believe some other proposition is not among the conditions that must be met in order for S's having an experience that *p* to make her justified in believing that *p*

On this view, S's having justification to believe some other proposition is *not even* a necessary condition for her acquiring justification from having the experience.²¹⁷ For example, when S has a perceptual experience that *p*, S's having justification to believe that she is not a brain in a vat, or that her experience is reliable, are *not* among the conditions that must be met for her experience to make her justified in believing that *p*. However, **Dogmatism** usually says that it *is* a necessary condition that S does *not* have justification to believe that she *is* a brain in a vat (or that her experience is very unreliable): this and other *defeaters* for her justification must be absent.²¹⁸ Let us say that if **Dogmatism** is true for experiences of a certain type, then experiences of that type *immediately justify* the subject in believing the content of the experience.²¹⁹

*Immediate
justification*

217. Note that having justification to believe some other proposition may be a necessary condition for S to even be able to *form the belief* that *p*. Consider the analogy: if having certain perceptual experiences is necessary in order to acquire certain concepts, it is not usually thought to follow that reflection on these concepts cannot yield *a priori* justification. (See also the second quote from Pryor in n. 220 below.)

218. We return to the question of what defeaters are shortly, and to the question of what it means for defeaters to be absent in §6.3 below.

219. It is a further question whether *it being true* that S is not a brain in a vat, or that her experience is reliable, are among the necessary conditions for S's having an experience to justify her in believing what her experience represents. Pryor: "Conservative and

When the kind of experience in question is perceptual experience, the resulting view is Dogmatism for Perception. This view is associated in particular with James Pryor (Pryor 2000, 2004, 2005).²²⁰ Liberalism about perceptual experience does not take on this commitment: it is consistent with (though not required by) Liberalism, that S needs to have justification to believe some other proposition in order for her experience to make her justified. So it is consistent with Liberalism that although having an experience singlehandedly justifies belief, it does not immediately justify it.

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My primary aim in this chapter is to defend the analogy: the claim that intuition and perception are on a par with respect to Liberalism. A secondary aim is to strengthen the case for *acceptance* of Liberalism for both perception and intuition. I try to achieve this by presenting an improved explanation of why perceptual experience justifies belief.

liberal treatments of H may or may not also assign H a truth-requiring role" (2004: 354). Recall that Pryor uses the terms 'conservative' and 'liberal' in a different way than I do. 220. A different interpretation of Pryor would understand him to endorse Liberalism but not Dogmatism, as these terms have been defined here. In attributing to Pryor endorsement of Dogmatism as defined here, I am relying *inter alia* on these passages:

My view is that when Moore's experiences represent there to be hands, that *by itself* makes him prima facie justified in believing there are hands. This justification doesn't rest on any *premises about* Moore's experiences: whether they constitute perceptions, how reliable they are, or anything like that. It's in place so long as he *merely has* experiences that represent there to be hands. There are things Moore could learn that would undermine this justification. But **it's not a condition** for having it that he *first* have justification to believe those undermining hypotheses are false (Pryor 2004: 356, **boldface** added).

And:

[T]he fact that you have immediate justification to believe P does not entail that no other beliefs are required for you to be able *to form or entertain* the belief that P. Having the concepts involved in the belief that P may require believing certain other propositions; it does not follow that any justification you have to believe P must be mediated by those other propositions (Pryor 2005: 183).

Here I take Pryor to make the point I note at the start of n. 217 above, thus buttressing my interpretation that as far as being *justified* by having an experience is concerned, having justification to believe some other proposition is *not even a necessary condition*.

This part of my discussion is usefully conducted against the backdrop of Pryor's defence of **Dogmatism** for Perception. Pryor claims that absent defeaters, having a perceptual experience that p immediately justifies the belief that p , and, moreover, that what *explains* why perceptual experience immediately justifies is the *phenomenal character* of perceptual experience.

I accept the claim that the correct explanation of perception's ability to justify belief is the phenomenal character of perceptual experience. I offer, however, an explanation given in terms of the attitude-specific phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity, which, I claim, does better on certain scores than the explanation Pryor offers.

I believe we can come to see that perceptual experience singlehandedly justifies belief by properly considering its phenomenal character. It is not as clear, I think, that we can come to see that it *immediately* justifies in this way. In any case, I set this question aside here.²²¹ The question in focus is the connection between the phenomenal character of experience, and its ability to provide justification. This question is of equal importance to **Liberalism** of all varieties, since supporters of this position share the view that having an experience of a certain sort singlehandedly justifies belief. So it is worth our while to treat this question carefully.

Insofar as the explanation I offer really improves on Pryor's explanation, the case for **Liberalism** is strengthened. But giving that explanation in terms of pushiness and objectivity also strengthens the case for the analogy, since intuitional experience shares these aspects of attitude-specific phenomenology with perceptual experience. I also argue that the differences between perception and intuition do not matter for intuition's ability to make a subject justified, and so do not stand in the way of the analogy.

The account offered here agrees with Pryor's account that the key to the epistemic power of perception is its phenomenal character. It is therefore usefully presented against the backdrop of, and contrasted with, Pryor's account. Accordingly, in §6.3 I describe **Dogmatism** for Percep-

221. This question is discussed further in Appendix A.

tion in some detail, before outlining Pryor's case for the view in §6.4.

After a brief interlude, I draw out, in §6.6, a challenge for Pryor's account. This challenge shows, I argue, that Pryor's explanation for why having a perceptual experience justifies belief is at best incomplete. On plausible assumptions, the challenge shows that it is not only incomplete, but incorrect. In §6.7 I present an alternative explanation, which I argue fares better on certain scores.

In §6.8 I describe Dogmatism and Liberalism for Intuition, before defending the latter view in §6.9. Intuitional experience, like perceptual experience, has phenomenology of objectivity and phenomenology of pushiness, and this allows it to singlehandedly justify belief. In §6.10 I use the argument provided so far to argue explicitly for the analogy. In §6.11 I take stock, before concluding the chapter.

Two short notes. I shall treat talk of having a lot of or a little justification as interchangeable with talk of strong and weak justification. This is surely *one* respectable way to understand these notions, though I am sure there are others. Intuitively, as a person gets stronger justification to believe that *p*, or more justification for that belief, she will be justified in having a higher credence in *p*. This is all the precision we need for our purposes.

According to **Dogmatism**, *in the absence of defeaters*, *S*'s having an experience that *p* immediately justifies her belief that *p*. We can think of a defeater for *S*'s justification to believe that *p* as evidence which (unless it itself is defeated), makes *S* less justified in believing that *p*.²²² Among defeaters, we can distinguish between *rebutting* and *undermining* defeaters ('underminers'). Applied to a case of perception, the latter gives a subject reason to doubt that her perceptual experience is veridical, and so *undermines* the justification her having the experience provides for belief

222. One may or may not wish to also include a provision which ensures that, when *S* has a defeater for her justification, she is no longer justified *simpliciter*. The subtleties here arise out of the combination of a 'defeater' as a notion which at least initially appears to be binary, with the graded notion of justification. Nothing here will hinge on these details.

in p . The former is evidence that *not-p*; which, while not directly bearing on the relation between the experience and the belief, does change the subject's epistemic status with respect to the belief that p .²²³

6.3 Dogmatism for Perception Characterised

Dogmatism for Perception is a view presented by James Pryor in "The Skeptic and the Dogmatist" (2000). Others have defended similar views (Chudnoff 2011a, Huemer 2001: 98-113, Pollock 1974: 59, Pollock and Oved 2005), but here I focus on Pryor's position.

As the title of the paper suggests, Dogmatism is offered as a view capable of dealing with the skeptical challenge. It is only claimed to be capable of dealing with the challenge satisfactorily for *our own* purposes, however. The aim is to allow us to retain commonsense beliefs about justification and knowledge without accepting crucial skeptical premises, not to refute the skeptic using only premises that *she* accepts. Pryor calls the latter the *ambitious* anti-skeptical project, and deems it unlikely to succeed. The project he is engaged in, by contrast, is the *modest* anti-skeptical project (2000: 517–18).²²⁴

Key to the skeptical challenge, Pryor argues, are the 'Skeptical Principles' about justification and knowledge. Dogmatism denies the skeptical principles, so considering the principles is a good way to understand the position. Here is the skeptical principle for justification:

SPJ: If you're to have justification for believing p on the basis of certain experiences or grounds E , then for every h which is "bad" relative to E and p , you have to have antecedent justification for believing

223. If my trustworthy friend tells me that p , it is plausible that I am now justified in believing that p . If I acquire evidence that *not-p*, this can make it the case that I am no longer justified in so believing. But if I acquire evidence that my friend lied in this instance, my justification to believe p is undermined. More fine grained taxonomies of defeaters are also possible, see e.g. Pryor (2004: 352-33).

224. On this distinction, see also Byrne (2004: 319), Cohen (1988: 117), DeRose (1995: §17), and Pryor (2004: 370).

h to be false—justification that doesn't rest on or presuppose any E-based justification you may have for believing *p*.²²⁵
(Pryor 2000: 531)

Let us unpack the principle a little. A scenario is *bad* relative to \mathcal{E} and *p* just in case it is incompatible with *p*—what you think you know or are justified in believing on the basis of \mathcal{E} —but still *allowed* by the experience—if you were in the scenario you might well have exactly the experience you actually do have (2000: 527). In other words, a bad scenario is compatible with the existence of \mathcal{E} , but not with the truth of its content.²²⁶

For example, it is standardly thought that if I am in a situation such as that depicted in the film *The Matrix*, a large number of my perceptual beliefs are false.²²⁷ But the scenario is allowed by my experience: were I in the scenario I could have exactly the experience I am now having. So the scenario is bad relative to my perceptual beliefs.

In later work, Pryor switches from talk of bad scenarios to talk of non-perceiving hypotheses, and it is worth noting why. A non-perceiving hypothesis *h* is a hypothesis the truth of which is incompatible with perceptual experience constituting *successful perception* of the world (2004: 355). On some non-perceiving hypotheses about an experience, the way the experience represents the world as being is not the way the world actually is. A paradigmatic example of this is depicted in *The Matrix*. But there may also be non-perceiving hypotheses according to which the world *is* the way it is represented as being.

Non-perceiving hypotheses

Suppose that the content of one of my experiences is that my right hand is on the desk in front of me. If my right hand *is* on the desk in front

225. I have replaced *p* in the original formulation with *h* here, for consistency with the later presentation. The corresponding principle for knowledge is: "If you're to know a proposition *p* on the basis of certain experiences or grounds \mathcal{E} , then for every *q* which is "bad" relative to \mathcal{E} and *p*, you have to be in a position to know *q* to be false in a non-question-begging way—i.e., you have to be in a position to know *q* to be false *antecedently* to knowing *p* on the basis of \mathcal{E} " (2000: 528).

226. In attributing badness to *scenarios* I am following Pryor (2000: 526–7).

227. For an argument for the contrary position, see Chalmers (2003/2005).

of me, the way the world is represented as being is the way the world actually is. But the experience might still fail to be connected with the world in the right way. It might, for example, be caused by a clever concoction of drugs rather than by light being reflected off the hand and the desk, entering my eyes, etc. In short, the experience might be hallucinatory, but veridical. The hypothesis that I am veridically hallucinating is a non-perceiving hypothesis: it is compatible with the existence of E , but not with E being an instance of successful perception. The scenario described is not *bad*, however: what I think I know—namely that my right hand is on the desk—is true in the scenario.

Not all views of the content of perceptual experience are compatible with veridical hallucinations. On some views, that my experience is caused by the world in the right way is itself part of the content of the experience (Jackson 2003). On such ‘thick’ views of the content of perceptual experience, all non-perceiving hypotheses describe bad scenarios.²²⁸ But on ‘thin’ views, views where the relation between the experience and the world is not part of the content of the experience, some non-perceiving hypotheses do not describe bad scenarios. Stating the dogmatist positions in terms of non-perceiving hypotheses (Pryor 2004) rather than in terms of ‘bad’ scenarios (Pryor 2000) thus constitutes a certain refinement. It allows Dogmatism to be evaluated without taking a stance on whether the content of perceptual experience is thin or thick.

*

Stated in terms of non-perceiving hypotheses, the skeptical principle about justification says that it is necessary to have *antecedent* justification to believe that every non-perceiving hypothesis h relative to p and E is

228. One might hold a view on which the experience being caused by the world in the right way is a part of the content of the experience, but that it is possible to come to believe merely the thin content, for example that there is a cup in front of me. Such a view would still be compatible with veridical hallucination. But not all views of the content of perceptual experience would take that stance: one need not think that the content factorises this neatly. The causal link to the world could be part of the content of *any* belief based on perceptual experience. Thanks to Leon Leontyev for helpful discussion.

false, in order to get justification for p from ϵ . Dogmatism denies this. But what does it mean to have *antecedent* justification?²²⁹

Pryor takes the notion to be more or less self-explanatory. Considering an example of his looking at the petrol gauge of his car and it looking to him as if it points to 'E', he notes that: "... there is an *obvious* sense in which my justification for believing that I'm out of gas *rests on* my justification for believing that the gas gauge reads 'E' ..." (Pryor 2000: 525, first emphasis mine).²³⁰ In this situation, Pryor's justification to believe that the petrol gauge points to 'E' is *antecedent* to his justification to believe that he is out of petrol, and his justification to believe that he is out of petrol *rests on* his justification for believing that the gauge points to 'E'.

Let us note two crucial points about the relation. First, it is an *epistemic*, and not a temporal, relation. If S 's justification to believe q is antecedent to his justification to believe p , the point is that it is closer to the foundation of the justificatory structure, not that it is earlier in any temporal ordering (Pryor 2000: 524). Second, as the name suggests, the relation is anti-symmetric: if S 's justification to believe q is antecedent to his justification to believe p , then S 's justification to believe p is *not* antecedent to his justification to believe q .²³¹

*An epistemic,
anti-symmetric
relation*

In the characterisation of **Liberalism** above, we said that S 's justification β to believe q is independent of her justification α to believe p just in case S could have β even if she did not have α . We can understand the relation of antecedence between justifications to pick out justification that is independent of S 's having an experience justifying S 's belief. So, we can

229. According to Pryor, S 's justification to believe p is antecedent to his justification to believe q just in case his *reasons* for believing p do not *rest on* his reasons for believing q (2000: 525). I understand this 'just in case' as 'if and only if', so I take justification for believing p being antecedent to the justification for believing q to be *equivalent* to the reasons for p not resting on the reasons for q . Pryor also speaks of justification resting on other justification; the equivalence holds either way.

230. Also: "I think that this notion of epistemic priority is a notion that we intuitively understand" (2000: 526).

231. Pryor states the requirement as asymmetry, which I take to be ambiguous between absence of symmetry (symmetry not holding) and anti-symmetry (2000: 530). I take it that he intends the stronger requirement.

assume that S 's justification β to believe q is *antecedent* to her justification α to believe p just in case S could have β even if she did not have α .²³²

The dogmatist for perception denies the skeptical principle about justification for perceptual experience. If my perceptual experience E rep-

232. We can draw out a consequence of the resting on relation for justification to what a subject is in an epistemic position to know. Being in an epistemic position to know is compatible with not being in a position to know all things considered, since one might be blocked from attaining knowledge by a non-epistemic factor: somehow being blocked from forming the relevant belief, for example.

