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### Sensuous Experience, Phenomenal Presence, and Perceptual Availability

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# Sensuous Experience, Phenomenal Presence, and Perceptual Availability

*Christopher Frey*

## Abstract

I argue that an experience's sensuous elements play an ineliminable role in our being intentionally directed upon an entity through perception. More specifically, I argue that whenever we appreciate a sensuous element in experience, we appreciate an intrinsic and irreducibly phenomenal aspect of experience that I call phenomenal presence – an aspect of experience that I show is central to its presentational character – and that the appreciation of phenomenal presence is necessary for perceptual intentionality. If an experience is to possess intentionality, the experience itself must make an entity available as an object of perceptually-based singular beliefs and the experiencing subject, by virtue of undergoing the experience, must in some sense be able to appreciate that it has done so. Phenomenal presence is necessary for perceptual intentionality because it plays an ineliminable role in making an entity available to its subject in this way.

**Keywords:** intentionality; presence; phenomenal character; acquaintance; transparency; singular belief

My goal in this essay is to argue that an experience's sensuous elements play an ineliminable role in one's being intentionally directed upon an entity through perception.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, I will argue that whenever one appreciates a sensuous element in experience, one appreciates an intrinsic and irreducibly phenomenal aspect of experience that I call *phenomenal presence* – an aspect of experience that I will show is central to its presentational character – and that the appreciation of phenomenal presence is necessary for perceptual intentionality.<sup>2</sup>

One of the principal tasks of the philosopher of perception is to understand perception's contribution from the viewpoint of the experiencing subject. We want to understand sensuous experience's role within the subject's perceptual life as it unfolds for her. Within this context, one of perception's primary functions is to afford its subject an opportunity to avail herself of the entities upon which her experiences are intentionally directed. To possess intentionality, a perceiver must be directed upon entities in a manner that makes them available, in a sense I will elaborate, as objects of attention, recognition, thought (especially singular, demonstratively-expressible judgments), and purposive

action. I will focus on one of these capacities, the capacity to form perceptually-based, singular beliefs. Experience not only prompts or disposes us to form singular beliefs but introduces novel entities into our cognitive purview by making them available as the objects of immediate demonstration.<sup>3</sup> If an experience is to possess intentionality, the experience itself must make an entity available to its subject and the experiencing subject, by virtue of undergoing the experience, must in some sense be able to appreciate that it has done so.

I will develop this notion of perceptual availability by showing how three movements in the philosophy of perception attempt (and ultimately fail) to accommodate it: (i) dual-component accounts of perception (§1), (ii) accounts that appeal to phenomenal concepts (§2), and (iii) accounts that employ descendants of the Russellian notion of acquaintance (§4). I will then introduce *phenomenal presence* and show that it plays an ineliminable role in making an entity available through perception (§5). One consequence of this argument is that any account of perceptual intentionality that neglects the phenomenality of experience is seriously inadequate.

## 1 Dual-Component Accounts

As its name suggests, the *dual-component* (or *dual-aspect*) account of perception maintains that a perceptual experience comprises two components: (i) a phenomenal, nonconceptual component, and (ii) the exercise of a cognitive, conceptual capacity by virtue of which the subject represents aspects of her physical surroundings. The first component determines an experience's phenomenal character and it can play a role in fixing the references of one's perceptually-based beliefs. But perceptual *intentionality* essentially involves the conscious representation of an entity *as* an exemplar or instance of some general property, relation, kind, or category. And for the phenomenal appreciation of an experience's sensuous elements to be representational in this way requires the exercise of an appropriate conceptual capacity. So, on this view, perception's phenomenal component plays no positive role in one's *being* intentionally directed upon an entity; perceptual intentionality consists entirely in the other-directedness of the conception or 'perceptual taking' that is the actualization of perception's second, conceptual component.<sup>4</sup>

Its pessimism about the viability of a non-conceptual account of perceptual intentionality places dual-component accounts of perception in direct opposition with most naturalist accounts of intentionality. But both camps are equally committed to the idea that sensuous experience's role in perception is merely causal.<sup>5</sup> Sellars asserts that a perceptual taking is a 'conceptual *response* to a *stimulus*' and that 'having sensations is having *causes of* judgments, not *reasons for* judgments'.<sup>6</sup> Davidson reaches the same conclusion.

What then is the relation [between a sensation and a belief]? The answer I think is obvious: the relation is causal. Sensations cause some beliefs and in this sense are the basis or ground of those beliefs. But a causal explanation of belief does not show how or why the belief is justified. (Davidson, 1986, p. 311)

Sensuous experience is typically involved in perception's etiology and the sensuous manifold one appreciates in these experiences serves to distinguish perception from the non-sensuous thoughts it occasions. But these sensuous elements neither determine nor constitute perception's intentional directedness and the appreciation of such elements plays no positive epistemic role in the formation of our immediate perceptual beliefs.

