

# PRESENTATIONAL PHENOMENOLOGY

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You know what it is like to walk into a room and see how it is arranged. Now imagine a blindfolded clairvoyant. He walks into the same room and immediately knows the same things you do about how it is arranged. How does your experience differ phenomenally from the clairvoyant's experience? In *The Nature of Perception*, John Foster proposes that "in the clairvoyant cases, as envisaged, there is no provision for the *presentational feel* of phenomenal experience—for the subjective impression that an instance of the relevant type of environmental situation is directly presented."<sup>1</sup>

I agree with Foster. Visual experiences have what he calls a presentational feel and what I will call *presentational phenomenology*. This distinguishes visual experiences from episodes of immediately coming to know how things are on the basis of clairvoyance. In this paper I will address three different questions about presentational phenomenology.

This first question is: what is the nature of presentational phenomenology? It is one thing to make presentational phenomenology salient by examples. It is another thing to give a theoretical description that reveals its nature. One of my aims is to develop such a theoretical description.

The second question is: what is the scope of presentational phenomenology? Visual experiences have presentational phenomenology. So, plausibly, do other perceptual experiences. But maybe some non-perceptual experiences have presentational phenomenology as well. I will argue that this is so, and more specifically that presentational phenomenology can be found in cases of intuition, introspection, imagination, and recollection.

The third question is: what is the significance of presentational phenomenology? Suppose perceptual, intuitive, introspective, imaginative, and recollective experiences all have, at least in some cases, presentational phenomenology. So what? I will argue that presentational phenomenology has an important explanatory role to play in accounting for the epistemic powers of these various experiences—i.e. their capacities to justify beliefs and give us knowledge.

The plan is straightforward. In section 1, I take up the first question. I develop an account of the nature of presentational phenomenology, which is

<sup>1</sup> Foster 2000 page 112.

motivated by reflection on perception, but which generalizes to other cases. In section 2, I pursue the second question. I provide motivation for thinking that at least some cases of intuition, introspection, imagination, and recollection possess presentational phenomenology. In section 3, I explore the significance of presentational phenomenology. I focus on its significance for the epistemology of perception, intuition, and introspection.

## I. Nature

The view that at least some perceptual experiences have presentational phenomenology is widespread, though there is no standard term for picking it out. Scott Sturgeon, for example, calls it Scene-Immediacy:

There is no way to conceive visual phenomenology apart from Scene-Immediacy. What it's like to enjoy visual experience is for it to be as if objects and their features are directly before the mind.<sup>2</sup>

In this section I will work up to a theoretical description that sheds some light on the nature of presentational phenomenology. This will serve two purposes. First, it will provide a basis for extending application of the notion beyond perceptual experiences. Second, it will give us a firmer grip on the notion so that we can better explore its significance.

Our question, to a first approximation, is: what is it for a perceptual experience to have presentational phenomenology? I will approach it by considering a historically important answer—Husserl's.

Husserl discussed presentational phenomenology throughout his career and made it a centerpiece of his epistemology. I will consider the view of it he developed in *Logical Investigations*. There Husserl distinguishes between signitive experiences which are “empty” and intuitive experiences which are “full”:

A signitive intention [i.e. experience] merely points to its object, an intuitive intention [i.e. experience] gives it ‘presence,’ in the pregnant sense of the word, it imports something of the fullness of the object itself.<sup>3</sup>

I take the property of being a full experience to be the same as the property of having presentational phenomenology. In explaining what he thinks this consists in—for perceptual experiences—he deploys some technical termi-

<sup>2</sup> Sturgeon 2000: pp 24.

<sup>3</sup> The quote is from Husserl 2001: pp. 233. See also p. 172 for a vivid description of the same contrast between what he there calls “presentation” and “mere thinking.”

nology: quality, matter, and representative content. Each corresponds to a notion common in the current literature.

Quality = intentional mode, manner, or attitude, i.e. that dimension along which *perceiving* that the sky is blue and *recollecting* that the sky is blue differ.<sup>4</sup>

Matter = intentional content, i.e. that dimension along which *perceiving that the sky is blue* and *recollecting that the sky is blue* are similar.<sup>5</sup>

Representative content = sensational properties, non-intentional qualia, or mental paint, i.e. that dimension along which the experiences of seeing red of spectrum inverted subjects are supposed to differ.<sup>6</sup>

According to Husserl “signitive representation institutes a contingent, external relation between matter and representative content, whereas intuitive representation institutes one that is essential, internal.” The idea, in current terms, is this: what it is for a perceptual experience to have presentational phenomenology is for there to be an essential, internal relation between its mental paint and its intentional content. What kind of essential, internal relation? Husserl considers similarity. Suppose you have a visual experience that represents something as red. What it is for it to have presentational phenomenology is for it to be mentally painted in such a way that it is itself somehow redish—presumably it should be *phenomenally* red, or red’.<sup>7</sup> The idea, then, is that in this experience it seems as if the property of being red is present because not only do you have an experience that represents the property of being red, but the experience also instantiates phenomenal redness, or red’ness.

