

## Notes for Week 9 of *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*

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### 1 **Brewer** (Actually, I'm *only* going to discuss Brewer, and Byrne on Brewer, in these notes.)

#### 1.1 **Brewer's Positive Argument for (CC)**

Brewer's aim in the essay is to argue for (and defend) the following claim:

(CC) Sense experiential states have conceptual content.

His argument for (CC) is as follows:

- (1) Sense experiential states provide reasons for empirical beliefs.
- (2) Sense experiential states provide reasons for empirical beliefs only if they have conceptual content.

∴ (CC) Sense experiential states have conceptual content.

Brewer offers no argument for premise (1). He takes (1) for granted. This may seem fair, since just about everyone seems to accept (1). But, I don't think (1) is entirely uncontroversial, once we understand precisely what Brewer *means* by it. As we'll see below, a lot of this debate will trade on how we understand "provide reasons for". Recall Pryor's distinction between the *dialectical* notion of a "reason" (a justification-*shower*) and the *non*-dialectical notion of a "reason" (a justification-*maker*). This will be one of the main issues surrounding Brewer's argument for (2). I raise this at the outset, since it's also relevant to assessing (1).

Nonetheless, following Brewer, I will put (1) to one side, and assume that all the action here surrounds premise (2). Note the similarity between Brewer's (2), and Prior's "Premise Principle" from last week:

**Premise Principle (PP).** The only things that can justify a belief (by *S*) that *p* are other states that assertively represent propositions, and those propositions have to be ones that could be used (by *S*) as premises in an argument for (*S*'s belief that) *p*. They have to stand in some kind of inferential relation to *p*: they have to imply it or inductively support it or something like that.

Brewer's argument for (2) makes it clear that he intends (2) to be similar to (PP). Note how I have added three parentheticals to Pryor's original statement of (PP). These are crucial for Brewer's rendition of his "(PP)".

First, it is important to get clear on what Brewer means by "conceptual content". Brewer understands a *conceptual state* (of a subject) as a mental state with conceptual content, which is a mental state whose content is *the content of a possible judgment by the subject*. For Brewer, this means that we're talking about:

representational content which is characterizable only in terms of concepts which the subject himself possesses, and which is of a form which enables it to serve as a premise or the conclusion of a deductive argument, or of an inference of some other kind (*e.g.*, inductive or abductive).

Now we're ready to examine Brewer's (central) argument for (2). Here it is, at a high level of abstraction:

- (2.1) Giving *S*'s reasons for her (experientially-grounded) belief that *C* involves identifying *premise propositions P* — those contents which figure as the premises of an argument (and a "good" one, in some corresponding sense) — explicitly articulating the (in some sense "appropriate") reasoning involved.
- (2.2) The premise propositions *P* cannot be related to *S*'s relevant sense experiential states merely indirectly, as some kind of extrinsic characterization on the part of the theorist. Rather *P* must actually *be* the contents of *S*'s experiential states, which implies that *S* has all of *P*'s constituent concepts.

Let's examine Brewer's argument for (2.1) first.

- (2.1.1) To give the subject's reason is to identify some feature of her situation which makes the relevant judgment or belief appropriate, or intelligible, *from the point of view of rationality*.

- (2.1.2) *Rational* intelligibility, or appropriateness of the kind revealed by giving reasons, just is that mode of approbation which is made explicit by the reconstruction of *valid reasoning* of some such kind to a conclusion which is *suitably related* to the judgment or belief for which the reasons are being given.

It is interesting to note that at the end of (2.1.2), Brewer has a footnote, which reads:

Note here that I intend “validity” to be interpreted very widely, to capture the correctness or acceptability of inductive and abductive reasoning as well as formal deductive validity.

This raises a background issue I would like to flag and discuss briefly here (and to which we will return later in the course). Deductive validity is a *logical* property of an *argument*, understood in a very abstract way as a set of propositions (having nothing to do with an agent). I’m not sure how we’re supposed to think of “the correctness or acceptability of inductive and abductive reasoning” here. Are these meant to be understood here as some sort of *generalizations* of *validity*, and hence as *logical* properties? Or, do they have an intrinsically *epistemic* nature, in a way that deductive validity does *not*? I think this is a very important issue, as is the general issue of the relation between entailment (logical) and inference (epistemic). It is clear that *logical* relations are relations among proposition-like entities. But, why should *that* imply anything about the nature of *epistemic* relations, even *inferential* ones — especially in “non-deductive” cases? After all, it seems that nobody has ever succeeded in formulating an inductive-*logic* that is *logical* in anything like the way *entailment* is. So, perhaps there is something fundamentally flawed with this picture? That is, maybe “non-deductive inference” isn’t even a relation between propositions in the same sort of way that “deductive inference” is. In other words, maybe there is something about “good inductive inference” that cannot be captured by *any* relation among propositions (and *only* propositions). See Titelbaum (on website). [Because we’re talking about *empirical* beliefs here, we can safely assume that many cases will be non-deductive.]