Dual-component accounts are therefore just as open to the absence of sensuous experience as are their naturalist rivals. Sensuous experience accompanies or occasions *our* intentional perceptual states, but this causal relationship is contingent. A non-sensuous causal intermediary could serve just as well in our coming to be perceptually directed upon the world. Reid, an early proponent of the dual-component account, recognizes this consequence explicitly when he says '[f]or anything we know, we might perhaps have been so made as to perceive external objects, without any [...] of those sensations which invariably accompany perception in our present frame' (Reid, 1785[1863], II.20). Though sensuous experience is actually a component of human perception, a philosophical analysis of perceptual intentionality need not advert to it.

To see where the dual-component account goes awry, it is useful to focus on one of its central pillars, namely, the claim that to perceive an entity is in part to perceive it as being some way or as being of a particular type and that this involves the employment of recognitional or classificatory conceptual capacities. These concepts cannot be entirely general. Singular reference has to underlie and mediate exhaustively descriptive representations of particular entities.<sup>7</sup> So the dual-component theory must appeal to recognitional/classificatory conceptual capacities that possess a singular demonstrative element, say, the concept 'that shape'. These concepts single out (or purport to single out) particular entities thereby enabling the deployment of general classificatory concepts, say, the monadic concept 'red' or the relational concept 'lighter than'.

But recognitional conceptual capacities are essentially dispositional. To possess such a concept is to be disposed to respond selectively to what is antecedently in one's cognitive purview. In perception, it is experience that makes particular entities available as potential objects of singular belief. So if experience is to execute this role, if it is to provide the materials upon which our conceptual capacities are exercised, it must itself be directed upon entities in a manner that is distinct from, and explanatorily prior to, the form of directedness involved in our singular perceptual beliefs.<sup>8</sup> As John Campbell notes,

We are not to take the intentional character of experience as a given; rather, experience of objects has to be what explains our ability to think about objects. This means that we cannot view experience of objects as a way of grasping thoughts about objects. Experience of objects has to be something more primitive than the ability to think about objects, in terms of which the ability to think about objects can be explained. [...] For experience to have its explanatory role, it must be prior to, and not require, demonstrative thoughts. (Campbell, 2002, p. 136)<sup>9</sup>

The non-conceptual component of experience, or at least a component of experience that does not involve the exercise of conceptual capacities for singular reference, must play a distinctive role in making particular entities available as the objects of perceptual demonstration.<sup>10</sup>

## 2 Phenomenal Concepts

There are several ways to provide a larger role for experience's sensuous elements in one's coming to be directed upon an entity. For example, one can hold that the concepts we employ in perceptual beliefs are *phenomenal concepts*. Most philosophers who invoke phenomenal concepts think they apply primarily to experiences. Phenomenal concepts enable demonstrative-like recognition and reidentification of experiential types on the basis of first-person phenomenological reflection; they have the form 'that kind [of experience]'. The sensuous features of experience, *qua* sensuous, partly individuate (or are constituent parts of, or are somehow 'quoted' by) these concepts.<sup>11</sup>

But phenomenological reflection in general, and the appreciation of an experience's sensuous elements in particular, are metaphysically neutral. An experience's sensuous elements may be, as far as their phenomenality is concerned, either instantiated by an experiential state, instantiated by an objective, mind-independent entity, or instantiated by an internal, mind-dependent entity. Freed from its restricted application, the introduction of phenomenal concepts allows one to accommodate the intuition that the sensuous elements we appreciate in experience are tightly connected to the qualities our immediate perceptual beliefs attribute to perceived entities, regardless of the metaphysical category to which these perceived entities belong. Experience's sensuous elements, *qua* sensuous, partly individuate the recognitional/classificatory concepts we employ in our immediate, first-order perceptual beliefs.<sup>12</sup>

But even if one grants experiences' sensuous elements this additional significance, doing so will not make them essential to perceptual availability. For the introduction of phenomenal concepts does not preclude one from holding a naturalist or dual-component account of perception. One can maintain that the

references [of phenomenal concepts] are determined solely by the causal and dispositional relations an individual has to her internal states that are

effected by an introspective ‘pointing in’; that is, by the fact that she’s in causal contact with a certain property and is disposed to reidentify it on subsequent occasions. (Levin, 2007, p. 89)

So an experience’s sensuous elements may partly individuate some of the concepts that figure in our perceptual beliefs, but when it comes to explaining how experience facilitates singular thought about the objects that fall under these phenomenal concepts, the sensuousness of experience is otiose. For,

any theory that makes the semantic powers of phenomenal concepts a matter of their conceptual role, or their informational links to the external world, or any other facet of their causal-historical workings [...] will make it incidental to the referential powers of phenomenal concepts that they have the same phenomenology as their referents. Any such theory leaves it open that some other state, with a different or no phenomenology, could have the same causal-historical features and thus refer to experiences for the same reason that phenomenal concepts do. [...] Phenomenal concepts do indeed refer because of their cognitive function, not because of their phenomenology, and therefore other states with a different or no phenomenology, but with the same cognitive function, would refer to the same experiences for the same reasons. (Papineau, 2007, p. 125)

On this view, the sensuousness of experience is epiphenomenal to the causal/functional information-processing that both occasions and fixes the reference of our singular perceptual beliefs. Consequently, one can hold constant an experience’s sensuous features while varying the properties that one’s phenomenal concepts represent things as having (by varying the experience’s causal/functional ancestry) and two ‘qualia-inverted’ individuals can have distinct phenomenal concepts that nevertheless represent things as having the same property (if the experiences have the same causal/functional ancestry).

