

The Rational Dimension of Phenomenal Character

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June 2009

One influential focus in the recent debates on the non-sensory aspects of the phenomenal character of our mental episodes has been on their intellectual elements. More specifically, it has been on what it is like to think or judge something (in opposition to seeing or imagining it), as well as on the extent to which how we subjectively experience our thoughts and judgements depends on how they present the world as being.¹ Other non-sensory — and non-intellectual — aspects of character, by contrast, have been largely neglected, despite two significant truths about them. The first is that they pertain not only to judgements and similar thoughts, but also to perceptions and other sensory episodes — thus not raising the more general issue of whether the episodes concerned possess a phenomenal character in the first place. And second, they are, in several respects, more interesting and perhaps also more basic than the sensory and the intellectual aspects usually discussed. In particular, they reflect the general nature of the type of episode concerned, rather than the specific differences among its instances. And, as part of this, they render especially the rational dimension of the mental episodes first-personally salient.

Our aim in this essay is to describe these non-sensory and non-intellectual phenomenal aspects of perceptions and other episodes and to highlight their link to the rational role of the latter. Pursuing this aim will involve, among other things, attempting to characterise the three kinds of phenomenal aspects at issue. More specifically, it is part of our proposal that the difference between the sensory and the intellectual aspects can be spelled out in terms of the non-neutrality and the reason-insensitivity of the presentational elements concerned. The phenomenal aspects of the third type — which may be called *rational aspects* — may then be distinguished from the other two by reference to the fact that only the former determine the type of non-neutrality involved in the respective episodes, rather than what these episodes are non-neutral about. This fits well with the already noted suggestion that the rational phenomenal aspects reflect the general type and role of the episodes in question — notably, that they provide us with or are based on epistemic reasons. The sensory and the intellectual aspects are instead connected to

¹For references, see below footnotes * and * below. *Comment on the use of 'cognitive' and of 'phenomenology'.

the specific realisation of this rational role — such as to the specification of which particular beliefs the episodes provide us with epistemic reasons for.

The resulting view of the rational dimension of the character of perceptions is an instance of *Experiential Rationalism*, which is the view that our mental episodes are phenomenally given to us as having a certain rational nature (assuming that they possess any). This means that their reason-giving power and their responsiveness to reasons form part of their phenomenal character.² If this would not be the case, the reasons concerned would not count as *our* reasons. They become reasons for us only in so far as their presence and rational impact is phenomenally accessible to us from our first-personal perspective. Our considerations in this paper are therefore centred around the idea of consciousness being shot through and through with rationality. After a detailed phenomenological description of the various aspects of the phenomenal character of perceptions and related episodes (sections I and II), we will conclude the first part of this article by making our case for Experiential Rationalism (section III). In the second half of the paper, we will identify non-neutrality as a central element in the experience of rational role (section IV) and use it to divide the phenomenal aspects introduced at the beginning into three categories (section V), before finally arguing that this grouping corresponds to the division of the phenomenal aspects into the sensory, the intellectual and the rational (section VI).

I.

Many of the important features of perceptions are reflected in their phenomenal character - that is, in their most determinate introspectible property which constitutes what they are subjectively like. And although the following list does not aim to provide a complete description of the character of perceptions, it is still meant to highlight most of those aspects of perceptual character which are central to the role played by perceptions in our mental lives.

One very straightforward and fundamental phenomenological observation about perceptions is that they *present* us with — or are about — objects.³ That mental episodes are presentational means, minimally, that they involve the appearance of objects as being distinct from them. If such an appearance were lacking, the episodes would possess an entirely intrinsic character with no link to something external to them (cf. Kant [1990]: B38) — as, arguably, in the case of feelings of boredom or depression. That the objects are (or seem to be) distinct from the episodes is compatible, however, with the idea that they are (or seem to be) part of, or

²*Cf. Dorsch [2009a] for a defence of Experiential Rationalism about the reason-sensitivity of judgemental thoughts and mental actions.

³This section draws partly on Dorsch [2009b]. Further below, we will contrast the mere presentation of objects and features with non-neutral presentations, that involve the additional claim that things indeed are as they are presented.

dependent on, them.⁴ Some disjunctivists, for instance, claim that our genuine perceptions are constituted by the perceived objects (cf. Martin [2003]). But the latter should not be identified with the former, or they would cease to count as *objects* of perception.

The phenomenal aspect coming with being a presentation of objects is — at least in the case of perceptions — subject to further qualification by other aspects. One such qualification concerns the fact that the presentation of objects includes the presentation of some of their material features (cf. Husserl [1992], Searle [1983] and Crane). We do not simply see objects. We (also) see their colour, size, shape, and so on. That is, the perceived objects appear to be a certain way in our perception.⁵ Similarly, we do not recall, imagine or think just of objects, but also of some of their features. And another qualification is that perceptual presentations enjoy some kind of *transparency*, meaning two things. First, when we are attending to the phenomenal character of our perceptions — to what they are like — the objects and features that they present us with continue to be in the focus of our attentive awareness. That is, attending to our perceptions means, at least in part, attending to the world. And second, when we are introspecting our perceptions, we do not become aware of entities or features — such as sense-data or presentational vehicles or properties over and above the property of being a presentation of certain objects — in virtue of which our perceptions are presentational. Our experiences of depicted or photographed objects are different in that they involve an awareness of a medium of presentation and of its respective features responsible for its presentational nature.⁶

It is also distinctive of perceptions that they present objects and their features at least partially in a *sensory* manner. In thoughts and other conscious intellectual episodes, objects are also presented as having certain features. But their presentation concerned is not sensory. Which properties objects may appear to have in perception is restricted by the particular sensory mode involved in their presentation.⁷ Furthermore, while some features are accessible in several modes (e.g., shapes), others are accessible only in one mode (e.g., colours or sounds). It is notoriously difficult to spell out the difference between sensory and intellectual presentation — say, between the ways in which the redness of an object is given to us in our perception of its redness and in our judgemental thought that it is red.⁸ And it is equally difficult to

⁴*Cf. Hume on distinct existences.

⁵This does not require, however, that the subject identifies or categorises the perceived objects in respect of the features that they appear to have. Seeing a blue book need not involve the recognition that the book is blue (cf. Dretske: 99f.).

⁶Martin discusses both aspects in Martin [2003]: section 1, and the former also in Martin [2000]. As Martin notes in Martin [2003]: 11, both observations are compatible with the possibility that, when we are attending to our perceptions, we become aware of more than the presented objects and features — namely, for instance, also of intrinsic aspects of the phenomenal character of perceptions.

⁷This is true even of the non-sensorily presented features. For instance, we may perhaps see the sadness of a friend; but we cannot touch it.

⁸The expression 'judgemental thought' is meant to make clear that what we have in mind are

draw the distinction between perceivable and unperceivable features. We will return to both issues further below and offer there a way of making sense of both contrasts.

Then, perceptions present us with *concrete* objects. That is, their objects appear to be extended in time and — at least in the visual and the tactile case — also in space.⁹ It is important to note that objects that are presented as concrete entities need not be presented with a specific identity. And this is closely related to the fact that they also need not appear to possess a determinate location, duration or size, or to be located in real time or space. The respective aspects of the character of presentations should therefore be clearly distinguished.