Assume now that S 's justification α to believe p rests on his justification β to believe q , and that α puts S in an epistemic position to know p . This *entails* that S is also in an epistemic position to know q (unless the justificatory threshold for knowing q is higher than for knowing p , a possibility I bracket here). For assume otherwise. Then, either something other than α put S in this position, or α does not rest on β after all. Something other than α putting S in this position contradicts our assumptions. But if it *was* α that put S in an epistemic position to know p , and α rests on β , then S must be in an epistemic position to know that q since, if α rests on β , then β obtains if α does. So, if S 's justification α to believe p rests on his justification β to believe q , and if α puts him in an epistemic position to know p , then S is also in an epistemic position to know q .

Consider one of Pryor's examples. As I am driving, my visual perceptual experience represents that the petrol gauge points to the empty symbol. I may thereby become justified in believing that my car is nearly out of petrol. But my justification α for believing this rests on my justification β for believing that the petrol gauge points to the empty symbol (2000: 525). If α puts me in an epistemic position to know that my car is nearly out of petrol, this *entails* that I am in an epistemic position to know that the petrol gauge points to the empty symbol. (It is crucial that it is α that puts me in a position to know, since, as Pryor notes (2000: 535), there is such a thing as 'evidential overdetermination'. I might be put in a position to know that the car is nearly out of petrol by something else, by my trustworthy navigator telling me, for example.)

Note that the opposite inference cannot be drawn. Suppose I know that S being in an epistemic position to know p entails that he is in an epistemic position to know q . I cannot infer that S 's justification α for believing p rests on his justification β for believing q . For one, α being identical to β would ensure that the entailment holds. In that case, however, α does not rest on β , since the resting on relation is anti-symmetric (and identity is symmetric).

It might also be tempting to think that *always* when β does *not* rest on α , it is possible for β to put S in an epistemic position to know q without S thereby being put in an epistemic position to know p . But this fails. For one, both α and β may be insufficiently strong to yield knowledge. For another, β obtaining may entail that α obtains. If β obtaining entails that α obtains it is not possible for β to put S in an epistemic position to know q without S thereby being put in an epistemic position to know p . And we cannot tell merely from the fact that β obtaining entails that α obtains that β rests on α . The two might for example be identical, in which case it is ensured that β does *not* rest on α . (Of course, if α is identical to β , neither is antecedent to the other; again, antecedence is anti-symmetric.)

resents that p , according to **Dogmatism** there is *no* proposition I need to have antecedent justification to believe in order to get justification to believe that p on the basis of E .

Let q_1, q_2, \dots, q_n each be a proposition that a particular non-perceiving hypothesis relative to E and p is false, and let $(q_1 \& q_2 \& \dots \& q_n)$ entail that *all* non-perceiving hypotheses relative to E and p are false. According to **Dogmatism** for Perception, in order to acquire justification to believe p by having E , I need not have antecedent justification for believing every q_i ; indeed I do not need this for *any* q_i .²³³ However, if I acquire a reason to believe that a non-perceiving hypothesis is true, that counts as a defeater for my justification to believe p .

Let us note some features of the view. First, what is at issue here is *propositional* justification, not doxastic justification. A person may be propositionally justified in believing p but fail to believe that p . Second, even if she does believe p , *that belief* may still not be justified, if her belief that p is not connected with the justification in the right way. If I believe that p as a result of a knock to my head, *that belief* will not usually be justified, even if I have propositional justification to believe p . If I have

233. Note that this is compatible with my having justification to believe p on the basis of having E entailing my having justification to believe some other proposition r *on that basis*. A common reaction to the richness of perceptual experience is to think that if my perceptual experience justifies me in believing that the cup is on the table, it must also justify me in believing some other things, perhaps that the cup is of a particular colour or that it is at a particular distance from me. (*Which* other things will vary from case to case, of course.) This is no threat to **Dogmatism**. If my justification for believing p is α , it is compatible with Dogmatism that α also justifies belief in r . But it is not compatible with Dogmatism that my having α entails that I also have a different justification, β , which justifies my belief in r . The crucial point here is that perceptual experience need not 'factorise' neatly. So it need not be the case that if my perceptual experience E justifies me in believing p (that the cup is on the table), some *part* of E , E' , justifies me in believing r (that the cup has a streak of sunshine across it). The same experience can justify both (Pryor 2005: n. 4).

For a similar reason, it is no challenge to anything said here if, whenever I am in a position to know p I am also in a position to know anything which is obviously entailed by p : $p \vee r$, for example. Dogmatism says that it is possible for me to be justified in believing p on the basis of E without there being any q such that I have independent justification to believe q . Let q here be $p \vee r$. The justification I have for q is not independent of my justification for p , since what justifies me in believing q here is partly what justifies me in believing p . (It is also partly something else, namely my grasp of logic.)

propositional justification *and* my belief is connected with that justification in the right way, I am doxastically justified in believing that *p*.²³⁴

Second, in the case of *mediate* justification, the justification for *p* rests on the *justification* for *q*, not on the belief that *q*. I need not actually believe *q* in order to be mediately justified in believing *p*.

Third, *what* a subject *S* can be justified in believing merely by having a perceptual experience is what the experience *basically represents*. In the example of the petrol gauge, Pryor supposes that what my perceptual experience basically represents is that the gauge points to the empty symbol.²³⁵ But it does not basically represent that the car I am traveling in has little fuel left in the tank.

But there are many “further conclusions we take [our] experiences to make obvious” (2000: 538), for example that the car has little fuel left in the tank, or that if I keep driving it will stop of its own accord in not too long. But these propositions are not what the experience basically represents.

The content of a perceptual experience is the way the experience represents the world as being (Pryor 2000: 519, see also §1.2.1), but one could still take what the experience basically represents to be only part of its content. On such a use of the terms, the latter two propositions may be part of the content of the perceptual experience. But on a narrower use, Pryor’s distinction between basic and non-basic representation would coincide with the distinction between what is *in the content proper* of the perceptual experience, and what is not. I adopt this usage.

Fourth, the justification is *prima facie*. That means that it can be de-

234. The distinction between propositional and doxastic justification is, I take it, well enough entrenched to be used without much introduction. An early deployment of the distinction is found in a paper by William Alston, who asks “whether it is enough for justification that *S* have adequate grounds for his belief, whether used or not, or whether it is also required that the belief be based on those grounds” (1985: 74). Alvin Goldman (1979: n. 17) attributes the distinction to Firth (1978). For a recent discussion on the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification, see Turri (2010).

235. Pryor uses various examples to illustrate his view, but takes no official stance on what perceptual experience basically represents (2000: 541). I follow suit, and assume for the purposes of discussion that he is right about the examples he uses.

feated or undermined, indeed that “there are always possible improvements in our epistemic state which would no longer support those beliefs” (2000: 517, 534). But if my perceptual experience basically represents that p , then absent defeaters and underminers, I thereby have *all things considered* justification to believe that p (2000: 535). What it *is* to have *prima facie* justification is that, absent defeaters and underminers, one has all things considered justification (2004: 353).

Fifth, as has also already been intimated, it is consistent with Dogmatism that a perceiving subject does not derive *very much* justification simply from having the experience. Pryor does not argue that the justification we get in this way is ever sufficient for knowledge (though he says that he believes that it is).²³⁶ But merely having the experience is enough to ensure that the subject has *some* justification.

6.4 Pryor's Case for Dogmatism

In “The Skeptic and the Dogmatist” Pryor (2000) presents two arguments for **Dogmatism**. The first takes as its starting point that it *seems* that experience suffices to justify belief, without the aid of anything besides itself. Philosophical conservatism dictates, Pryor argues, that absent reason to the contrary we should take those appearances at face value (2000: 536).

Pryor goes on to argue that we have no good reason to reject how things seem in this respect. The bulk of this work is done by distinguishing the view from other nearby views, with which it might be confused, and to which there are significant objections. The view is not that the justified beliefs are infallible or indubitable (2000: 532–3), nor that the justification is indefeasible (2000: 533). It is not that the propositions believed are self-evident or self-justifying (2000: 533), nor that they are capable of

236. Note that the dogmatist is committed to allowing that the agent can gain *more* than a certain minimal amount of justification from her perceptual experience. Otherwise Dogmatism would not be a distinctive position: even the skeptic grants that when I have experiences as of hands, I can come to know that I am not in a ‘normal’, but handless. Thanks to Leon Leontyev for helpful discussion here.

being believed all on their own, ‘autonomously’ (2000: 533–4).²³⁷ Pryor also defends his view against what we might dub ‘the challenge from cognitive penetration’—the view that what one perceives is influenced by theory, and that justification therefore must partly rest on that theory.²³⁸

Pryor’s second argument is that consideration of the phenomenal character of perceptual experience can explain and vindicate the impression that experience suffices to justify belief:

[What] explains why our experiences give us the immediate justification they do ... [is] the peculiar “phenomenal force” or way our experiences have of presenting propositions to us. Our experience[s] represent propositions in such a way that it “feels as if” we could tell that those propositions are true—and that we’re perceiving them to be true—just by virtue of having them so represented. (Pryor 2000: n. 37)

This line is developed further in a later paper (2004).²³⁹ Perceptual experience has, Pryor argues, the phenomenology of “seeming to ascertain that a given proposition is true”:

This [phenomenology] is present when the way a mental episode represents its content makes it feel as though, *by enjoying that episode, you can thereby just tell* that that content obtains. ... When you have a perceptual experience of your hands, that experience makes it feel as though you can just see that hands are present. It feels as though hands are being shown or revealed to you. (Pryor 2004: 357)

Pryor argues that this phenomenology characterises some but not all of our mental states; notably it is absent in daydreaming and visual imag-

237. They are capable of being *justified* all on their own, but that is different, see n. 217.

238. We set this challenge aside here; it is discussed in §A.5.

239. In that paper, Pryor also argues that in order to defeat skepticism, it is necessary to forego requiring antecedent justification to believe *some* q_i . Anyone who rejects skepticism then owes the dogmatist an explanation of why he is not entitled to say that non-perceiving hypotheses is not one of these (2004: 356).

ination. It is what according to him explains that perceptual experience immediately justifies.

6.5 Interlude

It is worth noting that there are other possible ways to support **Dogmatism** (or **Liberalism**)—for perception, for intuition, for both, or even for a larger class of seemings—than via philosophical conservatism or consideration of the phenomenal character of the relevant experience. Important lines of argument are that rejection of the view faces epistemic self-defeat,²⁴⁰ that our concepts of perception, physical objects or justification (or all of these) entail that we are justified,²⁴¹ and arguments that the ‘irresistibility’ of perceptual beliefs gives us entitlement or justification for these beliefs.²⁴² The first of these is compatible with the argu-

240. Bealer (1992) and Pust (2001) argue that blanket distrust in intuition faces epistemic self-defeat. Michael Huemer argues via self-defeat for what he calls ‘the rule of Phenomenal Conservatism’, according to which “if it seems to *S* as if *P*, then *S* has at least prima facie justification for believing that *P*” (2001: 99). (Note that Huemer also takes the phenomenal character of experience to be an essential feature of it (he has confirmed this in personal communication). See also his 2007, where the formulation is somewhat more circumspect, and his 2009.) Since intuition and perception are both among the relevant seemings for Huemer, this entails **Liberalism** for both. Some issues for self-defeat arguments are raised by DePaul (2009) and Weinberg (2007).

241. John Pollock argues:

A physical object is, by definition, the sort of thing we perceive. Our judgments about physical objects are based on perception. Thus perception is intimately involved in the justification conditions for statements about physical objects. Those justification conditions are themselves constitutive of the concept of a physical object. *This is the source of the connection.* We should ask, not whether there is a connection between perception and the physical world (of course there is!), but what the connection is (Pollock 1974: 50, emphasis mine).

242. Fred Dretske (2000), for example, discusses whether a person is ever *entitled* to believe a proposition *p* in cases where there is no proposition *q* which the person already accepts and to which she can appeal in support of *p*. He argues that we can come to realise we do have such entitlement by focusing on the “psychological immediacy and irresistibility” of perceptual beliefs:

We have no choice about what to believe when we see (hear, smell, feel etc.) that things are thus and so. We experience and forthwith believe. Between the experience and the belief there isn’t time to weigh evidence. The causal process ... runs its course before rational processes can be mobilized (2000: 598).

ment I present. The latter two seem to me to be on the wrong track; it would, however, take us too far afield to engage directly with them here. I aim to show that perceptual experience having the particular phenomenal character it has suffices to vindicate **Liberalism**. Inasmuch as this project succeeds, the other lines of argument are at best superfluous. So in this sense the account offered here engages indirectly with these other projects.²⁴³

Pryor's claim is that having a perceptual experience immediately jus-

243. A note about Dretske's line. Dretske may be right that there simply is not enough time between a perceptual experience and the belief being formed for rational processes to come into play. But it is hard to see that much of importance follows from this. Suppose I have a perceptual belief about which it would be true that I ought to jettison it, were it not for the fact that I have not yet had the time required to mobilise the cognitive resources I need to do so. (To jettison a belief is to deliberately cause oneself to lose the belief. Whether or not this is a direct process is not important.) That means that as soon as enough time passes to enable me to mobilise the resources I need, I ought to jettison it. While I may for a short while have been shielded from this 'ought' on the grounds of ought-implies-can considerations, this relief is short lived.

On the question of irresistibility, Dretske argues that we do not *directly* control our beliefs in the same way we control the movement of our limbs (2000: 604). This is probably true. However, the directness or indirectness of the process is not really important. For it is certainly true that we can initiate processes which have the (predictable) consequence of the belief being jettisoned. Dretske acknowledges this, he agrees that we have *indirect* control over our beliefs (2000: 600).

I think Dretske is wrong to say that it is only before I have a certain perceptual experience that I have this indirect control; it seems clear that there are processes I can initiate both before and after having an experience which will predictably lead me to come to fail to believe what I experienced. For false beliefs, some of those processes will be rational processes, and it will be the outcome of such processes that jettisoning the belief is rationally required. For true beliefs Dretske assumes that there will be no rational process—no process that an epistemically responsible agent can undertake—that leads to that result. It does not matter whether this is so, since all that is required is that there is some process the agent can engage in voluntarily that (predictably, even if not with certainty) leads to the belief being jettisoned. That is all that is needed to show that the simple irresistibility claim is false.

And Dretske's irresistibility claim is indeed more complicated. He points out that there is nothing an *epistemically responsible* agent can do to jettison her true perceptual beliefs. That is true. But it is also scarcely more than a *restatement* of the fact we started with; the strong intuition that we are justified by our perceptual experiences. The question is *why* that is true, *why* it would be epistemically irresponsible of a person to engage in such practices as are available to her to cause her belief to be jettisoned. The correct answer is that she was justified to begin with; but the question is *why* that is so. Neither the immediacy nor the irresistibility of a belief does anything to answer that question.

tifies belief. I focus instead on the claim that it singlehandedly justifies. I argue that, because the aspects of the character of perceptual experience which explain why it singlehandedly justifies are shared by intuitional experience, intuitional experience also singlehandedly justifies.

This line of argument can stand on its own. But it is worth noting that the view that intuition singlehandedly justifies belief is also supported by philosophical conservatism. It *seems* that no part of what *makes* me justified by having an intuitional experience—for example with the content that if Ann is taller than Bob and Bob is taller than Cam, then Ann is taller than Cam—is my justification for believing some other proposition. This is, I insist, just as much a datum as in the case of perceptual experience. Moreover, just as in the case of perception, we can distinguish the view from implausible nearby views. The justified beliefs are not infallible or indubitable, the justification acquired is not indefeasible, and the propositions believed need not be regarded as self-evident or self-justifying, nor capable of being believed 'autonomously'.