### 3 Three Questions

Our discussion has so far touched on three questions that we must be careful to distinguish.

- (Q1) In virtue of what does experience fix the reference of the singular elements of one’s perceptual beliefs?
- (Q2) In virtue of what does experience make *this* particular entity rather than another available to a perceiver?
- (Q3) In virtue of what does experience make *an* entity available to a perceiver?

The account I have provided on behalf of dual-component and naturalist theories of perception provides an answer to (Q1). Our experiences register information about particular entities and our perceptual beliefs are systematically dependent on the (in principle non-sensuous) informational properties of these states. It is an experience's causal/functional ancestry that grounds its informational properties and thereby fixes the reference of the singular beliefs the experience occasions. This answer is then brought to bear on the remaining pair of questions. To make a particular entity *available* to a perceiver just is, on this view, to occasion a belief that refers singularly to *that* entity and not another. And if experience can make particular entities available, then it clearly satisfies the weaker requirement, in (Q3), of making *an* entity available. If correct, all three questions can be answered without an appeal to the sensuousness of experience.

But these responses embody a confusion about the present task. We are not trying to answer (Q2). The class of facts about one's perceptual situation that determine *which* entity one is directed upon when one is in an intentional state is broader than, and perhaps need not even contain, those facts that determine *whether* one is intentionally directed upon an entity in perception at all. And accounts of experience's role in fixing reference that would satisfy (Q1) shed no light on the notion of perceptual availability at issue. Perhaps an experience, in order to make an entity available, must meet those conditions that would determine the singular references of the perceptual beliefs it occasions. But to know what determines which entities an experience makes available to a perceiver brings us no closer to understanding this availability itself. In particular, it brings us no closer to understanding perception's contribution from the viewpoint of the experiencing subject – how a subject, by virtue of undergoing an experience, is in a position to recognize or appreciate that she is directed upon an entity that is available as an object of cognition (broadly construed). (Q3) must be answered independently.

#### 4 Acquaintance

Those who recognize that the extrinsic relationships that fix the reference of one's singular perceptual beliefs are, in the present context, explanatorily unavailing commonly advert to something like the Russellian notion of *acquaintance* in order to explain experience's role in making entities available to their subjects. 'I am *acquainted* with an object', says Russell, 'when I have a direct cognitive relation to that object, *i.e.*, when I am directly aware of the object itself' (Russell, 1910, p. 108). For Russell, acquaintance is a primitive, *sui generis* relation that provides direct, infallible, non-propositional, and non-perspectival knowledge about (for the most part) particular entities. Fortunately, we can prescind from many of Russell's controversial epistemological commitments. For our purposes, acquaintance is simply a relation between an individual subject and an entity that (i) affords the subject direct,

non-conceptual, cognitive access to the entity and (ii) requires that the entity actually exists.<sup>13</sup> The two clauses are not independent. The entity one is acquainted with in experience must exist because it is somehow an essential constituent of the experience whenever the relation obtains and acquaintance could not establish a cognitive connection with an entity, it could not make an entity available to its subject, without this ontological connection.<sup>14</sup>

As it stands, the core notions in this characterization of acquaintance are susceptible to naturalistic analyses that do not advert to experience's sensuous features. There are numerous accounts of how an experience can occasion a belief that contains *entity-dependent* singular elements and there is no *a priori* argument that the ontological connection that obtains in such cases cannot be explained in exhaustively causal/functional terms.<sup>15</sup> But in the end, whether or not a causal/functional analysis of acquaintance is achievable is of little consequence. For neither entity-dependence, nor any notion of ontological constitution or inclusion (be it physically explicable or metaphysically primitive) that underlies it, guarantees the kind of connection to an entity that acquaintance purports to provide. The metaphysical notions of ontological constitution and entity-dependence have the same basic shape as the metaphors of 'intimacy' and 'brute contact' that surround appeals to acquaintance. But this surface similarity does not make the former apt to explain the latter. Ontological intimacy does not entail cognitive intimacy. Ontological constitution has existential consequences, but it does not by itself entail anything about experience's cognitive significance. An experience's (meta)physical status and the countless entity-involving relations in which it may stand cannot explain its role in making an entity available to a perceiver.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps it is best to view this ontological intimacy as merely a necessary condition for perceptual availability. Indeed, we may stand in numerous relations that are entity-dependent in the same way that acquaintance is, but no one argues that entity-dependence, in general and in and of itself, makes that to which we are so related available to us. But acquaintance, by design, cannot fill out what would make it sufficient for availability. Its positive characterization is exhausted by its sole essential function. Consequently, the invocation of acquaintance in one's explanation of experience's role in making entities available to us is no better than the invocation of a *virtus dormitiva*. That is, appeals to acquaintance provide the most unsatisfying answer to our guiding question: experience makes an entity available to a perceiver because experience acquaints her with the entity, i.e., because it affords her direct cognitive access to the entity.