Husserl’s account is suggestive. But the key notion of an experience’s mental paint being essentially, internally related to its intentional content seems to me too obscure to do useful theoretical work. The case of color experience might seem clear. But it isn’t. It is far from clear that something that is phenomenally red or red’ is really thereby similar to, or in any other

4 See Husserl 2001: pp. 119 ff., Chalmers 2004, Crane 2001.

5 See Husserl 2001: pp. 119 ff.

6 Husserl uses a confusing array of terms to pick out this dimension of difference: in Husserl 2001 “immanent content” on p. 99, “sensational content” on p. 103, “presentational content” on p. 175, and “representative content” on pp. 241 ff. In later work Husserl introduces the term “hyle”; see Husserl 1983. For contemporary discussions see Peacocke 1983, and Block 1996.

7 For red’ see Peacocke 1983, and for phenomenal redness see Chalmers 2006.

way essentially, internally related to, something that is red.<sup>8</sup> I suggest we set aside mental paint altogether. On Husserl's account, presentational phenomenology consists in a correlation between an intentional property—having a certain intentional content—and a non-intentional property—being mentally painted in a certain way. On the account I will propose, presentational phenomenology consists in a correlation between two intentional properties.<sup>9</sup>

One of the intentional properties is common to the two accounts—the property of having a certain intentional content. Suppose you see a red light ahead. You have a visual experience. We can say of it:

- (1) In having the visual experience, you represent that there is a red light ahead.

(1) reports on the visual experience's intentional content. But there is something else we might say in addition:

- (2) In having the visual experience, you see a red light ahead.

(2) reports on a different property of the visual experience. It says of the visual experience that it is one in which you stand in the relation of seeing to something, namely the red light that is ahead of you. (1) could be true of the visual experience, even if (2) is not, if, say, you are hallucinating. (2) could be true of the visual experience even if (1) is not, if, say, the red light is too far away, or facing in the opposite direction.<sup>10</sup>

The property that (2) attributes to the visual experience is not a purely phenomenal property because whether the visual experience instantiates it depends on non-phenomenal conditions such as the existence of the red light. Consider, however, another report:

- (3) In having the visual experience, you seem to see a red light ahead.

(3)'s truth, unlike (2)'s, does not depend on the existence of the red light, since

<sup>8</sup> Nothing in the characterizations that Peacocke and Chalmers give suggests that they are.

<sup>9</sup> Though I reject Husserl's account of presentational phenomenology in the case of perception, I think that his views about presentational phenomenology in other cases, and in particular in intuition, are quite plausible, and by far the most well-worked out to be found in the literature. Their development in *Logical Investigations* can be found on pp. 271 to 304 of Husserl 2001. See also Husserl 1983, and Husserl 1975.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Dretske 1969, 1995.

you can seem to see a red light ahead, even if there is no red light ahead to be seen. So (3) does not report on the same property as (2). It also does not report on the same property as (1). (1) can be true of the visual experience even if (3) is not. Suppose some branches from a nearby tree obscure the light from view. Still, you can make out that there is a light ahead and that it is red: imagine the redish aura behind the branches. In this case you might visually represent that there is a red light ahead, even though you do not see and it does not seem to you as if you see a red light ahead.<sup>11</sup>

So in addition to having a certain intentional content, perceptual experiences also make it seem as if you are aware of certain things, where seeming to see something is a way of seeming to be aware of it. These are distinct intentional properties.<sup>12</sup> On my view, presentational phenomenology consists in their being correlated in a certain way. That is, what it is for an experience to have presentational phenomenology is for it to both represent that *p*, say, and make it seem as if you are aware of an *F*, say, where *p* and *F* are related in a certain way. What way? The relation that seems to me to best illuminate what presentational phenomenology is like is truth-making. So:

What it is for an experience to have presentational phenomenology with respect to *p* is for it to both represent that *p* and make it seem as if you are aware of a truth-maker for *p*.

A few clarifications and elaborations follow.

First, note that the characterization is general. There is nothing specific to perception about it. For perception we might specify it further thus:

What it is for a perceptual experience to have presentational phenomenology with respect to *p* is for it to both perceptually represent that *p* and make it seem as if you are sensorily (e.g. visually) aware of a truth-maker for *p*.

This formulation makes clear that presentational phenomenology in perceptual experiences consists in the correlation of perceptual representation and seeming sensory awareness. But for other types of experience, intuitions for

<sup>11</sup> Here is another example: you might visually represent that a rocket has launched, even though you do not seem to see the rocket because it is hidden by its exhaust cloud.

<sup>12</sup> This claim is compatible with a variety of theories about the natures of these two properties, including theories according to which what an experience makes you seem to be aware of supervenes on its intentional content.

example, the relevant form of representation will be different—intuitive—and so will the relevant form of seeming awareness—intellectual.