Unlike in the case of perception, however, I take it that there is quite strong variation between instances in how strongly it seems that we are justified by the intuitional experience. But note that the epistemic features of a mental state surely supervene on its non-epistemic features. If the fact that intuition singlehandedly justifies can be explained by the phenomenal character of intuitional experience, and if that character is shared between instances like the one just mentioned and other instances, then those other instances also give rise to singlehanded justification (although there may be differences in whether there are defeaters, of course). So the support derived via philosophical conservatism transfers to cases in which it may not initially have been felt that the seeming provides justification, insofar as they share the phenomenal features in terms of which the explanation of justification is given.

6.6 A Critique of Pryor's Argument

Pryor claims that what explains why perceptual experience immediately justifies are facts about the phenomenal character of perceptual experi-

ence. Since whenever an experience immediately justifies it singlehandedly justifies, Pryor is also committed to the weaker claim that the phenomenal character of experience explains why it singlehandedly justifies. This weaker claim is of interest to all who support **Liberalism**, so it shall continue to be our focus here.

The claim is, I believe, correct. Moreover, I offer below an explanation of *why* it is correct, an explanation which owes much to Pryor's. This notwithstanding, I now wish to make certain critical points about Pryor's account.

The most important of these is that Pryor's explanation of why we get singlehanded justification from our perceptual experiences is at best incomplete. We can, I shall argue, get such justification even in the absence of the phenomenal character which Pryor takes to explain it. On plausible assumptions about the cases where this occurs—on the assumption, in particular, that what justifies in these cases is just what justifies in other, everyday cases as well—this shows that Pryor's explanation is not merely incomplete, but incorrect.

*

Recall that Pryor argues that the phenomenal character of perceptual experience can explain why we get singlehanded justification from having it:

My view is that our perceptual experiences have the epistemic powers the dogmatist says they have because of what the *phenomenology* of perception is like. I think there's a distinctive phenomenology: the feeling of *seeming to ascertain* that a given proposition is true. This is present when the way a mental episode represents its content makes it feel as though, *by enjoying that episode, you can thereby just tell* that that content obtains. (Pryor 2004: 357)

Let us refer to the phenomenology Pryor describes here as 'the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell*'. I shall argue that the explanation in terms of this character does not succeed.

Consider again the example of Ann in the blizzard:

Blizzard: Ann is standing stationary on a flat, snow-covered plain in a blizzard. The wind is whipping snow around in all directions, and no features of the landscape are visible. Ann can barely see her own knees, and she cannot see the tips of her skis.

Someone approaches very slowly from the direction in which Ann is looking. At first she is completely unable to distinguish the approaching person from patterns randomly forming and dissipating in the snow. As the person approaches, Ann's perceptual experience changes, the human figure gradually appears more and more clearly.

I assume that those sympathetic to **Liberalism** will agree that there is a point at which Ann acquires some singlehanded justification from her visual perceptual experience for the belief that there is a person there.²⁴⁴ It also seems clear that this point comes well before Ann's experience takes on the character of seeming able to *just tell* that there is. If that is correct, what explains why she acquires singlehanded justification from her perceptual experience cannot be that her experience has this character, since at that point it does not. So the explanation in terms of that character is at best incomplete.

One could attempt to resist this conclusion by insisting that before Ann's experience takes on the phenomenal character of seeming able to *just tell*, her experience does not even represent that there is a person there. At those points, Ann's experience represents at most that there is a person-esque shape in the snow, or something of that nature.

But this response seems unmotivated. Why think that all the uncertainty which is associated with perception belongs in its content? It is true that *there is* a point at which her perceptual experience represents (at most) that there is a person-esque shape in the snow: Ann starts out unable to distinguish the approaching person from patterns randomly

244. Or that there is a person approaching. Nothing here hinges on this distinction.

forming and dissipating, after all. Her perceptual experience will soon represent that there is a person there, however, but her perceptual experience will still not have the character of seeming able to *just tell*. If that is correct, this reply to the objection does not succeed.

A second reply insists that Ann does not get *any* singlehanded justification from her perceptual experience before it has the character of seeming able to *just tell*. But this, too, is very hard to believe. There is a point at which Ann's perceptual experience represents that there is a person there, well before her experience has that character. At that point, why think that she does not get *any* singlehanded justification? Justification, after all, comes in degrees. Perhaps Ann only acquires quite weak justification. But it does seem that she acquires some. So this reply also does not succeed. Since both these replies fail, we retain our conclusion that Ann receives singlehanded justification from her perceptual experience for the belief that there is a person there before her experience has the phenomenal character of seeming able to *just tell*. And from this it follows that the explanation in terms of this phenomenal character is at best incomplete.

But perhaps this situation is so unusual that the account still holds for ordinary cases? No. There are many cases that share these features. Here is another:

Increasing Light: With a tight blindfold on, Bob is led into a room with black walls, ceiling and floor, in which there is a black table but no other objects. He is left alone in the room at some distance from the table, the light is turned off, and the doors are closed. Bob is instructed to remove the blindfold. He is now standing in a completely dark room with his eyes open: he cannot see a thing.

Soon the illumination begins to increase very slowly. At first, Bob is completely unable to discern the table against the background. As the illumination increases, his visual perceptual experience changes: the table gradually appears more and more clearly.²⁴⁵

245. Thanks to Alan Hájek for mentioning examples involving dimmed light. He discusses such examples in [Hájek \(Forthcoming\)](#).

There seems to be a point at which Bob acquires *some* singlehanded justification for the belief that there is a table there, and that point arrives well before his experience takes on the character of seeming able to just tell. Parallel considerations to those given in the discussion of **Blizzard** show the implausibility of denying this. It is very plausible that Bob's experience represents that there is a table there well before it seems to him that he can just tell, and it is plausible that he acquires justification from his experience when that is so.

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We have seen that an explanation of the justification we acquire from perceptual experience given in terms of the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell* cannot account for all cases, since the phenomenology is absent at a point when justification is acquired.

However, it is also plausible that Ann and Bob acquire justification from their experiences *for just the same reason* as why justification is acquired from perceptual experience in normal cases. After all, there is every reason to think that Ann's and Bob's visual perceptual experiences share central aspects of the phenomenal character with more everyday visual perceptual experiences. For one, we can surely be confident that their perceptual experiences have the character of 'visualness' (§5.4.3). Moreover, intermediary cases are easy to construct:

Judging Distance: Cam is seated with her chin on a long table. Stretching out in front of her are two flat rods. The left rod is fixed to the table, the right one can be slid back and forth. Cam's line of sight is parallel to the rods.

Each rod has an indicator attached to it some way down. At the start, the indicators are clearly at different distances from Cam. Her task is to move the right rod until the two indicators appear to be equidistant from her. As she carries it out, her phenomenal experience changes. After a while she stops; this is, she thinks, her best shot at solving the task. But it does not seem to her that she can *just*

tell that the two markers are equidistant from her, and her perceptual experience does not have that character.

In **Judging Distance** it is surely plausible that Cam acquires *some* singlehanded justification from her visual perceptual experience for her belief that the indicators are equidistant from her. But the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell* is absent.

Cam's situation is artificial, but many perfectly ordinary situations share the important features with it. When looking along a straight road, where one person at some considerable distance is waiting for another person who is approaching, one surely at some point acquires *some* singlehanded justification for the belief that the two people are equidistant from one (i.e. next to one another). But it is implausible that one's experience has the character of seeming able to just tell.

We could construct more examples to complete the bridge between **Blizzard** and **Increasing Light** and our ordinary perceptual experiences. But hopefully it is already clear that the aspect of the character of perceptual experience which really explains why we acquire singlehanded justification from our perceptual experiences in ordinary cases is just the same as that which explains why Ann, Bob and Cam acquire some singlehanded justification from their experiences. We have agreed that their perceptual experience is not characterised by the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell*. That means that the explanation of justification gained from perceptual experience in terms of the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell* is not just incomplete, but incorrect.

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The point at which Ann gets some singlehanded justification occurs before the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell* arises. It is also extremely plausible that her justification *gets stronger* as the person approaches, and as her perceptual experience changes accordingly. If Ann's credence that there is a person there gradually increases, this is clearly *epistemically appropriate*. And it is epistemically appropriate because of the gradual changes to Ann's visual perceptual experience.

The deep problem with explaining singlehanded justification by means of seeming able to *just tell* is that it is a binary notion. When I have an experience with the representational content that *p*, it either seems to me that I can just tell that *p* or it does not: even if it *weakly* seems to me that I can just tell, it still seems to me that I can just tell. But justification is a matter of degree: I can have more or less of it. This is a *principled* reason to think that the notion Pryor uses to explain why experience yields justification is ill-suited to do the job.

It is of course possible to bite this bullet, and say that the right outcome *is* binary. If it seems to the subject that she can *just tell* then she gets some justification, otherwise she gets none, and that is that. This would be an unfortunate response, however. On such a view, the experience Ann has shortly before her experience takes on the character of seeming able to *just tell* must be regarded as epistemically on a par with the experience in which the snow being whipped around appears undifferentiated to her. And it is surely beyond doubt that those experiences are *not* epistemically on a par.

Pryor's claim is specifically that when a person has a perceptual experience that *p* she thereby gets *some* justification to believe that *p*; he is explicit in his refusal to commit to the person getting some particular amount of justification. Given that, the position just considered—with insistence on the binary distinction between *some* justification or none at all—is the natural bullet-biting position. But one might instead develop other binary options. Perhaps one could say that there is a cut-off point above which the subject gets *sufficient* reason to believe that a person is approaching, but below which she does not, and perhaps that cut-off occurs when the subject's experience has the character of seeming able to *just tell*.²⁴⁶

But this line, too, would fail to explain all that needs explaining. Before Ann has the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell*, and before Bob does, there is a very strong intuition that both get *some* singlehanded

246. I am grateful to Nicholas Southwood for helpful discussion here.

justification from their experiences, even if neither gets sufficient reason to believe. And it is very plausible that the justification gets stronger as the perceptual experience changes. What is needed is therefore a notion that comes in degrees. Together with the intuition that what explains that immediate justification is acquired in **Blizzard** and **Increasing Light** is just the same as what explains it in more normal cases, this strongly suggests that we should not bite the bullet. The better response is to give up on the explanation in terms of the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell*, and to look for a different character of the phenomenology of perceptual experience to do the explanatory work.

6.7 Explaining Justification

Describing the character of phenomenology of experience is no easy task. We often lack the vocabulary necessary, and we do not have established methods for ascertaining exactly what that character is. However, even taking this into account, it seems that the characterisation of the phenomenal character of perceptual experience in terms of seeming able to *just tell* has a certain problem with it. When it seems to a person this way, this seems to be a *result* of her perceptual experience having a certain particular character, and not itself an aspect of that character proper.

In Chapter 5 I argued that perceptual experience has phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness. These aspects of the phenomenology of perceptual experience seem to come closer to describing the phenomenal character of the experience itself. ‘Closer’, because this is surely a matter of degree, and also because, in describing these attitude-specific aspects of the character of perceptual experience, I myself made use of metaphor in various ways. No doubt this characterisation does not get all the way to the phenomena. But it seems to be a move in the right direction.

Second, it is not clear that the offered account actually explains what it sets out to explain. It offers a description of the character of experience, but does not explain why having experience with that character should justify belief. Again, this is a tall order, but I will attempt to make

some progress on this here. The two points are related: improving the description of the phenomenal character of perceptual experience is likely to yield an improved explanation of why perceptual experience provides justification for belief.

6.7.1 Pushiness and Objectivity Explain Justification

On the table in front of me there is a blue water bottle. Dogmatism says that in virtue of having the perceptual experience I am now having I get immediate justification to believe that there is a blue water bottle on the table in front of me.²⁴⁷ According to **Liberalism**, I get singlehanded (though possibly not immediate) justification. As we have noted, the common core is that having justification to believe some other proposition is no part of what *makes* me justified: what makes me justified is that I have the experience. I claim that the fact that perceptual experience has the phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity can explain this: it can explain why a perceptual experience that *p* singlehandedly justifies belief that *p*.

Phenomenology of objectivity (§5.4.1, page 152) provides one part of the explanation. An experience could represent something as merely imagined. That my perceptual experience is characterised by phenomenology of objectivity explains why that experience does not. The purported content of perceptual experience, what it purports to represent, is the way things are, objectively speaking. What perceptual experience purports to represent is not the way things are according to my imagination. Perceptual experience purports to be about something independent of me. That my perceptual experience purports to be about the way things are independently of me is part of the very phenomenology of the experience. *Because* it has such phenomenology, the subject matter of the experience is the objective way things are. Recalling the conversational analogy, we can describe the situation by saying that perceptual

247. Or perhaps just for there being a blue bottle-shaped object in front of me. What I get immediate justification for is whatever the experience basically represents.

experience purports to ‘say’ something about the way things are subject-independently. But *what* does it say about this?

One thing it is possible to say about the way things are is that they are *not* a certain way. Or, speaking about the way things are subject-independently, I could ask you to *suppose* that things are a certain way. But perceptual experience is not analogous to any of these things. By virtue of having phenomenology of pushiness (§5.6.1) perceptual experience purports to *inform me* that things *actually are* a particular way. My experience *pushes* me to believe that this is how things actually are; it does not merely ask me to consider the possibility, nor does it say that things are *not* that way.

Together it seems that these aspects of perceptual experience can explain why we get singlehanded justification from having it. For being *perceptual experience gives a reason* *pushed* to accept that things actually are a certain way, not by an agent—whose intentions and honesty one might doubt—but simply by *how it appears to one that things are*, this seems to constitute a genuine *reason* to accept that things actually are that way.

It is hard to see what more, or what else, could be required to derive justification from having an experience. A perceptual experience makes it seem to the perceiving subject that things *actually are* as they are represented as being, in the objective world. If that could not give her justification to believe that things actually are that way, it is hard to see what could. Both of these aspects of experience seem necessary.²⁴⁸ Jointly they seem to be sufficient.

Suppose someone objected that some independent criterion being satisfied is, after all, part of what *makes* the subject justified. This would amount to saying that the experience does not suffice to really make it appear that things *actually are* the way they are represented as being, but that the ‘joint appearance’ created by also keeping in mind that some other condition is satisfied—reliability, say—*would* make it seem

248. This supports the claim made in §6.5 above, that insofar as the explanation I offer is accepted, one has a reason to discount the other offered arguments in favour of a dogmatist or liberalist view.

that way. However, my claim is precisely that experience *on its own already* makes it seem that things really are a particular way subject-independently. No consideration of other factors being fulfilled is necessary. That is precisely what the experience having phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness means. Unless the claim about the phenomenal character of perceptual experience is challenged, it seems that the claim about justification should be accepted.

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A strength of this explanation is that these aspects of the character of perceptual experience can be present even when a person's perceptual experience does not have the phenomenal character of seeming able to *just tell*. Ann's experience can be characterised by objectivity and pushiness before it takes on the character of seeming able to *just tell*. It *must* be, if she is to receive singlehanded justification from it before that point, and we have seen that it is very plausible that she does.

If Ann's experience lacks phenomenology of objectivity, she cannot be justified in believing that a person is approaching, for her experience will then no more justify her than will experiences of imagining a meaningful pattern in the snow. If it lacks pushiness, it no more justifies than does supposing that something is the case. Both are necessary. When both are present, Ann acquires singlehanded justification from her experience that *p*, whether or not the experience has the phenomenal character of seeming able to *just tell*. The current explanation therefore allows us to respect the intuition that what gives rise to justification in **Blizzard**, **Increasing Light** and **Judging Distance** is just the same as what gives rise to it in more normal circumstances.