## 5 Phenomenal Presence

We have not, however, exhausted the possible responses to our guiding question. The key to an appropriate answer, I will argue, is to be found in the

notion of *presence in experience*. The appeal to presentation, in one form or another, is commonplace in discussions of perceptual availability. J. J. Valberg, for example, provides the following definition: ‘By “an object of experience” we shall mean something *present* in experience.’ He then goes on to claim that ‘the fact of an object’s presence is what makes the object available for us [... and] creates the possibility of demonstrative reference’ (Valberg, 1992, pp. 4 and 6–7). But we must move beyond mere postulation.

Experiential presentation may initially appear to be a dead-end. For many philosophers, including Russell, maintain that presence is acquaintance’s converse. After Russell defines acquaintance as a ‘direct cognitive relation to [an] object’, he says,

When I speak of a cognitive relation here, I do not mean the sort of relation which constitutes judgment, but the sort which constitutes presentation. In fact, I think the relation of subject and object which I call acquaintance is simply the converse of the relation of object and subject which constitutes presentation. That is, to say that S has acquaintance with O is essentially the same thing as to say that O is presented to S. (Russell, 1910, p. 108)<sup>17</sup>

If correct, the appeal to presence is no advance.

We find a serviceable notion of presence, I contend, once we focus on experience’s presentational character and on a phenomenon which I claim is central to it, namely, *phenomenal presence*.<sup>18</sup>

When one undergoes a sensuous experience one appreciates an element *as other* or *as before* one; one appreciates a manifest opposition between *the self* – that before which the other is present – and *the other* – that which is present before the self. Phenomenal presence – this experiential nexus of *self* and *other* – is the manifestation of sensuous experience’s basic and intrinsic phenomenal structure. Sensuous experiences are phenomenally articulate unities and to appreciate something as other is to appreciate its invariant position within this bipartite, phenomenal articulation.

This structure grounds the transparency or diaphanousness of experience. The sensuous elements that one phenomenally appreciates in an experience are always appreciated as other. It also grounds transparency’s converse, the elusiveness of the self. The sensuous elements that one phenomenally appreciates in an experience are never appreciated as being, being instantiated in, or being about the self *qua* experiential subject (or a state/mode thereof). For to be sensuous is, in part, to be appreciated as other, and to be appreciated as other is to occupy a particular position within experience’s phenomenal articulation. The phenomenal self cannot occupy this position, it cannot be sensuous and before one, without ceasing to be what it is, without ceasing to occupy its own position within experience’s phenomenal articulation. In this way, *self* and *other* are phenomenal categories that capture sensuous experience’s

phenomenal structure in a manner analogous to the way in which, for Frege, the logical categories *object* and *concept* capture thought's logical structure.

The basic other-directedness that phenomenal presence realizes, though itself non-sensuous, is nevertheless phenomenally appreciable. To focus on the other in experience is, *ipso actu*, to appreciate its position with respect to our phenomenal selves. So the phenomenal appreciation of sensuous elements in experience will always involve an appreciation of phenomenal presence and will thereby always involve an appreciation of sensuous experience's intrinsic other-directedness.

I will argue that phenomenal presence is central to perceptual intentionality by showing how it satisfies three constraints on an acceptable account of perceptual availability that our discussion has so far revealed.

- (A1) Perceptual intentionality (and the availability it affords) is both distinct from, and a prerequisite for, singular perceptual belief.

Our singular perceptual beliefs are directed upon particular entities. I have argued that the exercises of the conceptual capacities that figure in our perceptual beliefs cannot secure their own objects.<sup>19</sup> It is experience that brings particular entities into our cognitive purview making them available as objects of singular reference. And if experience is to provide that upon which our conceptual capacities are exercised, then experience itself must manifest a form of directedness that is distinct from, and explanatorily prior to, the form of directedness involved in our perceptual beliefs.

This priority is an explicit feature of acquaintance. For '[k]nowledge of things, when it is of the kind we call knowledge by *acquaintance*, is essentially simpler than any knowledge of truths, and logically independent of knowledge of truths' (Russell, 1912, p. 46). In contrast, the presence of a sensuous element in experience does not by itself furnish *knowledge* of any kind. But it does embody a basic form of intentional directedness. This distinctive sort of intentionality is pre-reflective. To appreciate something as other requires neither the possession nor the exercise of recognitional/classificatory conceptual capacities. So the form of intentional directedness that phenomenal presence realizes is distinct from the form of intentionality that the exercises of our conceptual capacities effect. This does not on its own show that phenomenal presence is central to perceptual availability or is a prerequisite for singular perceptual belief. But insofar as phenomenal presence does not presuppose the sort of directedness that it is meant to explain, it is not prohibited from occupying this explanatory position.

