Introduction

In a recent book Robert Audi cites as one reason for a renewed interest in intuitionism that “a half-century's responses to W. V. Quine's attack on the a priori, and indeed on the power of reason to reveal significant truths, have restored in many philosophers a certain sense of epistemological freedom.” As a second reason he mentions that “we have recovered from the attack on the possibility of non-inferential knowledge, something that intuitionism in any major form, whether rationalist or empiricist, is committed to positing for certain moral propositions.” I will be focusing on this second reason—our no longer being overly impressed by the attack on the possibility of non-inferential knowledge—but in the context of perceptual rather than moral knowledge. Audi's own brand of intuitionism, especially as evinced in his epistemology of perception, raises the question whether he should perhaps be more daunted than he is by what Peter Markie has usefully dubbed “the mystery of direct perceptual justification.”

Consider the belief that a hand is in front of one's face. Audi would maintain that if this belief is based on an apparently normal visual experience of a sort that seems to show that a hand is in front of one's face, then it is normally justified. The experience (normally) gives rise to justification; the justification is intuitive, or direct. There is something mysterious about this.

Although I begin by talking of perceptual justification, my primary concern will be with perceptual representation: what is it for a visual experience to seem to show a hand in front of one's face, and how does it do this? I consider what Audi's treatment of non-inferential or intuitive justification appears to entail regarding the representationality of visual experience and I compare that with Ernest Sosa's very different account, arguing that neither approach is without its difficulties. Two key questions posed by Laurence BonJour will help frame much of the discussion.
Jack Lyons has argued recently that perceptual beliefs need not be experientially grounded: even zombies could have them. Perhaps this intriguing possibility is actually correct, but I shall take as given for the purposes of this paper both that perception is required for perceptual beliefs and that perception is experiential. As Audi says, “There is something it is like [emphasis in original] to see a maple tree ... and here 'like' has its phenomenal, not its comparative, sense.” Assume, then, that a being with perceptual beliefs must have perceptual experiences. If one's belief that there is a tree before one is a perceptual belief, it must be at least somehow connected with one's perceptual experiences. Even if zombies had some beliefs, they would have no perceptual beliefs.

If perceptual beliefs are experientially grounded, one may ask what beliefs perceptual experiences of a given sort do (directly) ground. Audi's “visual experience principle” gives at least a partial answer:

... when, on the basis of an apparently normal visual experience (such as the sort we have in seeing a bird nearby), one believes something of the kind the experience seems to show (for instance that the bird is blue), normally this belief is justified.

The fact that one's believing that the bird is blue is based (appropriately) on an apparently normal visual experience of the sort we have in seeing a bird nearby normally suffices to justify one's belief that there is a bird there and that it is blue. There is no need to infer that a blue bird is present from premises about the character of one's visual experience.

Audi maintains also that principles like the visual experience principle are a priori:

We cannot know that, in every possible world, conformity with the principles conduces to forming true beliefs; but we can know a priori that in any possible world they generate (prima facie) justified beliefs. For the concept of justified belief is in part constituted by the very principles that license our appeal to these elements.

James Pryor endorses a similar principle:

An experience as of there being hands seems to justify one in believing that there are hands in a perfectly straightforward and immediate way. ... the mere fact that one has a visual experience of that phenomenal sort is enough to make it reasonable for one to believe that there are hands. No premises [emphasis in original] about the character of one's
experience—or any other sophisticated assumptions—seem to be needed.\textsuperscript{x}

Audi and Pryor follow a common practice in characterizing visual experiences in terms of the physical objects whose presence they appear to indicate or reveal. The “as of” employed by Pryor in the above quote and by Audi and others elsewhere is a economical device for doing this. A visual experience as of an F is an experience in which, as Brentano might have said, an F is intentionally inexistent; it's a visual seeming that an F is present, a visual experience in which an F is—as it were—presented. I say “as it were” to accommodate the possibility that no F is actually present. An experience as of an F may be an experience of an F, but it need not be.\textsuperscript{x}

