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# Nonconceptual Modes of Presentation<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

In a recent paper, Peacocke (2001) continues an ongoing debate with McDowell and others, providing renewed arguments for the view that perceptual experiences and some other mental states have a particular kind of content: nonconceptual content. In this article I want to object to one of the arguments he provides. This is not because I side with McDowell in the ongoing debate about nonconceptual content. On the contrary, my views seem to me closer to Peacocke's, and have been strongly influenced by him. It is just that I am not convinced by the particular argument I will be questioning here. The explanatory task is a formidable one. At least some first-person self-ascriptions, particularly those resulting from introspection, prove so puzzling because they seem different in kind from others, first person or otherwise. Adding to that the question of whether such self-

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<sup>1</sup> My work has benefited from discussions of Peacocke's paper with members of a LOGOS discussion group, particularly with Jose Díez and Dan López de Sa. The paper was given at a SADAF conference in Buenos Aires, November 2003; I thank the audience for helpful comments, in particular Eleonora Orlando, Eduardo Rivera and Ernest Sosa. Thanks also to an anonymous referee for the European Review of Philosophy. Financial support was provided in the framework of the European Science Foundation EUROCORES programme "The Origin of Man, Language and Languages" by the Spanish Government's grant MCYT BFF2002-10164 and research project HUM2004-05609-C02-01, and by a Distinció de Recerca de la Generalitat, Investigadors Reconeputs 2002-2008, DURSI, Generalitat de Catalunya.

ascriptions can be tokened by creatures lacking concepts ostensibly introduces a further gap that any acceptable account must bridge.

I cautiously condition my joining Peacocke's side of the debate because of a fundamental problem I have in this area: I do not feel that the distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual content has been made perspicuous, so that it is difficult to see what the disagreement is really about. Contents are sometimes characterized as nonconceptual if subjects might entertain them even if they do not possess the concepts belonging to a privileged theory that defines them. This view derives the distinction from a previous relational notion of *nonconceptual content relative to theory T* (by itself useless, for every content is nonconceptual, in that sense, relatively to some theory), by selecting a theory as privileged in relevant respects. The problem with this is that it is then difficult to see why paradigm cases of states whose content should count as conceptual in this debate (say, judgments of experts no more self-reflective than ordinary human beings, on matters straightforwardly in their field of expertise) will end up being such. For there is no reason to expect that ordinary human beings possess the concepts devised by the relevant privileged theory of contents to characterize their mental states, including the indicated judgments.

Peacocke's own proposal in the paper I will be considering further illustrates the difficulty. He says:

I shall be taking it that conceptual content is content of a kind that can be the content of judgment and belief. Concepts are constituents of those intentional contents which can be the complete, truth-evaluable, contents of judgment and belief" (op. cit., 243).

The problem with this suggestion is the complement of the one just raised for the previous one: unless specific constraints specify which states can properly count as judgments and beliefs, the proposal will trivialize the debate by making conceptual the content of perceptual experiences. This will be so if judgment and belief (together with their contents) are accounted for along behaviorist lines, or their nowadays more popular but similarly reductive functional (or functional-cum-teleological), information-theoretical proposals. I take it that what Peacocke says right after the preceding quotation is a move in the direction of preempting the disappointing denouement which his proposal, together with views like those just mentioned, would otherwise ensure:

Conceptual content and concepts I take to have identities conforming to, indeed answerable to, Gottlob Frege's criterion of identity for senses. Complete contents *p* and *q* are distinct if and only if it is possible for someone for whom the question arises rationally to judge that *p* without judging that *q*, and even while judging that not-*q*. (ibid).

I believe that this move accounts in part for Peacocke's motivation to endorse the argument I will be objecting to in this paper.<sup>2</sup> My criticism will later make it clear why I do not think that this suggestion really helps Peacocke's proposal to properly trace the conceptual/nonconceptual divide: unless further, question-begging constraints are put on what counts as *rationaly judging a content without judging another*, contents of perceptual experiences also have identities answerable to Frege's criterion.