- (A2) It is experience itself that makes an entity available to its subject and the experiencing subject, by virtue of undergoing the experience, must be able to appreciate that it has done so.

When a suitably sophisticated individual undergoes an experience, she can deploy successfully the concepts *experience*, *sensuous*, *present*, *experiential subject*, *intentional object*, *singular directedness*, etc. Some philosophers maintain that only individuals with this extensive conceptual repertoire can appreciate the directedness of experience as such. For example, Burge claims that ‘we can identify the directedness in experience’ but

being *aware* of – and even more, being able to *identify* – the singularity and outerness of singular intentionality *as such* requires tracking abilities and certain relatively sophisticated concepts of objectivity, as well as certain perceptual and conceptual abilities that connect one to purported types. (Burge, 2003, pp. 440 and 441)<sup>20</sup>

But experiential intentionality and the availability this directedness affords cannot consist in these conceptualized modes of attention. If one is to conceptually discern and thereby attend to the intentionality of experience as such, experience itself must somehow make its very other-directedness available as an object of one’s conceptual activities.

Phenomenal presence can satisfy this constraint. First, phenomenally conscious states are necessarily states of an individual subject; phenomenal consciousness is consciousness for an individual. And if an individual is phenomenally conscious (in an intransitive sense), then there are necessarily elements in the conscious state that the individual phenomenally appreciates. These elements are *conscious to/for* the experiencing subject *qua* individual. In the case of experience’s sensuous elements, these elements are *presented to*, or *present for*, an individual.<sup>21</sup>

Second, the form of directedness that phenomenal presence realizes is itself phenomenally appreciable. When we judge that something is the case, the judgment’s logical structure is not itself an object of judgment. But when we appreciate a sensuous element in experience we appreciate it as other, we appreciate its invariant (op)position with respect to our phenomenal selves. The intrinsic and universal orientation of sensuous experience is not appreciable in the same way that an experience’s sensuous elements are. But phenomenal appreciation’s scope is not limited to experience’s sensuous elements and sensuous experience’s non-sensuous phenomenal structure, viz. phenomenal presence, is itself phenomenally manifest.

Third, the appreciation of phenomenal presence, like the appreciation of an experience’s sensuous elements, is pre-reflective. So if the availability that presence-based intentionality affords is inherent to the phenomenality of presence itself (which still remains to be argued), then the subject of a sensuous experience will be in a position to appreciate this availability simply by virtue of undergoing the experience.

- (A3) An account of perceptual availability does not concern the entities that experience makes available but the nature of the connection, broadly construed, between individual subject and entity that is inherent to experience.

Both dual-component theorists and naturalists maintain that perceptual availability is ultimately a semantic phenomenon. A particular entity is available to an experiencing subject because the experience's causal/functional ancestry determines that entity to be the singular reference of the subject's perceptual beliefs. But I have argued that we must distinguish questions that concern the entities we are directed upon in experience from questions that concern the subjective availability of these entities. We must not mistake an explanation of that which makes a particular instance of sensuous blue (rather than another) the entity one appreciates with an explanation of 'that which makes the [appreciation] of blue a mental fact' (Moore, 1903, p. 20).

Accounts that center on acquaintance may appear better positioned to illuminate perceptual availability. According to these accounts, an experiencing subject appreciates a particular entity only if that entity is a constituent of the experience. The ontological inclusion of the entity in the experience is in part what explains the entity's availability to the subject's cognitive powers. But again, I have argued that this approach fares no better than its causal/functional rivals. For though 'acquaintance' refers to the connection that obtains between individual subjects and particular entities in experience, this relation's significance is exhausted by facts about its 'objective' relatum. And the metaphysical position of an entity vis-à-vis an individual subject cannot by itself explain how experience makes the entity available to the individual as an object.

The difficulties that attend these approaches have a common root. Whether construed physically, semantically, or metaphysically, these accounts ground perceptual availability in a form of directedness that is fundamentally *relational* in nature. And all such accounts give explanatory pride of place to intentional objects and the relations we stand in toward them. But perceptual availability must issue from experience itself, not the entities that experience makes available.

Phenomenal presence is suited perfectly to avoid these difficulties. For phenomenal presence *is not a relation*. It is neither a two-place relation – *y is present to z* – nor a three-place relation – *experience z presents y to z* – where *y* and *z* pick out members of distinct kinds, experienced entities and experiential subjects respectively. A subject may in fact stand in numerous relations to the entities she appreciates in her sensuous experiences. But the form of intentionality that phenomenal presence realizes does not *constitutively* involve *any* relations.