It's at least easier to describe experiences in this way—in terms of the physical objects they appear to reveal—than to describe them directly in terms of their intrinsic features. Perhaps, as Gilbert Harman says, it's the only possible way to describe one's perceptual experience: “Look at a tree and try to turn your attention to intrinsic features of your visual experience. I predict you will find that the only features there to turn your attention to will be features of the presented tree.”\textsuperscript{xi}

Harman's view would provide an answer to two questions Laurence BonJour asks, namely, what is the significance of our characterizing experiences in physical-object terms, and what accounts for the seeming appropriateness of these characterizations?\textsuperscript{xii} To the first question a good Harmanian answer might be: our characterizing experiences in this way signifies nothing other than a lack of any alternative way of doing so. And if, as Harman says, when we try to attend to the intrinsic features of a visual experience we find no features to attend to except features of the presented object, then why should we not find the description of the experience in terms of the features of the presented object perfectly appropriate?

But is it true that when we attend to the intrinsic features of a visual experience we never find anything to attend to other than features of the presented object? It seems at least coherent to suppose that perceptual experiences may have, as Laurence BonJour has suggested, a sensory, nonconceptual core.\textsuperscript{xiii} Such a core might contribute towards determining what the experience “says” or presents. The view that there is or could be such a core is not without problems, but for present purposes I propose mainly to ignore them. I'd like to consider, on the supposition that there is such a core, how one might go about addressing BonJour's questions.

Let us suppose then that a certain sort of visual experience has intrinsic nonconceptual sensory features which somehow make descriptions of it in terms of a particular sort of physical object “appropriate.” These features, we might say, contribute to its being apt for presenting, e.g., a sphere as before one—hence the appropriateness of describing the experience in terms of a sphere.
BonJour asks how these features do this trick. What is it about the intrinsic sensory features of a visual experience as of a sphere that makes it an experience as of a sphere as opposed, say, to one as of a pyramid, cube, or barbell? This is not a question that can arise for Harman or like-minded thinkers. It may arise for Audi and indicate a difficulty with his approach. So BonJour appears to believe. Audi's “epistemic realism” is the view that “it is implicit in our concept of a real empirical object that it can impinge on our senses, that, under certain conditions, it tends to affect our senses, and that it is the sort of thing which best explains our spontaneous perceptual experiences.” Of Audi’s development of this view BonJour writes that it “seems to suggest that there is after all no further reason or explanation as to why the object-experience correlation takes the specific form that it does.”

Are BonJour’s questions legitimate? They may appear to presuppose that a visual experience has intrinsic qualitative properties such that given those properties alone it is apt for revealing whatever it does reveal, or counts as being “as of” such and such a kind of thing. In general this is implausible. A sort (as characterized in terms of intrinsic, qualitative properties) of visual experience apt for revealing to human beings with normal color vision the presence of something white might be apt for revealing to some other sort of creature the presence of something green. But although the general claim is implausible, some related restricted claims appear less so. Consider shape, for instance. It seems plausible that the intrinsic sensory character of a visual experience as of a sphere would make that experience more apt for revealing the presence of a sphere than the presence of a tetrahedron.

Part of what Pryor claimed was that an epistemic agent needn’t reason from premises about the character of her experience in order for her belief to be reasonable. Her mere having the experience is enough. But it seems that something more is needed, namely that the belief be based on the experience. This suggests a worry well-expressed by Donald Davidson as to whether there is any justifying sense in which a belief could be based on a perceptual experience, or anyway on a “sensation”:

The relation between a sensation and a belief cannot be logical, since sensations are not beliefs or other propositional attitudes. What then is the relation? The answer is, I think, 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 a belief does not show how or why the belief is justified.

Davidson here locates the obstacle to there being a logical relation between a sensation and a belief.
in the *sensation*: sensations are not items of a sort that can stand in logical relations to anything. Something needs to be said about how sensations or perceptual experiences can serve, non-inferentially, as genuine bases or grounds of perceptual belief. There are many actual and possible accounts. We turn to Ernest Sosa’s.