Putting those deeper worries about the relation between logic and epistemology (or, more precisely, between “inductive logic” and non-deductive inference) to one side, let’s focus on (2.1.1)/(2.1.2). It seems that Brewer has in mind here what Pryor calls the justification-*show*er conception of “provide reasons”. For Brewer, *S*’s reasons for *C* must *show* that her belief that *C* is appropriate, or intelligible. Brewer uses the locution “*from the point of view of rationality*” to demarcate a particular type of justification-*showing*. I take it that some externalists (e.g., Goldman from last week) would not even want to grant (1) if *this* is what “providing reasons” means. I presume that they would only want to concede that *S*’s sense experiential states are justification-*makers* (or parts thereof) for empirical beliefs. As Pryor explains, however, there are other lines of attack open to internalists here, which are in fact taken up by Brewer himself wrt (2.1)/(2.2).

First, Pryor mentions the important distinction between there *being reasons* to believe that *C* vs *S* *having reasons* to believe that *C*. Clearly, Brewer is interested in the latter, as he says he’s interested “not just in any old reasons which there may be”, but only in “reasons *for S*”. And, this requires that *S* have some *epistemic access* to the reasons in question, or that they be “available” to *S*. But, does “availability” require *this*?

- (†) If *S*’s belief that *C* is experientially grounded (i.e., grounded on *S*’s experiential state *E*), then *E* must have propositional content *P*, which *S* can grasp (and which can serve as *S*’s reasons for believing *C*).

Here, the crucial question seems to be whether (as Pryor puts it) we “(the foundationalist) can make sense of beliefs being grounded on non-representational justifiers like headaches.” I’ll return to this, in the end.

Second, Pryor discusses the distinction between *acting in accordance with* vs *being guided by* an epistemic norm “When in *J<sub>C</sub>*, believe that *C*”, where *J<sub>C</sub>* is a justification-*maker* for *C*. It is clearly the latter that interests Brewer. And, in that case, as Pryor explains, one might want to claim something very similar to (†):

- (‡) *S*’s belief that *C* can be *guided by* the norm “When in *J<sub>C</sub>*, believe that *C*” only when *S* represents to herself *that she is in J<sub>C</sub>*, and she can employ *that* proposition (*P*) as a premise in reasoning (to *C*).

Note that (‡) does *not* imply that *J<sub>C</sub>* *itself* is a representational state. But, it does imply that representational states are always *present* whenever *S*’s belief (in some empirical *C*) is properly epistemically grounded in experience. This leaves Brewer free to claim that it is really *the state that represents S-as-being-in-J<sub>C</sub>* (which has propositional content *P* that “supports” *S*’s belief that *C*), and not *J<sub>C</sub>* itself, that is doing the justifying. Indeed, this is, in fact, Brewer’s (considered) view. I will now bracket further worries about (†) and (‡) that Pryor discusses, and I will move on to discussing Brewer’s defenses of (CC) against various recent objections. Many of these objections are located at the “semantics/epistemology border”, which raises various subtle issues. I will return to (‡) later on, in my discussion of Byrne (*qua* non-conceptualist) in his reply to Brewer.

## 1.2 Brewer's Defenses of (CC) and (2) Against Objections

### 1.2.1 A Preliminary Parry: The "Imagistic" Alternative Conception

Before getting into serious objections and alternatives, Brewer asks us to imagine that:

*S* sees (images of) two geometrical figures, *A* and *B*, say; and she arrives at the judgment that they are identical in size and shape by imaginatively transforming *A* into *B* by a certain rotation and translation. She has a reason for her resultant belief that *A* and *B* are identical in size and shape. Her sense experience of *A* and *B* provides her reason for this empirical belief. Yet there is, according to the proponent of this alternative conception, no need to regard the content of this sense experience as conceptual. For the reasoning in which it is involved ... is neither deductive nor strictly inferential of any other kind.

Brewer is not sympathetic to this alternative conception. He says that what sustains the "correctness" of this "reasoning" is the *deductive validity* of the following argument (think: logic/epistemology again!):

- (a) If two figures can be moved one onto the other by translation & rotation, then they are identical in size & shape.
- (b) That<sub>A</sub> figure can be transformed into that<sub>B</sub> one by translating and rotating thus.
- ∴ (c) *A* and *B* are identical in size and shape.