When we are perceiving an object, it is presented as having a *determinate spatio-temporal extension and location*. When we are visualising an object, by contrast, the resulting image need not present it as having a specific size and duration, or as being at a particular point in time or space. Indeed, imagined object need not possess any determinate spatio-temporal features. What is crucial here is that sensorily imagined objects are not related to each other or to our own location in real time and space, independently of our intentions or thoughts about them. The duration of a real sound is independent of how long we want or take it to be. And since it normally determines the length of our perception of it, we have access to its duration in virtue of the duration of the latter. But the same need not be true of an imagined sound. It is up to us whether the real duration of our imaginative experience of it corresponds to the imagined duration of the sound. In particular, an auditory imagination, which is ten seconds long in real time, may be taken by us to be an imagination of the whole duration of an imagined sound, which is ten hour long in the imagined time.¹⁰ However, our act of imagining need not be specific on the relation between the real length of the experience and the imagined length of the sound. Hence, the question of how long the sound is, that we imagine with the help of a ten seconds long act of imagining, may fail to have an answer. Similar considerations apply to size and location. Given that the distance and the presence or absence of simultaneity between us and sensorily imagined objects or between the imagined objects themselves may remain indeterminate, it may not always be possible to settle the issue of the specific location or size of the imagined entities. In other words, our sensory imaginings may stay neutral on the particular spatio-temporal relations in which their objects stands to other imagined or perceived

temporally extended episodes of thought, rather than the instantaneous onsets of such episodes (cf. Soteriou (*)). In particular, we do not want to refer to acts of judging, but instead to the thoughts resulting from such acts and possibly remaining occurrent for a long while. Just consider the contrast between realising that a person is very attractive and then constantly having this thought in mind and letting it influence what one says and does while spending the evening with him or her.

⁹In what follows, we will, somewhat loosely, speak generally of spatio-temporal extension and location. Also, we will use the notion of an *object* in a wide sense such as to include events and property instances.

¹⁰Compare the idea of re-experiencing one's whole life during the last moments before one's death.

entities. Indeed, the imagined objects may actually appear to be part of separate and non-real 'times' or 'spaces'.¹¹

That perceived objects appear to be determinate in their extension and location is closely linked to the fact that they are presented as being *particulars with determinate identities*. When we are visualising a landscape, we need not visualise any particular landscape, and the question of which specific landscape we are visualising may be inappropriate.¹³ But when we are perceiving a landscape, we perceive a particular landscape, and this specificity of what we are perceiving is first-personally salient, even though we might not always be able to subjectively notice differences in particularity (cf. Martin [2002]). If it were not, we would not (be able to) rely on our perceptions when aiming to demonstratively refer to concrete entities in our environment.¹⁴ The phenomenological salience of the particularity of the perceived objects is partly grounded in the impression that they are at specific points in time and space. Perhaps the latter already suffices to generate the former.

Next, perceived objects are presented as *existing* — which means that they and their features appear to be *actually or really there* (rather than, say, merely possible or fictional). If we are seeing a blue book, it seems to us as if there really is a blue book before us.¹⁵ Again, this impression is needed for us to rely on perceptions in the demonstration of objects. But it also adds something to the presentation of concrete objects with determinate identities and locations. We may visualise a particular object (e.g., Napoléon) as being in a particular place (e.g., the middle seat of the front row of the *Opéra Garnier* in Paris), without taking the visualised object to actually exist.¹⁶ But we could not perceive the same situation without such an appearance of existence. Consequently, there is a difference in how we interact with perceived and with imagined entities: we treat only the former as actual parts of reality (cf. Walton [1990]).

This impression of existence is further qualified. For example, it involves a sense

¹¹Cf. Wittgenstein [1984] sections 622 and 628, Sartre [2004]: 8ff., and McGinn [2004]: 58f.. Of course, acts of imagining can specify the extension and location of the imagined objects by including some conscious intentions or thoughts concerning that matter.¹² And perhaps each act of imagining must include some minimal spatio-temporal specification of this kind — for instance, if we are visualising two objects, there may have to be always an answer to the question of whether one is to the left of the other.

¹³Something similar is true of paintings of landscapes and other things (cf. Wollheim [1998]; Martin [2001]: 276).

¹⁴See Siegel [2002]. Compare also the arguments in Martin [2002] and Soteriou [2000] for the involvement of particularity in perceptions. The phenomenological salience of the particularity of the perceived objects has the consequence that accounts, which assume that perceptions possess only a general content (e.g., Dretske [1995]), are unable to capture this phenomenal aspects.

¹⁵*This is part of what Martin (*) tries to capture with the actuality thesis. [...] Besides, it is not clear whether the actuality concerned is metaphysical or epistemic in nature. When we are seeing a tree, do we take it and its features to be part of the actual world, simpliciter; or do we rather take them to be part of the actual world, for all that we know?

¹⁶Cf. Sartre's idea that some acts of visualising may posit their objects as 'non-existing' (cf. Sartre [2004]: 12).

of *mind-independence or objectivity*: the perceived objects are presented as existing, and their features are presented as being instantiated, independently of our current experiences of them (cf. McDowell [1985], Siegel [2006] and Martin [forthcoming]: *). This explains why we expect perceived objects and their features to be accessible by others as well, and to stay in existence even if they are unperceived. One interesting issue here is whether some non-perceptual experiences might present their objects as existing, without presenting them as existing mind-independently. After-images are perhaps possible candidates for such experiences. It may be argued that, when we are experiencing a yellow after-image, say, it appears to us as if there is really something yellow there. But the experienced yellow spot clearly does not seem to be part of our actual environment (e.g., it 'moves around' in accordance with our eye movements) and does not appear to exist independently of our experience of it, nor as a public entity open to further scrutiny. Experiences of subjective values are perhaps other examples. For us, the people whom we love possess a special value for us (in addition to any value which they possess simply in virtue of being alive, or of being human or sentient beings). But this exemplification of value does not strike us as being objective — for instance, we do not expect or demand others to value them in the same way as we do.

Another important qualification of the perceptual presentation of an existing object is that it and its features are given as *existing in the present*. This means that perceptions present their objects as existing simultaneously with their own occurrence, and as being a certain way right at that very moment.¹⁷ Episodes of sensory memory, on the other hand, present their objects as having existed and being a certain way in the past (cf. Martin [2001]). A similar contrast may be drawn with respect to spatial closeness. Visual perceptions present their objects as existing presently right there before our eyes (even if in some considerable distance), and visual memories do the same with respect to the past. But recollections, or acts of visualising which take their objects to exist, say, are bound to present them as absent from our actual spatial surroundings.¹⁸

One further significant phenomenal aspect of perceptions is that they present their objects as their *determinants*. When we are perceiving a blue book, it seems to us as if our experience would change or would have been different, if the object would change or would have been different. More specifically, this means two things.

¹⁷Interestingly, this might actually be systematically misleading. Given that the speed of light is finite, our experiences always lag a bit behind the emission of light by the perceived objects. And this makes it possible that we continue to experience objects (e.g., distant stars) which have already gone out of existence. Besides, note that Martin describes the 'presence' of the perceived object in two different ways: in terms of spatio-temporal closeness, and in terms of constitution or counterfactual determination (cf. Martin [2001]: 272f.). We would like to keep these two aspects apart, given that we do not want to rule out the possibility that sensory memories are also constituted or determined by their past objects, and that this fact is subjectively salient.

¹⁸Cf. Sartre [2004]: 12f., for a subtle discussion of different ways in which an object may appear to be absent from our environment).

First, it seems to us as if we would not perceive the object to be a blue book, if it were not a blue book. It is in this sense that the perceived object is presented as determining which features it appears to have as part of the perception. And second, it seems to us as if our perception would not have occurred, if the book did not exist. It is in this sense that our perceptions seem to be *dependent on*, and to *relate us to*, particular objects in the world. Taking into account the sense of the presence of the object, the resulting impression may also be described as an impression of a *direct or immediate determination* by the perceived objects.¹⁹

Besides, the impression of a determination by mind-independent entities comes also with an impression of *involuntariness in origin and persistence* — something which is lacking, for instance, in the case of acts of visualising. We experience perceptions — in contrast, say, to actively produced and sustained images — as occurring and as staying in existence in an unbidden manner. However, since this complex phenomenal aspect of perceptions is not of importance for what follows, we will not further discuss it here.²⁰

II.