Second, note that I have added a relativization to a proposition. Experiences can have presentational phenomenology with respect to parts of their intentional content. Suppose you have a visual experience that represents your friend as smiling and as happy. Plausibly, this experience has presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that your friend is smiling—you seem to see the smile right there on your friend’s face—but lacks presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that your friend is happy—your friend’s happiness is expressed in what you seem to see, but the happiness itself does not seem to be seen.<sup>13</sup>

Third, while it is not clear how to *prove* the correctness of my account, we can observe the following virtues. A) It comports with a wide range of informal descriptions of presentational phenomenology that philosophers have given in passing. O’Shaughnessy’s, for example, comes quite close: “Whenever a person perceives—that p, he both believes p and perceives something which is relevant to p’s truth value. For example, one believes that the traffic lights are green, and one sees the greenness of the traffic lights.”<sup>14</sup> B) As pointed out above, it is general enough to allow a wide range of different experiences to have presentational phenomenology. C) But it is specific enough about the nature of presentational phenomenology to guide us in exploring its scope and significance. More on this in subsequent sections. D) Finally, it is theoretically modest. I am not assuming any particular analysis of what seeming to be aware of a truth-maker consists in. A variety of different theories of its nature are compatible with my account of presentational phenomenology. This seems to me the appropriate level of commitment at which to theorize for my purposes, precisely because it allows enough illumination of presentational phenomenology to explore its scope and significance without ruling out an ecumenical attitude toward accounts of what it is to seem to be aware of a truth-maker.

<sup>13</sup> Husserl clearly appreciated the need for relativization. See Husserl 2001, pp. 235 ff.

<sup>14</sup> See O’Shaughnessy 2003: p. 319. O’Shaughnessy is discussing perception, not perceptual experience, but adapting his characterization so that it abstracts from the veridicality of perception and the object-dependence of seeing, yields something quite close to my characterization of presentational phenomenology.

## 2. Scope

In this section I will provide motivation for thinking that presentational phenomenology extends beyond perceptual experiences and can be found in at least some cases of intuition, introspection, imagination, and recollection. I will consider each experience in turn.

*Intuition.* Consider the following passage from Husserl:

Presentation is often opposed to mere thinking. The same difference is then operative that we also call the difference between *intuition* and *concept*. Of an ellipsoid I have a presentation, though not of a surface of Kummer: through suitable drawings, models, or theoretically guided flights of fancy I can also achieve a presentation of the latter. A round square, a regular icosahedron and similar *a priori* impossibilia are in this sense ‘unpresentable.’ The same holds of a completely demarcated piece of a Euclidean manifold of more than three dimensions, of the number  $\pi$ , and of other constructs quite free from contradiction. In all these cases of non-presentability ‘mere concepts’ are given to us: more precisely, we have nominal expressions inspired by significant intentions in which the objects of our reference are ‘thought’ more or less indefinitely...<sup>15</sup>

Husserl is drawing a contrast between two different ways of having an abstract object, such as an ellipsoid or the number  $\pi$ , in mind. One way makes the object seem present. The other way does not. The difference is not sensory. Take Kummer surfaces. It is easy to find graphic renderings of these online. But looking at such graphic renderings does not make the surfaces they depict seem any more present to mind. To have that sort of experience, you need to be an expert—you need to be in a position to engage in “*theoretically guided* flights of fancy.” So the difference between the two ways of having an abstract object in mind is intellectual, rather than sensory. When you have, or seem to have, something like an ellipsoid or a Kummer surface in mind in a way that makes it seem present, I will say that you are, or seem to be, intellectually aware of it.

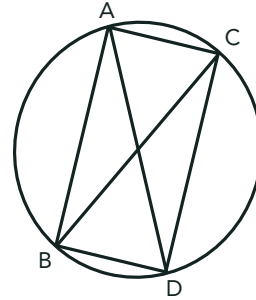
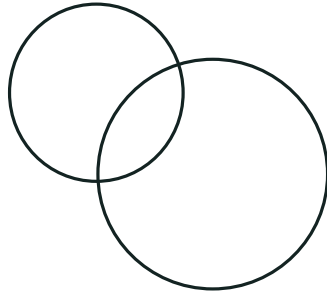
Given this notion of seeming intellectual awareness, we can say what it would be for an intuition to have presentational phenomenology:

What it is for an intuition to have presentational phenomenology with respect to  $p$  is for it to both intuitively represent that  $p$  and make it seem as if you are intellectually aware of a truth-maker for  $p$ .

<sup>15</sup> Husserl 2001: p. 172. Italics and quotes in the original.