The explanation also allows us to account for the intuition that Ann's justification changes as her experience does. The phenomenology of objectivity is binary; it is there or it is not. But pushiness comes in degrees. As the approaching person gets closer, Ann's experience pushes her ever harder to accept that there is a person approaching. This allows us to explain why Ann derives progressively *more* (or stronger) justification as her experience changes.

The explanation in terms of pushiness and objectivity therefore improves on the explanation in terms of seeming able to *just tell* in three ways. First, it explains how a subject can acquire singlehanded justification from her experiences in cases when they do not have the character of seeming able to *just tell*. Second, it accounts for the strong intuition that as the phenomenal characters of Ann's and Bob's experiences change, they progressively acquire *more* (or stronger) justification.

Three improvements

Third, Pryor's claim is that when I have a perceptual experience it seems to me that I can *just tell* that things are a certain way. The question is salient, however: why should that give me justification to believe that things actually *are* that way? The description I have given of the phenomenal character of perceptual experience allows us to answer that question. Being *pushed* to accept that things actually are a certain way objectively by how things appear to oneself to be *constitutes a reason to believe* that they are that way. How much justification one acquires in this way depends on how strong the pushy phenomenology is.

The case can be strengthened by pretending that we started at the opposite end, asking what a state would have to be like in order for it to provide singlehanded justification. If any state could play that role, what characteristics would it have to have?

Again, a plausible answer is that it would have to have both phenomenology of objectivity and phenomenology of pushiness. It would have to have phenomenology of objectivity, for otherwise it could not justify a person's belief that a world independent of herself has the represented characteristics. That, after all, is what the subject goes on to believe. And it would have to have phenomenology of pushiness, because otherwise it could not justify her belief that the objective world *actually does* have those characteristics, rather than her belief that it is *possible* that the world has those characteristics. So if we were to ask ourselves what perception would have to be like in order for it to provide immediate or singlehanded justification, it seems that the answer would be that it would have exactly the features I have argued that perceptual experience does have.

6.7.2 Explaining Seeming Able to *Just Tell*

I have claimed that a description in terms of pushiness and objectivity comes closer to characterising the phenomenal character of perceptual experience proper than does seeming able to *just tell*. This claim is supported by the fact that a subject's experience having this character can in turn explain why it seems to her that she can *just tell*, in the cases when it does seem that way.

In virtue of having phenomenology of objectivity, perceptual experience seems to represent a blue water bottle in a world which is independent of me. My perceptual experience also contains a perspective, a point of view, and it represents the bottle as being a certain distance away from the locus of that perspective, and at a certain orientation from it. Neither of these facts, however, can explain why it seems to me that I can *just tell* that there is a bottle there. In visual (iconic) imaginative experience, those very same features are present. Nevertheless, that experience does *not* have the effect that it seems to me that I can just tell that there is a blue water bottle there. What is needed is that my perceptual experience has phenomenology of objectivity. In virtue of that, my perceptual experience *itself* 'tells me' that what is being represented to be a certain way is independent of me. Because it has this character, the subject matter of my experience seems to be the subject-independent world.

Without the phenomenology of pushiness, however, I would not seem to have any reason to believe that things *actually are* that way, rather than for instance supposing for the sake of argument that they are, or believe that they are not that way. And it would then not seem to me that I could *just tell* that things are a certain way, that there is a blue water bottle on the table in front of me, say. But when my experience is characterised by objectivity and pushiness, and when the pushiness is strong enough, it can seem to me that I can *just tell*.

It will not always seem to a subject this way. For seeming to be able to *just tell* is plausibly a matter of reaching a threshold, and that threshold may not always be reached. In **Blizzard** and **Increasing Light**, the thresh-

old will be reached eventually, when the light is quite bright, or when the person is very close. But in **Judging Distance** it may be that the threshold is never reached, and likewise in the case of judging whether two people on a straight road are next to one another or not.

We can explain this by reference to the phenomenology of pushiness. When that aspect is strong enough it seems to the subject that she can *just tell*. But that aspect may not always be strong enough, and when it is not, it does not seem to the subject that she can *just tell*. Nevertheless, so long as objectivity is also present, the subject acquires some singlehanded justification from her perceptual experience.

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Let us sum up. I have argued that the view of perceptual experience I have presented—the view according to which perceptual experience has phenomenology of objectivity and phenomenology of pushiness—comes closer to describing the actual phenomenal character of perceptual experience, rather than noting a result of that character being the way it is. I have also argued that it allows us to explain why it seems to us that we can *just tell* that things are the way they are represented as being in perceptual experience, when it does seem that way. Most importantly, however, it allows us to better support **Liberalism**—be it of the dogmatist variety or not—because it provides a better explanation of why a state with that character can singlehandedly justify belief.

6.8 Liberalism and Dogmatism for Intuition

Recall that **Liberalism** can be understood as a claim about the epistemic powers of certain experiences. Some experiences are such that, if certain necessary conditions are met, a subject's having such an experience can *make* her justified in believing what the experience represents, without 'requiring assistance' from S's being justified in believing some other proposition. Some experiences, we said, *singlehandedly justify* belief.

The notion of an intuitional experience was defined in Chapter 5. It is a mental state with representational content, a state that does not have content-specific phenomenology but does have attitude-specific phenomenology: objectivity, pushiness, and valence. Using this notion we can explore **Liberalism** for Intuition and **Dogmatism** for Intuition.

If **Liberalism** for Intuition is true, then if the relevant necessary conditions are met, *S*'s having an intuitional experience that *p* of positive valence singlehandedly justifies her belief that *p*, and her having an intuitional experience that *p* of negative valence singlehandedly justifies her belief that *not-p*. No part of what *makes S* justified is *S*'s justification for believing other propositions. We shall concentrate on cases with positive valence, but what we say carries over, *mutatis mutandis*.

According to **Dogmatism** for Perception, **Liberalism** is true, and moreover, having independent justification to believe some other proposition is not among the necessary conditions that must be met for the experience to make the subject justified. So, there is no non-perceiving hypothesis such that I need to have antecedent justification to believe that it is false in order to be justified by perceptual experience. According to **Dogmatism** for Intuition, in order to derive justification for *p* on the basis of an intuitional experience that *p*, there is no non-intuiting hypothesis such that I need to have antecedent justification to believe that it is false, in order to be justified on the basis of the experience.

What is a non-intuiting hypothesis? If I know that *all* the non-intuiting hypotheses relative to a particular intuitional experience *I* and a particular proposition *p* are false, then I know that *I* is a *successful intuition*. Recall that a necessary condition for successful *perception* is that the representational content of the perceptual experience is true: if *E* represents that *p* and *p* is false, that is enough to show that my having the perceptual experience does not constitute successful perception. Similarly, a necessary condition for a case of successful intuition is that the representational content of the intuitional experience is true. If *I* represents that *p* and *p* is false, that is enough to show that *I* does not constitute a successful intuition.

In both cases, however, it is plausible that the representational content of the experience being true is not *sufficient* for the experience to constitute a successful perception or intuition. The experience needs to be connected with the way things are in the right way, as the case of veridical hallucination makes vivid. So a non-intuiting hypothesis about the intuition that p says that either p is false, or p is true and the intuition is not connected with the way things are in the right way. So, according to **Dogmatism** for Intuition, I need not be justified in believing that my intuitional experience is connected in the right way with the way things are in order for the experience to make me justified in believing what it represents.

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Let us note some further points. First, as before, what is at issue both for **Dogmatism** and **Liberalism** is *propositional* justification, not doxastic justification.

Second, as in the case of perception, we can in the case of intuition also distinguish between what an intuitional experience basically represents and what it simply makes obvious. It may be that this distinction more easily catches one's eye in the case of perceptual experience; but it is there all the same in the case of intuitional experience.

Consider, for instance, the Gettier intuition (n. 25). The intuitional experience makes it obvious that anyone in that scenario would fail to know. If the roles were reversed, for example, Jones would fail to know, just as Smith now fails to know. But is *that* in the content of the intuitional experience, properly speaking? It might be that that content is that *Smith* does not know. According to **Dogmatism** for Intuition, we get *immediate* justification from an intuitional experience only for what is in the content proper of the experience (in Pyrror's parlance: when it is what the experience basically represents). If the content is simply that Smith does not know, then my justification for my belief that *anyone* in that situation would fail to know is not immediate, but *mediate*. In particular, it is mediated by my justification for what kind of general consequences one can

draw by way of example if the example does not make use of features particular to the individuals mentioned in it (roughly, my grasp of the rule of universal introduction).

Similarly, not only does the intuitional experience make it obvious that anyone in the same situation as Smith fails to know, it makes it obvious that anyone in a structurally identical situation fails to know. And it even makes it obvious that anyone in a *relevantly similar* situation fails to know. But it is not plausible that these are in the content proper of the intuitional experience. So, the distinction between what is in the content proper of the experience (or, what it basically represents) and what it merely makes obvious has proper application in the case of intuition. According to **Dogmatism** for Intuition it is only the former for which we acquire immediate justification.²⁴⁹

Third, the justification is *prima facie*: it can be defeated or undermined. However, if my intuitional experience basically represents that *p*, then absent any defeaters or underminers, I thereby have *all things considered* justification to believe that *p*.

Fourth, and again in parallel with **Dogmatism** for Perception, **Dogmatism** for Intuition is consistent with a wide variety of views on *how much* justification we get from having an intuitional experience. It is possible that we never get enough justification in this way to achieve knowledge of the intuited proposition. But the position holds that we do get *some* justification in this way.

6.9 The Case for Liberalism for Intuition

Above I argued that perceptual experience providing singlehanded justification is well explained and supported by the phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness, and better than by seeming able to *just tell*. In this section I argue that intuitional experience having phenomenology of

249. Timothy Williamson (2007b: 185–7) presents an argument which can be read in favour of uncertainty about what is in the content proper of intuitions (although he would not take it this way).

objectivity and phenomenology of pushiness explains and supports the view that intuition singlehandedly justifies belief. Since this claim is of interest to all supporters of **Liberalism** we bracket, as before, the question of whether intuitional experience immediately justifies belief. But let us first note why we should not try to explain and support the claim that intuition provides justification via the character of seeming able to *just tell*.

6.9.1 Justification Without Seeming Able to *Just Tell*

Just as in the case of perception, it is plausible that we can derive singlehanded justification from our intuitional experience even in cases when it does not seem to us that we can *just tell* that things are a certain way.

Consider Tim. Tim has the intuitions that torturing the innocent is morally wrong, that if Ann is taller than Bob, and Bob is taller than Cam, then Ann is taller than Cam, and that an object cannot be both red all over and blue all over at the same time. When he has one of these intuitions, it seems to him that he can *just tell* that that is the way things are, and it is plausible that he gets some justification from his experience. But sometimes when Tim has an intuition, his intuitional experience does not have the character of seeming able to *just tell*.

Many people, Tim included, have the intuition that in war it is wrong to kill civilians in order to save the lives of soldiers. Those who have this intuition might, for instance, think that the use of weapons of mass destruction against civilians in order to force the surrender of a nation at war is morally impermissible.

Some people's intuitions are absolute. For many, however, the numbers matter. If the numbers of civilians killed and soldiers saved by an action are equal, Tim has a strong intuition that the action is impermissible. But if the ratio of lives saved to lives taken becomes large enough, Tim has the opposite intuition. Tim has a strong intuition, for instance, that it is permissible, even *obligatory*, to take one civilian's life in order to save the lives of one million soldiers. In both these cases it seems to Tim

that he can *just tell* that that is the way things are.

So Tim has a strong intuition that it is impermissible to kill x civilians in order to save y soldiers when $x=y$, and a strong intuition that it is permissible when $x=1$ and $y=1,000,000$. In between these two cases, however, there are many cases about which Tim has *weak* intuitions. As the ratio y/x becomes larger, there is a point at which Tim has a *weak* intuition that the action is permissible, but at which, nevertheless, it does not seem to him that he can *just tell* that this is so. His intuitional experience does not have this phenomenal character. Still, it is very plausible that Tim thereby gets *some* singlehanded justification to believe that the action is permissible, just by having the experience. True, he gets less justification than if the intuition were strong. But he does get some. This shows that explanation in terms of the phenomenology of seeming able to *just tell* cannot account for all cases in which we acquire singlehanded justification from intuitional experience. Such an explanation would at best be incomplete.

It is plausible, moreover, that Tim acquires singlehanded justification from his intuitional experience *for the very same reason* when he has a weak intuition as when he has a strong one. After all, there is every reason to think that his intuitional experiences have aspects of attitude-specific phenomenology in common in the cases of strong and weak intuitions. The weak intuitions differ from the strong ones in that they are weak, but are otherwise phenomenally similar to the strong ones. But if Tim gets singlehanded justification from his intuitional experience in cases when he has weak intuitions for just the same reason as he gets such justification in the cases when he has strong intuitions, and if it does not seem to him that he can *just tell* in the cases of weak intuitions, then this cannot be what explains his justification in the cases of strong intuitions, either.

Just as in [Blizzard, Increasing Light and Judging Distance](#) (pages 223–225) it is extremely plausible that Tim's justification gets stronger as the phenomenal character of his intuitional experience changes. If Tim's credence that the act is permissible gets higher as the ratio y/x becomes

larger, that seems to be epistemically appropriate. And it is epistemically appropriate *because* of the gradual changes to Tim's intuitional experience.

As before, therefore, the deep problem with explaining singlehanded justification by means of seeming able to *just tell* is that it is a binary notion. When Tim has an intuitional experience which represents that p , it either seems to him that he is able to *just tell*, or it does not. His experience either has that phenomenal character or it does not. But justification is a matter of degree, and Tim can have more or less of it. So this is, as before, a principled reason to think that singlehanded justification should not be explained in terms of seeming able to *just tell*.

Again in parallel to the case of perception, one could bite this bullet, and say that *if* it seems to Tim that he can *just tell* that the action is wrong then he gets some justification, but otherwise he gets none. But that would be a bad response. As Tim considers cases with ever-increasing ratio y/x , there will be a point immediately before it seems to him that he can *just tell* that the action is wrong. According to this response, this experience must be regarded as being epistemically on a par with an experience of not having an intuition at all. I take it to be beyond doubt that those experiences are not on a par, epistemically speaking.

Other bullet-biting positions are available. Perhaps one could say that when it seems to Tim that he can *just tell*, he gets sufficient reason for belief, but before that, he does not. But for the same reason as in the case of perception, this does not explain all that needs explaining.²⁵⁰ The better response is to look for a different character of phenomenal experience to do the explanatory work.

250. There is a very strong intuition that Tim gets *some* justification for his belief that the relevant action is wrong *before* it seems to him that he can *just tell*. And it is very plausible that the justification gets stronger as his experience changes. Together with the thought that what explains why Tim acquires singlehanded justification from his intuitional experience in the cases of strong intuitions is the same as what explains it in the cases of weak intuition, this makes bullet-biting seem like a bad option.

6.9.2 Pushiness and Objectivity Explain Justification

Tim has the intuitional experience that killing x civilians to save y soldiers is permissible, for some ratio of y/x . It is plausible that he gets some singlehanded justification for this belief from this experience. The fact that intuitional experience has the phenomenologies of pushiness and objectivity can explain this.