It will help locate the rationale for the objections in its wider context, if I outline my own way of characterizing the distinction between the two kinds of contents. For reasons of space and focus, a rather dogmatic sketch is all I will provide here. Following Dummett (1973), I think of judgments as internal forms of the linguistic act of assertion, and beliefs as dispositional states whose manifestations are judgments so understood. Like other participants in the debate, I take judgments and beliefs to satisfy some form of Compositionality such as Evans' (1982) *Generality Constraint*, although, unlike others like Heck (2000), I do not think this by itself distinguishes conceptual from nonconceptual contents. As I will explain, I think that contents of perceptual experiences also satisfy some such constraint, if sufficiently vaguely articulated. Concepts are the structured constituents of judgeable contents, and therefore, under the Dummettian proposal, I take their identities to include, as a matter of fact, linguistic items, like auditory images of linguistic sounds, which would allow for the expression of judgments of which the concepts are constituents, should the need arise to do so. If we further think (with Brandom (1994) and Williamson (2000), putting aside their differences) of assertions as individuated by knowledge-related norms, this will lead us to see prototypical concept-involving states as committing their subjects to be in a position to justify them if the question arises, and to invoke them in providing justifications for other states. The view that judgments and beliefs are linguistically constituted is not a necessary ingredient of this proposal; the Dummettian linguistic characterization of judgments and beliefs is here taken to be merely reference-fixing, leaving open whether an account of their constitutive essence will allow for judgments and beliefs in speechless subjects. It is just that, as we conceive of them, paradigm cases of what we take to be conceptual contents are actually linguistically expressible.

This conception of conceptual contents is in agreement with most of what McDowell (1994) says about them, including their location in Sellars' "space of reasons". Thus, McDowell (1994, ch. 3) deals with Evans' (1982)

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<sup>2</sup> Peacocke (1989), however, advances other arguments to the effect that nonconceptual contents do not satisfy the Fregean identity criterion.

“fineness of grain” argument for the nonconceptual character of the content of perceptual experience by providing his well-known analysis of the contents of perceptual experiences by means of demonstratives. This maneuver is readily intelligible if the conceptual/nonconceptual divide is understood as here suggested. Assuming this proposal as a constraint on what (at least prototypically in the actual world) counts as judgments and beliefs, we can now appeal to Peacocke’s own characterization of the conceptual/nonconceptual divide, without incurring in the difficulty I mentioned for Peacocke’s.<sup>3</sup>

With this in mind, we can now move to describe the real disagreement between Peacocke and McDowell, which is in my view epistemological, confronting epistemologists who share an internalist approach to justification. *Internalism* is here understood the way it is in epistemology, not in the philosophy of language, as the thesis that whether one is justified in believing *p* supervenes on facts which one is in a position to know by reflection alone, where *reflection* encompasses introspective awareness of one’s mental states, *a priori* reasoning, and memory of knowledge acquired in those ways.<sup>4</sup> Philosophers who, like myself, side with Peacocke, contend that the contents of perceptual experiences differ from the contents of any judgment or belief, understood as previously suggested. This is compatible with the fact that those experiences are capable of providing full-fledged internalist justification for judgments or beliefs. This is what Pryor (2000) calls ‘dogmatism’.<sup>5</sup> It is the view that perceptual beliefs are justified by *the fact* that the subject has relevantly related perceptual experiences, rather than by any inferential derivation from any other beliefs, including introspective beliefs about the presence and nature of the relevant perceptual experiences.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The proposal would be unwelcome to Peacocke, I take it: “that a concept user must have a language on which he can express some of his concepts [...] is a substantive, nondefinitional thesis that needs to be established”, *op. cit.*, 243. But I am not sure of this; notice that, in my proposal, the connection between concepts and language is definitional, like the connection between water and being colorless, although, as in the latter case, it may be substantive: the connection leaves open whether it is metaphysically possible that there is thought without language.

<sup>4</sup> I take this from what Pryor (2001, 104) calls ‘simple internalism’.

<sup>5</sup> Although I cannot elaborate on this here, the version of dogmatism I would like to defend deviates from Pryor’s. Firstly, unlike Pryor, I think it is only appropriate to apply dogmatism to perceptual judgments involving observable properties, for reasons close to Peacocke’s (2004a, 65-73). Also, like Peacocke I would defend dogmatism on the basis of considerations having to do with the identity conditions of concepts and the nature of *a priori* knowledge.