Consider the following propositions about circles:

- (1) Two circles can have at most two common points.
- (2) If a quadrilateral is inscribed in a circle, the sum of the products of the two pairs of opposite sides is equal to the product of the diagonals.



$$AB \times CD + AC \times BC = AD \times BC$$

Both (1) and (2) can be proved. But while it is necessary for most of us to work through a proof of (2) in order to appreciate that it is true, it is possible for most of us to just “see,” i.e. intuit, that (1) is true.<sup>16</sup>

Contrast the experience you have when you intuit (1) with the experience you have when you consciously judge (2), whether because you recall it, prove it, receive testimony that it is true, or whatever. Now recall the contrast between the blindfolded clairvoyant’s experience of just knowing how a room is arranged and the ordinary person’s experience of seeing how a room is arranged. I find that when I hold these four experiences in mind and examine them that the contrast between the first pair resembles the contrast between the second pair. That is, I find that my intuition of (1) has presentational phenomenology. It both represents (1), just as my conscious judgment represents (2). But there is something else. My intuition of (1) does not just represent it as being true, it also makes it seem as if its truth is revealed to me by my intellectual awareness of its subject matter, i.e. my intellectual awareness of items such as circularity that contribute to making the proposition true. Compare Gödel’s famous remark: “Despite their remoteness from sense experience, we do have something like a perception also of the objects of

<sup>16</sup> Though I’ve chosen a geometrical example this is not essential. The observations I make in this and the next paragraph remain valid when, say, (1) is the proposition that if  $a < 1$ , then  $2-2a > 0$  and (2) is the proposition that  $\sqrt{7} + \sqrt{10} > \sqrt{3} + \sqrt{17}$ .



set theory, as is seen from the fact that the axioms force themselves upon us as being true.”<sup>17</sup>

Reflection on examples such as the foregoing provides some *prima facie* motivation for thinking that presentational phenomenology extends to intuition. One way to support the case is to work through more examples. Another way to support it is to develop a substantive account of the nature of seeming intellectual awareness of truth-makers. I do not have space to pursue either task here.<sup>18</sup>

*Introspection.* I will use “self-knowledge” and “introspection” with restricted senses. By “self-knowledge” I mean our knowledge of our own current phenomenally conscious states. Typically, if I see a red light ahead, I am in a position to know both that there is a red light ahead, and that I am having a visual experience as of a red light ahead. This second bit of knowledge is an example of self-knowledge. So you can easily have lots of self-knowledge without knowing thyself in the Delphic sense. By “introspection” I mean our capacity to gain self-knowledge so understood. The claim that I endorse here is that at last sometimes when we exercise this capacity, i.e. when we introspect, we are in states that have presentational phenomenology.

To see why, let me begin again by picking out a special kind of awareness. Horgan, Tienson, and Graham describe it:

Sensory-phenomenal states do not merely present apparent objects and properties to the experiencer—for instance, redness, as an apparent property of an apparent object in one’s visual field. In addition, they present *themselves*, since a given phenomenal state-type *is* a specific type of phenomenal character. There is something that *experiencing* red is like. Visual experience of red objects acquaints you not merely with those objects and *their* redness, but with the distinctive what-it’s-like-to-experience-redness character of the experience itself.<sup>19</sup>

Call the sort of awareness Horgan *et al* are describing self-presentational awareness.<sup>20</sup> Three immediate clarifications about it are in order.

First, it is not the same as introspection. Self-presentational awareness is pre-reflective: it automatically comes along with all phenomenally conscious states, and it typically occurs without giving rise to associated beliefs. Introspection, however, is reflective: it is directed by our intention to gain

17 Gödel 1947.

18 I discuss the matter further in (Chudnoff 2011b).

19 Horgan, Tienson, and Graham 2006.

20 Kriegel and Williford 2006 provide a good entry way into the literature on this notion.

knowledge about ourselves, and it typically gives rise to associated beliefs.<sup>21</sup>

Second, the view that phenomenally conscious states are always associated with self-presentational awareness is compatible with a variety of views about its nature. For example, phenomenally conscious states and states of self-presentational awareness might be distinct, or identical.<sup>22</sup> Or, self-presentational awareness might be a form of object-awareness, or it might not be.<sup>23</sup>

Third, it is possible to accept the view that phenomenally conscious states are always associated with self-presentational awareness without thinking that this accounts for the explanatory gap, or solves the hard problem of consciousness, or constitutes an account of what phenomenal consciousness is.<sup>24</sup> Maybe these additional claims are workable.<sup>25</sup> But they are additional.

Given the notion of self-presentational awareness we can say what it is for presentational phenomenology to extend to cases of introspection:

What it is for an instance of introspection to have presentational phenomenology with respect to *p* is for it to both introspectively represent that *p* and make it seem as if you are self-presentationally aware of a truth-maker for *p*.