This extensive and detailed description of the phenomenal character of perceptions can be used to shed more light on the character of other mental episodes.

With one notable exception, episodes of sensory memory, too, possess all the mentioned phenomenal aspects distinctive of perceptions. The exception in question is that, while perceived objects appear to be present and, in particular, simultaneous with our experience of them, recalled objects are presented as being past — or, if one prefers, as having being a certain way in the past.²¹ This phenomenal difference has the consequence that the two kinds of experience also differ with respect to how they present themselves as being linked to their objects. Sensory memories appear to be determined by — and thus appear to relate us to — objects from (or perceived in) the past, and not the present. When we recall the visual appearance of a blue book, it seems to us as if we would not remember the book to be blue, if it had not been blue in the past when we perceived it to be so. And it also seems to us as if

¹⁹Cf. Martin [2003]: especially *, and Martin [2001]: especially 273ff. Note also that Martin understands immediacy as an aspect of the transparency of experience (cf. Martin [2003]: 413) and that the transparency of memories and imaginings involves only an 'analogue of immediacy', linked to their non-neutrality towards the past or the imagined, rather than towards the present (cf. Martin [2003]: 413f.; Martin [2001]: *). This is related to his idea that immediacy and transparency are the mark of sensory experience (cf. the first approach to the sensory discussed below).

²⁰See Dorsch [2009b] for a more detailed description of this complex phenomenal aspect, as well as considerations about less central elements, such as the vivacity or clarity of sensory presentations.

²¹Perceptions and sensory memories may also differ in other phenomenal aspects, such as their vividness or clarity. But we take it that such differences are at best typical. For instance, there may be vivid memories and unclear perceptions (cf. Budd [1991]:104, on seeing and visualising).

our memory would not have occurred, if the book had not existed in the past and if we therefore had not perceived it in the first place. It is in this — slightly different — sense that episodic memories present their past objects as their determinants.²² Both perceptual and mnemonic presentations seem to us to be dependent on the apprehended objects and their material features and, in this sense, seem to provide us with access to the latter. But only the perceptions appear to directly relate us to entities which seem to be actually present before us at the time of our experience of them. Episodic memories, by contrast, seem to be determined indirectly by their objects in so far as these determining objects appear to belong to (or to have been perceived in) the past.

Now, judgemental thoughts (as well as possibly other thoughts) may show many of the aspects of the phenomenal character of perceptions as well. When we are thinking of a book as being blue, the book is presented to us as being distinct and independent of our thought, and also as concrete. For conceiving of it as *a book* (or, say, instead as *that thing over there*) means, in part, conceiving of it as a certain kind of concrete and independent entity outside of our mind. The same is true of the appearances of particularity, locatedness, existence and presence. If we are thinking of the book as *that book actually on the table in front of us*, we thereby take the book to exist with a particular identity and to be present in our actual environment at a specific spatio-temporal location. This is simply part of the concepts that we employ in our thought. Of course, not all ways of conceiving of objects involve all or even some of these elements. If we are thinking of the book as *fictional*, for instance, at least the latter four aspects are missing. And when we are judging that a certain card game is intelligent, the resulting thought does not present its object as concrete, present or having a determinate location. But all that is important for current purposes, however, is to note that objects of thoughts may be presented as possessing all of the features just mentioned.²³

None the less, judgemental thoughts — just like episodic memories — differ from perceptions with respect to the sense of determination they involve. And this time, the difference is more radical since judgemental thoughts do not present their objects as their determinants at all. Instead, we experience judgemental thoughts as determined by epistemic reasons — even in cases in which we are unable to identify those reasons, or in which the occurrence of the thoughts is in fact due to some merely causal factors. For — as one of us has argued at length elsewhere

²²It is still an open question whether we experience our episodic memories also as being determined by our past perceptions of the objects concerned; and if so, whether there is anything more to our experience of our memories as being determined by their objects. But given that perceptions are (experienced as being) determined by their objects, any impression of a determination by a past perception is likely to involve the impression of a determination by the respective perceived object.

²³*For the plausibility of talking of objects of thought, see, for instance, Husserl [1992] and Martin [2000]. And for the plausibility of taking thoughts to possess a character, and to take intellectual presentations to be forms of appearance, cf. * and Dorsch [2009a].

(cf. Dorsch [2009a]) — this best explains why we trust our judgements in belief and action, and why we take our judgements by default to be reasonable and not in need of revision. Spontaneous and similarly non-judgemental thoughts, on the other hand, do not come with such an impression of reasonableness and of determination by reasons; and we consequently do not trust them when extending or altering our picture of reality.

Episodes of imagining show a third kind of subjectively salient determination: we experience them as being determined by practical reasons.²⁴ This means that they present themselves as responsive to and guided by reasons for acting, which we are provided with by our conscious and concurrent intentions, desires, and so on.

Imaginative thoughts may still share most, if not all, other phenomenal aspects with the cognitive episodes (i.e., perceptions, memories and judgements). Since they may involve the same concepts and referential elements as judgemental thoughts, they can present their objects as existing, mind-independent, particular and present in roughly the same way as the latter can do this (e.g., when we imagine that *that book on the table before us* is red). And we also may experience some imaginative thoughts as being determined by quasi-epistemic reasons - that is, by reasons for supposition, rather than reasons for genuine belief. This may happen, for instance, when we employ them in hypothetical reasoning, or in the creation or appreciation of fictional stories. Consider the example of dreaming up a world exclusively filled with transparent objects and wondering about which theories of the world its inhabitants might come up with. This will involve imagining the visual experiences of the inhabitants as well as their resulting beliefs. And it will require altering the imagined beliefs in response to the imagined experiences. In fact, failing to take the imagined experiences to be reasons for the imagined beliefs would either mean failure in our imaginative project, or reveal some degree of irrationality on our behalf. Now, if our imaginative thoughts are rationally responsive to our sensory imaginings, this may have the effect that we experience the former as being based on reasons provided by the latter. But although the reasons in question function very similarly to our real-life epistemic reasons, they are not of the same kind, given that they are not reasons for beliefs about reality.²⁵

Episodes of sensory imagining, on the other hand, are phenomenally more removed from their cognitive counterparts than imaginative thoughts are from judgemental ones. The main reason for this is that their objects are presented as particular, existing, and so on, only if they are accompanied by additional thoughts or intentions to this effect (cf. *).²⁶ As already noted, sensory imaginings are by

²⁴At least if they constitute mental actions (cf. Dorsch [2009a,c]). But it is very plausible to assume that many — if not all — episodes of imagining are intrinsically active (cf. *ibid.*).

²⁵Cf. also Currie & Ravenscroft for the observation that the rational relations in which imaginative thoughts stand parallel those in which judgemental thoughts stand (cf. Currie and Ravenscroft [2003]: e.g., 49, 81, 93f. and 100).

²⁶We stay neutral here on the question of whether these additional intellectual elements are (always) part of the sensory imaginings; and if so, whether they by default qualify the imag-

default unspecific about the particular identities, locations and extensions of their concrete objects and do not present them as existing or as mind-independent. And any determination of their particularity or their other ontological features demands the involvement of some additional intellectual elements. The same requirement is not in place in the case of perceptions or sensory memories, since they present their objects always as determinate, existing, and so on.

III.