Brewer's idea is that *S* has (a) as part of her background knowledge, and she comes to believe (b) on the basis of her perceptual experience of *A* and *B*, where (b)'s *perceptual demonstratives* "that<sub>A</sub>", "that<sub>B</sub>", & "thus"

depend for their correct understanding both upon the subject's actually standing in the relevant experiential relations with *A* and *B*, and upon her actually making the translational rotational transformation of *A* into *B* which she makes in imagination on this basis. The sense experience which provides her reason for belief therefore has precisely the content of premise (b), which is by definition conceptual: it constitutes the premise of a deductive argument, and has to be grasped by the subject in a sense which requires that she possess all of its constituent concepts.

Variation: *S* sees a movie, which shows *A* and *B* coming into perfect alignment *via* rotation and translation. I think that case is a bit better, for Brewer, since one *visually perceives* an appropriate rotation and translation being performed on *A* and *B*, rather than *imagining* it, after looking at two static images of *A* and *B*. Nonetheless, this does seem to be a case which is favorable to the sort of reconstruction Brewer favors. But, I detect something like the following presupposition about the relation between logic & epistemology:

(LE) For every "good" *inference*, there exists an *argument* with (corresponding) *logical* structure/virtue.

And, I wonder why we should believe this, especially in non-deductive cases (Titelbaum). More on this later. [And, what about Pryor's headache example? I suppose Brewer would say that, in that case, the experiential (headache) state (somehow) *represents S-as-having-headache-supporting-properties(?)* (*P*), and it is *P* which can serve as the premise in an argument, which "supports" *S*'s belief that they have a headache. How plausible does *that* case sound? Later, in my discussion of Byrne's reply to Brewer, we'll encounter a different example that may threaten Brewer's position.]

### 1.2.2 Heck's Objections

#### 1.2.2.1 Heck on "Explaining" the Possession of Demonstrative Color Concepts

The use of perceptual demonstratives is crucial for the conceptualist. Without them, it would be impossible to account for the richness of our sense experience. For instance, we can discriminate many more shades of color than we seem to have explicit concepts for (*e.g.*, "scarlet"). Conceptualists avail themselves of demonstratives "that<sub>R</sub> shade" (said or thought while attending to a particular sample *R*). They handle other aspects of experience (shapes, sounds, *etc.*) similarly. Heck admits that these *do* constitute genuine concepts, which *are* "available" to the agent in the requisite sense. But, he sees an "explanatory gap" here.

- (a) *S*'s experience of color samples (*R*) explains *S*'s possession of the demonstrative color concepts ("that<sub>R</sub> shade"s) under which they fall.
- (b) If *S*'s experience explains *S*'s possession of a concept (*C*) then its content cannot involve *C* as a constituent.
- ∴ (c) Experiences of color samples do not have demonstrative color concepts as constituents.

Brewer concedes that this "circularity" would be a barrier to *causal* explanation of *S*'s possession of the demonstrative color concepts. But, he claims that the kind of explanation we have here is *constitutive*, not causal. On the conceptualist account Brewer has in mind, experience of a color sample (*R*) just *is* a matter of entertaining a content in which the demonstrative concept "that<sub>R</sub> shade" is a constituent.

### 1.2.2.2 Heck on Fixing the Semantic Value of Demonstrative Color Concepts

Brewer also concedes that (CC) would render an *Evansian* account of what fixes the semantic value of demonstrative concepts viciously circular. According to Evans, “that<sub>R</sub> shade” is a concept of the fine-grained color of *R* in virtue of the fact that the subject’s attitudes towards contents containing it are suitably sensitive to information about that color delivered mainly in perception (call such information *I<sub>R</sub>*). But, on Brewer’s view, possession of such perceptual information *I<sub>R</sub>* is a matter of entertaining *that very concept* “that<sub>R</sub> shade”. This makes the Evansian semantics of “that<sub>R</sub> shade” circular. To avoid this, Brewer “goes externalist”:

“That<sub>R</sub> shade” is a concept of the fine-grained color of *R* in virtue of the fact that the subject’s attitudes towards contents containing it are suitably sensitive to *that color itself*, where this sensitivity in large part depends upon his normal neurophysiological perceptual processing.

I’m not sure I see how all of this *coheres*. [I guess the idea is that *semantic* externalism is OK here, even though *epistemic* externalism is not? Note that the *content* of “that<sub>R</sub> shade” (in *S*’s mouth) will now depend on *S*’s “normal neurophysiological perceptual processing”, which is *not* “available” to *S*. Similar issues arise in the Peacocke sections, below. Here, we’re coming up against subtle issues about *semantic vs epistemic* aspects of experiential content.]