<sup>6</sup> The general principle endorsing the transition from experience to judgment as justificational, in the particular case of perception, is, I think, Burge’s (1993, 469) *Acceptance Principle*: “A person is *a priori* entitled to accept a proposition that is presented as true and that is intelligible to him, unless there are stronger reasons not to do so, because it is *prima facie* preserved (received) from a rational source, or resource for reason; reliance on rational

This is a form of internalism. Indeed, only facts relevantly accessible to the subject count for the justification of his beliefs, rather than facts about, say, reliable connections between the experiences and states of affairs they represent only empirically. It is also a form of what Pryor (2001) calls ‘modest foundationalism’, because it posits justificational basic beliefs (beliefs that are not inferentially justified by other beliefs), while allowing for the fallibility and corrigibility of those basic beliefs. Heck (2000, 518-9) provides a compelling defense of the nonconceptualist view – understood along what I take to be the preceding lines – from McDowell’s considerations.

The nonconceptual contents of perceptual experiences are full-fledged constituents of states of conscious awareness of their subjects, since they are to supply internalist justification. Therefore, a reflective subject, armed with the needed conceptual tools (including linguistic resources) can conceptualize them, so that they become judgeable contents. But these are not the contents of the relevant experiences, which are the ones providing the fundamental justification for perceptual beliefs. Beliefs about perceptual experiences can allow the conceptually sophisticated thinker to articulate justifications for his perceptual beliefs of a better quality than that provided by the experiences themselves. However, the nonconceptualist holds that their presence provides by itself justification enough for knowledge. Indeed, animals and infants can in principle enjoy perceptual experiences identical to ours.

In my view, perceptual experiences are analogous to the states constituting the understanding that ordinary speakers have of the compositional building blocks (lexical units and meaningful elements of syntax) of their native languages – including their understanding of logical expressions. Following Peacocke again, I take this understanding to consist in finding certain transitions (*i.e.* multi-propositional intentional acts) primitively compelling in virtue of their form.<sup>7</sup> I think beliefs justified by states involving nonconceptual content (*states of pre-judgmental awareness*, as I prefer to call them) are close to at least some of the *primitive certainties* discussed by Wittgenstein (1969), and earlier by Ortega (1940).<sup>8</sup> Unlike judgments (including the judgments that conceptualize them), they may justify without

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resources—or resources for reason—is, other things equal, necessary to the function of reason”.

<sup>7</sup> Peacocke might concur: regarding the relevant form, he says: “I think that some appreciation of this form is also psychologically real. When one makes an inference of this sort, one is aware of the form, even if nonconceptually so” (2004b, 97).

<sup>8</sup> Kevin Mulligan indicated to me the similitude between Ortega’s and Wittgenstein’s views here. I thank him for allowing me to see his manuscript “Certainty, Soil and Sediment”, where he elaborates on this and presents the similarly related views of other less well-known philosophers.

requiring justification, while being at the personal level and having internalist rationalizing potential.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, a crucial aspect of the difference between conceptual and nonconceptual contents lies in the role that the latter play as primitive presuppositions for the former.<sup>10</sup>

I now move to present the argument by Peacocke that I intend to rebut. Perceptual experiences have contents, at least in the minimal sense that they have correctness conditions, which may or may not be satisfied by the actual world around the would-be perceiver. As Heck (2000, 508-9) correctly insists, they also have at least an ingredient of force, the mind-to-world direction of fit characteristic of judgments and assertions, which Heck calls its ‘presentational’ aspect. (I will come back to this important issue by the end of the article.) Clearly, the contents of experiences are about the distribution of quality-instances in their environment. Peacocke argues, and I agree, that they involve not just these qualities, but the ways in which qualities and their instances may be perceived. The argument I will be objecting to is intended to distinguish these ways for observable qualities and their exemplifications to be perceived from Fregean senses. I suspect that Peacocke thinks (wrongly, in my view) that it is important to sustain his claim that contents of perceptual experiences are nonconceptual, in spite of their being as fine-grained as Fregean contents of judgments. If I am right, his idea would be that, even though both conceptual and nonconceptual contents constitute fine-grained correctness conditions, only the former are Fregean thoughts consisting of Fregean senses.<sup>11</sup>

In order to conclude that ways are not Fregean senses, Peacocke relies on a Dummettian premise that I am willing to grant, that a Fregean sense, including senses of perceptual demonstratives “can be individuated by the condition for it to refer to a given object or property” (*op. cit.*, 248). The argument then proceeds by attempting to establish that, unlike senses, ways for quality-instances to be perceived cannot be regarded “as individuated by the condition for them to refer to some object or property” (*ibid.*).