Our next aim is to provide some support for *Experiential Rationalism* by arguing that the phenomenal character of the various cognitive episodes reveals their reason-giving power. As already suggested, the character of perceptions adequately reflects important aspects of their respective nature.²⁷ It is indeed distinctive of perceptions that they relate us to particular and present objects in the actual world. Moreover, how they present these objects as being is determined directly by how the latter are. Accordingly, perceptions provide us with immediate access to mind-independent objects and their material features. This gives rise to the fact that we are entitled to rely on them when forming beliefs about the world. Perceptions provide warrant for our beliefs precisely because they directly relate us to reality. The situation is very similar for episodic memories — with the qualification that they are concerned with the past, rather than the present. Episodes of the sensory imagination, however, do not relate us to the actual world and therefore by themselves lack the power to justify our beliefs about reality.²⁸ And, just as in the case of perceptions and memories, this aspect of their nature is reflected in their phenomenal character — or so we would like to argue. The idea is that we experience perceptions and sensory memories, but not sensory imaginings, as providing us with reasons for belief. And the main consideration in favour of this claim is that the postulated phenomenal difference best explains why we are motivated and justified to trust our perceptions and memories, but not our imaginings, when forming our views on reality.

Consider for a moment the case of hallucinations. Trusting them in belief formation can never lead to knowledge about reality, given that they do not relate us to the world.²⁹ But it may still be rational to rely on them; and whether it is depends largely on their phenomenal character. If a hallucination is subjectively indistin-

ined objects as perceived within the imagined world. See Peacocke [1985] and Martin [2003] for considerations in favour of a positive answer.

²⁷Notable exceptions may be states which are defective in one way or another. Some hallucinations, for instance, are experienced by us as if they were perceptions and did relate us to the world, despite of this not being so. We discuss the nature of the resulting error, which occurs already on the first-order experiential level, in Soldati and Dorsch [2010] and Dorsch [2010].

^{28*}They may acquire such a power due to their embedding in a suitable mental project...

²⁹And it is arguable that this is due, not merely to a lack of truth, but also to a lack of justification (cf. McDowell(*)). We would like to stay neutral here on the issue of how epistemic justification and rationality are actually linked to each other.

guishable from perceptions and thus wrongly seems to be a perception, it would be irrational for the subject concerned not to endorse it in belief - unless she becomes aware of its hallucinatory status by other means, such as observation or testimony (cf. McDowell (*)). If, on the other hand, it is first-personally discriminable and thus marked as something distinct from a perception, it would be irrational for the subject in question to actually rely on it in belief formation. However, from a third-personal perspective, both kinds of hallucinations do not differ significantly. Hence, that we do trust hallucinations of the first, but not of the second kind and are rational in doing so is to be accounted for in part by reference to their phenomenal character.³⁰

This explanation presupposes that the character of perceptions involves certain phenomenal aspects, which are partly responsible for our epistemic reliance on them and on all other episodes with a first-personally indistinguishable character. Moreover, it suggests that the very same aspects are missing in the case of those sensory episodes which we do not put trust in when acquiring beliefs about the world — notably subjectively recognisable hallucinations and sensory imaginings. There are basically two kinds of candidates for these phenomenal aspects. On the one hand, there is the impression of the determination by an actually and mind-independently existing object — an impression which is present in perceptions (as well as perception-like hallucinations) and episodic memories, but absent in their openly hallucinatory or imaginative counterparts (cf. *). And, on the other hand, there is the impression of the provision of a certain epistemic reason which, again, pertains to the former, but not to the latter types of sensory episode. The two options are compatible with each other. In fact, it is plausible to maintain that one way of experiencing an episode as providing us with an epistemic reason is just to experience it as being determined by — and thus also as relating us to — specific parts of reality. But, more importantly, that the phenomenal character of our sensory episodes is central to our rational reliance on them and, in particular, that the relevant experience is one of reason-provision (and not merely one of determination by reality) should become clear once we focus on the distinction between epistemic entitlement and epistemic trust.

Whether sensory episodes entitle us to form beliefs about reality and thus put us into the position to acquire knowledge depends on whether they relate us to the actual world. But epistemic trust is not a matter of the presence of entitlement. We may fail to rely on experiences, despite being entitled to endorse them in belief — for

³⁰This is true even if subjective indistinguishability does not mean here sameness of phenomenal character. If the character of the first kind of hallucination is different — though first-personally indistinguishable — from that of perceptions, our reliance on it has to be accounted for in terms of its character (wrongly) seeming to us to be perceptual in nature. Hence, it is still their possession of a certain kind of phenomenal character — namely one subjectively indiscriminable from the character of perceptions — which accounts for our rational trust in it. Besides, we have argued in Soldati and Dorsch [2010] and Dorsch [2010] that perception-like hallucinations do possess the same phenomenal character as the corresponding perceptions.

instance, when we take them to be hallucinatory or imaginative. And we may trust experiences which do not provide us with epistemic warrant — such as, arguably, hallucinations which are first-personally indistinguishable from perceptions. Moreover, we need not count as irrational in either case. In fact, rationality may very well require us to act contrary to the (unknown) presence or absence of entitlement. This shows that epistemic reliance is, rather, a matter of taking entitlement to be present and to be ours. That is, it is a matter of taking the respective episodes to provide epistemic reasons, and of taking these reasons to be reasons for us. The relationality of perceptions and sensory memories plays a central role in explaining why they entitle us to believe, or provide us with epistemic reasons. But it cannot account for the subjective element involved in epistemic reliance — that we take ourselves to be entitled to form the respective beliefs. Only the latter makes it rational from our perspective to trust our perceptions and episodic memories.

Now, taking these sensory episodes to warrant beliefs does not require having any mental states over and above them — such as higher-order beliefs about their perceptual or mnemonic nature. It suffices to consciously enjoy the perceptions and memories and to experience them as *providing us with epistemic reasons* — which means, in this case, to experience them as *providing us with access to the world*. Furthermore, as already suggested, we do the latter precisely because they present their objects as enjoying actual and mind-independent existence and as being their actual determinants. Discriminable hallucinations and sensory imaginings, on the other hand, lack these phenomenal aspects — which is why we do not experience them as providing us with epistemic reasons and, hence, do not rely on them when forming beliefs about reality. Moreover, this difference in character explains why it would be irrational for us, say, to endorse sensory imaginings, or to fail to endorse perceptions: we experience the latter, but not the former, as providing us with epistemic reasons. The resulting picture treats epistemic reliance still as non-inferential. For it claims that we rely on perceptions and memories simply because we experience them as providing us with epistemic reasons while consciously enjoying them — and not because we form any additional judgements or beliefs about their nature or epistemic status.³¹

A very similar line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that we experience judgemental thoughts, but no other thoughts, as providing us with reasons for belief. Again, what needs to be accounted for is that it is rational for us to trust our judgements, but not our spontaneous or imaginative thoughts, as premisses in reasoning about reality. Any answer to this explanatory challenge should make reference to the fact that we experience only the judgemental thoughts as being determined by epistemic reasons and, therefore, as being epistemically reasonable. Indeed, if their phenomenal character were different, we would not rely on them, but instead give them up or revise them — assuming that we are rational. Moreover, in the light

^{31*}Besides, the account is neutral on whether epistemic reasons are facts in the world, or the experiences concerned, or something else, such as propositions.

of the difference between epistemic entitlement (*) and epistemic rationality, the respective experience needs to be a way of taking the thoughts concerned to provide epistemic reasons for us. That is, it needs to be an experience of reason-provision.

Consequently, we experience perceptions, memories and judgements (but none of their cognitive counterparts) as providing us with epistemic reasons, and the latter also as being determined by epistemic reasons. The resulting account of the phenomenal character of our cognitive episodes therefore conforms to the main tenet of Experiential Rationalism, according to which the rational role of our mental episodes is subjectively salient as part of their character. In addition, perhaps the most crucial element in the generation of this experience of rationality is the the impression of determination — whether by objects or by reasons. For we experience our cognitive episodes as reason-giving either by experiencing them as relating us to the world, or by experiencing them as being supported by reasons for beliefs about reality. And both experiences arise out of the respective impressions of determination by objects or by reasons.

IV.