It might be helpful to compare phenomenal presence with another non-relational construal of experience: the *adverbial* theory.<sup>22</sup> According to the adverbial theory, to appreciate, say, an instance of blue in an experience is not to

stand in a relation to blue; rather, it is to experience in a particular way, namely, *bluely*. The sensuous elements one appreciates in an experience are not entities one is purportedly related to but modifications of the activity or state of experiencing.

Though typically applied to experience's sensuous elements, the form of directedness that is involved in the appreciation of such elements can itself receive an adverbial interpretation. If we interpret phenomenal presence adverbially, experience's sensuous elements drop out – whenever one appreciates a sensuous element in experience one experiences in a particular way, namely, *presentationally*.<sup>23</sup> Experiencing presentationally, like experiencing bluely, is non-relational. Consequently, the former shares the latter's existential neutrality – no relatum need exist. But the existential neutrality of experiencing presentationally is even stronger than that of experiencing bluely. One need not even advert to sensuous modifications of the act or state of experiencing in order to fully characterize its nature.<sup>24</sup>

Though suggestive, I do not endorse an adverbial interpretation of phenomenal presence. Adverbs are typically taken to denote one-place properties and phenomenal presence can be considered a property of experience only in a strained sense. Sensuous experiences are phenomenally articulate unities and phenomenal presence is the manifestation of this basic phenomenal structure. So experiencing presentationally, that is, undergoing an experience in which one appreciates phenomenal presence, is akin to expressing a sentence grammatically or making a judgment logically. If these structures or forms were properties, they would have no contrast classes. In particular, one *cannot* appreciate a sensuous element in experience without it being present as other.<sup>25</sup> I'm inclined to think, in a Tractarian spirit, that even these expressions are problematic – the issue is not that 'non-presentational experience' is empty, it is rather that the very attempt to divide experiences into mutually exclusive classes on the basis of phenomenal presence is somehow confused. These issues, however, are difficult and would lead us far afield. For present purposes, we can proceed with the common core of our preferred interpretation and the adverbial theory: the form of intentionality that phenomenal presence realizes is non-relational, existentially neutral, and is intrinsic to sensuous experience.

Phenomenal presence's metaphysical and existential neutrality allows it to be manifest equally in both veridical and hallucinatory experiences. The form of directedness it realizes does not require the posit of uninstantiated universals, Meinongian entities, or merely intentional objects. The availability that presence-based intentionality affords is inherent to the phenomenality of presence itself.<sup>26</sup>

Though sensuous experience always involves the appreciation of one or more entities, viz. the sensuous elements one appreciates as other, the appreciation of phenomenal presence itself is not an appreciation of an entity but rather an appreciation of one's *being directed upon* an entity. What one appreciates

when one appreciates phenomenal presence is other-directedness in a pure and isolated form.

The appreciation of phenomenal presence is what allows us to transcend our cognitive isolation; it is what enables us to transition from mere *relatedness* to *directedness*. And perceptual availability consists in this difference. Without an appreciation of experience's manifest other-directedness, one would not be in a position to accept, to take advantage of, the various entities one is directed upon in experience *as objects*.

Of course, what determines which particular entity, if any, one is directed upon on a given experiential occasion requires another story. And the causal/functional considerations we have discussed will likely play an important role in this story. But an account of how our experiences *come to be* directed upon a particular entity is not an account of *what it is* for an experience to be directed upon a particular entity, nor is the latter an account of what it is for an experience to be directed in a way that would make an entity available to an individual subject.

This argument does not undermine the notion of unconscious perceptual states. There are unconscious states that qualify as cases of perception by the standards of empirical psychology and I am not in a position to object to this classificatory practice. But it does undermine attributions of perceptual intentionality to these states. Without phenomenal presence, perception is incapable of making entities available to an individual subject and without this availability, perception is intentional in name only.

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### Notes

- 1 I would like to thank the audiences at Furman University, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and the members of my graduate seminar on the philosophy of perception at the University of Chicago for their helpful comments. I would also like to thank Endre Begby, Chris Hill, Uriah Kriegel, John McDowell, Karl Schafer, and Anil Gupta for discussions that have significantly improved this paper.
- 2 Terminological clarifications are already in order: (i) Appreciation or, more properly, phenomenal appreciation, does not presuppose any particular account of how one comes to be aware of an experience's sensuous elements. It places no demand on its subject beyond that of undergoing a relevant experience. To undergo an experience in which a sensuous element is present *is* to appreciate phenomenally that sensuous element. (ii) The *sensuous* elements in an experience are the most salient class of an experience's phenomenally appreciable elements. This class is typically introduced by an enumeration of paradigmatic instances, say, the way the redness of a Red Delicious apple looks when one sees it or the way middle C sounds when one hears it being played on a Bösendorfer piano. (iii) It is important to note that the sensuous and the phenomenally appreciable need not be coextensive. We can, I will argue, phenomenally appreciate more than an experience's sensuous elements; an experience's total phenomenal character contains more than its sensuous phenomenal character.