Why think that at least some cases of introspection have presentational phenomenology? Suppose you have a visual experience as of a red light ahead. You are thereby self-presentationally aware of your visual experience. Suppose you also exercise your capacity to gain self-knowledge. You are thereby in a state that introspectively represents that you are having the visual experience. We fall short of presentational phenomenology in just one respect: we have not established that it is the instance of introspection itself that makes it seem as if you are self-presentationally aware of a truth-maker for its propositional content. Suppose further, however, that the introspective seeming that is part of your introspective effort constitutively depends on your visual experience. In this case the seeming brings along with it the self-presentational awareness, and so we have a case of presentational phenomenology. All we need to know is that this further stipulation is a possibility that at least

21 See Zahavi 2005, and Gallagher and Zahavi 2008 for further discussion of the pre-reflective/reflective distinction.

22 For helpful discussion of the contrast and references to the literature see Kriegel 2009.

23 Both Drummond and Zahavi discuss this issue and come down against the view that it is a form of object-awareness; Drummond 2006, Zahavi 2006. For a fuller discussion of what is distinctive about object-awareness see Siegel 2006.

24 Levine 2006 argues against these applications of the notion of self-presentational awareness.

25 See Kriegel 2009.

sometimes occurs. And this is plausible. For in at least some cases the content of an introspective seeming is composed of *de re* modes of presentation of what that seeming is about—it has a *this* experience is *thus* sort of content. This is a way for an introspective seeming to constitutively depend on the phenomenally conscious state it represents. So we *can* properly stipulate that in the example under consideration the introspective seeming that is part of your introspective effort constitutively depends on your visual experience. So it is an example in which presentational phenomenology extends to introspection. There is nothing outlandish or implausible about the example, and so I take it to motivate the view that some cases of introspection do have presentational phenomenology.

*Imagination.* It is common to distinguish between objectual and propositional imagining. The distinction's currency in recent discussions traces back to Yablo:

Imagining can be either *propositional*—imagining that there is a tiger behind the curtain—or *objectual*—imagining the tiger itself. To be sure, in imagining the tiger, I imagine it as endowed with certain properties, such as sitting behind the curtain or preparing to leap; and I may also imagine *that* it has those properties. So objectual imagining has in some case a propositional accompaniment... But it is the other direction that interests me more: propositional imagining accompanied by, and proceeding by way of, objectual imagining. To imagine that there is a tiger behind the curtain, for instance, I imagine a tiger, and I imagine it as behind the curtain.<sup>26</sup>

The natural way to formulate what it is for a case of imagining to have presentational phenomenology in Yablo's terms is this way:

What it is for a case of imagining to have presentational phenomenology with respect to *p* is for it to be one in which you both propositionally imagine that *p* and objectually imagine a truth-maker for *p*.

Yablo's example fits this specification: in it you both propositionally imagine that there is a tiger and you objectually imagine a truth-maker for the proposition that there is a tiger, namely the tiger itself.<sup>27</sup>

26 Yablo 1993: p. 64. For additional discussion see also Chalmers 2002, and Byrne 2007.

27 Yablo and Chalmers use the notion of a situation "verifying" a proposition: the situation objectually imagined—the situation in which there is a tiger—verifies the proposition propositionally imagined—the proposition that there is a tiger. They do not understand verifying as an evidential notion: the situation objectually imagined isn't just evidence for

There is a possible line of resistance to the claim that some cases of imagination have presentational phenomenology. Unlike sensory, intellectual, or self-presentational awareness, objectual imagining is not a kind of awareness, or seeming awareness. That is, objectually imagining an F is not a way to seem to be aware of an F. On the face of it, if you seem to be aware of a tiger, for example, you represent the tiger as actual—it is really there. But you can objectually imagine a tiger without representing the tiger as actual.

These observations seem correct to me, and they show that cases of imagining do not have presentational phenomenology in quite the same way that cases of perceiving, intuiting, and introspecting sometimes do. That conceded, however, there is an impressive phenomenal similarity between propositionally imagining that there is a tiger by objectually imagining a tiger and seeing that there is a tiger by seeing a tiger. It is natural to employ the notion of presentational phenomenology in characterizing this similarity.<sup>28</sup> So there are strict extensions of presentational phenomenology, such as extensions to intuition and introspection, where the extensions are based on recognizing forms of awareness characteristic of these experiences. And there are loose extensions of presentational phenomenology, such as the extension to imagination, where the extensions are based on recognizing forms of objectual representation that are not forms of awareness but that can play a similar role in fleshing out what is propositionally represented. With the qualification that it is loose rather than strict, the extension of presentational phenomenology to imagination shouldn't be controversial.

*Recollection.* The verbs “recall” and “remember,” like the verbs “perceive” and “imagine,” take both objectual and propositional complements. Contrast, for example, the following:

- (A) I recall that the Red Sox won the World Series in 2004.
- (B) I recall the Red Sox winning the World Series in 2004.

(A) and (B) report on different experiences, with different phenomenal characters. The difference can be quite significant, as Norman Malcolm illustrates:

the proposition propositionally imagined. Rather the situation is an ontological ground for the proposition. So, it seems to me, their notion of verifying is just the notion of truth-making.