So far, we have identified various phenomenal aspects of perceptions and other mental episodes. And we have argued that most of them are linked, in one way or another, to the rational role of the episodes concerned. If our argument has been successful, it has established the existence of a rational dimension of the phenomenal character of perceptions, sensory memories and judgemental thoughts. In the remainder of this article, we would like to say a bit more about this rational dimension. More specifically, we would like to characterise further the different ways in which phenomenal aspects may be connected to the proposed experience of rationality and to use this characterisation in an attempt to group the aspects into three kinds — the sensory, the intellectual, and the rational aspects. We will start with the issue of what is the common phenomenal element in our experiences of perceptions, memories and judgements as reason-providing, given that the underlying impressions of determination involved in them differ fundamentally from each other. Not only does this question arise straight from the observation of the intimate link between the first-personally salient rationality and determination of our cognitive episodes. But answering it will also shed more light on what it means to experience episodes as reason-giving and help us later on with our specification of the three categories of phenomenal aspects.

Our proposal is that the common element in our experiences of episodes as reason-providing is some form of first-personally salient *non-neutrality* or *commitment*. In the case of perceptions and episodic memories, this non-neutrality arises, again, out of the presentation of the perceived or remembered objects as determinants of how they are experienced. When we are perceiving or sensorily membering an object, the latter is presented as determining how it is perceived or remembered

as being. Accordingly, we get the impression that the object indeed possesses the features that it appears to have as part of our perception or memory. The respective episodes are therefore non-neutral about the presentation of their objects as having certain features: they involve a subjectively salient endorsement of this presentation, which means that they take their objects to be the way which they present them as being. More generally, perceptions are non-neutral towards the material features of concrete and particular parts of the mind-independent and present reality. Episodes of sensory memory, on the other hand, take a stance on how specific parts of the actual world have been in the past. That is, they make a claim about how things actually were, and not about how they actually are (cf. Martin [2001]). What both types of episode have in common, however, is that their commitment is concerned with reality: they are non-neutral about particular real objects being a certain way, whether in the present or the past. This aspect of their character is part of why we epistemically rely on them when forming beliefs about the world. Indeed, it is part of why we experience them as providers of epistemic reasons. Their non-neutrality is therefore *epistemic* in nature.

There is a sense in which perceptions and memories may also be said to be ‘non-neutral’ towards the more fundamental ontological properties of their objects, such as their particularity and mind-independent existence. But there is at least one significant difference between the already discussed non-neutrality towards material features and any additional ‘non-neutrality’ towards more basic ontological properties. For while the former figure in our perceptual or mnemonic beliefs, the latter do not. Consider the mind-independent existence of the perceived objects and their features. Although it is true that we take them to exist mind-independently in our interaction with them, the judgement that they enjoy mind-independent existence is not of the same type as the judgement that the book is blue, say. In particular, while the latter is perceptually warranted, the former is not. Instead, judging the mind-independent existence of what we are perceiving requires reflection on the nature of our experience of it. One way of doing this is to attend to one particular aspect of the phenomenal character of perceptions, namely that they present themselves as relations to mind-independently existing entities. Unless we are aware of a reason to doubt the adequacy of this impression, we are entitled to take it at face value and judge our experience to be a perception of mind-independent reality. The presentation of the ontological properties of the perceived objects is therefore part of the (self-)presentation of the perceptual nature of the perception concerned. And this presentation — just as the resulting justification — is *experiential*, which means that it pertains to our first-personal experience of what perceptions and other mental episodes are like.³² By contrast, our perceptual beliefs are concerned solely

³²We discuss this token-reflexive presentation and our self-knowledge based on it in more detail in Soldati and Dorsch [2010] and Dorsch [2010]. Especially the latter work also addresses the difference between the perceptual presentation of the material features instantiated in the world and the experiential presentation of the relational features bridging the gap between mind and

with how the world is like, and not with the nature of our relevant perceptions of the world. This difference in how our perceptions may ground beliefs about their objects is reflected by the fact that the presentation of the ontological properties is the same for all perceptions and in fact essential to their perceptual nature, while the presentation of material features is specific to each particular situation and object.

Now, judgemental thoughts are non-neutral in exactly the same sense in which perceptions and sensory memories are non-neutral: they make a claim about how reality is like, that is, are committed to reality being a certain way, namely how they present it to be. The only difference is that judgemental thoughts are epistemically non-neutral because they present themselves as being determined, not by real objects, but by reasons for beliefs about real objects — such as those reasons provided by presentations which appear to relate to the world (i.e., perceptions or episodic memories). But the distinct kinds of cognitive episode still share their first-personally disclosed epistemic commitment. And it is, minimally, this phenomenal aspect which constitutes the substantial common element in their impressions of being providers of epistemic reasons. Mere thoughts and non-cognitive episodes are not committal in this sense. The simple thought that the book is blue presents the books as being blue, but does not endorse it as being blue. Wondering whether the book is blue or desiring it to be blue also do not take a stance on whether the book is blue, despite being about the exemplification of blueness by the book. By contrast, seeing a blue book and judging a book to be blue involve the claim that it is as it is presented, namely blue.³³

V.

The conclusion that the phenomenal character of our cognitive episodes reflects their rational role and, as a central part of this reflection, includes an epistemic commitment enables us now to divide the phenomenal aspects involved into three groups. The basic division concerns the nature of their contribution to the non-neutrality of the episodes in question. Some of the aspects are responsible for the general occurrence and type of the non-neutrality at issue — notably, that it comes with an epistemic commitment towards the real world and that it is either perceptual, or mnemonic or judgemental in nature. Other aspects contribute instead to the more specific determination of what the respective presentations are non-neutral about and epistemically committed to.

Consider the case of a perception of a blue book. The book appears to be blue;

world.

³³The distinction between neutral and non-neutral presentation parallels that between semantic and stative representation to be found in Martin [2003]. Compare also the example of entering a classroom and finding the sentence 'the book is blue' written on the blackboard (cf. (*)): it is clear that the sentence presents something to be a certain way, but it is yet undecided whether it is also meant as an endorsement of what is presented.

and it appears to exist independently of our experience of it. If the book were not to appear to exist, or were to appear to depend for its existence on our experience of it, our perception would not come with an epistemic commitment concerning the blueness of the book. This is exactly what happens when we are visualising a blue book: the book does not appear to exist independently of our experience of it, and our experience does not incline or warrant us to form a judgement about how the world is like. The corresponding phenomenal aspects are therefore crucial to the type of non-neutrality involved (if any). By contrast, if the perceived book were not to appear to be blue, it would still appear to have some other property instead (e.g., another colour) and would thus still commit us to a judgement about what the book is like. Accordingly, while the appearance of blueness is irrelevant for the fact that our perception of the book involves an epistemic endorsement, the appearance of existence and mind-independence is essential to this involvement. None the less, the appearance of blueness still contributes something to the epistemic non-neutrality of our perception of the book. For it identifies the specific nature of this epistemic commitment — namely that it is a commitment to the ascription of blueness to the book, rather than that of another property.

The line of thought concerning other phenomenal aspects is similar. As already suggested, the first-personal non-neutrality of perceptions is largely due to the fact that they seem to be determined by their objects.³⁴ If the perceived book were not to appear to determine our experience of it and, especially, which material properties it appears to have as part of this experience, the latter would not commit us to the ascription of those properties to the book. For if our experience were not phenomenally marked as being responsive to and influenced by the actual properties of the book, it would not purport to provide us with access to the latter and therefore involve no claim about its actual properties. Furthermore, the impression of objects as determinants of experience presupposes a sense of their concreteness and particularity, including a determinate extension and location. There could not be an appearance of determination by and dependence on an unspecified object, that is, an object which fails to be presented as having a particular identity and determinate spatio-temporal features. Episodes of visualising do not appear to be determined by their objects partly because they do not as such present us with particular and specifically located objects. Correspondingly, they do not make a claim about how concrete parts of the real world are like.³⁵ Finally, the non-neutrality of perceptions is marked as perceptual — rather than as mnemonic — due to their presentation of

³⁴*In the case of imaginings, what gives rise to the non-neutrality is the determination by the active intentions. Problem: what about cases of misperformance?