### 1.2.2.3 Heck on Demonstrative Color Concepts and the Possibility of Perceptual Misrepresentation

Here is Heck’s example about perceptual misrepresentation:

Consider the perceptual judgment expressed by *S*’s utterance of “*that* part of my desk is *that* color,” pointing twice at the same part of her desk. This judgment is bound to be true. For the demonstrative “that color” refers to the color which the relevant part of her desk actually has. Yet her perceptual experience may be mistaken in the color it presents that part of her desk as being. So the content of her experience cannot be that of the perceptual demonstrative judgment, as the conceptualist proposes.

Brewer’s reply to this objection was (again) not fully satisfying (to me). He explains how Evans’s requirement of *object-tracking* can be adapted to allow the conceptualist room for “perceptual error” in *some* cases involving perceptual demonstratives, but it’s unclear this allows for the *sort* of error Heck envisages:

Demonstrative reference to a particular object depends, in Evans’s view, on the subject’s capacity to keep track of the object in question over time, appropriately modifying her attitudes and responses to its movement or her changing position in relation to it. Failure to exercise this capacity results in a failed attempt at a demonstrative thought about that thing. . . Similarly, the conceptualist might insist that there are tracking conditions upon successful demonstrative reference to the fine-grained colors of the things within her view. . . Given that she is tracking the color of something which she is looking at in this way, her experience of it consists in her entertaining the conceptual content “*that* is colored *thus*,” which is indeed bound to be true. Errors in color perception are perfectly possible on this account, though, when the required tracking fails, and the relevant demonstrative color concept “colored thus” is not available for the subject. Her experience in the relevant respect consists in a failed attempt to grasp that concept, a failed attempt at demonstrative reference to the specific shade in question, and is, in that sense, mistaken.

It seems that *the only way* Brewer can allow for perceptual “error” is *via* some failure (on *S*’s part) to *grasp* the salient demonstrative concept (“that<sub>R</sub> shade”). But, that sounds different than the sort of *misrepresentation* case Heck has in mind. If *S* doesn’t even *have* the concept “that<sub>R</sub> shade” (in the context), then (I presume) Brewer must say that there is *no* (color) content of *S*’s visual experience (of *R*, at the time she performs her demonstrative utterance). Heck, on the other hand, is thinking of a case in which *S*’s experience *succeeds* at representing *some* color shade, just *not the shade of the part of the desk she is pointing at* (when she makes her demonstrative utterance). As far as I can tell, it looks like Brewer is committed to saying that this *cannot happen*. So, unless I’m missing something, Heck’s example seems to reveal something odd after all.

### 1.2.3 Peacocke’s Objections

#### 1.2.3.1 Peacocke on the Determinacy of Reference of the Bare Perceptual Demonstrative “That”

According to Peacocke, the determinacy of reference of the bare perceptual demonstrative “that” is (at least in some contexts) secured *via* supplementation by “a *non-conceptual* way in which the relevant shade, shape, movement, or whatever, is presented in experience.” Brewer claims this is incompatible with (CC). Strictly speaking, I don’t think it is. It is true that in such cases the *experience* would be contributing in a *non-conceptual way* to the content of the singular thought expressed using “that”. And, while this is *compatible with* the experience *not* having propositional content, that is not (as far as I can see) *necessary*

for Peacocke's point. All that really matters here, though, is that the *conceptual* content of the experience is *not* — *all by itself* — (*experientially*) *epistemically grounding* the singular thought in question. So, it's not so much whether experience has conceptual content *per se* that's important here — it's rather the following:

(CC\*) Sense experiential states have conceptual content, and it is *solely in virtue of their conceptual content* that sense experiential states are able to provide reasons/justification/grounding for empirical beliefs.

Peacocke's alternative *seems* incompatible with (CC\*), and that's what's at issue here anyway. But, *is* Peacocke's alternative incompatible with (CC\*)? In Peacocke's example, the problem seems to be a *semantic* one — *determining a referent* for a bare perceptual demonstrative “that” (used by *S*). Let us suppose that Peacocke is right, and that sometimes this “semantic gap” is filled by some *non*-conceptual aspect of *S*'s experience. Why must *that* contradict (CC\*)? Why couldn't it still be the case that it is the *conceptual* content of *S*'s experience which *epistemically* grounds the resulting (completed) demonstrative thought? There seems to be some sort of “semantics/epistemology continuity thesis” in the background here — maybe *this*?

(SE) Whichever features of *S*'s experience are involved in *semantically completing* an (experientially grounded) empirical thought, *C*, (of *S*) must also be involved in *epistemically grounding* *C* (for *S*) as well.