Although a way contributes to a correctness condition, it is important that which object is presented in a given way is not simply a matter of the object’s fitting that way. A distant aircraft in the sky may be presented as being in a certain direction. It may not in fact be in that direction, because the light rays are passing through refracting bodies of differentially heated air. When an object is presented in a given way in

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<sup>9</sup> This is just an analogy; unlike experiences, many such “primitive certainties” remain tacit, perhaps essentially so.

<sup>10</sup> My proposal is thus close to Luntley’s (2003).

<sup>11</sup> As I acknowledged before, though, Peacocke (1989) presents further arguments that nonconceptual contents do not satisfy the Fregean identity criterion.

perception, which object is presented in that way is at least partly a matter of causation, as H. P. Grice argued (*ibid.*)

The argument can be construed as follows:

1. Fregean senses are individuated by the conditions for contentful states to refer to a given object or property.
2. For a perceptual experience  $e$  involving a way  $W$  for an instance of a quality to be perceived to present an object  $o$ ,  $o$  must play a salient causal role in the origination of  $e$ .
3. In some cases, an object  $o$  that an experience  $e$  is about may play a salient causal role in the origination of  $e$ , even if  $o$  does not satisfy the condition  $W$  constituting the way  $o$  is perceived in  $e$ .
4. Therefore, ways are not senses.

As I said, I accept premise (1), and I agree with Peacocke that Grice's (1961) considerations in support of the causal theory of perception validate premise (2). However, I want to resist premise (3). To see how I propose to do that, let us examine in more detail the example by means of which Peacocke defends it. In order to do that, I will introduce *conceptualizations* of ways of perceiving objects. These conceptualizations should of course not be confused with the ways themselves, which, unlike them, are constituents of nonconceptual contents; but there is no other way for us to discuss them intelligibly than through conceptualizations.<sup>12</sup>

We can imagine having an experience of the kind Peacocke describes, and introducing while attending to its relevant elements the following complex demonstrative  $D$ : *this (instance of this) aircraft-shape in this (instance of this) direction (centered around such-and-such bodily axes)*. (Aircraft-shaped instances and not aircrafts will be the intended objects in my reconstruction, on the assumption that the primary objects of perceptual experiences are instances of observable properties; but nothing important for the argument hinges on this, I think.) I assume that in the kind of cases Peacocke has in mind, illustrated by his example, something like this complex demonstrative conceptualizes what he takes to be the relevant way  $W$ . Now,

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<sup>12</sup> Heck (2000, 519-20) remarks on how on his view, to which as I said earlier mine is in the relevant respects very close, the very linguistic articulation of the reasons that our perceptual experiences provide for our perceptual beliefs is of necessity unfaithful to their contents.

in the situation described, *D* lacks reference.<sup>13</sup> However, the experience does present an object. The object that the experience is about, therefore, is not determined by its fitting *W*, but in some other way, and causation is the most sensible candidate for that role.

In my view, however, the problem lies exclusively with a too simplistic characterization of what is the relevant way *W* for (an exemplification of) a quality to be perceived. Philosophers of perception have frequently noted that observable qualities belong in qualitative spaces: classes of qualities of the same type, held together by different observable relations. Those relations are geometrical, in the case of qualities like shapes or directions; relations of saturation, brightness and hue in the case of colors; relations of pitch and intensity in the case of sounds, and so on. In my view, this is not a contingent fact, but a fact constitutive of the very identity of the observable qualities at stake.<sup>14</sup> The capacity we have for perceptually recognizing instances of those qualities is constitutively linked to our capacity for distinguishing them from others in the same range, and for placing them in their proper qualitative spaces relative to others. Now, cases like the one considered by Peacocke are prototypical illusions. What distinguishes them from the other kind of prototypical perceptual mistake, hallucinations? The intuitive difference lies of course in that illusions, but not hallucinations, have objects; but how should we capture this intuition?