*Sosa on Belief and Visual Experience*

Sosa takes it that a visual experience can be a reason to believe that an object of such and such a description is present. But his view is markedly different from Audi’s or Pryor’s. He writes:

... *visual experience as if there is something white and round before one* is a reason for believing that there is such a thing there before one, but only because in the actual world such a visual experience is reliably related to there being such a thing there: that is to say, what is required is that in the actual world such a visual experience *would* in normal conditions reveal the presence of such a thing before the perceiver. Most naturally one would want the state of the perceiver describable as “visual experience as if there is something white and round before him” to be necessarily such that it *would* normally reveal the presence of such a thing before the perceiver. Otherwise that same state would not be properly describable as such an experience. [Emphases in original.]

Like Audi and Pryor, Sosa characterizes the visual experience in a way that is non-committal as to the experience’s actually being of a physical object of the sort mentioned in the characterization. One difference (from Audi at least) is that Sosa builds an externalist, reliabilist condition into the very conception of what it is to be a visual experience of the given sort. According to Sosa an experience is as if there is something white and round before one only if the occurrence of an experience of that sort would normally (in the actual world) reveal the presence of something white and round before one. For Audi, by contrast, it’s not built into the very conception of what it is for a visual experience to be as of a white round thing that occurrences of experiences of that type are reliably correlated with the presence of white round things.

An attractive aspect of Sosa’s approach is that it provides a straightforward response to one of BonJour’s questions. BonJour wrote “it seems ... important to ask just what the significance of these characterizations of experience in physical-object terms really is and what it is about the experience that makes them seem so obviously appropriate.” Since on Sosa’s approach it is essential to an experience as if an F were present that experiences of that sort be reliably correlated (in the actual
world, normally) with the presence of Fs, we have the basis of an answer to the first of BonJour’s questions. Whether we have, in Sosa’s approach, an adequate response to the second—what it is about the experiences that makes the physical-object characterizations of them so “obviously appropriate”—is less clear, as will appear.

For Sosa, it is only in virtue of a reliable connection holding between the occurrence of experiences of a certain kind and the presence of objects of a certain kind that the experiences make it reasonable to believe that such objects are present. This is particularly evident in Sosa’s characterization of an alternative to his sort of view:

Alternatively one might suppose that there is a state with an intrinsic mental character whose intrinsic mental character makes it properly characterizable as a state of experiencing thus (as a state of experiencing a white, round item, or the like), and this with logical independence of any modal relation that such a state, with such an intrinsic character, may bear to the presence or absence of white and round items.\(^{\text{xi}}\)

This alternative is like Audi’s own view in its internalism: what earns a state a description as a state of experiencing in such and such a way is independent of any relations states of its sort (states with the same intrinsic mental character) bear to the presence or absence of any given sort of physical objects. For just this reason, Sosa says, the view runs into difficulties:

The problem for this view will be to explain how such states could possibly give a reason to believe that there is something white and round before one. It may be held that it just does [emphasis in original]. And now one will face the following prospect: the need for a boundless set of principles each with fundamental status, connecting various intrinsically characterized mental states with paired external facts of specific sorts.\(^{\text{xii}}\)

Has Sosa identified a serious problem for Audi-style accounts of these matters? Certainly Audi is committed to the view that when one believes, on the basis of an apparently normal visual experience, something that the experience seems to show, one’s belief is normally justified. This is essentially his visual experience principle. Sosa is not, of course, saying that the principle is false. He is suggesting rather that it may be, for the internalist, inexplicable, or—what may come to the same—explicable only by reference to a “boundless” set of fundamental principles. Sosa’s thought appears to be that since on the view under discussion there need be no reliable relation that occurrences of a given sort of experience bear to the presence of, say, round and white objects, there is simply no possible explanation (on that sort of view) of how such an experience can be a
reason to think a white round object is present. In each case the fact that a given sort of visual experience gives a reason to think that an object of such and such description is present would simply be a brute fact. (“It just does.”) If indeed all these facts were in this way brute there would be some justice to the claim that one would be faced with the need for a boundless set of fundamental principles. Each pairing would come under its own “principle,” which, being applicable only to one case, would be a principle in name only.