Phenomenology of objectivity (§5.5.1, page 168) provides one part of the explanation. When it seems to Tim that killing x civilians to save y soldiers is permissible, the subject-matter of his intuition seems to him to be the way things are independently of him; the way they are objectively speaking. The way things are represented as being do not seem to him to result from a flight of his own fancy. In virtue of his intuitional experience having phenomenology of objectivity, it purports to represent ways things are which are independent of him. The way things are objectively is the subject-matter of Tim's intuition.

But what does intuition say about the way things are, objectively speaking? In a conversation, one can say that things are *not* a certain way, request that it be supposed for the sake of argument that they are a certain way, or one can say that it is *possible* that they are a certain way, without taking a committed stance. But intuition is not analogous to any of these. By virtue of its having phenomenology of pushiness (§5.6.1, page 176), Tim's intuitional experience purports to *assert* that things *actually are* that way, to *inform him* that they are. Tim's intuitional experience *pushes* him to believe that that is how things are.

Just as in the case of perception, it seems that intuitional experience having both phenomenology of pushiness and phenomenology of objectivity can explain why we get singlehanded justification from having it. For being *pushed* to accept that things actually are a certain way, not by an agent—whose intentions and honesty one might doubt—but simply by *how it appears to one that things are*, this seems to constitute a genuine *reason* to accept that things actually are that way.

*Intuitional
experience
gives a reason*

It is hard to see what more, or what else, could be required to de-

rive justification from having an experience. An intuitional experience makes it seem to the intuiting subject that things *actually are* as they are represented as being independently of her, that is, objectively speaking. If that could not give her justification to believe that things actually are that way, it is hard to see what could. Both of these aspects of experience seem necessary. Jointly they seem sufficient.

Suppose that someone objected that some independent criterion being satisfied is, after all, part of what *makes* the subject justified. It seems that this would amount to saying that the intuitional experience does not suffice to really make it seem that things *actually are* the way they are represented as being, objectively speaking, but that the ‘joint appearance’ created by keeping in mind that some other parameter is satisfied—reliability, say—and the intuitional experience *would* make it seem that way. However, my claim is precisely that intuitional experience *on its own already* makes it seem that things really are a particular way subject-independently. No consideration of other factors being fulfilled is necessary. Unless the claim about the phenomenal character of intuitional experience is challenged, the claim about justification should be accepted.

As in the case of perception, a strength of this explanation is that these aspects of the character of perceptual experience can be present even when it does not seem to a person that she can *just tell*. Tim’s intuitional experience can be characterised by the phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness before it seems to him that he can *just tell* that killing x civilians to save y soldiers is permissible. It would have to be, if Tim is to derive singlehanded justification from his intuition, which it is plausible that he does. If Tim’s experience lacks phenomenology of objectivity, it no more justifies him in believing that that is how things actually are than an imaginative experience would. If it lacks pushiness, it no more justifies him than supposing for the sake of argument that things are a certain way justifies the belief that they actually are that way. But if his intuitional experience has both phenomenology of pushiness and phenomenology of objectivity, Tim acquires singlehanded justification from his intuitional experience, whether or not it seems to him that he can *just*

tell. This allows us to respect the intuition that what justifies Tim in the cases of weak intuition is the same as what justifies him in cases of strong intuition.

The explanation also allows us to account for the intuition that Tim's justification changes as his experience does. Phenomenology of pushiness comes in degrees. We may suppose that, as the ratio y/x increases, Tim's experience pushes him ever harder to accept that the action is permissible. This allows us to explain why Tim derives progressively *more* (stronger) justification as his experience changes.

Finally, the case can be strengthened by considering what answer we would give if we started at the opposite end, and asked what characteristics intuitional experience would have to have to yield singlehanded justification. A plausible answer is that it would have to have both phenomenology of objectivity and phenomenology of pushiness.

It would have to have phenomenology of objectivity, for otherwise it could not justify a person's belief that things are a certain way, independently of her. That is, after all, what the subject goes on to believe. And it would have to have phenomenology of pushiness, because otherwise it could not justify her believing that things *actually are* that way, rather than that it is possible that they are. So the answer seems to be that it would have exactly the features I have argued that intuitional experience does have.²⁵¹

251. In Chapter 5 I argued that objectivity is part of the accuracy conditions both of perception and of intuition (§§5.4.2 and 5.5.2). In this chapter I have argued that pushiness and objectivity together explain justification, both in the case of perception and intuition (§§6.7.1 and 6.9.2). An intriguing suggestion is that phenomenology of objectivity is not, after all, required to secure *justification*, but only to secure that objectivity is part of the justified belief. Such a view might fit neatly with the view that *introspective* experience has phenomenology of pushiness, but lacks phenomenology of objectivity. For then introspective experience could provide immediate justification, but not for content about the way things are, objectively speaking. Although I cannot do this suggestion full justice here, I will briefly sketch my reasons for believing that it is incorrect.

First, I have argued that phenomenology of objectivity really is necessary for immediate justification to arise at all (§§6.7.1 and 6.9.2). This applies to introspection as well, at least if the explanation of the justification is to at all resemble the explanation we give for justification in perception and intuition. It must seem to the agent that things really are the way they are represented as being, objectively speaking, and not merely

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That intuitional experience has phenomenology of objectivity and phenomenology of pushiness vindicates the impression that we get single-handed justification from having an intuition, by explaining why we do. It seems that intuitional experience must have both phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness in order to provide justification, and that together, they suffice to explain it.

This provides a better explanation than an explanation in terms of seeming able to *just tell* would do. It allows us to explain why we get justification also in cases where it does not seem that we can just tell, and why the justification gets stronger as the intuition does. And it is well suited to explain *why* it seems to me that I can *just tell* in the cases when it does seem to me that way.

6.10 An Argument for the Analogy

We are now in a position to consider whether those who accept **Liber-
alism** for Perception—whether of the dogmatist variety or not—should also accept **Liberalism** for Intuition. I shall argue that there is a compelling case for a positive answer: for acceptance of the analogy.

as a result of a flight of fancy on her part, *even if* what is being represented is that she herself has a headache, for instance. If this is right, then, paradoxical as it might at first sound, even introspective experience would have to have that phenomenology if were to provide *immediate* justification on the model of perception and intuition.

Introspection, however, does not have phenomenology of objectivity. And I am in any case inclined to think that an altogether different explanation is required. It seems to me that introspection is more likely to be correctly explained broadly on a model we considered in §4.4 above, namely the model of ‘thinking with understanding’. I cannot pursue this here, but note that it is perhaps not so surprising that the models will differ: we might have expected the explanation of our knowledge of our inner life—of the way *we* are, as we might say—to be quite different from our knowledge of the way things are, objectively speaking.

6.10.1 The Argument

I assume that the epistemic features of a mental state supervene on its non-epistemic features. Therefore, if two states share non-epistemic features which explain why the first state has the epistemic features it has, that gives us very good reason to think that the second state must also have those same epistemic features.

There are two ways to resist this. The first is by saying that the putative explanation is *incomplete*: other non-epistemic features are required for a full explanation, which the second state lacks. The second is to say that, while the second state shares all features that explain why the first state has the epistemic features it has, it has additional features which *block* the epistemic features from obtaining.

Liberalism for Perception says that having a perceptual experience that p can make a subject justified in believing that p , without the assistance of her being justified in believing some other proposition; it can singlehandedly justify belief. I have argued that this is explained by perceptual experience having the attitude-specific phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity.

One could resist the analogy by claiming that the explanation in terms of pushiness and objectivity is incomplete: perceptual experience has features which intuitional experience lacks, and which are necessary for a full explanation of why having a perceptual experience can singlehandedly justify. Or, one could say that intuition has features which perceptual experience lacks, features which block intuition from singlehandedly justifying. This leads us to the

Argument for the Analogy:

- (1) If intuition and perception share all features which explain why perceptual experience singlehandedly justifies, and if intuition does not have any features which block justification from arising, then intuitional experience singlehandedly justifies just in case perceptual experience does
 - (2) Perception and intuition share all features which explain why having a perceptual experience singlehandedly justifies
 - (3) Intuition does not have any features which block justification from arising
-
- (4) So, intuitional experience singlehandedly justifies just in case perceptual experience does

The first premise takes account of the two ways to block the analogy. It seems clear that this premise is true. If intuition has *just the same* non-epistemic features as does perception, then it must also have the same epistemic features, since the latter supervene on the former. If it does not have the same epistemic features, that must either be because it is lacking some non-epistemic features it would have to have, or because it has some non-epistemic features it would have to *not* have, in order to singlehandedly justify. So premise (1) is true.

I have argued that seeming able to *just tell* cannot be the true explanation of why we get singlehanded justification from perceptual experience (§6.6), and that phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity, on the other hand, *can* explain this (§6.7.1). I have also argued that the fact that perceptual experience has phenomenology of objectivity and phenomenology of pushiness *suffices* to explain how it can provide singlehanded justification. In Chapter 5 I argued that intuition shares these features with perception: intuition too has phenomenology of objectivity and phenomenology of pushiness, and of course it has representational content.

This constitutes a defence of premise (2). For if phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity suffices to explain why perceptual experience singlehandedly justifies, and if intuitional experience shares these two

features, then perceptual and intuitional experience share all the features that explain why perceptual experience singlehandedly justifies.

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There are two claims of a significant difference between perception and intuition which are likely to be raised in support of the view that premise (2) is false. The first is that perception has, but intuition lacks, content-specific phenomenology. The second is that perception is, but intuition is not, the result of a causal process which we understand well. Let us consider these in turn.

6.10.2 The Disanalogy of Content-Specific Phenomenology

In Chapter 4 I argued that intuition lacks, but perception has, content-specific phenomenology. There is no doubt that this difference between the two is very salient. The question is whether it justifies rejecting the analogy. If it does, that must be because it justifies a rejection of premise (2), on the grounds that perceptual experience having content-specific phenomenology is part of what explains why perception gives rise to singlehanded justification. (Content-specific phenomenology is a feature which perception has and intuition lacks, not the other way around.)

The claim that intuition lacks content-specific phenomenology will of course be considered very important by anyone who thinks that we *cannot know* the content of intuitional experience if it does not have phenomenology of this kind. David Pitt argues forcefully for this conclusion in his 2004, and it is a view which often encounters sympathy among philosophers.

But this is not primarily a challenge to the analogy; it is a challenge to the very coherence of the view of intuition which I have articulated. After all, it seems that we *do* know the content of our intuitional experiences. I have argued that this challenge can be met: there are other ways we

can know the content of intuitional experience aside from through their having content-specific phenomenology (§4.4). At issue in this section are challenges specifically to intuitional experience's ability to provide immediate justification, *provided* that we accept the proffered account of their nature. At this stage of the discussion, then, it is assumed that something other than content-specific phenomenology fixes the content of intuitions and that we can know what those contents are. It is also assumed that we know what the contents of perceptual experiences are.²⁵²

One obvious possibility is that the content-specific phenomenology of perception plays the role of fixing the content of perceptual experience. If it did, that would not constitute a challenge to the analogy. There is no inconsistency in thinking that content-specific phenomenology fixes the content of perceptual experience—that perceptual experience has *phenomenal intentionality*, as one might put it (Horgan and Tienson 2002)—while at the same time maintaining that the content of intuitional experience is fixed and known in some other way. A challenge to the analogy arises *only* if we have reason to think that content-specific phenomenology plays some role specifically in enabling perceptual experience to provide singlehanded justification.

I have argued, however, that perceptual experience having phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness *on its own already* suffices to explain why it provides singlehanded justification. No further feature is required. Having done so I do not need to provide additional reasons to think that content-specific phenomenology does not play more than a content-revealing or content-fixing role in perception. The argument I have given is *in itself* an argument that content-specific phenomenology is not required to explain the epistemic role of perceptual experience. Someone wishing to argue that content-specific phenomenology *is* necessary to explain the special epistemic role played by perceptual experience must find fault with the argument I have presented. Absent that, we lack

252. Perhaps we do not know *exactly* what the contents of perceptual and intuitional experiences are; see §5.4.2. Some disagreement about what is in the content proper of such experiences and what is merely made obvious by them does not threaten Liberalism.

reason to think that perceptual experience having content-specific phenomenology stands in the way of acceptance of the analogy.

6.10.3 The Disanalogy of a Known Causal Mechanism

Let us now consider the claim that the analogy is undermined by perception being the result of a causal process we understand well.

It is worth noting that there can be no objection based on this disanalogy to accepting *Dogmatism* for Intuition if one accepts Dogmatism for Perception. For, according to **Dogmatism** for Perception, I need not be justified in holding any belief in order to be justified by my experience that p for the belief that p . *A fortiori* I need not be justified in holding any belief about the workings of the system that makes it the case that I have the experience.²⁵³

Liberalism, on the other hand, allows that it may be a necessary condition for experience to justify belief that I have justification to hold certain other beliefs. So I might be required to be justified in believing that there is a well-understood causal mechanism underlying perception. If one held this one could deny **Liberalism** for intuition, on the grounds that the relevant mechanism is ill understood, so that the necessary condition is *not* fulfilled in that instance.

Is this view plausible? It is true that we now know a lot about the workings of the perceptual system. We know how light reflects off objects, we know about the composition of the eye, and we know about transmission of information through the eye and the optical nerve to the brain. One might even think that we have the beginnings of an understanding of how the brain processes information.

On the other hand, there was a time when none of this was known to humans. There may even be humans currently living who know no part of this story. But whether or not there are, and exactly when people started understanding the perceptual system, these things do not matter.

253. The question of defeaters is bracketed here; we return to it in §6.11 below.

What matters is that there were (or are) people who did not know *any* of this. Fixing on those people, there is, I think, a very strong intuition that they acquired singlehanded justification from perceptual experience in exactly the way we do. If that is right, our knowledge and understanding of the perceptual system is not a necessary condition which has to be fulfilled in order for perceptual experience to singlehandedly justify belief.

It is true that the people who lived in 900 B.C., say, did have access to the *coherence* of their experiences, even if they knew nothing about the perceptual system.²⁵⁴ So one *could* claim that they had justification for their perceptual beliefs in virtue of some explicit or implicit awareness of the harmonious integration between their experiences, and on no other grounds. But that is very implausible. It seems that those then living did not *need* coherence to derive justification from their perceptual experiences. Simply having the perceptual experience was enough.²⁵⁵

Suppose that critics are correct in claiming that the connection between intuitional experience and the way things are is, at least in some cases, at the moment ill-understood.²⁵⁶ This places us now in a parallel

254. Alvin Goldman made this point in reply to a question I asked at his Jack Smart Lecture 'Philosophical Naturalism and Intuitional Methodology', at the Australian National University in July 2011.

255. Note that this is not a mere reaffirmation of the intuition Pryor wields. Pryor does emphasise that merely having the experience seems to afford justification. But reflection on those ignorant of the perceptual system removes the possibility that we mis-characterise that crucial intuition in certain ways. One might have thought that when we consider our own case we confuse the intuition that we *are* justified when we have perceptual experience (surely true), with the distinct intuition that our perceptual experience singlehandedly justifies us (perhaps false). Reflection on the historical case removes this possibility.