Note to begin with that the proper ontological kind to which objects of perception (those “instances” and “exemplifications” of observable qualities we have been speaking about so far) belong is that of *eventualities*; I use this term to cover more specific kinds, like states, events and processes. Perceptual experiences constitute sensory impressions of eventualities, in which different observable qualities (temporal, spatial, chromatic, auditory, noxious, etc.) are exemplified. Both in illusions and in hallucinations, no eventuality is causally responsible for instantiating the subject’s sensory impression. In the case of illusions, however, as opposed to hallucinations, there is an eventuality instantiating qualities in the same qualitative spaces as those of which the experience gives its subject a sensory impression. This eventuality does not merely cause the experience, but also, in addition, a kind of more complex causal dependence of the experience on the eventuality. Indeed, the orderly alterations of the observable qualities actually instantiated in the eventuality, along the specific relational dimensions constituting their respective qualitative spaces, would cause sensory impressions of

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<sup>13</sup> On a view of complex demonstratives such as that in Larson & Segal (1996, sec. 6.4), a demonstrative *that F* may have a semantic referent, even if it does not satisfy *F*. I am assuming a contrary view, such as the one elaborated in García-Carpintero (2000).

<sup>14</sup> García-Carpintero (2002a) develops this view; see also the references there.



qualities altered in corresponding ways. In fact, there is an eventuality on which the experience is causally dependent: illusions have objects. In the case of hallucinations there is no such eventuality, and thus no objects.

I will call ‘causal influence’ this more complex form of causal dependence, borrowing the term from Lewis (2000), for it can be seen as a particular instance of a new condition that, under that name, Lewis thinks is needed for a proper definition of causation. Lewis says that *E* is causally dependent on *C* if and only if *C* influences *E*, and *C* influences *E* if and only if “[...] there is a substantial range *C*<sub>1</sub>, *C*<sub>2</sub> ... of different not-too-distant alterations of *C* (including the actual alteration of *C*) and there is a range *E*<sub>1</sub>, *E*<sub>2</sub> ... of alterations of *E*, at least some of which differ, such that if *C*<sub>1</sub> had occurred, *E*<sub>1</sub> would have occurred, and if *C*<sub>2</sub> had occurred, *E*<sub>2</sub> would have occurred, and so on” (*op. cit.*, 190). The details of Lewis’ definition of an *alteration* of an event *E* need not concern us here. Moreover, I would like to emphasize that, while Lewis reductively defines causation in terms of counterfactual dependence, I do not think that either his definition or any other could succeed. I have consequently simply used causation as a primitive relation in my own formulation of the specific form of causal influence that I need.

Using our recently introduced talk of eventualities, the complex demonstrative *D* by means of which I proposed earlier to conceptualize what appears to be Peacocke’s idea of the way *W* in his example reads: *that eventuality consisting of this (instance of this) aircraft-shape being in this (instance of this) direction (centered around such-and-such bodily axes)*. The preceding considerations suggest a different complex demonstrative properly to conceptualize *W*, *D'*: *that eventuality consisting of an (instance of) a shape properly related in its specific qualitative space to this (instance of this) aircraft-shape, in an (instance of) direction properly related in its qualitative space to this (instance of this) direction (centered around such-and-such bodily axes), which causally influences this experience*. In non-illusory cases, the shape and direction actually instantiated by the eventuality which *D'*, and thus *W*, is about are the very same that the subject experiences. In illusory cases, as in Peacocke’s example, some of them are not the same (for all he says about the example, the shape may be the same, even if the direction is not); however, even in illusory cases, *D'*, unlike *D*, is still determined as the referent, in that the eventuality *fits* the demonstrative, and therefore the way *W* that it conceptualizes. What Peacocke takes to be the way is but part of what it really is, according to this proposal. In addition, the experience itself is self-referentially involved, and so is the relation of causal influence.

I will consider presently an immediate objection to this proposal, which derives from this feature, that the way *W* is both self-referring (as it refers to the experience whose content contributes to specify itself) and causation referring. The proposal shares both features with Searle's (1983) well-known account of the content of perceptual experiences, and thus it also shares its problems. But let me elaborate first on what in my view is its main advantage over Peacocke's, which can be summed up like this: in my view, that in virtue of which the experience is correct or incorrect (illusory or hallucinatory) is an intrinsic part of an experience (a part of its content), while in Peacocke's own proposal it is a mere extrinsic part.