It is not clear, however, why all the relevant facts would have to be brute. Sosa is in effect simply assuming that the only possible explanation of how visual experiences can provide (or be) reasons to believe that an object of such and such description is present must be given in terms of reliable connections between the occurrences of visual experiences of a certain character and the presence of objects of a certain description. If this is true, then Audi-style views may be in trouble. Further, what Sosa says here is not implausible. How else would a visual experience come to have this “authority” about how things are?

One might say in defense of an Audi-style approach that only a relatively few fundamental principles would be needed, of which the visual experience principle might be a typical example: when you believe that p on the basis of an apparently normal visual experience that seems to show that p, your belief is normally justified.

I don't find this defense entirely convincing. We may get down nominally to just a few principles in this way, but something could still be amiss. Might it not be that every fact of the form such and such a sort of visual experience seems to show that p is brute? For Sosa, clearly not, but I do not see that Audi has said anything that would rule this out.

**Audi and the Sellarsian Dilemma**

Wilfrid Sellars is often taken to have argued against the possibility of beliefs being supported solely by perceptual experience by posing roughly the following dilemma. First horn: if a perceptual experience is nonconceptual it will not suffice to justify any belief because it won’t stand in any particular logical relation to the content of any belief. Second horn: if a perceptual experience is conceptual it will itself require justification, and will therefore again not by itself suffice to justify the belief. xxiii

“Seeing as” is conceptual, so the second horn should apply. Audi once wrote of “seeing a green arrow as such” that it
... may require conceptualizing what one experiences in terms of the concept of an arrow. It does not follow that the grounding visual *experience* [emphasis in original] needs or even admits of justification, and neither seems to be the case. The conceptual, as opposed to the doxastic (the belief-constituted) need not admit of justification. xxiv

Audi is not alone in holding that perceptual experiences neither need nor admit of justification. Some go further. For instance, Michael Huemer writes: “It does not make sense—it is a category error to say—that an experience is justified or unjustified.” xxv This is at least initially a plausible view. Can we make sense of the idea that seeing a green arrow as a green arrow is justified—or unjustified?

If seeing a green arrow as a green arrow required *believing* there to be an arrow present or believing there to be a green arrow present, etc., that would be a different story. But does it? Isn’t it possible for a person looking at a green arrow to see it as a green arrow and yet not believe that there is a green arrow present?

If seeing a green arrow as a green arrow does not require believing there to be a green arrow present, then it is unclear how this seeing-as could require epistemic justification. It seems then that there is reason to doubt (at least on Audi’s reading of it) the truth of the second horn of the Sellarsian dilemma, which says: if a perceptual experience is “conceptual” it will itself require justification, and will therefore not by itself suffice to justify the belief.

However that may be, Audi does see a role for the nonconceptual in the justification of belief, so it looks as if he must attend to the first horn of the dilemma as well. A nonconceptual experience won’t stand in any “logical” relation to any belief-content; how then can it play a justificatory role in relation to a belief?

Audi’s answer goes something like this. Suppose you say that it is foggy. When asked (say, over the phone) how you know this, you say “I see dense fog.” In making this claim you express, Audi claims, “a belief whose content is ‘conceptualized.’” xxvi He continues:

But that the expression or indication of one’s ground is conceptual does not necessarily mean that one’s ground itself is. Citing a ground in this justificatory way is intrinsically conceptual. Citing it in this way, however, constitutes giving it as a *reason* in defense of the claim being supported or explained; the reason, though it indicates the source of one’s ground (vision), is not itself that ground (visual experience). The *fact* that I see it is my reason—and a good one—because it identifies my ground. [Emphases in original.] xxvi

For Audi, the nonconceptual experience serves as a ground, not a reason. The reason (the fact that
I do see a dense fog) “identifies” that ground and in turn justifies the belief that it is foggy. But what exactly is the role of the nonconceptual experience? What role does its being “identified” by the fact that I see a dense fog play? Is the suggestion that the fact that I see a dense fog is a good reason for my belief in so far as it “identifies” the grounding nonconceptual experience? But this seems quite mysterious. What is it to “identify” the grounding experience, and how does such identification contribute to making the fact that I see a dense fog a good reason for my belief?