<sup>28</sup> One might press a rival characterization: perhaps the similarity derives from the fact that both experiences are in some way sensory. This approach is insufficiently general. There are intellectual imaginings, conceivings, that possess the feature we are trying to characterize, but not in virtue of whatever sensory phenomenology accompanies them.

A prisoner who had not seen his wife for many years might regret that he could no longer remember her face. He might remember much about her face: that her complexion was fair, her eyes blue, and so on. But he cannot *see* her face. He might give natural expression to this by saying “I don’t remember her face any more.” It would be a joyous experience for him to see her face in his mind. If at last this happened he could exclaim “Now I remember her face!”<sup>29</sup>

Malcolm calls (A) and the recollections that the prisoner does have about his wife’s face “factual recollections.” He calls (B) and the recollections that the prisoner would like to have of his wife’s face “perceptual recollections.”<sup>30</sup>

I propose replacing “perceptual recollection” with “objectual recollection.” If it is possible to be intellectually aware of an item, such as an ellipsoid or a Kummer surface, then it should be possible to recall such an item, where this is more than just recalling facts about it. Using the term “perceptual recollection” prejudices us against this possibility.

Given the notions of factual recollection and objectual recollection we can say what it would be for a case of recollection to have presentational phenomenology:

What it is for a case of recollection to have presentational phenomenology with respect to *p* is for it to be one in which you both seem to factually recall that *p* and seem to objectually recall a truth-maker for *p*.<sup>31</sup>

Suppose the prisoner gets his wish: reminiscing about his wife’s face he both factually recalls that her complexion was fair, her eyes blue, etc and so too does he objectually, and in this case perceptually, recall her face itself, bringing it before his mind’s eye to linger on its fair complexion, blue eyes, etc. I will assume that we are all familiar with experiences similar to if less poignant than the prisoner’s.

So there is reason to think that the property of having presentational phe-

29 Malcolm 1975: p. 206.

30 For earlier discussions of the distinction by philosophers see Bergson 2007, Russell 1995, Broad 2001. Endel Tulving introduced a related distinction between two memory systems, “semantic memory” and “episodic memory,” into the psychological literature; Tulving 1972. For an illuminating recent discussion that takes into account both earlier philosophical and earlier psychological discussions see Martin 2001.

31 I assume that “factually recall that *p*” is factive and “objectually recall an *F*” is relational, so in order to pick out a properly phenomenal property I have used the notions “seem to factually recall that *p*” and “seem to objectually recall an *F*”

nomenology with respect to a proposition applies to a broad range of experiences, including perceptual, intuitive, introspective, imaginative, and recollective experiences. Its application is not trivial, however. Plenty of experiences lack presentational phenomenology. Some cases of recollection, such as those available to the prisoner in Malcolm's example, lack it. Further, there are some kinds of experience whose instances never have presentational phenomenology. Consider, for example, experiences of receiving testimony that *p*, or experiences of inferring that *p*. It is notable that there are no uses of "receiving testimony" or "inferring" or cognates that take objectual complements. One might suspect that this fact marks a deep division among kinds of experience, one that explains why some have instances with presentational phenomenology and some do not. But reservations are in order. Consider "love" and "hate." They take propositional and objectual complements. But I doubt that experiences of loving and hating possess presentational phenomenology. So an issue remains: what explains why some kinds of experience have instances with presentational phenomenology, and some do not? I must leave this an open question here. In the next section I consider why having presentational phenomenology is a significant feature of those experiences that do have it.

### 3. Significance

Perceptual, intuitive, and introspective experiences justify beliefs and give us knowledge. What is it in virtue of which they have these capacities? In my view, one of the main reasons why presentational phenomenology is significant is that it plays a central role in answering this question. Toward the end of this section I will essay some more tentative proposals about its significance in thinking about imagination and recollection.

Consider the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p*. The account of presentational phenomenology set out in Section 1 tells us what it is for an experience to *instantiate* this property:

What it is for an experience to have (i.e. instantiate the property of having) presentational phenomenology with respect to *p* is for it to both represent that *p* and make it seem as if you are aware of a truth-maker for *p*.

An experience instantiates the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p* just in case it makes things *seem* a certain way to

you, just in case it makes it seem that *p* is true and it makes it seem as if you are aware of a truth-maker for *p*.

If we are in a favorable environment and the mechanisms that produce our experiences are working properly, then often things are the way they seem. Suppose an experience not only instantiates the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p*, but is also such that things are the way it thereby makes them seem. Then I will say this experience *realizes* the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p*:

What it is for an experience to realize the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p* is for it to both *veridically* represent that *p* and *veridically* make it seem as if you are aware of a truth-maker for *p* (i.e. really make you aware of a truth-maker for *p*).

Consider an example. Suppose you have a visual experience that represents that there is a red light ahead and also makes it seem as if you see a truth-maker for the proposition that there is a red light ahead. So this visual experience instantiates the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that there is a red light ahead. Now suppose further that it realizes this property. Then the following is also true of your visual experience: the proposition it represents as true is true, and in having this visual experience you see the bit of your environment that makes this proposition true, presumably the light and its properties.