- 3 (i) Here and throughout, I associate singular, perceptual reference with demonstrative reference. This move is not universally accepted (cf. Papineau 2007, 113–14). It is, however, convenient to make the assimilation and doing so does not bear any significant argumentative weight. (ii) The following argument does not depend upon the cognitive nature of singular, perceptual thought. Perhaps we need to possess several conceptual capacities to have singular thoughts involving demonstrative reference to particulars. Our present concern is the role perceptual experience plays in making entities available for singular thought, not the conditions for singular thought itself.
- 4 The expression ‘perceptual taking’ is Sellars’ preferred phrase for perception’s conceptual component. Thomas Reid, an early proponent of the dual-component account, maintains that perception’s conceptual component takes the form of a belief. Sellars sometimes contrasts perceptual taking with belief (e.g., at Sellars, 1981, p. 89 n.11). But he consistently treats such perceptual takings as being both ‘propositional’ and ‘doxastic’ (ibid. and Sellars, 1982, p. 101; cf. Chisholm, 1957, pp. 75–80, 84–90).
- 5 Naturalist accounts identify intentionality with a physically respectable relation, typically some form of tracking relation, that holds between one’s token brain states and the entities toward which one is intentionally directed. Roughly, if one stands in the appropriate tracking relation to an entity and thereby registers information about that entity in a way that makes it available for the control and guidance of behavior, then one is intentionally directed upon, one perceives, that entity. Within this naturalist program, sensuous experience’s role is not to ground perceptual intentionality but to serve as a causal intermediary between perception and various cognitive activities. To undergo an experience in which something is phenomenally appreciable is simply to acquire a (possibly suppressed) disposition to form immediate, i.e., non-inferential, beliefs about the intentional objects of one’s perceptual states and, perhaps, to acquire various recognitional and imaginative capacities as well. Moreover, the warrant conferred to one’s perceptual beliefs does not depend upon any operation on the sensuous aspects of one’s experiences but rather upon the reliability of the belief-yielding, causal process in which these experiences figure.
- 6 Sellars, 1981, p. 89 n.11 and Sellars, 1954, p. 205. Elsewhere, Sellars says that ‘the direct perception of physical objects is mediated by the occurrence of sense impressions which are, in themselves, thoroughly non-cognitive. Furthermore, this mediation is causal rather than epistemic’ (Sellars, 1963, pp. 90–91).
- 7 Though I disagree with several of the conditions Strawson places on singular reference, I consider his argument for the priority of singular reference over general (descriptive) reference to be persuasive (Strawson, 2006, Ch. 1 and pp. 114–17).
- 8 A. D. Smith arrives at the same conclusion: ‘the dual-component account [...] is incoherent because it presupposes that a this-thinking has an object, while making the occurrence of that very thinking constitutive of the awareness of the object that itself alone gives cognitive access to the object [...] For a perceptual this-thought to succeed referentially, *our senses themselves must provide an object*’ (Smith, 2002, p. 85; cf. p. 114).
- 9 Later, Campbell expresses this point in terms of perceptual availability: ‘So experience of the object should not be regarded as consisting in grasping a thought about the object, “in the mode: vision”, as we might say. Rather, consciousness of the object has to be a more primitive state than thought about the object, which makes thought about the object possible by revealing the object to you’ (ibid., p. 143; cf. Coates, 2007, p. 55, and Peacocke, 2001).

- 10 The rider in this sentence is intended to leave room for those views according to which conceptual capacities are operative in our coming to be directed upon entities in experience but are so in a way that is quite different from the way they operate in singular, discursive judgments. For example, McDowell (2008) maintains that perceptual experience possesses an intuitional content that is importantly different from the contents of discursive judgments. The arguments that follow do not undermine this attenuated sense in which concepts and content may figure in experience's phenomenal component.
- 11 Notable discussions of phenomenal concepts include Loar, 1990; Block, 2002 (an example of the partial constitution view); Papineau, 2002 (an example of the quotational view); Tye, 2003; Chalmers, 2003; Stoljar, 2005, and many of the articles in Alter and Walter, 2007.
- 12 Block endorses something like this when he states that we have, in addition to a phenomenal concept of the experience of red, a phenomenal concept of the color red (Block, 2007, p. 252). The present proposal is even more neutral in that it is prior to any distinction between experience and the objects of experience. Burge comes closer when he claims that, 'associated with the intentional content of typical perceptual judgments is a phenomenal element that is part of, or at least necessary to, the content – inseparable from the way of thinking, or mode of presentation, of the perceived entities. A normal visual judgment about a visually presented red surface would have a different content – or would be a different visual judgment – if the phenomenal aspect associated with the judgment were relevantly different (though the different visual judgment might still represent a red surface)' (Burge, 1997, p. 384; cf. Tye, 2000, p. 49; Lycan, 2001, p. 32, and Fish, 2009, pp. 10–15).
- 13 These two clauses are expressed well in Coates' characterization of acquaintance: (i) What 'grounds the claim that a particular object is seen [is s]ome form of intrinsic (and non-causal) connection which links the subject's experience [...] with the perceived entity, in a manner that is metaphysically necessary, such that the existence of the former is dependent on the existence of the latter' (ii) 'The Direct Realist is therefore committed to the idea of some unique relation of acquaintance between mind and world [...] The claim is that the object perceived is intrinsically related to the perceptual experience, and is immediately present to phenomenal consciousness, so that the subject becomes aware of it' (Coates, 2007, pp. 75 and 86).
- 14 (i) On the present construal, acquaintance is what Timothy Williamson calls a *primo* psychological relation (Williamson, 2000, Ch. 3). When acquaintance obtains, the 'objective' relatum is an ineliminable participant in this non-composite psychological fact. (ii) This characterization of acquaintance covers a wide variety of relations. For example, McDowell insists that 'we *can* make sense of the idea of direct perceptual access to objective facts about the environment' where 'direct perceptual access' picks out a relation that, were it to obtain, would make 'an environmental fact directly available to one' in a manner that guarantees the existence of the entities that figure in the environmental fact (McDowell, 2006, p. 228). Though this notion of direct access relates us to facts and involves the exercise of conceptual capacities, it satisfies our characterization of acquaintance in all other respects. The irreducibly experiential relation of 'experiential taking' invoked by so-called *primitivists* also counts as an acquaintance relation (cf. Chalmers, 2004, and Pautz, 2010).
- 15 For example, if an experience's sensuous elements are features of the experience itself, then what it is for a singularly-directed phenomenal concept to contain the particular entity it represents may consist in the physical inclusion of the represented entity within the token brain-state that implements the representation.