Audi may have good answers to these questions. I confess to some uncertainty as to what his argument here actually is. But for my part I cannot see that he has made much headway against the nonconceptual horn of the dilemma. The epistemic role presumably played by nonconceptualized experience continues to mystify. Perhaps the following will help:

... an experience may have qualities, such as the visual sense of the dense grey of fog, that —quite apart from whether they are believed to belong to it—can stand in “logical” relations to the content of the proposition believed [emphases in original]. The phenomenal property of my having a visual impression of grey is in a certain way appropriate to the property of being grey: the internal instantiation of the former is at least arguably best explained by causation by the external instantiation of the latter. xxviii

Thus, even if I do not experience the dense grey of the fog as such—even if I do not conceptualize my experience as being as of a dense grey something—nevertheless the experience itself may have properties that stand in “logical” relations to, for instance, the property dense grey, a content of the proposition believed.

But can we make sense of a nonconceptual experience having properties that stand in logical relations to contents of the believed proposition in the required way?

A naïve thinker might be tempted by the notion that his visual experience was itself a dense grey in color just as is the fog he believes to surround him. If this were correct, a quality of the experience would stand in a “logical” relation—identity—to a content of the proposition believed: dense grey would be both a property of the experience and a content of the believed proposition. But even on this naïve view it is hard to see what reason there would be to think that the internal instantiation of the property (the experience’s being grey—whatever that might mean) would be best explained as an effect of its external instantiation (the fog’s being grey).

Of course, Audi does not think of the visual experience as being literally grey. He does not take experiences to be concrete objects. In his theory of perception the concrete objects are just the perceiver and the thing perceived. xxix The thing that does the internal instantiating is the perceiver.
The internal, phenomenal, property that is said by Audi to be appropriate to the grey of the fog is the property of the perceiver's having a visual impression of grey, which may be understood adverbially as perceiving in a certain way. But we are still left in the dark. In what way is my having a visual impression of grey particularly appropriate to or best explained in terms of the external instantiation of the property grey in the fog that surrounds me?

Could this be an empirical question, unsuited for investigation from the armchair? It depends on how one thinks about the properties involved. If with Sosa we think of a property like my having a visual impression of grey as being necessarily such that its instantiations are, in the actual world, normally reliably connected with instantiations of grey in my immediate vicinity, then the question may not be empirical. If the necessary connections aren't there, how could the property be the property of my having a visual impression of grey? Perhaps on Audi's way of thinking about such phenomenal properties the question is empirical. I think we cannot tell until we know more about how Audi thinks of such properties than he has told us so far. For now we're in no position to say more than that Audi's best-explanation claim could be true. We cannot say how it could be true, or what it's being true would amount to.

**Audi vs. Sosa**

Earlier I attributed to Sosa the assumption that the only possible explanation of how visual experiences with such and such a character can provide or be reasons to believe that an object of such and such description is present must be one in terms of reliable modal relations in the actual world between occurrences of visual experiences of a certain character and the presence of objects of a certain description. Audi's response to the nonconceptual horn of the Sellarsian dilemma, if successful, would by being a counter-example, show Sosa's assumption to be false. But although Audi's best-explanation claim, like Sosa's assumption, could turn out to be true, we are not in a position to see that it is true or how it could be true. Have we then reached an impasse?

Sosa may not have succeeded in showing that an Audi-style approach to perceptual justification is defective. He has, however, presented a straightforward alternative account in terms of reliability of what it is for a visual experience to be as if, for example, something white and round were before one. Further, Sosa's account includes an explanation of why it is that such a visual experience can provide a reason for believing that something white and round was before one. Sosa's account is elegant, comprehensive, relatively simple, and seems to leave little unexplained. Should we think on balance that it is superior to Audi's? There are two reasons one might think so. First, Audi appears to
have little to say of a systematic nature about what it is for a visual experience to be as of such and such. And the second is the obscurity of what Audi does have to say about why it is that a visual experience, e.g., as of something white and round before one provides a reason for believing that something white and round is present.

How damaging to Audi's position are these two points? I'll begin with the second. I think it's tantamount to the complaint that Audi presents no convincing argument for the visual experience principle beyond a possibly ill-considered feint in the direction of inference to the best explanation. This is true, but note that the principle's being non-inferentially justifiable would certainly comport well with the intuitionist epistemology Audi advocates. It could be that belief of the principle based on an adequate understanding of what it says is simply—non-inferentially—prima facie justified.