³⁵Episodes of sensory imagining may still commit us to the acceptance of certain facts about types of objects (e.g., that book covers are rectangular in shape). But the respective pieces of knowledge are not delivered by the imaginative episodes. Instead, the occurrence of the latter depends on the exploitation of this knowledge (cf. Dorsch [2009c]). — *Similarly, visualising a blue book may incline and entitle us to judge that the experienced book does not exist. But this would not be a perceptual commitment.

objects as presently being a certain way.

The phenomenal aspects distinctive of perceptions can therefore be grouped into those which are responsible for their general possession of an epistemic and, in particular, perceptual non-neutrality; and into those which instead determine what the perceptions are epistemically committed to, namely the ascription of certain material features to objects in the world. While the presentations of material features belong to the second group, the presentations of (many of³⁶) the more basic ontological properties belong to the first. It hopefully becomes clear — even without spelling this out in any more detail — that exactly the same division is present in the cases of sensory memories and of judgemental thoughts.

However, the phenomenal aspects of cognitive episodes may differ in their relation to epistemic rationality in another way, which is orthogonal to the distinction just described. More specifically, they may be *sensitive to epistemic reasons* or not. That a phenomenal aspect is sensitive to epistemic reasons means that — on the assumption of full rationality — our coming to be aware of the latter brings about a change in the former. Some examples may help to illustrate this. If we perceive a slender person with long hair from behind and take her to be a woman, how the person appears to us will change if we come to learn that she is actually a man. Again, if we see what looks to you as a bunch of flowers, but then touch them and feel that they are actually made out of plastic, their appearance will change, and thus the character of our experience. Similarly, what we take to be the façade of a voluminous building looks different to us from what we take to be a mere façade with no building behind it. And switching from seeing a depiction of a duck to seeing a depiction of a rabbit involves a change in phenomenal character. Or, finally, if we overhear very few fragments of a conversation, namely repeated utterances of the sounds 'gift', and think that the speaker is talking about a present, our experience will change, once we have realised that he is actually speaking German and talking about poison instead.³⁷

As a matter of fact, the phenomenal aspects responsible for the occurrence of a perceptual commitment — that is, the aspects concerned with the presentation of the more basic ontological properties of the perceived objects — are insensitive to epistemic reasons. When we are perceiving something, it is presented as a concrete, particular, determinately located, existing, mind-independent and present determinant of our perception of it. None of these phenomenal aspects will change if we come to doubt or believe — perhaps on justified grounds — that there is in fact no such object that we are perceiving, say.³⁸ A prominent example is the impression of objectivity. Even people, who believe that colours and other secondary qualities

³⁶Unclear cases are, perhaps, the presentation of objects as being concrete, or as having determinate spatio-temporal locations and extensions.

³⁷*Cases in which concepts are misapplied, lacking or newly acquired...

³⁸This is the case even if one denies that hallucinations share any of these phenomenal aspects (cf. Martin [2006]). For this denial still leaves room for perceptions which we wrongly (but justifiedly) believe to be hallucinatory.

are projections of our minds onto the world, except that they continue to experience them as mind-independently instantiated features.³⁹ More sweeping examples are sceptical scenarios, which question our claim to knowledge about the external world precisely by casting general doubt on the adequacy of the (acknowledged) complex impression of a perceptual access to reality.⁴⁰

Which material features perceived objects appear to have, on the other hand, may be dependent on which epistemic reasons we recognise as such. The scope of perceivability and of perceptual knowledge are difficult to determine (cf. Millar [2000]). And it has been controversial whether (some types of) perceptions are cognitively penetrable or impenetrable in the way described (cf. Audi (*), McDowell (*) and Dretske (*)). But assuming that we can see more complex properties, such as being a woman or being a flower, the respective perceptual presentations will be sensitive to reasons — as illustrated by the examples given above. That the hair of the person appears to be long or that the flowers appear to be red, however, do not constitute reason-sensitive aspects of phenomenal character. They stay the same, even if we find out that — contrary to our experiences — the person has short hair, or the flowers a yellowish tone. Each of the perceptions' phenomenal aspects discussed in this article therefore belongs to one — and only one — of the following three categories: (i) reason-insensitive aspects determining what the episodes concerned are non-neutral about; (ii) reason-sensitive aspects determining what the episodes concerned are non-neutral about; and (iii) aspects which are responsible for the general occurrence and type of the non-neutrality in question.

The issue of whether episodic memories involve not only aspects of the first and the third, but also aspects of the second kind corresponds to the issue raised above with respect to perceptions. And again, we do not want to rule out this possibility here. If we learn that what we visually recall is not the façade of a building, but instead just a mere façade, how it appears to us may very well change accordingly (e.g., it may stop to appear to be voluminous). Similarly, how things are presented to us in judgemental thoughts is sensitive to reasons as well. Indeed, it is responsive to reasons in a more radical way. In the case of perceptions or memories, there are always some presentational aspects concerning the material features of the perceived objects which stay constant. Accordingly, a perception does not disappear, but merely changes in response to the impact of epistemic reasons. By contrast, no aspect of the judgemental presentation of material features is resistant to the rational influence of epistemic reasons. This explains why judgemental thoughts may cease to exist altogether, once they are epistemically challenged. But it also means that judgemental thoughts do not involve phenomenal aspects of kind (i).⁴¹ Besides,

³⁹Which is why they endorse some kind of error theory (cf. Mackie (*) and Boghossian (*)).

⁴⁰Compare the various forms of Cartesian and Humean scepticism (Wright (*)). For a discussion of what it may mean for a phenomenal aspect to be misleading, cf. Soldati and Dorsch [2010] and Dorsch [2010].

⁴¹*Possible exceptions: visual thinking; imagistic thoughts; etc.?

the reason-sensitivity extends to the aspects of kind (iii) in the case of judgemental thoughts. When we realise that there is in fact no object on the table before us, we should and normally will give up our judgement that there is an (existing and mind-independent) book on the table.

[*The two main phenomenal aspects, which distinguish judgemental thoughts from perceptions and episodic memories, are intimately linked to each other. It is part of the nature of judgemental thoughts that they are fully responsive to epistemic reasons and, at least in rational subjects, are based on epistemic reasons.⁴² This fact is reflected by their phenomenal character in that we always experience them as responses to epistemic reasons (even if they are not such responses). But it is also partly constituted by the fact that their presentation of material properties is, in its entirety, sensitive to epistemic reasons.⁴³ Accordingly, we would not experience judgemental thoughts as based on reasons, if how they present objects to be were not sensitive to reasons. The experience of judgements as reason-based thus reflects the more fundamental fact of their reason-sensitivity.⁴⁴]

VI.

The preceding considerations suggest that, at least among the cognitive episodes, the contrast between the sensory presentations (i.e., perceptions and episodic memories) and the non-sensory presentations (i.e., judgemental thoughts) is co-extensional with the contrast between at least partly reason-insensitive and fully reason-sensitive presentations of material features of objects. And this promises, again, an account of the distinction between the sensory and the non-sensory in rationalist terms. In this final (*) section, we would like to assess this view. It will turn out that, in order to be able to capture sensory imaginings as well, the condition of reason-insensitivity has to be supplemented by the condition of non-neutrality. Our hope is then to make plausible the idea that the three categories of phenomenal aspects identified in the last section indeed capture the sensory, the intellectual and the rational elements of phenomenal character. But to start off, it is necessary to say a bit more about the scope of the sensory.