- 16 (i) Scott Sturgeon makes a similar claim about the invocation of entity-dependence in explanations of experience's presentational character (what he calls the 'scene-immediacy' of experience) (Sturgeon, 2000, pp. 12–15; cf. Levine, 2007, pp. 162–3). (ii) If one restricts the class of entities to which one can be acquainted to sense-data (where sense-data are entities whose essence is constituted entirely by the way they appear to a subject), then one might be able to derive availability from entity-dependence. This is, in the context of the present inquiry, a desperate move.
- 17 Cf. Valberg, 1992, pp. 4–5. Much of Russell's discussion of acquaintance is inspired by the notion of presentation that occurs in the work of his teacher, James Ward (Ward, 1886).
- 18 The following discussion of phenomenal presence is quite abbreviated. For a more thorough account, see Frey, 2013.
- 19 But see fn. 10 for an important qualification on the precise sense in which perceptual availability must be non-conceptual.
- 20 To be fair, Burge does make the following concession: 'Perhaps there is another sense of phenomenal awareness of the singularity that would not require conceptual identification of that feature. Perhaps insofar as a singular usage involves consciousness, one might allow a phenomenal awareness of the singularity, even though one is not conceptually and identificationally aware of it' (2003, p. 449 fn.7). Note, however, that the appeal to 'singular usage' reflects Burge's contention that singular intentionality resides in the *application* of concepts, i.e., in the exercise of conceptual capacities for singular reference.
- 21 For Russell, acquaintance is essentially tied to phenomenal consciousness. But this isn't necessary. Given our characterization, it is possible for one to be acquainted with an entity in experience (it is possible for a particular entity to be an essential constituent of the experience) without that entity being phenomenally appreciable (cf. Fish, 2009, pp. 16–17, and Chalmers' distinction between disjunctivism about phenomenology and disjunctivism about metaphysics at Chalmers, 2006, p. 53 fn.1).
- 22 The *loci classici* of the adverbial theory are Ducasse, 1942, and Chisholm, 1957.
- 23 This would allow one to sidestep many of the objections leveled against adverbial accounts of experience's sensuous elements, for example, that adverbial formulations lack the compositionality of relational formulations and consequently cannot preserve the inferences one is able to draw from the latter (cf. Jackson, 1977).
- 24 Sensuousness may be necessary for presence. After all, it is an experience's sensuous elements that one appreciates as other. But these elements are not constitutive of presence. The directedness of sensuous appreciation is itself phenomenally appreciable but is nevertheless exhaustively non-sensuous.
- 25 Nor can one express a sentence ungrammatically or make a judgment illogically. Putative counter-examples are sentences and thoughts in name only.
- 26 A similar view is put forward by Loar (2003, p. 85): 'object-directedness is a non-relational feature that the hallucination shares with the veridical lemon sighting.' It would lead us too far afield to give an exhaustive account of illusion, hallucination, and the various ways in which philosophers attempt to accommodate these phenomena, e.g., disjunctivism, in this essay. Phenomenal presence is manifest in both veridical and hallucinatory experiences. Hence the form of intentionality it realizes and the availability it affords are also present in both veridical and hallucinatory experiences. This does not entail that phenomenal presence is nothing more than apparent presence. Nor does it entail anything about the metaphysics of either phenomenon beyond their manifesting phenomenal presence. But again, to overcome the difficulties that arise in this area would require a thorough inquiry into the nature of intentional objects and I leave that task for another occasion.

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