In my view, both instantiating and realizing presentational phenomenology are epistemologically significant. More precisely:

- (K) If an experience—perceptual, intuitive, or introspective—puts you in a position to know that *p*, it does so in virtue of realizing the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p*.
- (J) If an experience—perceptual, intuitive, or introspective—justifies you in believing that *p*, it does so in virtue of instantiating the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p*.

Though (K) involves some novel jargon, the view it expresses is similar to some already familiar views. Compare the following:

[Given that] self-evidence is knowledge which we possess independently of inference; [and] perception of the correspondence of a judgment with some complex is what constitutes perception of [or acquaintance with] the truth of the judgment; [then:] Self-evidence is a property of judgments,

consisting in the fact that, in the same experience with themselves, they are accompanied by acquaintance with their truth.<sup>32</sup>

Sensory awareness discloses the truthmakers of our immediate perceptual judgments. Those truthmakers are external spatio-temporal particulars, which sensory awareness makes available for immediate demonstration. The structural elements (objects, stuff, their qualities, and the relations in which they stand) in those truthmakers are then recombined in immediate judgment...if I am seeing a spoon on the table, and judge accordingly, then I typically know that there is a spoon on the table... I typically know these things because the judgments in question are reliably formed from their respective truthmakers, which awareness makes manifest.<sup>33</sup>

According to Johnston, if an experience puts you in a position to know that *p*, it does so because it makes you aware of a truth-maker for *p*. Russell found this sort of view inadequate; he thought that our judgment that *p* and our awareness of a truth-maker for *p* should be simultaneous “in one experience,” such that the two cannot “fall apart,” and such that the judgment itself “feels different” from non-self-evident judgments.<sup>34</sup> So Russell added the condition that your experience also make you aware of the correspondence between *p* and its truth-maker. It is not clear whether this works, but I will not criticize Russell’s proposal here. What I want to point out is that the condition that the experience not only be one in which you are aware of a truth-maker for *p*, but also be one in which it seems to you that *p*, secures the unity, inseparability, and phenomenal distinctiveness that Russell sought. And this condition is precisely what (K) requires.

Those sympathetic with Pryor’s perceptual dogmatism or Heumer’s more general phenomenal conservatism should find (J) plausible:

Perceptual Dogmatism: if it perceptually seems to you that *p*, then you thereby have some *prima facie* justification for believing that *p*.<sup>35</sup>

Phenomenal Conservatism: if it seems to you that *p*, then you thereby have some *prima facie* justification for believing that *p*.<sup>36</sup>

32 (Russell 1992): pp. 156, 165, and 166.

33 Johnston 2006: pp. 282 and 289. For similar views see Husserl 1970: p. 10; McDowell 1982: pp. 213 -214. In Dancy 1988.

34 Russell 1992: p. 165.

35 See Pryor 2000, 2004.

36 See Huemer 2001.



These are views about sufficient conditions for *prima facie* justification. If they are true, then there must be something about perceptual seemings, and seemings more generally, in virtue of which perceptual dogmatism and phenomenal conservatism are true of them. What might that be? Both Pryor and Huemer think that it is their phenomenology. (J) suggests a more specific answer: it is their presentational phenomenology—at least it is for those seemings, like perceptual seemings, that have presentational phenomenology.<sup>37</sup>

(K) and (J) weigh in on controversial issues. Together they constitute a natural, systematic, and fruitful setting for thinking about the epistemology of perception, intuition, and introspection. A final verdict on (K) and (J) must await further elaboration of this setting and a comparison of it with others. Here I want to address two worries that, if successful, would undermine any such venture.

The first worry is that both (K) and (J) are too strong. While driving, you check your speedometer and see that you are driving at 60 mph. In this case you have a visual experience that both justifies you in believing and, we may suppose, puts you in a position to know that you are driving at 60 mph. But this visual experience does not make you aware of, nor does it seem to make you aware of, a truth-maker for the proposition that you are driving at 60 mph. This suggests that the conditions identified by (K) and (J) are too strong: perceptual knowledge, or justification, does not require awareness of, or seeming awareness of, truth-makers; sometimes awareness of, or seeming awareness of, evidence or truth-indicators suffices.

To deflect this worry, we must clarify the intended scope of (K) and (J). They are about knowledge and justification that wholly derive from an experience—whether perceptual, intuitive, or introspective. (K) governs knowledge you are in a position to have wholly because of an experience; (J) governs justification you have wholly because of an experience. In the example, you have justification for believing, and are in a position to know, that you are driving at 60 mph, and this justification and this position to know derive partly from your perceptual experience. But it is implausible that they derive wholly from your perceptual experience. Both at least partly depend on your having background beliefs to the effect that speedometers indicate the speed at which you are driving. So this example gives us no reason to reject (K) or (J). Similar examples can be treated similarly.