To explain what I have in mind here, let me use an analogy. According to Kaplan's (1989) well-known theory of indexicals and demonstratives, their *character*, and by extension the character of sentences in which they appear, is a property of types; thus, any two utterances of 'I am hungry' have the same character. Now, consider a view according to which the only intrinsic or essential semantic property of an utterance is its character. On such a view, the truth-conditions of an utterance would not be an intrinsic semantic aspect of the utterance; two utterances of 'I am hungry', with the same character, might have different truth-values, and therefore different truth-conditions. The truth-conditions of an utterance would depend in part on its intrinsic semantic properties, but in part also on semantically extrinsic properties. Correspondingly, the fact that an utterance of 'I am hungry' entails that someone is hungry (whenever the truth-conditions of the utterance are satisfied, the proposition that someone is hungry is true) and therefore justifies the judgment that someone is hungry, would not be just a matter of the intrinsic semantic properties of the utterance, but, in part, a matter of extrinsic properties. Compare the situation on an alternative, token-reflexive view according to which indexical utterances have, as their only intrinsic semantic property, a token-reflexive meaning, so that, for an utterance of 'I am hungry' including a token of 'I', its content would be that the utterer of that token is hungry.<sup>15</sup> This view is, to that extent, in a position to count the truth-condition of the utterance as a purely intrinsic matter, and, likewise, the entailment by the utterance of the proposition that someone is hungry, and thus its suitability to justify a judgment of the latter proposition.

Consider now a subject who judges in the situation that someone is hungry, on the basis that someone has uttered in his presence 'I am hungry'. Suppose, for the sake of the analogy, that the only relevant piece of justification the subject has for his judgment is a rational intuition as to the intrinsic semantic properties of the utterance he has witnessed, in the under-

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<sup>15</sup> García-Carpintero (1998) develops and defends such a theory.

standing that a rational intuition is a conscious state which plays, in cases like this one, an epistemological role similar to the one of experiences vis-à-vis perceptual judgments on a “dogmatist” view like the one advanced by Pryor (2000), articulated by Burge’s (1993) *Acceptance Principle*. Under these assumptions, the Reichenbachian view is closer than the Kaplanian one to the epistemological internalism we are assuming.

The same contrast emerges when we compare Peacocke’s theory of the intrinsic semantic properties of perceptual experiences to the one advanced here, to the latter’s advantage. Consider someone in a situation like the one described in Peacocke’s example, but for the fact that the situation is not illusory: he is correctly seeing the position of the airplane. On Peacocke’s view, the experiences of both subjects have exactly the same content. Therefore, whether or not an experience is correct does not just depend on its semantic intrinsic properties, but on extrinsic properties in addition. Correspondingly, the fittingness of an experience to justify perceptual beliefs does not depend on its intrinsic semantic properties alone, but also on additional extrinsic facts. In the present proposal, and thanks to the sort of token-reflexive character that it ascribes to the content of experiences (the particular experience itself is self-referentially part of its content), the correctness-condition of an experience, and its suitability to justify corresponding perceptual beliefs, can be taken to be its intrinsic semantic properties.<sup>16</sup> This supports the present proposal, assuming the internalist epistemological stance we are taking for granted here. On internalist assumptions, the correctness-conditions of an experience, in virtue of which it is veridical or illusory, and in virtue of which it is apt to justify perceptual judgments, should be its main essential property.

I will conclude by discussing briefly the aforementioned objection to the present proposal, that it over-intellectualizes the content of experiences.<sup>17</sup> My defense depends crucially on my own way of understanding the conceptual/nonconceptual divide, outlined at the outset. It is not part of my view that full-fledged rational, adult human beings share states with nonconceptual content with infants and animals, in general. A paradigm case of those

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<sup>16</sup> I emphasize the ‘can’; I am only claiming here that the present view is in a better position than Peacocke’s to take the correctness-condition of the experience as intrinsic semantic properties. Much more is required to defend that they are, given the modal (essential) nature of intrinsicness. Epistemologically important issues on the vicinity of the disjunctivism-conjunctivism debate, which I cannot properly tackle here, lurk behind this.

<sup>17</sup> Burge (1991) and McDowell (1991) make objections like this to Searle’s (1983) analogous proposal. García-Carpintero (1999), in spite of several criticisms of Searle’s self-understanding of his own proposal, gives a reply on behalf of it, on which what follows elaborates.

states are those “primitive certainties” on the truth-preserving character of inferential transitions constituting the fundamental logical knowledge of a normal adult, like clear-cut instances of *modus ponens*. What makes those ‘states of *pre-judgmental awareness*’ nonconceptual, as I prefer to call them, is the fact that subjects enjoy them even if they lack the concepts needed to think about them and critically evaluate their justificatory standing. My claim is that the contents of the experiences of full-fledged rational beings are nonconceptual in that sense. Their contents should for that purpose be understood as having the token-reflexive character I have ascribed to them. (I am not concerned here with characterizing the contents of the experiences of animals or infants.)