The first point may present a greater difficulty. Audi does not appear to have much to say of a systematic nature about what it is for a visual experience to be as of such and such, or what it is for a visual experience to "seem to show" that p. Some remarks of Audi's in a reply to a paper by BonJour seem rather to illustrate the difficulty than to point the way to a solution. Audi writes:

But I am not committed to holding that the kinds of arboreal experiences we normally have are only contingently related to the concept of a tree. ... it is essential to the concept of a tree that trees have, for example, branches, and it is essential to an arboreal visual experience—one as of a tree (a non-committal expression I use to cover both veridical and nonveridical experiences)—that it exhibit, for example, branches. [Emphasis in the original.]

Thus, on Audi's view, it's essential to an "arboreal" visual experience—one as of a tree—that it "exhibit branches," and hence normal arboreal experiences are not merely contingently related to the concept of a tree: since the concept of a tree is among other things the concept of a thing with branches, a visual experience as of a tree must "exhibit branches." But this thought is helpful to one puzzled about what it is for an experience to be as of a tree, or "arboreal," only to the extent that it is clear to her what it is for a visual experience to exhibit branches. Audi does not make it clear what this would be. Might one say that it is for branches to be a part of what the visual experience represents? One might well (and perhaps truly) say this, but to say it to one puzzled about what it is for a visual experience to be as of a tree, or "arboreal," would obviously not be helpful.

Recall BonJour's questions. He asked first what the significance of characterizing perceptual experiences as Audi and Pryor (and others, of course) do in terms of physical-objects really is, and he asked secondly what it is about the perceptual experiences that makes these characterizations "seem obviously appropriate." On Sosa's view it is essential to an experience's being as if an F
were present that it is of a kind such that in the actual world occurrences of experiences of that kind are reliably connected with the presence of Fs. This addresses a question about the significance of giving physical-object characterizations of experiences: at least part of the significance of characterizing a particular visual experience as being “as if” an F were present is that its occurrence is a defeasible but reliable indication of the presence of an F. But how well does it respond to the further question what it is about perceptual experiences of a given sort that makes certain physical-object characterizations of them seem so obviously appropriate (and, one could add, makes certain others obviously inappropriate)? Sosa is not without resources here. Experiences of such and such an intrinsic qualitative character just are normally connected with one's being affected by objects of such and such a description. Why not say that this connection is all that's needed to explain why characterizing the experiences in terms of the objects seems appropriate? They're the sorts of experiences we have in the presence of those kinds of objects. So naturally—whatever their intrinsic qualitative character—it seems “appropriate” to describe the experiences in terms of those objects.

As ingenious as Sosa's approach is, it seems less than fully satisfactory. The sorts of experiences that are in the actual world experiences “as if” spherical things were present could have been reliably correlated instead with the presence of, say, pyramids, cubes, barbells—anything, actually, but we'll stick with pyramids for simplicity. Such experiences would in that case have been experiences “as if” (in Sosa's sense) pyramids were present even though in the actual world experiences of the same intrinsic qualitative character are experiences as if spherical things are present. This raises the question whether the correlations to which Sosa's account adverts fully account for or explain the representational character of the experiences—especially if, as seems plausible, intrinsic, qualitative characteristics of experiences do play some role in determining their representational character. In a defense of the theory of appearing, William Alston touches on this concern:

The most fundamental component in our concept of perception is that it is an intuitive, rather than a discursive, cognition of objects; it is a matter of having objects presented to one's consciousness, rather than a matter of thinking about them, or bringing them under general concepts, or making judgments about them. Much less is it just a matter of a causal relation between the object and one's experience of something else or of nothing. ... It is the presentational feature of perception that gets lost in externalist accounts of object perception.\footnote{xxxii}

Whatever one's estimation of the theory of appearing or of Alston's defense, one may find it
plausible that a visual experience “as if” (in Sosa’s sense) a white round thing were present could fail to be an “intuitive cognition” of anything, even if a white round thing were present. It’s a reliable indicator of the presence of a white round thing, but is it more than that? Perhaps nothing more is to be expected, but it may well be worth trying to work out a conception that does justice to the idea that perception is an “intuitive cognition of objects.”