256. For such claims see e.g. Boghossian (2000: 231; 2001: 635); Chihara (1982: 215); Devitt (2005: §§3–4, though especially p. 114); Goldman and Pust (1998: 184–6); Hintikka (1999) and Mackie (1977/1990: 38–9). Note that this criticism need not be general, one could say that it is only in some cases that intuition's connection with the way things are is mysterious. In his doctoral dissertation, Bengson argues that the relation between intuitions and the way things are may (in some cases, and in particular when the way things are is abstract) be that of *constitution* (Bengson 2010: §§31–34). In my view this intriguing suggestion is mistaken; the only essential features of intuition are those discussed in §5.10.

situation with respect to intuitional experience as those who lived long ago were in with respect to perceptual experience. If their lack of understanding of perception did not stop them from acquiring singlehanded justification from perceptual experience, our lack of understanding of intuition does not stop us from acquiring such justification from intuitional experience.

I stress that it is fully compatible with this to think that those who lived long ago got some additional justification from the coherence of their experiences, just as it is compatible with this that we get additional justification from the coherence of our intuitions (when they are coherent). So long as they got *some* singlehanded justification merely from having a perceptual experience then so do we, from our intuitional experiences. For the same reason, it is consistent with this to say that we now get some additional justification from our understanding of the perceptual system, compared to those who lived long ago.

Finally, it is not clear that the claim intended to undermine the analogy is even true. According to **Liberalism** about Perception, it is in virtue of perceptual *experience* having certain features that those who have those experiences acquire justification. And, although the perceptual process is in many ways well understood, why or how *conscious experience* arises is *not* well understood, to say the least.²⁵⁷

It has been argued that perceptual experience having the phenomenologies of objectivity and pushiness *suffice* to explain how it yields immediate justification. It is possible that we acquire some additional justification from knowing what we do about perceptual processes. But we do not need that knowledge in order to derive justification from our perceptual experience. And if that is true, we do not need it to acquire justification from our intuitional experience either.²⁵⁸

257. The literature on this subject is extensive, but the essential point is just that facts about the way things are with respect to phenomenal experience do not logically supervene on facts about the way things are with respect to physical or functional facts. The recent *locus classicus* is Chalmers (1996).

258. For related objections and discussion, see e.g. Cummins (1998); Goldman (1987); Grundmann (2007); Harman (1977); Pust (2001, Forthcoming).

6.10.4 The Disanalogy of Valence

How might one object to premise (3) in the *Argument for the Analogy*? I have argued that intuition is a mental state with representational content, which lacks content-specific phenomenology, and which has attitude-specific phenomenology of objectivity, pushiness, and valence. I also said that I am unsure whether to think that perception has valence, but it is only ever positive, or perception does not have valence (§5.7). On this conception, the only feature which intuition has, but perception lacks, is valence, either of the negative sort, or altogether.

According to *Liberalism* about Intuition, an intuitional experience that p with positive valence can provide singlehanded justification to believe that p , and an intuitional experience with negative valence can provide singlehanded justification to believe that *not-p*. There is, then, a direct correspondence between the valence of the experience and the justification the subject acquires. Given this, it is hard to see why intuition having (negative) valence should block justification from arising.

6.11 Taking Stock

The focus of this chapter has been the connection between the phenomenal character of an experience and its ability to justify belief. I have argued that when an experience of a certain type has phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity, it can singlehandedly justify a belief that p . This explanation does better, I argued, than one given in terms of the character of seeming able to *just tell*. Because perceptual experience is an experience with phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness, the explanation vindicates our impression that having a perceptual experience can make a person justified in believing what it represents, without the aid of justification in other beliefs.

I have also argued that intuition and perception are on a par with respect to singlehanded justification. They are on a par because the aspects of the phenomenal character of perceptual experience which explain why

perception singlehandedly justifies are also present in intuition, and because none of the differences between the two block this analogy from holding.

If **Liberalism** for Intuition is accepted, what will the consequences be, for philosophical methodology, and for epistemology in general? Accepting **Liberalism** will be, I believe, very significant in one sense, but will have quite modest significance in another.

It will be a significant result because in current analytic philosophy one can easily get the impression that intuition has no claim whatever to provide justification, and that appeal to intuition to justify a belief is an illegitimate and perhaps even underhanded practice. Timothy Williamson, for example, notes disapprovingly that “[w]hen contemporary analytic philosophers run out of arguments, they appeal to intuition” (2004: 109), and goes on to say that the absence of an account of how intuition “might work” coupled with the use of intuition in philosophy “looks like a methodological scandal” (2004: 109–10).²⁵⁹ And Paul Boghossian says that “[i]ntuition’ seems like a name for the mystery we are addressing, rather than a solution to it” (2000: 231).²⁶⁰

If **Liberalism** for Intuition is true, and the explanation I have offered is accepted, one might hope that some of the mystery will dissipate. Intuition provides justification because of its phenomenal character simply because having an experience with that character *constitutes a reason* to believe the represented content of the experience. There is nothing too mysterious about that. And it will follow, I think, that appeal to intuition is not in general illegitimate.

The reason this is still a modest conclusion is that it is an open question how thick on the ground defeaters or underminers are. For all that has been said here, defeaters for the justification that intuition provides might be few and far between, or they might be rather omnipresent. Nothing here has borne on that question.

259. Williamson also argues that we do not really rely on intuition after all, but this line of argument does not concern us here (see §1.3).

260. See also n. 28 on page 17.

And that seems appropriate. Our topic has been a mental state, a good candidate for a psychological kind. Given that, the fundamental task has been to give a general account of the epistemic properties the state has. The question of how thick on the ground defeaters are is, it seems, best answered by philosophers of various disciplines. If intuition is used in an attempt at gaining mathematical knowledge, what does it take for there to be a defeater? It seems reasonable to ask the philosopher of mathematics.

I argued above that it is *not* a necessary condition for us to be singlehandedly justified by our intuitional experience that we understand how intuition works. This, I believe, is revealed by consideration of the epistemic situation of those who lived long ago with respect to their perceptual experience. I also noted that there was no possibility for those who accept Dogmatism for Perception to reject **Dogmatism** for Intuition on this basis, since according to **Dogmatism** I need not be justified in believing any other proposition in order to be justified by my experience.

Recall, however, that the dogmatist only claims that *in the absence of defeaters* my experience immediately justifies. It is therefore still possible for the dogmatist to claim that in the case of intuition, that situation never obtains: I *always* have a defeater.

But it seems to be quite unclear what could motivate this stance. I do not contest that we lack understanding of how intuition works. We do not know that all *non-intuiting* hypotheses are false. But nor do we know, or even have good reason to believe across the board, that the non-intuiting hypotheses are true. Whether they are depends on many things about which there is currently little agreement; for one, it depends on the nature of the things our intuitions are about. It seems reasonable to think that the availability of defeaters will vary with different areas of knowledge, and reasonable, moreover, to defer on the question of whether there are defeaters in a particular area to the theory of that area (coupled with relevant empirical investigation): the epistemology of logic, morality, modality, mathematics, and so on.

In Chapter 1 it was argued that neither the involvement of modality

nor having a particular etiology should be accepted as essential features of the mental state of intuition, considered as a good candidate for a psychological kind. Intuition, I argued, is fully permissive with respect to the content it admits, and it does not have to result from understanding of one's concepts, nor must it fail to result from conscious deliberation or argument. Indeed, one of the examples we started with was the intuition that people generally prefer less pain to more. We have little reason, it seems, to doubt that this could be the content of an intuition as that state is understood here, and little reason to think that such an intuition cannot justify belief.

Indeed, a consequence of the arguments in Chapter 1, and of the account of intuition developed in Chapters 4 and 5, on which we have not yet dwelt, is that a person may not only have the intuition that people prefer less pain to more, and the intuition that an undermined house will fall. A person might furthermore have intuitions such as *this branch is about to break; that person is untrustworthy; the ice on this lake is not safe; he is a good person*, and even *there is a person behind me*.

Suppose this is so. According to **Dogmatism**, a person who has such an intuition will receive some immediate justification from her experience. If **Liberalism** is true, she will acquire some singlehanded justification, provided that the necessary conditions for such justification to arise are met.²⁶¹ This suggests that useful lines of future enquiry will seek to settle whether, in addition to **Liberalism**, **Dogmatism** is also true for intuition, to discover what the defeaters are, but also, in the case of **Liberalism**, to discover what the relevant necessary conditions are.

261. That intuitions seem to play a more important role in philosophy than in general life might be thought to show that this cannot be so. But, first, it is far from clear that intuitions as conceived here do not play a non-trivial role in our everyday lives; it seeming to a person that another person is untrustworthy is surely the kind of thing that could well influence her behaviour and decision making. Moreover, for all that has been said here, that impression can to a large extent be vindicated. For it is consistent with what we have said that defeaters are much thicker on the ground in other areas than in those with which philosophy is typically concerned. And that would mean that in philosophy, one ends up with all things considered justification originally acquired from an intuition in many more cases than one does in other areas.

6.12 Concluding Remarks

Our focus in this chapter has been on the relation between the phenomenal character of a type of experience and its ability to justify belief.

In the previous chapter it was argued that intuition and perception both have phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity. In this chapter it was argued that this fact about these experiences has important epistemic consequences. I argued, in particular, that intuition and perception sharing these characteristics puts them on a par with respect to **Liberalism**, the view that having experiences of this kind can, if necessary conditions are met, singlehandedly justify belief.

I argued, moreover, that **Liberalism** should be accepted, both for perception and intuition. That is because being *pushed* to accept that things actually are a certain way, objectively speaking, simply by *how it appears to one that things are* constitutes a genuine reason to accept that things actually are that way. In virtue of their having phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity, to push in this way is exactly what perceptual and intuitional experiences do.

Conclusion

I have argued that there is a class of mental states deserving of the label ‘intuition’, and which is a good candidate for a psychological kind, a kind which cuts the mind at its natural joints. States in this class have representational content, lack content-specific phenomenology, but have attitude-specific phenomenology of pushiness, objectivity, and valence. Intuition thus conceived has something in common with perception: both have phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness, and both have representational content. On the view advanced here, intuition and perception share a further feature: both singlehandedly justify belief in their content.

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In Chapter 2 we saw that doxastic views of intuition entail that subjects are rationally criticisable in situations where they are not. Such views should therefore be rejected. It does not matter whether a doxastic view seeks to reduce intuition to an all-out or to a partial belief. It does not matter whether it instead seeks to reduce it to the *acquisition* of an all-out, or a partial, belief. And it does not matter whether it seeks to reduce it to a belief or a partial belief in the content of the intuition itself, or to belief or partial belief in a different content (or the acquisition thereof). The **Argument from Rational Criticisability** is effective against all these views. It is also effective against attempts to reduce *perception* in one of these ways. And the argument suggests a similarity in nature between the two states: intuition and perception are both experiences.

In Chapter 3 we investigated a line of argument presented by Frank Jackson against views of perception advanced by David Armstrong and

George Pitcher. We understood Armstrong and Pitcher to suggest that in some cases perception should be seen as the acquisition of a *disposition* to believe the content of the perception. Jackson sought to establish that this yields *false negatives*; cases inappropriately classified as *not* being instances of perception. He sought to do this by finding cases where a perceiver would clearly have a perceptual experience, where she would be in the conditions of manifestation of the disposition, but where the disposition would not manifest: the person would not form a belief with the content of her perceptual experience.

We saw, however, that Jackson's argument fails. The disposition theorist can simply claim that in a case where the disposition does not manifest, that is because something blocks it from doing so. This is arguably consistent with the person still having the disposition to believe. The lesson transfers to the case of intuition. The corresponding objection to attempts to reduce intuition to a disposition to believe fails, because the disposition theorist can simply claim that something blocks the disposition from manifesting.

The allegation of false positives seems more promising: it seems that perception and intuition are characterised by a certain phenomenal character, but that nothing in the dispositional view guarantees that this will obtain. At least in the case of intuition, however, the claim of false positives is likely to prove dialectically ineffective, since those who seek to reduce intuition to a disposition to believe are not likely to accept that having a particular phenomenal character is among the essential features of intuition.

Having considered these arguments, I went on to present two arguments of my own. The first, the **Argument from Phenomenal Inadequacy**, is also likely to be dialectically ineffective: the disposition theorist is not likely to acknowledge that there is something here to account for. But rational criticisability returns to the scene: the **Second Argument from Rational Criticisability** shows that dispositional views are also mistaken. Dispositional views also entail that subjects are rationally criticisable in situations where we know they are not, and must for this reason be re-

jected. The argument, also effective in the case of perception, indicates that intuition and perception are states that carry no inherent rational risk. This points to the same conclusion as before: intuition and perception are experiences.

In Chapters 4 and 5 a positive conception of intuition as an experience was developed. I introduced the distinction between content-specific and attitude-specific phenomenology. Perception has content-specific phenomenology: what it is like to see something green is different from what it is like to see something red. The question then explored was whether intuition also has content-specific phenomenology.

Intuition, we assumed, has content-specific phenomenology just in case thought does. I argued, however, that thought does not have content-specific phenomenology, and that intuition therefore also does not. Even those who claim that thought does have content-specific phenomenology agree that this is an elusive property of it: cognitive phenomenology is hard to see, if it is there. This establishes a presumption against it: those who do not recognise content-specific phenomenology in their own experience, and who cannot be convinced by argument that thought has such phenomenology, should not accept that it does.

One argument for content-specific phenomenology of thought claims that thought having such phenomenology is necessary for us to know what we think in the way that we do. But this argument fails: it seems that we can simply think with understanding, and thereby know what we think. Likewise, minimal pair arguments also fail to rationally persuade us of their conclusions. Such arguments attempt to infer that the best explanation of differences in overall phenomenology are that thought has content-specific phenomenology. But because our mental lives are characterised by **Richness** and **Flux**, many other explanations account for such data equally well. Both main lines of argument for content-specific cognitive phenomenology therefore fail, and the presumption against it stands. Given the link between content-specific phenomenology of thought and of intuition we conclude that, unlike perception, intuition does not have content-specific phenomenology.

In what sense, then, can intuition be an experience? Intuition is an experience because it has what I call *attitude*-specific phenomenology. In particular, it has phenomenology of pushiness, objectivity, and valence. An experience has phenomenology of objectivity when its purporting to be about the way things are, objectively speaking, is itself an aspect of its character. It has phenomenology of pushiness when its pushing its subject to accept its content is itself an aspect of its character. And intuition has phenomenology of valence: something can both seem true and seem false in intuition, and this is reflected in the phenomenology of the experience. Perception shares the former two aspects of its attitude-specific phenomenology with intuition: it has phenomenology of objectivity and pushiness. It may be that perception does not have valence, or it may be that it does, but that it only comes in the positive variety.

The case for the claim that intuition and perception has such phenomenology was partly made by careful description, allowing recognition of the relevant character in the reader's own experience. I also argued abductively that intuition and perception have such phenomenology. In particular, that intuition and perception have phenomenology of objectivity can explain facts about it that are independently plausible: objectivity is part of the content of these states. In the case of perception it can also explain the widely noted point that perceptual experience is transparent.

Likewise, that perception and intuition have phenomenology of pushiness also explains facts that are independently plausible. Perceptual and intuitional experience do not, we noted, offer up the possibility for consideration that things might be a certain way. Perceptual and intuitional experiences *push* the subject to believe that things actually *are* that way. It is in virtue of doing this that the experiences appear to *inform* the subject that things are the way they represent them as being. This is well explained by perceptual and intuitional experience having phenomenology of pushiness.