A reason in favor of the present proposal is that it provides the best account of what Heck (2000) calls the ‘presentational’ aspect of experiences, the peculiar way in which their force possesses the mind-to-world direction of fit characteristic of judgments and assertions. Following Anscombe’s (1957) original introduction of the idea, the distinction between two directions of fit is usually made in an intuitive way. Comparing a list used by a man going shopping to the same list, used by a detective tailing the man and listing his purchases, Anscombe writes on what distinguishes the two lists: “It is precisely this: if the list and the things the man actually buys do not agree, and if this and this alone constitutes a *mistake*, then the mistake is not in the list but in the man’s performance [...] whereas if the detective’s record and what the man actually buys do not agree, then the mistake is in the record.” (Anscombe, 1957, p. 56.) Intuitively, states with the mind-to-world direction of fit like assertions and beliefs ought to be changed to fit the world, and not vice versa, while the world should be changed to fit states with the world-to-mind direction of fit, like requests and desires, not vice versa.

In general, the asymmetry cannot be correctly characterized further in causal or temporal terms, by saying, for instance, that the fact that the content of a desire is not realized in the world is not yet a failing in the desire, and not yet any reason to discard the desire. Because the same could be said about some beliefs: beliefs ordinarily have future contents, so that the fact that their content is not yet realized in the world is not a failing in the belief. In general, the most that can be said is, I think, something like this: in normatively ideal circumstances, the occurrence of a doxastic state depends on the occurrence of its content, but not the other way around, while the occurrence of a conative state depends on the occurrence of the conative state, but not the other way around. To further theoretically characterize the distinction, we should go deeper into the nature of the ontological dependence, something here out of the question. However, it is sensible to think that properly constituted cases of perceptual beliefs depend on the truth-

makers of their true propositional contents, in that they are caused by, and thus formed later than, those truth-makers. (Perhaps in correspondingly fundamental cases, properly constituted desires cause their fulfilled propositional contents and are thus formed earlier than them.) The present account of the contents of perceptual experiences captures this intuition, in the simplest possible way, and is therefore to that extent validated by it.

In order to do this, contents of perceptual experiences include on this view a reference to causation, and also of course to the two terms of this relation; it must therefore refer to the experience itself, and to some of its intrinsic properties. As a result, the present proposal is a version of a sense-datum theory of perception. Let me use a traditional simile in this context to make this tenet of the present view palatable. To understand linguistic utterances, subjects must not just be aware of their contents, but also of the linguistic vehicles that convey them; however, they are typically oblivious to the latter, because their attention is typically occupied only with the former. On the present view, in understanding perceptual experiences, subjects are not merely aware of an external situation, characterized in terms of observable properties; but also of the properties of the experience itself that are the meaning-vehicles in this case. Subjects are, however, typically unaware of the latter; this is what is nowadays called the “diaphanousness” of experiences in fact amounts to.<sup>18</sup> This does not contradict the present view; it is to be explained in analogous terms to the linguistic case, compounded with the fact that the relation between meaning-vehicle and content is in the perceptual case not conventional, as it is in the linguistic case, but iconic. Many theorists will of course reject this claim, distinctive of sense-datum theories. I have defended it elsewhere, also on the traditional basis that it provides an optimal account of the relation between veridical experiences, illusions and hallucinations.<sup>19</sup> Here I only need to show that it is a sensible account, to dispose of the present objection that the proposal over-intellectualizes the contents of experiences. We have intuitions that perceptual experiences have a “presentational” character, in that they present for us an objective, independently existing situation. We also have intuitions that there are important commonalities between illusions and hallucinations, on the one hand, and corresponding veridical experiences, on the other. On the present view, these sets of intuitions manifest what the proposal elaborated

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<sup>18</sup> I am aware that this understanding of the transparency of experiences is very controversial, for reasons analogous to those concerning the previous proposal about their intrinsic contents, see fn. 15; I lack the space to properly defend it here.

<sup>19</sup> See García-Carpintero (2002b).

here makes explicit, or conceptualizes: the nonconceptual contents of experiences of which we have a pre-judgmental awareness.

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