Conclusion

Why does a visual experience as if a white, round thing is present normally justify one’s believing that a white, round thing is present? Sosa has this answer: visual experiences, in order to qualify as being in his sense “as if” white, round things are present, must be of a sort reliably correlated (in the actual world) with the presence of white, round things. This entails that visual experiences as if (in Sosa’s sense) white round things were present are in the actual world good indicators of the presence of white round things. So far so good. But if we take “as if” to have representational import—if we think of an experience “as if” a white round thing is present as one which presents a white round thing as being there before one—then it seems the correlations mentioned by Sosa fail to clarify how the experience can do this, how it can make a white round thing present to consciousness.

As for Audi, he seems rather to presuppose than to offer an account of what it is for a visual experience to present a white round thing as there before one—to be, as we might put it, genuinely “as of” a white round thing in front of one. Such an account would complement the visual experience principle and could play a key role in a satisfactory intuitionist view of direct perceptual justification.
Works Cited


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Audi, The Good in the Right, 2.

Ibid.

Markie, “The Mystery of Direct Perceptual Justification.”

Audi, Epistemology, 29-30.

Lyons, Perception and Basic Beliefs.

Audi, “Moral Perception and Moral Knowledge,” 81.

Audi, Epistemology, 29-30.

Audi, “Justification, Truth, and Reliability,” 19-20; See also Audi, “Justifying Grounds, Justified Beliefs, and Rational Acceptance,” 222.


I follow Audi in using “as of” noncommittally “to cover both veridical and nonveridical experiences.” Audi, “Justifying Grounds, Justified Beliefs, and Rational Acceptance,” 223.

Harman, “The Intrinsic Quality of Experience,” 39. See also Tye, “Visual Qualia and Visual Content”; Dretske, Naturalizing the Mind, and others for similar claims.

BonJour writes: “… it seems to me important to ask just what the significance of these characterizations of experience in physical-object terms really is and what it is about the experience that makes them seem so obviously appropriate.” “Are Perceptual Beliefs Properly Foundational?,” 88.

Ibid., 86-87.


See, e.g., Markie, “Epistemically Appropriate Perceptual Belief,” 118. Thanks also to John Heil for reminding me of this point. Here I engage—harmlessly, I hope—in the conceit that colors are genuine properties.


BonJour and Sosa, Epistemic Justification, 164.

Audi, “Justifying Grounds, Justified Beliefs, and Rational Acceptance,” 223. “My claim was that we cannot know a priori that there is an objective likelihood of truth, one entailing that in at least the majority of relevantly similar possible worlds the proposition in question is true.”

BonJour, “Are Perceptual Beliefs Properly Foundational?,” 88.

BonJour and Sosa, Epistemic Justification, 164.

Ibid., 164-165.

Sellars’ presentation is difficult and has no settled canonical interpretation. My version is at best “Sellarsian” and is certainly not the result of scholarly exegesis on my part. I base it on the following formulation by Audi in The Architecture of Reason, 17.: “if experiences are non-conceptual, they do not stand in need of justification but have none to give; and if they are conceptual (e.g. entailing belief) they may provide justification but also stand in need of it and hence cannot play a foundational role. This argument may be buttressed by the idea that only propositions stand in logical relations to the propositional objects of beliefs, and non-conceptual experiences can at best stand in causal relations to the beliefs in question.” For Sellars’ original statement, see his “Empiricism and the philosophy of mind,” reprinted in Sellars, Science,

xxiv Audi, The Architecture of Reason, 17.

xxv Huemer, Skepticism and the Veil of Perception, 97.

xxvi Audi, The Architecture of Reason, 17.

xxvii Ibid.

xxviii Ibid.

xxix Audi, “Moral Perception and Moral Knowledge,” 87.

xxx Audi, “Justifying Grounds, Justified Beliefs, and Rational Acceptance,” 223.

xxxi BonJour, “Are Perceptual Beliefs Properly Foundational?,” 88.