The second worry is that (K) is too weak, and in particular falls afoul of certain Gettier cases. The relevant Gettier cases are fake barn cases.<sup>38</sup> Henry

37 I discuss reasons for endorsing this more specific view. In Chudnoff 2011.

38 For discussion see Goldman 1976.

and his son unknowingly drive into fake barn county, where the locals erect barn facades that look just like barns to those driving by, though there are also some real barns around as well. Henry happens to see a real barn. His visual experience realizes the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that there is a barn. That is, in his experience it veridically visually appears to him that there is a barn, and it veridically seems to him as if he sees a truth-maker for the proposition that there is a barn, namely a barn. Even so, he is not in a position to know that there is a barn. So the conditions identified by (K) are insufficient for knowledge.

To deflect this worry, we must clarify the intended aim of (K). (K) aims to identify those conditions that explain why an experience puts you in a position to know something, when it does so. This is not the same as aiming to identify conditions sufficient for an experience to put you in a position to know something. More generally: the claim that Q obtains in virtue of P is not the same as the claim that P suffices for Q. This much should be uncontroversial, since for any Q, Q suffices for Q, but for many (and maybe all) Q, Q does not obtain in virtue of Q. Still, one might argue: Q obtains in virtue of P only if P suffices for Q. Sufficiency may not be sufficient for an “in virtue of” relation to hold, but it might be necessary. This is probably the dominant view.<sup>39</sup> But I believe it is incorrect. I believe that it is possible for Q to obtain in virtue of P even though P is not a sufficient condition for Q. The reason why is that Q’s obtaining in virtue of P might depend on background enabling conditions that are not part of Q’s explanation.<sup>40</sup> So, (K) might identify conditions in virtue of which experiences put you in a position to know something, when they do so, even if satisfaction those conditions does not suffice for an experience to put you in a position to know something. I defend this strategy for upholding theses about the explanation of knowledge in the face of Gettier counterexamples at length elsewhere.<sup>41</sup>

(K) and (J) illustrate how presentational phenomenology might be significant in thinking about perception, intuition, and introspection. Now I want to consider briefly how presentational phenomenology might be significant in thinking about imagination and recollection.

Consider, first, why it wouldn’t do to extend (J) to imagination as follows:

39 See Audi ms, Fine ms, Rosen 2010.

40 One way of interpreting Moral Particularism is as a view about moral grounding, or moral “in virtue of” relations, according to which moral facts might obtain in virtue of conditions that do not suffice for them. Cf. Audi ms, Dancy 2004.

41 Chudnoff forthcoming 2011c.

- (J<sup>1</sup>) If imagining that *p* justifies you in believing that *p*, it does so in virtue of instantiating the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p*.

This wouldn't do because there is nothing to explain here: imagining that *p* never justifies you in believing that *p*. It might, however, justify you in believing that *p* is possible. Consider, then, the following:

- (J<sup>2</sup>) If imagining that *p* justifies you in believing that *p* is possible, it does so in virtue of instantiating the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to *p*.

(J<sup>2</sup>) has more going for it. It illustrates how presentational phenomenology might be significant in thinking about imagination.<sup>42</sup> It not clear whether and how (K) might be extended to imagination.

Consider, next, the following example from Michael Martin:

Suppose that someone, Archie, is looking for a cuff link. He looks in a drawer but fails to notice it and continues searching the room. Eventually he gives up and leaves for dinner. On the way to dinner, he agitatedly thinks back to his search of the room. Having a relatively good visual memory, he recalls how things looked as he searched. Suddenly he realizes that the cuff link was in the drawer but that he had failed to notice it.<sup>43</sup>

Typically, when we recollect that *p* it is because we already believe that *p*. Martin's case, however, suggests that it is possible for recollection to generate new beliefs: Archie acquires the belief that his cuff link was in the drawer. Further, Archie's recollection justifies this belief and, we may suppose, makes it amount to knowledge. In virtue of what? A natural idea is that it is in virtue of instantiating and realizing the property of having presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that the cuff link was in the drawer. Martin's description of the case suggests that Archie objectually—and more specifically, visually—recalls a truth-maker for the proposition that the cuff link was in the drawer. And, plausibly, Archie's sudden realization consists in

42 Claims that are related to (J<sup>2</sup>) in a way analogous to the way perceptual dogmatism, and phenomenal conservatism, are related to (J) have been discussed in the literature on modal epistemology: see Yablo 1993, Chalmers 2002, Byrne 2007, Gregory 2010.

43 Martin 1992.

this recollection suddenly making it seem to him that the cuff link was in the drawer. So Archie's experience does have presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that the cuff link was in the drawer. Martin's case, then, suggests that (K) and (J) might be extended to recollection. If so, then for at least some recollective experiences, presentational phenomenology will have the same sort of significance it has for perceptual, intuitive, and introspective experiences.<sup>44</sup>

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