

A priori seminar, 2018.11.20

**Attending:** Indrek, Giovanni, Peter, Philip, Sonia, Jose, Xintong, Moritz, Claire, Giacomo

**Presenting:** Claire

**Reading:** Chudnoff, *Intuition* Chapter 3

### **Basic/non-basic distinction of perceptual seeming**

People wonder about how exactly the distinction between basic and non-basic perceptual seemings is drawn.

**Giacomo** suggests that non-basic perceptual seeming is one that doesn't have presentational phenomenology.

**Jonathan** points out that Chudnoff's account of perception is so phenomenology-focused in the sense that the both conditions in the characterization of presentational phenomenology are seemings. ('What it is for an intuition experience of yours to have presentational phenomenology with respect to p is for it to both make it intuitively seem to you that p and make it seem to you as if this experience makes you intuitively aware of a truth-maker for p.'(p.48))

If basic perception is distinguished by having presentational phenomenology, then basic perception becomes a matter of how it seems. What we then have is an account of what seems like a perception not what perception is.

**Giacomo:** Siegel's angry Jack example might help to illustrate the distinction. According to Chudnoff, Jill's perceptual experience is not basic because of the lack of presentational phenomenology—the experience does not make her seem to be aware of the truth-maker of Jack being angry.

**Jonathan** disagrees with Chudnoff's view that Jill's perceptual experience does not basically represent Jack being angry. Chudnoff's idea of presentational phenomenology is built upon *de re* thought. Contrary to Chudnoff's suggestion, Jonathan thinks that one can have *de re* thought about someone being angry, and directly perceive someone's angry (as opposed to just, say, some facial expressions suggesting that one is angry).

**Carrie:** In addition, for evolutionary reasons, e.g., the usefulness of social communication of emotion, it also seems likely that anger is something we can directly perceive.

**Jonathan:** Some people hold the view that what you get directly from perceptual experience are the most basic things, such as simple orientation, shape etc., and everything else is inferential. Suppose that this is right, then the basic perceptual seeming where one seems to be aware of the truth-maker is restricted to these simple things. If so, how does the analogy carry over to intellectual seemings? In the case of intuitive experience, the presence of presentational phenomenology is supposed to make you aware of the abstract entity, function etc. But what are the analogous simple things in the abstract realm that we can be directly aware of?

**Peter:** what is the truth-maker in the angry Jack example? Is it anger, or is it Jack?

**Giacomo:** It could be Jack's face.

Other suggestions include Jack's anger, Jack, angry Jack.

**Peter:** From last week, we conclude that the truth-maker for Chudnoff is supposed to be an object, not a fact.

**Indrek** worries that, no matter what the truth-maker is in this case, it might be something else other than the experience that makes you seem to be aware of the truth-maker of the proposition. Chudnoff does not seem to consider this possibility.

### **The argument for phenomenalism<sub>p</sub>**

‘Imagine an experience with exactly the same phenomenology. Could this experience fail to have the capacity to justify you in believing [the same thing], even in the absence of epistemic defeaters? It doesn’t seem like it. But why not? The most natural answer is that it is the phenomenology itself that accounts for why both experiences have the capacity to justify you in believing their contents.’ [Quote from Chudnoff reproduced in the handout.]

**Jonathan:** the inference from the supervenience of justification on phenomenology, to the conclusion that the justification is due to phenomenology is invalid. There can be something other than the phenomenology that provides the justification.

**Giacomo:** The argument here is not deductive. It is like an inference to the best explanation.

**Peter:** But why is it supposed to be the most plausible explanation? To begin with, there are externalist accounts of justification. But even for the internalist, there are alternatives. For instance, having the same phenomenal experience guarantees the same intentional content, you might think it is the intentional content that does the justification, rather than the presentational phenomenology.

**Giovanni:** To put the worry in a different manner, the argument at best shows that phenomenology is sufficient to justify, but not necessary to provide justification because of the possibility that when phenomenology changes the justification might still be there. Chudnoff should consider whether removing the phenomenology will remove the justification.