For there are two legitimate views on this issue, which can be brought to the

⁴²Cf. Dorsch [2009a] for a discussion of how to deal with self-evident judgements (if there are any).

⁴³Perceptions and emotions, in contrast, are only partially rational in that how they present objects to be changes only to some extent in the face of opposing epistemic reasons (cf. above for perceptions, and Dorsch [2007] for emotions).

⁴⁴It is interesting to note that perceptions — to the extent to which their presentational aspects are sensitive to epistemic reasons — will also be determined by epistemic reasons and will accordingly present not only their objects, but also epistemic reasons, as their determinants. When we are seeing the façade of a building as the façade of a building, how it appears to us seems to be determined, not only by how it in fact is, but also by whatever brings us to take it to be part of a building in the first place.

fore by the following examples. Actual experiences of pain, on the one hand, and episodic memories or imaginings of pain, on the other, are at the same time similar and different with respect to their character of painfulness. That they are phenomenally similar is reflected by the fact that we group them together under the heading of experiences of pain. They both show, as part of their phenomenal character, an aspect of painfulness. But they also differ in how they involve such a phenomenal aspect.⁴⁵ In particular, their involvement of painfulness has, in each case, a very different impact on our behaviour. For instance, we do not take an aspirin in order to get rid of a recalled or imagined pain. However, this and similar differences cannot be accounted for in terms of degrees of painfulness. Instead, they require the assumption of a difference in kind of aspect: actual pain experiences involve a different quality of painfulness than episodic memories or imaginings of pain. Similarly, seeing a red object and recalling or visualising one have something subjectively salient in common: they are appearances of something red. But they also differ first-personally: they do not involve the same quality of reddishness. That is, on some level of specification, perceptions, memories and imaginings of a red object involve the same phenomenal aspect; but on another, more fine-grained level, they involve different, but still very similar aspects — at least much similar to each other than to those involved in thoughts about red objects.

Examples like these have motivated some to limit the scope of the sensory to actual perceptions (and sensations), and to treat episodic memories or imaginings as mere copies or echoes of the sensory. Accordingly, the former and the latter do not share a common sensory core, but show a qualitative difference in respect of how they present even the most basic features (such as colours or textures) of their objects (cf. Martin [2001]). But the very same examples also give support to the idea that all three types of episode — and in contrast to all thought — are sensory in a broader sense, and that the differences among them concern their different ways of realising this more comprehensive form of sensoriness. In what follows, we will be mainly concerned with the latter and broader notion of sensoriness. The former is comparatively easy to capture. A straightforward proposal is to take an episode to be sensory in the narrower sense — that is, to take it to be a perception — just in case it possesses the described phenomenal aspects and, in particular, the impression of an immediate determination by a present object. Martin [2003, 2001], for instance, accepts this narrower notion of sensoriness and provides an account of the corresponding resemblances among perceptions, memories and imaginings in terms of the idea that the latter two are representations of the former and therefore show an analogue of immediacy, namely represented immediacy. But this treatment does not address the applicability of the wider notion of sensoriness, given that it does not identify a phenomenal feature common to all three kinds of episode. For an impression of immediate determination is different from a presentation of an

^{45*}One issue is whether they involve the same aspect in different ways, or different, but similar aspects in the same way. — Exemplifying vs. representing painfulness.

experience involving such an impression.⁴⁶

Our own interest lies in the possibility of identifying such a common element, and we will therefore turn our attention to the question of the sense (if any) in which perceptual, mnemonic and imaginative presentations share their sensoriness and differ from non-sensory presentations, such as thoughts or conative episodes. Our starting point is the idea that the partial⁴⁷ reason-sensitivity of the presentation of material features — that is, of precisely those features which non-neutral episodes are non-neutral about — is an indicator of sensoriness. The resulting view can indeed capture the sensoriness not only of perceptions and episodic memories, but also of the respective imaginings, given that the latter are at least partially unresponsive to epistemic reasons with respect to which material properties they ascribe to their objects. But the same is true of non-judgemental thoughts and conative episodes, and the proposal thus faces the immediate difficulty of not being able to characterise the latter as non-sensory.

It is here that non-neutrality becomes important. Both mere or spontaneous thoughts and conative presentations are neutral towards their presentational aspects. Neither merely entertaining the possibility that a (certain) book is blue, nor having a longing feeling for a blue book take some object or another to be a blue book. They both stay neutral on their presentation of a blue book.⁴⁸ This leaves sensory and intellectual imaginings.⁴⁹ Neither of them is epistemically non-neutral, at least not by themselves.⁵⁰ But instead of being non-neutral towards reality, they can still be understood as being non-neutral towards an imagined world — that is, as involving an imaginative commitment. Here is how Martin puts it with respect to visualising:

'When one visualises an ocean like the Pacific, one imagines a blue expanse. [...] Visualising the water puts you into a position of not being neutral with respect to the *imagined* situation. In visualising the expanse of water, one is not non-committal whether the imagined situation contains a blue expanse of water. Furthermore, visualising in this way can have consequences for what one accepts about the imagined situation and hence what one comes to believe is possible.' (Martin [2003]:

⁴⁶Besides, there is the further issue of how to deal with perception-like hallucinations - that is, the issue of whether the presence (and not merely the impression of the presence) of a perceptual relation to the world is required for being a perception as well (cf. *)

⁴⁷Or the full one, if it is denied that how we perceive or recall things as being is responsive to epistemic reasons at all.

⁴⁸Note that entertaining the possibility that a (certain) book is blue is different from judging that a (certain) book can be blue: the proposition entertained during the former does not involve any modal concept.

⁴⁹Unbidden images may be treated in the same way as sensory imaginings, independently of whether the former should be counted among the instances of imagining.

⁵⁰*Though we may visualise something in such a way that it may justify a corresponding perceptual belief about an actual (i.e., non-modal) fact in the world (cf. Dorsch [2009c]).

413f.)

The episode of visualising the ocean does not merely present us with a blue ocean — as, for instance, the conscious desire to see a blue ocean does. It also takes this blue ocean to be part of the imagined world. If the latter were not the case, the episode of visualizing could have no rational impact on what we intellectually imagine about the imagined situation — say, as part of an imaginative project similar to the one described above in section *. In the last sentence of the quote above, Martin suggests that what is crucial here is, rather, the rational impact that episodes of visualizing may have on our beliefs about the imagined situation, as well as on our belief of what is possible. But it is not clear how this could distinguish episodes of visualising from conscious desires, given that the latter may have a rational impact on our beliefs about what we desire and, possibly, also on our beliefs of what is possible (e.g., if it turns out that we cannot genuinely desire the impossible, such as possessing a round square). However, in the case of conative episodes, there is no equivalent to the possibility of a quasi-epistemic link between sensory and intellectual imaginings — not the least, presumably, because there are no conative mental projects. Correspondingly, our judgements about what we long for make a claim about our state of mind, not about any situation or world distinct from our mind.