Intuition is, we said, an experience with representational content, one that does not have content-specific phenomenology, but that does have

attitude-specific phenomenology. In the final chapter of the thesis, this conception of intuition was put to use. I defended ‘the analogy’, the claim that that **Liberalism** should be accepted for intuition just in case it is accepted for perception. What explains that perceiving that p can make a subject justified in believing that p is that the experience has phenomenology of pushiness and objectivity. These features are shared with intuitional experience. And the major disanalogies between intuition and perception—that perception has, but intuition lacks, content-specific phenomenology, and that perception is, but intuition is not, underpinned by a causal mechanism we understand—do not stand in the way of the analogy. So we should accept **Liberalism** for intuition just in case we accept it for perception. And I argued that we *should* accept **Liberalism** for perception, and for intuition. For being pushed to believe that things are a certain way, objectively speaking, simply by how things appear to one to be constitutes a reason to believe that they actually are that way, objectively speaking.

If the view of intuition I have defended is accepted, there are some consequences for philosophical methodology. Intuition cannot be charged with being mysterious; it is an experience the nature of which has been clarified. We can also see why having an intuition provides justification for belief: having an intuition that p is a reason to believe that p . Appeal to intuition can therefore not be illegitimate across the board. But much is also left open by the view: in particular how thick on the ground defeaters are. If defeaters are omnipresent, we will not usually be left with all things considered justification from having an intuition. If defeaters are scarce, that may often be the result.

A consequence of the account of intuition I have presented is that intuition may be more common than one might have been lead to believe. What it takes to have an intuition that p is to have a mental state which represents that p , which lacks content-specific phenomenology, but which has attitude-specific phenomenology of pushiness, objectivity and valence. Modality need not be involved, and nor are mental states ruled out on account of not having the right etiology. Presumably, then,

we can have such mental states with a variety of contents.

This opens up the intriguing possibility that, whatever its role in philosophy, intuition may play a rather important role in our everyday lives. We often have intuitions, in the sense developed here. When we do, the mere having of the intuitional experience has the capacity to make the person justified in believing that things are that way, objectively speaking. Whether it actually does make the intuiter justified will depend on a number of things. It depends on whether not only **Liberalism**, but also **Dogmatism** is true about intuition: on whether having an intuitional experience immediately, and not just singlehandedly, justifies. And it depends on how widely available defeaters for the justification acquired are. Perhaps it depends on further things besides. But it is not unlikely that intuition, as this psychological kind has been conceived of here, plays a pervasive and important role in our mental and rational lives.

Appendices

Objections to Dogmatism, and Replies

A.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6 I argued that perception and intuition are on a par with respect to **Liberalism**, the view that if certain conditions are met, having such an experience *makes* a subject justified in believing what it represents. A supporter of **Liberalism** can take one of the necessary conditions to be that the subject has justification to believe other propositions; that she is not a brain in a vat, for example. But her justification for believing these other propositions is no part of what *makes* her justified. I argued in favour of adopting **Liberalism**, both for perception and for intuition.

Liberalism was distinguished from **Dogmatism**. According to **Dogmatism**, *S*'s having independent justification to believe some other proposition is *not* among the conditions that must be met in order that *S*'s having an experience that *p* makes her justified in believing that *p*. If **Dogmatism** is true for experiences of a certain kind, we said that those experiences *immediately* justify belief in what they represent; if **Liberalism** is true they *singlehandedly* justify.

Although I did not defend this view in the main text, I believe that **Dogmatism** is true, both for perception and for intuition: both perceptual and intuitional experience immediately justifies. When a subject *S* has a perceptual or intuitional experience that *p*, it is not even a necessary condition for the experience to make her justified in believing that *p* that

S has independent justification to believe that she is not a brain in a vat, for example.

I believe, moreover, that it *being true* that S is not a brain in a vat, or that her experience is reliable, are also not among the necessary conditions for S to be justified by having the perceptual or intuitional experience. Having the experience is enough, all on its own.²⁶² Let us call this view Dogmatism+. Although giving a full defence of this view is too big a task to take on here, I will briefly note the line of reasoning that convinces me.

I believe we can come to see that perceptual experience singlehandedly justifies belief by properly considering its phenomenal character. I also said that it is not as clear to me that we can come to see that it *immediately* justifies in this way. It seems to me that reflection on the character of perceptual and intuitional experience reveals that nothing but having one of these experience is what *makes* the subject justified. But I am not sure whether reflection on the phenomenal character of the experiences can reveal that no separate necessary condition must be satisfied.

However, I believe (with Pryor, if I understand him correctly) that it *seems* to us that merely having a perceptual experience is on its own sufficient for a subject to be justified. The subject need not be justified in believing that she is not a brain in a vat, nor does that even need to be true. And I think this intuition is just as strong for intuitional experience: it *seems* that merely having the experience suffices to provide some justification for believing its content. We should only give up on this view if we find a good reason to do so. Since I believe that none of the major objections to this view succeed, I think we should not give it up.

Below I consider some of these objections.²⁶³ Most of my responses are suggestive rather than decisive, and in some cases they consist in little more than an argument for thinking that theory that removes the problem can be developed. But properly fleshed out the responses will,

262. See n. 219 above. I take Pryor to also believe this; see e.g. the quotes in n. 220 above.

263. I often conduct the discussion in terms of perceptual experience, but the points I make carry over to intuitional experience.

I believe, show that we can retain Dogmatism+, both for perception and for intuition.

A.2 The Baseline Intuition

I wish to begin by addressing perhaps the most fundamental objection to Dogmatism+ that there is. Essentially the objection is that what the dogmatist+ claims gives us justification is simply the wrong kind of thing to do the job.

The objector says: “You say that perceptual experience has a certain phenomenal character, the character of seeming able to *just tell*, *pushiness* and *objectivity*, or something along these lines. Suppose that you are right that perceptual experience has this character. This is still no more than a fact about how things feel to you. It is mysterious why this should have anything to do with what you are justified in believing, and even more mysterious why having an experience with that character should suffice, all on its own, to justify belief in what it represents.”

Dogmatism+ is certainly committed to the claim that experiences are the right kind of thing to provide the subject with justification. But so, in a sense, are most others. For very few are willing to deny that perceptual experience can *contribute* to justification for belief. Even if perceptual experience fits in to a story that has other cogs and wheels in it, perceptual experience is still the right kind of thing to contribute to providing the subject with justification.

We might paraphrase the objection as saying that perceptual experience, being nothing more than facts about our psychology, can at most explain why we *feel good* about believing something, not why we are actually justified in believing it. But once the point is made that perceptual experience plugs in to most accounts of justification somehow or other, this claim loses plausibility. Perhaps the character of perceptual experience sometimes makes us feel good about believing something. But perceptual experience must also somehow be capable of doing more.

Perhaps the claim instead is that perceptual experience is the wrong kind of thing to ever bring about justification *on its own*. This objection may result from what one might call a baseline intuition.

Above I tried to *argue* that being pushed to accept that things actually are a certain way objectively speaking, simply by how it appears to one that things are, constitutes a genuine *reason* to accept that things actually are that way, objectively speaking. But there is a limit to how far such arguments can go. No doubt, this argument seems compelling to me in part because it really does seem to me that perceptual and intuitional experience, given their specific phenomenal character, are precisely the *right* sort of things to provide justification all on their own. So, against the baseline intuition I can only offer the argument given in the main text, along with my sincere report of having the opposite intuition (and the note that so too, obviously, do many others).

Against the baseline intuition this is, I think, the best one can do. But it may also be that resistance against Dogmatism+ stems from the worry that accepting the view would have bad consequences. In the remainder of this appendix I address a number of these worries.

A.3 *Having the Experience Does Not Matter*

Consider Petra, a normal human subject, who has had a number of ordinary perceptual experiences. Petra has just woken up from a nap, is about to open her eyes, and is considering what will happen next. Among the things she considers is the possibility that she will have a particular perceptual experience *E*, which represents, among other things, that *p*. Petra forms a conditional credence of *p* given *E*, and that credence is high. Is Petra's conditional credence justified? It seems natural to say that it is. But then Petra's justification for belief in *p* upon *having E* seems to be explainable by facts that were present before she had the experience. And that—so the objection goes—makes it hard to believe that it really is the *mere having* of the perceptual experience which matters for Petra's justifi-

cation.²⁶⁴

Let us begin our reply by noting that the distinctive dogmatist claim is that the mere having of a perceptual experience suffices to provide immediate justification for belief. It is not that having perceptual experience has no other repercussions, nor that the only way of becoming justified in believing a proposition like p is by having an experience like ϵ .

When a normal human subject has had a number of perceptual experiences, it is plausible that she has developed the ability to fairly well imagine what it would be like to undergo a particular perceptual experience she is not currently undergoing. (One may want to say that normal subjects develop a capacity to *simulate* having a perceptual experience with a certain range of (mundane) contents.) It is plausible that imagining well enough what it would be like to undergo such an experience will put one in a situation that makes a high conditional credence justified. This certainly shows that there are other ways to become justified in believing the proposition p than by having the experience ϵ . But that is hardly surprising.

But perhaps the case is thought to show that one *always* has justification to hold conditional credences of this kind temporally prior to actually having the experiences, and perhaps that, with respect to one's justificatory structure, actually *having* the experience is irrelevant.

But the case shows no such thing. First, the dogmatist can and should reply that one does not have justification to hold the conditional credence unless one's credence results from a sufficiently good exercise of the imagination (or the capacity for simulation).

Second, the mere existence of such cases—cases of a subject being able to acquire *mediate* justification for the belief that p by forming justified conditional credences and later updating—does nothing to undermine the plausibility of the claim that when a normal human subject has a perceptual experience with the representational content p , she thereby acquires *immediate* justification to believe that p .

264. I am grateful to Leon Leontyev for very helpful discussion here.

And third, even when a conditional credence is justified, the *having* of experiences is not unimportant to justification. It is *precisely* the having of a number of experiences which enables the formation of a capacity to imagine or simulate. And imagining what it would be like to have a perceptual experience one is not having only justifies insofar as one imagines sufficiently well. This surely removes any impression that *having* the experience does not matter.

In the case at hand, the dogmatist will claim that it is no bar to Petra acquiring justification to believe that p on the basis of E if she is *not* justified in having the conditional credence. According to Dogmatism+ (and Dogmatism), Petra does not need to be justified in having a high credence in *any* other proposition, in order to derive justification from her experience. The case in question is just an instance of that more general claim. And it could easily be the case that Petra is *not* justified in forming the conditional credence, if her imagination bears insufficient resemblance to the actual perceptual experience, for example.²⁶⁵

265. Of course, if Petra is justified in having a *low* conditional credence in p given E we are dealing with a different case altogether.

Some object to Dogmatism+ (and Dogmatism) on the basis of conflict with Classical Bayesianism (see e.g. [Cohen 2005](#), [Silins 2007](#), and [White 2006](#)). One such objection, which builds on the considerations in this section, is the following:

According to Dogmatism+ (and Dogmatism) being justified in having high credence in p upon having experience E is compatible with *not* being justified in having low credence in any non-perceiving hypotheses relative to p and E . But, as we have just seen, if S is justified in having high credence in p upon undergoing E , S will at least sometimes be justified in having high *conditional* credence in p given E before having the experience. Assuming that S is rational, this *entails* her having low conditional credence in *not- p* given E ; in fact, the two are equivalent.

So if the subject is rational, she cannot be justified in one but not the other.

(Thanks to Wolfgang Schwartz for helpful discussion here.) However, since Bayesian Epistemology is still a work in progress—see e.g. [Arntzenius \(2003\)](#) and [Hájek and Hartmann \(2010\)](#) for challenges arising when epistemology meets Bayesianism—it seems reasonable to think that it will be possible to amend Bayesianism to remove the conflict, while still retaining its usefulness; see [Pryor \(Manuscript\)](#), [Weatherson \(2007\)](#) and [Jehle and Weatherson \(Manuscript\)](#) for proposals.

A.4 Bootstrapping

The bootstrapping objection to Dogmatism says that if Dogmatism is correct, we can acquire justification for believing that our perceptual experiences are reliable through a sequence of reasoning which, it is claimed, intuitively should not be able to provide such justification. An objection of this kind was raised against reliabilism by Richard Fumerton (1995: 178–9) and by Jonathan Vogel (2000: 612–15), before being applied to Dogmatism by Steward Cohen (2002; 2010).²⁶⁶

It seems to me that contrary to initial appearances, there is nothing wrong with the reasoning Cohen outlines *per se*. (I shall concentrate on Cohen's exposition of the problem.) A comprehensive defence of this claim would require a comprehensive theory of justification, which I cannot provide here. But I will try to show that we have little reason to think that the additional machinery which is required to defuse the challenge from bootstrapping cannot be provided. My defence for this claim combines an insight from a recent paper by Michael Titelbaum (2010) with a point made in the discussion of Petra's epistemic situation (§A.3).

The bootstrapping objection says that if perceptual experience provides justification in the way the dogmatist says that it does, one can acquire justification for the belief that one's perceptual system is reliable too easily. I could, for example, ask someone to hold up a series of differently coloured cards in front of me. When I see a card, I note that it looks to have a particular colour, and I form the belief that it *does* have that colour. That belief is now justified, according to Dogmatism+. But putting these two bits together, I note that the card looked to have the colour I believe that it does have, and infer that my colour vision worked correctly in this instance. After many iterations of this procedure, I form the belief that my colour vision is reliable (Cohen 2010: 142–3).

266. Cohen actually argues that the problem afflicts any theory that allows an agent to acquire justification from a source, the reliability of which the agent does not have antecedent justification to believe in (see Titelbaum 2010: 121). James Van Cleve (2003) argues that the bootstrapping problem afflicts all but externalist theories of justification.

When Cohen revisits the bootstrapping objection in his 2010, he does not devote much effort to *arguing* that the outcome of bootstrapping reasoning is unacceptable. Presumably this is because he takes it to be clear that it is. Here is about half of what Cohen says about this:

Can the [dogmatist] simply accept that bootstrapping reasoning does justify me in believing my color vision is reliable? To see how implausible this is, we can note that prior to carrying out the test of my color vision, I know that each time I look at a card, I will be justified in believing that my color vision is working correctly. . . . But if I can know, before carrying out the test, that it will justify me in believing that my color vision worked correctly, then surely carrying out the test and becoming so justified cannot confirm the reliability of my color vision.²⁶⁷ (Cohen 2010: 143)

If the argument concerning Petra's justification presented in §A.3 is correct, this passage is at best misleading. I do *not* know beforehand that each time I look at a card, I will thereby acquire justification to believe that my colour vision is reliable. It is not the case that beforehand I am justified in having high conditional credence in the first card having the colour it will appear to have, given just the fact that I will carry out the test. At most I have justification to have high conditional credence in the first card having the colour it will appear to have *given that the experience will have a certain phenomenal character*—a phenomenal character which includes phenomenology of pushiness and phenomenology of objectivity. And I will *only* be justified in having that high conditional credence if I am able to imagine well enough what it will be like for me when I have the experience. This seems a plausible thing to say for anyone defending the view that perceptual experience providing immediate justification is explained precisely by its phenomenal character.

Now to the insight from Titelbaum's paper. Titelbaum (2010: 122)

267. I concentrate on Cohen's objection to *Dogmatism* (which also applies to *Dogmatism+*), so I have substituted Cohen's phrase denoting that larger group of views with the word 'dogmatist' (see n. 266 above).

notes that “[t]he bootstrapping literature largely trusts our intuitive rejection of bootstrapping processes”, but then goes on to plausibly argue that we need a better understanding of why such processes should be thought objectionable. He sets up a notion of a ‘no-lose investigation’: a series of observations and inferences that, while having the potential to *justify* a belief, has no potential to provide evidence against it (2010: 123–6). He then plausibly claims that a theory of justification should not allow no-lose investigations (2010: 122).