**Peter:** Since the question Chudnoff aims to address is *in virtue of what* perceptual experience provides justification, if he thinks phenomenology is the answer, he has to give us reasons to think that presentational phenomenology is necessary.

**Moritz** notes that the justification is propositional. He wonders whether it follows from Chudnoff’s view that one will have a propositional justification that, say, there is a mobile phone on the table, even if one is having a hallucination?

**The argument for (Presentationalism<sub>p</sub>):**

(1) *If your perceptual experience representing that p justifies you in believing that p, then it does so because in having this experience it is for you just like having a perceptual experience that puts you in a position to know that p.*

(2) *If in having an experience it is for you just like having a perceptual experience that puts you in a position to know that p, then it has presentational phenomenology with respect to p.*

(3) *So if your perceptual experience representing that p justifies you in believing that p, then it does so because it has presentational phenomenology with respect to p.*

**Peter:** what’s the structure of sentence (1)? Is it having a certain kind of experience, which is one representing that p, justifies you in believing that p, or is it having the perceptual experience representing that p, justifies you in believing that p?

**Markie’s gold case and Siegel’s angry Jack example** (putative counterexample to Chudnoff’s account)

**Indrek:** the gold case is not the best kind of counterexample to Chudnoff’s account (Chudnoff can easily deal with it) because atomic structure is not something we can seem to be aware of in virtue of having visual experience. Likewise, there is a sense in which other people’s mental states are hidden as well. But if Chudnoff’s general strategy to respond to counterexample is to argue that the truth-makers in the case aren’t things the experience can make us seem to be aware of, there will be cases where Chudnoff need to bite bullets.

**Giovanni:** Why can’t basic beliefs be cognitively penetrated?

**Peter** suspects that it is just the assumption Chudnoff works with given that the basicness is meant to rule out all counterexamples.

*Support for the existence of intuitive justification. Reflection on examples, e.g., the proposition that every concave figure can be rounded out to a convex figure that bounds a greater area in a smaller perimeter. Why are they good examples? Because initially it neither seems to you that P is true nor that it is false, but after reflecting on it, it seems true to you that P is true.*

**Peter:** The idea that, at first you don't find P true, then after you think about it, P seems true, is meant as analogy to the perceptual experience and captures the idea that you come to contact with the truth-maker in virtue of this experience. But I don't see the analogy at all with respect to the second non-geometrical example (the proposition that the bigger of two numbers is the average of their sum and difference—  $\max(m, n) = [(m + n) + |m - n|]/2$ ). I realize the proposition is true after doing some basic calculation in my mind, there is no presentational phenomenology here. What is the truth-maker that the experience is supposed to make me to seem to be aware of?

**Philip:** Perhaps if you were to substitute m, n with numbers, then the number of will be the truth-maker. Part of the difficulty here might be the generalization involved, if the generalization is removed then I can be directly connected to the abstract entity.

**Peter:** there is a trivial sense in which numbers are the truth-maker of all equations.

**Giovanni:** The analogy does seem to break down in the second example since it is through a process of calculation, thinking, that P seems true to me. It is not like opening my eyes and seeing an object in front me, that p seems true.

**Giacomo:** For Chudnoff, the *sui generis* intuition is constituted by a number of other experiences such as imaginings calculations etc. This is also meant to address the mysterious objection to sui generis intuition.

**Peter:** I just don't think I'm having an experience in which I'm seemingly aware of an object whose phenomenal character justifies the belief when I consider the non-geometrical example.

**Moritz:** Why do we still call the experience an intuitive one? If the experience, as described Chudnoff is one in which p seems false at first, then after I do some drawing/calculation, I come to realize that p is true, the end-product doesn't seem to be a seeming [but a well-grounded belief]. Why don't we work with simple examples like having an intuition that  $2+2=4$ ?

**Philip:** Presumably, the switching process is important for Chudnoff because it is meant to capture an analogy with the perceptual cases. Simple propositions  $2+2=4$  wouldn't have that feature.