Similar considerations can be put forward in support of the claim that imaginative thoughts, too, involve a commitment concerning how the imagined world is like. For intellectual imaginings could not be responsive to quasi-epistemic reasons (i.e., to reasons for *), if they were not non-neutral towards the imagined situation. Hence, they are non-neutral, minimally, to the extent to which they are reason-sensitive in this specific way.⁵¹ The respective commitment is of course also imaginative in nature. That is, it pertains to the presentation of objects as belonging to an imagined world, rather than the real one.⁵² Furthermore, the presentation of material features

⁵¹Velleman may have had something similar in mind when proposing that intellectual imaginings share with judgemental thoughts the attitude of regarding propositions as true (cf. Velleman [2000]: 248ff.). One problem with his proposal is, however, that he does not further specify what it means for an episode to regard a proposition as true, apart from noting that it does not amount to the stronger commitment of taking reality to be a certain way. And another difficulty is that he uses this idea also to specify the direction of fit of judgemental and imaginative thoughts — which appears to force him to accept that merely thinking something involves some form of non-neutrality as well. Besides, our proposal is weaker than Velleman's in that it does not put forward a claim about all instances of intellectual imaginings. Instead, it leaves room for non-neutral imaginative thoughts. For instance, if it is true that a thought is already imaginative if it is formed in direct response to the intention to produce a mental presentation of certain objects and features, then simple imaginative thoughts need not be committal (cf. Dorsch [2009c]: *). The underlying idea is that intellectual imaginings come with an imaginative commitment or 'attitude' only if they are embedded in a wider mental project — precisely because they acquire a sensitivity to quasi-epistemic reasons only in the context of such a project. * Problem: why not the same true of the potential of sensory imaginings to provide quasi-epistemic reasons?

⁵²*Cf. the idea of an imaginative attitude.

involved in imaginative thoughts is fully sensitive to quasi-epistemic reasons. In contrast, sensory imaginative presentations of material features are, at least to some extent, resistant to such rational impact (though they are, as instances of mental agency, certainly open to the influence of practical considerations). For example, theoretical rationality does not demand of us to avoid visualising a person as blonde if we also suppose, as part of the same imaginative project, that her hair is dark. If there is any such rational pressure, it will be concerned with the reconsideration of what we intellectually imagine — requiring us, for instance, to give up the assumption that the person is dark-haired, or alternatively to imagine in addition that the visual image is part of an illusory experience within the imagined world.

It is true that the manifestation of the rational sensitivity of our imaginative thoughts requires mental agency on our behalf, while it is not clear whether our revision of our judgements is similarly active (cf. Harman [1986]: *, and Dorsch [2009a]). And it is also true that we do not always care, as part of a certain imaginative project, about the consistency or coherence of what we are imagining; and that this need not even be a sign of irrationality. But both observations are compatible with imaginative thoughts being sensitive to quasi-epistemic reasons. For the latter does not require that they do always change in response to such reasons, but only that this may happen and does happen under suitable conditions. In the case of judgemental thoughts, the latter comprise perhaps not much more than sufficient theoretical rationality. But in the case of imaginative thoughts, they may also include the absence of overriding practical concerns, given that the existence and effectiveness of the latter need not render the resulting thoughts to be irrational in any sense — contrary to what would be the case in judging. Consider again the example of visualising a person as being blonde, while also supposing her to have dark hair. Within the project of imagining how a friend of this imagined person sees her, we will come under rational pressure to revise or supplement our imaginative thought. But within the project of imagining different possible directions in which the life of the imagined person might develop, no such pressure arises — perhaps because what we end up imagining are two distinct and independent worlds.

If now read the characterisations of the three categories of phenomenal aspects from section * in terms of theoretical reasons, rather than merely epistemic ones, we get an improvement on the simple account of the sensory introduced above. The modified proposal is that a presentational aspect is sensory just in case it is insensitive to theoretical reasons and contributes to the determination of what the respective episode is non-neutral about. Accordingly, the sensory aspects of phenomenal character are identical with the phenomenal aspects of kind (i). And presentational episodes are sensory just in case they involve such sensory aspects — possibly in addition to reason-insensitive aspects of kind (ii). The requirement of non-neutrality towards the material properties of objects rules out mere or spontaneous thoughts and conative presentations. Adding the partial or full reason-insensitivity of the presentation of such properties enables us then to exclude judgemental and imaginative

thoughts as well.

Does this imply that sensoriness is constituted by non-neutrality and reason-insensitivity? Perhaps not, for there is still the possibility that one or several more fundamental features are constitute of sensoriness and responsible for the non-neutrality and unresponsiveness of theoretical reasons. Initially plausible candidate for such features are the common transparency or perspectivalness of perceptions, episodic memories and sensory imaginings (cf. Martin [2003]), or the determination by objects rather than reasons (cf. the Kantian notion of receptivity or object-provision). But a discussion of this issue has to wait for another occasion.

Another question that remains to be addressed is whether all non-sensory phenomenal aspects are intellectual (or conceptual) in nature. The aspects of kind (ii) — that is, the reason-sensitive presentations of material features — clearly pertain to our understanding and should therefore be treated as intellectual. But the situation is less obvious with respect to the phenomenal aspects of kind (iii) — that is, the presentations of objects as particular, existing mind-independent, and so on. These aspects may be labelled *rational phenomenal aspects* in so far as they are central to the occurrence of an experience of rational role (cf. section *). Moreover, their presence is a precondition for the non-neutral and reality-concerned presentation of objects and their material features. For it is the aspects of kind (iii) that establish the non-neutrality and concern for reality in question. In this function, they resemble very much the Kantian categories which, ideally, should have included all the concepts corresponding to the relevant aspects in our list in section *. So there is some plausibility to taking the latter to be intellectual as well. But there are also some reasons speaking against this conclusion. Most importantly, they are not responsive to theoretical reasons when occurring as part of the character of sensory episodes. Perhaps part of this — namely their insensitivity to empirical evidence — may be explained by reference to their status as preconditions for the presentation of material (or empirical) features. But this solution can still not account for the fact that, say, what subjectively seems to be a perception does not change or disappear once we come to believe with respect to it that there is really no perceived object. This fits well with the observation already made in section * that perceptual judgements and beliefs involve only the ascription of material features, but not that of the more basic ontological properties under discussion here. And it is also related to the further idea that the perception of real objects may not require the possession or employment of the respective ontological concepts. Besides, the underlying Kantian picture, that has motivated the characterisation of the aspects of kind (iii) as intellectual, is too radical in that it takes the presentation of existence, mind-independence, and so on, as a precondition for the presentation of objects in general, and not merely for the presentation of real objects. This raises the challenge to account for the apparent fact that sensory imaginings present us with objects. It is particularly pressing with respect to unbidden non-perceptual and non-mnemonic images, where it is not possible to point to an act of imagining or make-believe as

the source of the impression of the provision of an object.⁵³ Hence, the non-sensory and rational phenomenal aspects of kind (iii) are perhaps better not taken to be intellectual in the same sense as the aspects of kind (ii).

To sum up, there are three different kinds of presentational phenomenal aspects, as the example of perceptions illustrates. First, the character of the latter involves sensory elements of kind (i). A perception of a blue book takes the latter to be blue; and that the book appears to be blue both contributes to the character of the perception and is insensitive to, say, evidence that it in fact has a different colour. Second, the phenomenal character of perceptions may also involve intellectual elements of kind (ii). The perception of the blue book may take the latter to be a book; and that the book appears to be a book may both contribute to the character of the perception and be sensitive to, say, new evidence that it is in fact just a fake book. And third, the character of perceptions involves rational aspects of the kind (iii) — namely presentational aspects that are concerned with the more fundamental ontological properties of the objects, as well as with the resulting epistemic features of our perceptions. What is significant to note with respect to the debate about non-sensory phenomenal aspects is that aspects of the last kind are much more difficult to deny than intellectual elements concerned with the presentation of material features. It may be plausible to argue that properties like being a book or being a man are, strictly speaking, not really perceivable (cf. ref. *). But that perceptions present us with objects which appear to be concrete, in existence, particular, mind-independent or present, say, is very difficult to ignore. Of course, some of these aspects might be more controversial than others. But it is very hard to plausibly reject all of them. Part of the explanation of this difficulty is surely their centrality to conscious experience: they do not only render subjectively salient the type of the episodes concerned, but also reflect the latter's rational roles in our mental lives.⁵⁴

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⁵³*Such a manouvre for the Kantian was proposed to us by John McDowell.

⁵⁴Acknowledgements...

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