Here is something it is hard to deny: if a subject has available to her other avenues of investigation, but still engages in a *nothing-but*-bootstrapping investigation with respect to the reliability of her colour-vision, then she is acting in an epistemically irresponsible way, and is rightly subjected to epistemic criticism. On its own, however, this does *not* show that the mere fact that a subject engages in bootstrapping reasoning shows that she is epistemically criticisable. ‘Being *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for’ is, as we have seen, a non-monotonic relation (§2.5). So, one can consistently say that an agent is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for availing herself of bootstrapping style reasoning while *not* availing herself of other avenues of inquiry into the reliability of her colour vision, while denying that she is *ipso facto* rationally criticisable simply for availing herself of such reasoning.

Is an agent *ipso facto* rationally criticisable for engaging in bootstrapping reasoning? I think not. To see that, note that the reasoning Cohen has outlined involving the coloured cards is not a no-lose investigation. As Cohen himself notes, the colours of the cards might have appeared unstable (Cohen 2010: 143). Before starting out with the coloured cards, I therefore do *not* know that after the procedure’s conclusion, I will not be justified in believing that my perceptual process is *unreliable*. If the colours of the cards that are shown to me appear unstable, that is exactly what I will be justified in believing. However, for the procedure to count as a no-lose investigation, I would have to know ahead of time that after the conclusion of the procedure, I will not be justified in believing that my perceptual process is *unreliable*. Because the investigation is *not*

“guaranteed to have no justificatory downside” (Titelbaum 2010: 124), it is not a no-lose investigation.

So when my perceptual experience shows up without any defeaters, this really should raise my confidence in the reliability of my perception at least a little. After all, the fact that colours appear stable is *some* evidence for the reliability of colour perception, albeit quite weak evidence. Indeed, it is hard to believe that there are *any* no-lose investigations with the conclusion that the subject’s perceptual system is reliable. For, considering my situation beforehand, it is always epistemically possible for me that my upcoming experience should display blatantly undermining properties: it might have a red ‘ticker’ tape running across it informing me about my recent envatment, for example (Pryor 2000: 538).²⁶⁸

What *is* true is that the ‘investigation’ I undertake by gazing at coloured cards has very modest potential for presenting defeaters. For this reason it is incumbent on the overall theory of justification to not allow an investigation such as this one to provide unduly much justification. As Titelbaum suggests, there has to be a balance between risk and reward, epistemically speaking.²⁶⁹

But there does not seem to be anything in the dogmatist position that prevents a filling-out of the theory that is consistent with this. Dogmatism+ obviously makes no claim to being a complete theory of justification (neither does Dogmatism). The claim is that merely having a perceptual experience which represents that *p* gives the subject *some* justification to believe that *p*. But that claim is consistent with a wide variety of constraints that bar the ‘investigation’ outlined by Cohen from providing a

268. Titelbaum leaves it as an exercise for the reader to confirm that Roxanne, who goes through a bootstrapping procedure involving her petrol gauge, is also involved in a no-lose investigation (2010: 126). *Pace* Titelbaum I think it is clear that she is not. The gas gauge could very easily give evidence *against* its own reliability, by fluctuating up and down, for instance. As anyone who has driven an old Massey Ferguson tractor can readily testify, gas gauges do occasionally behave in this manner.

269. Titelbaum does not say *quite* that. He says: “There’s an old idea in epistemology that some risk must attach to any reward: If an investigation can’t undermine a conclusion, it can’t support it either” (Titelbaum 2010: 122). I assume that the proportionality constraint I have suggested is quite acceptable to Titelbaum.

lot of justification for the reliability of colour vision. It is perfectly consistent with Dogmatism+ (and Dogmatism) that, while one *can* gain justification from bootstrapping reasoning, that justification can only ever take one up to a quite low level of justification for the proposition that one's colour vision is reliable, a level that is too low for justification in outright belief in the reliability of colour perception.²⁷⁰ Of course, the details of a story that delivers this result still have to be provided. This certainly is a task the defender of Dogmatism+ (and Dogmatism) should take on. But admitting this is a far cry from admitting some in-principle problem for Dogmatism here.

Cohen says: "Surely it is absurd to suppose I can in this way acquire justification for believing that my color vision is reliable" (2010: 143). I think the answer is that no, it is not absurd to suppose that a person can acquire some justification through bootstrapping style reasoning. It is true that one is epistemically criticisable for engaging only in bootstrapping-type reasoning, if other investigations are available. And it is reasonable to want to avoid such reasoning being able to provide sufficient justification for, say, rational, all-out belief. But there seems to be no reason to think that anything in Dogmatism+ (or in Dogmatism) in principle prevents machinery ensuring this outcome from being constructed. The consequence the dogmatist is committed to, that the subject can gain *some* justification from her perceptual experience in this way, is one the dogmatist can and should accept.²⁷¹

A.5 Cognitive Penetration

A challenge against Dogmatism (and against Dogmatism+) which was considered by Pryor in his original paper (2000), and which has recently

270. Thanks to John Cusbert for helpful discussion here.

271. Another option for the Dogmatist is to accept the principle of 'negative self-intimation', the principle that whenever an agent fails to be justified in believing that *p*, she is justified in believing *that*. I do not pursue this possibility here, but see Titelbaum (2010: 130 and n. 21).

been given fresh support, is the challenge from the *cognitive penetrability* of experiences (Siegel Forthcoming).²⁷² The challenge can be roughly described as follows.

It is at least possible that our perceptual experiences are influenced by what we believe, what kind of mood we are in, our hopes and wishes, etc. If a particular perceptual experience really is influenced by what we believe (hope, wish, ...), then the ability of that experience to justify belief is thrown into doubt. And the situation is particularly dire if one of the causes for the experience is the belief in the very proposition that is a candidate for receiving immediate justification from the experience.

To fix ideas, let us focus on a specific example, found in Susanna Siegel's discussion of cognitive penetrability:

Jill believes, without justification, that Jack is angry at her. The epistemically appropriate attitude for Jill to take toward the proposition that Jack is angry at her is suspension of belief. But her attitude is epistemically inappropriate. When she sees Jack, her belief makes him look angry to her. If she didn't believe this, her experience wouldn't represent him as angry.
(Siegel Forthcoming)

Let PEN be Jill's experience; p be the proposition *Jack is angry with Jill*, and q be the proposition that PEN is cognitively penetrated by Jill's belief that p .²⁷³ Let us now ask the following about Jill:

- (i) Does Jill have doxastic justification to believe that q ?
- (ii) Does Jill have propositional justification to believe that q ?

If the answer to (i) is no but the answer to (ii) is yes—that is, if Jill has propositional but lacks doxastic justification to believe that q —we can go on to ask:

- (iii) Is the fact that Jill lacks doxastic justification something for which Jill is rationally criticisable?

272. Sosa (2007c: Chapter 3) seems to raise the cognitive penetrability challenge against intuition; Huemer (2005: 103–4) discusses cognitive penetration of moral intuitions.

273. Or a proposition that obviously entails this. I bracket this in what follows.

For simplicity I shall assume that Jill believes that q if and only if she has doxastic justification to believe it. Given this we can ask, in order to guide our thoughts about (iii), whether Jill *ought* to believe that PEN is cognitively penetrated by her belief that p . This yields the relevant options for Jill's justification in q which are depicted in Figure A.1.

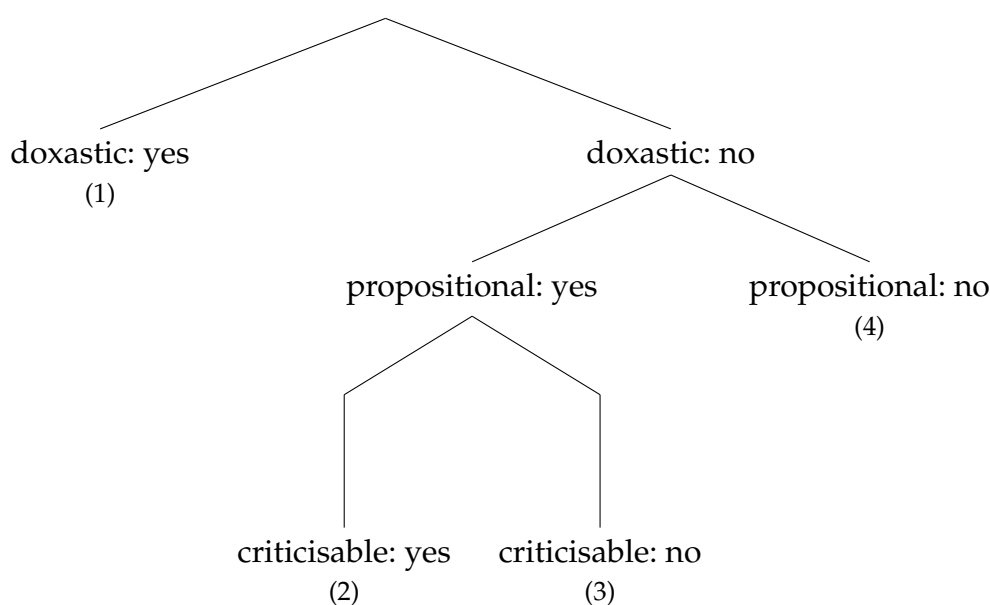


Figure A.1: Relevant options for Jill's epistemic situation with respect to q

I take it to be obviously true, and I shall assume it to be agreed by all parties, that if option (1) obtains—if Jill has doxastic justification to believe that PEN is cognitively penetrated—then Jill has an undermining defeater for her justification to believe that p . This may be bad news for Jill, but it is good news for Dogmatism: there clearly is no challenge to the view on this option.

Before discussing the other options, it is useful to introduce some machinery. A fully ideal agent would presumably believe all and only the truths. So, if it is possible for an agent to have propositional justification while lacking doxastic justification (which the distinction requires) and also without believing all and only the truths, then it must be possible

to conceive of the agent as *moderately idealised*. The moderately idealised version of the current agent has come to justifiably believe what the current agent has propositional justification to believe, without going all the way to believing all and only the truths.

A crucial question is *how much* idealisation is at issue here, and along which dimensions. For example: does the agent merely have to carefully carry out a large amount of reasoning which she already masters, or does she have to carry out reasoning which she does *not* already master? Does she perhaps also have to carefully introspect, or do something else? I shall simply assume that these questions can be settled. For ease of exposition I shall also assume that reasoning is all that is required (no introspection is needed, for instance). Nothing hinges on this last point; everything which follows can be restated if needed.

There is at least one strong restriction on the idealisation: if Jill has propositional but not doxastic justification for belief in q , then the reasoning that would take her to belief in the proposition must in some sense be *available* to her. But that means that if Jill does *not even* have propositional justification to believe that q , then the reasoning that would take her to belief in q is not even available to her. And that, so far as I can tell, means that there can be no challenge to Dogmatism (or to Dogmatism+) from cases of type (4). If Jill does not even have propositional justification to believe that q , then no reasoning (introspection) is available to her that could lead to her believing that q . It is very hard to see that in such a case the agent cannot derive justification to believe p on the basis of PEN. So, in cases of type (4) it seems that the fact that PEN is penetrated by Jill's prior belief does not matter to the justification she derives from it at all.²⁷⁴

Thus the interesting cases are those of type (2) and (3). Let me start with the former. In case (2), Jill does not believe q , but she has propositional justification for it, and she is rationally criticisable for lacking doxastic justification to believe q . (She *ought* to believe q .)

274. If Jill holds the belief that p in spite of evidence to the contrary, then she is probably rationally criticisable for so doing. But that does not show that she is rationally criticisable for increasing her credence in p on the basis of PEN, of course.

It seems reasonable to say that Jill in this instance has an undermining defeater for the support of p by PEN. It is surely not the case that all defeaters must be recognised as such: we can demand of an agent that she does *something* to put two and two together which she has not already done. But then cases of type (2) also pose no challenge for Dogmatism+ (or for Dogmatism). Dogmatism+ claims that *absent defeaters*, merely having an experience suffices to justify. But here a defeater is present.

So, if there is a challenge to Dogmatism in the vicinity, it is from cases of type (3). In such a case, Jill does not believe that PEN is cognitively penetrated by her belief that p , but she has propositional justification to believe this. She is not, however, rationally criticisable for the propositional justification failing to amount to doxastic justification. Whatever she would have to do to arrive at a justified belief that q , she is not rationally criticisable for not doing so.²⁷⁵

Here it seems to me that the right answer is that Jill *does* get justification for her belief that p from having PEN. When we considered case (4) we said (roughly) that if there is nothing the agent *could* do to discover q —if the reasoning to q is not even available to her—then there is no block to justification. It is just as reasonable to say that if there is nothing the agent *should* do, epistemically speaking, there is no block to justification. So, in cases of type (3), the agent really does acquire justification merely from having the experience, and, again, there is no threat to Dogmatism+ (nor to Dogmatism).

*

I said that if Jill is rationally criticisable for not having doxastic justification for believing q , she has an undermining defeater for the support of her belief in p by PEN. This reply is somewhat reminiscent of one discussed by Susanna Siegel. She suggests that if the subject is at least in a position to notice or suspect that cognitive penetration is taking place,

275. It is worth noting that for all that is said here she may be *morally* criticisable: it is at least conceivable that morality in certain situations demands more of us than do purely epistemic concerns. Here, however, our concern is exclusively with the latter.

justification falters.²⁷⁶ Siegel goes on to argue that this reply has the unwelcome consequence that possible *good* cases of cognitive penetration—for example where a radiologist learns that her patient has a tumor by looking at an x-ray, when a non-expert would not have seen this—also do not justify belief. The response, she says, “would prevent experiences by themselves from justifying beliefs (mediately or immediately), even in cases where cognitive penetration seems epistemically good or neutral” (Siegel Forthcoming).

This strikes me as a mistake. The reason is simple: undermining defeaters can themselves be undermined. If the radiologist suspects that she has the experience because of certain beliefs that she holds, she is *still* immediately justified by the experience, because her undermining defeater is itself undermined by the further belief that this fact is beneficial, and the outcome of appropriate training and experience.

A.6 Dissonance

Susanna Siegel distinguishes between ‘pure’ and ‘limited’ versions of Dogmatism with respect to contents. The latter are versions of the view according to which only certain contents are eligible for immediate justification from experience. As we have seen (§6.3), there are two ways to describe Dogmatism (and Dogmatism+), according to which notion of content one employs. On one notion, both what the experience *basically represents* and what it makes obvious are part of the content of the experience. On the other, only the former is part of the content proper. But in either case, a proposition might be made obvious by the experience without being basically represented by the experience.

According to Siegel, “limits on the contents to which dogmatism applies are at odds with dogmatism’s phenomenological motivation”

276. Her actual formulation: “If you notice, suspect, or are in a position to notice that: you have an experience that p when *and because* you antecedently believe p or favor p as a hypothesis, then your experience that p by itself does not suffice to justify the belief (Siegel Forthcoming)”.

([Forthcoming](#)). It should be clear, however, that given the explanation I have provided (§6.7) of why we receive immediate justification from experience, there is no such conflict. What explains why we are justified is the *attitude*-specific phenomenology of perceptual and intuitional experience, and what we are justified in believing are the contents of the experience. It is perfectly consistent with this that it is only what is in the content proper of the experience that we are justified in believing, and, equally, that we are on occasion wrong about what that content is. There is no dissonance here that threatens **Dogmatism**.

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