I think the incompatibility here depends on (SE). Might (SE) be false? Moreover, might (SE) be in tension with Brewer's *externalist semantic* commitments? Recall that with some *semantic* phenomena — *e.g.*, fixing the semantic value of demonstrative concepts (§ 1.2.2.2) — Brewer goes *externalist* (to avoid circularity). One might wonder how Brewer can (1) be an *externalist* about the *semantic* phenomenon, (2) be an *internalist* about the *epistemic* phenomenon, and yet (3) endorse (SE). Specifically, one might worry about the relationship between (SE) and Brewer's “Recognition Requirement”, which is [more on (RR), below]:

(RR) *Reasons for S* must be recognizable (*by S*) *as such*, and susceptible to rational scrutiny and evaluation (*by S*).

### 1.2.3.2 Peacocke on Learning New Observational Concepts (*e.g.*, *Pyramid*)

Peacocke also worries that the conceptualist cannot adequately account for *S*'s acquisition of *new* observational concepts, such as *pyramid*. Suppose *S* is poised to acquire *pyramid*. It seems that *S*'s sense experience must *already* be sufficient for her to rationally apply the concept. But, her experience cannot *already contain* the conceptual content *pyramid*, if we're going to account for her *acquisition* of the concept. He suggests

there is such a thing as having an experience of something as being pyramid shaped that does not involve already having the concept of being pyramid shaped. What such an experience will have is a *non*-conceptual content which, if correct, is sufficient for something's falling under the concept *pyramid*.

Brewer thinks the conceptualist can meet this challenge, by altering the second sentence as follows:

What such an experience will have is a *conceptual* content involving the demonstrative concept, “that (shape)”; referring to the pyramid shape of the object in question.

A regress lurks here, since Peacocke will ask the same question about the acquisition of the (generic) demonstrative concept “that (shape)” *itself*. Brewer is aware of this, and he goes “externalist” (again) at this point:

Of course, the same cannot be said in explanation of her acquisition of the concept “that (shape)” *itself*; but the conceptualist will claim that her appropriately attending to, and tracking, the shape of the object in question just *is* her entertaining that concept in experience. That is, she acquires it precisely in virtue of standing in these attentional and tracking relations with the actual shape of the object in the world.

This is another case of Brewer “going externalist” to avoid a potential regress/circularity problem. Until now, the externalist maneuvers were limited to *semantic* phenomena (as in § 1.2.2.2). But, this one seems *epistemic*. I guess *some epistemic* externalism is OK for Brewer here, so long as he can still tell the story he wants about *S* “having reasons” involving the demonstrative concept “that (shape)”, even when she (merely) “stands in these attentional and tracking relations with the actual shape of the object in the world”. Can he? Or, may this put pressure on his “recognition requirement”? I don't have the space here to discuss Peacocke's (very subtle) positive non-conceptualist proposal. Instead, I'll discuss Byrne's foil to Brewer.

## 1.3 Byrne's Reply to Brewer (on behalf of a certain kind of non-conceptualist)

Byrne sets-up an example, which he uses to try to “fend off” the arguments of Brewer. Byrne's hypothetical non-conceptualist is (for me) simpler and easier to understand than Peacocke. Although, as we will see, it seems (as a result) not able to (as) adequately address all of Brewer's concerns. Here's Byrne's set-up:

Pretend that the content of belief is Russellian, and imagine a non-conceptualist who holds in addition that the content of perception is Lewisian/Stalnakerian. Suppose a certain blue book  $o$  looks blue to  $S$ . According to our non-conceptualist, the content of  $S$ 's experience is the possible worlds proposition that is true at a world  $w$  just in case  $o$  is blue in  $w$ , which we can take to be the set of worlds  $\{w \mid o \text{ is blue in } w\}$ . If  $S$  endorses the content of his experience, he will make a judgment with the content that  $o$  is blue, which we can take to be the ordered pair  $\langle o, \text{blueness} \rangle$ . [And, suppose  $S$  does believe that  $(C) o$  is blue, in this way.]

Before diving into Brewer's arguments, Byrne begins by asking the following crucial question:

What, according to Brewer, is  $S$ 's reason ( $P$ ) for believing  $(C)$  that  $o$  is blue?

Unfortunately, I think Byrne ends-up with an uncharitable answer to this question. His answer seems to be that  $(P)$  is the proposition that  $o$  is blue. That is, Byrne attributes to Brewer the view that  $P = C$  in this case. He does so (I think) because he is reading Brewer as being more similar to McDowell than he (in fact) is. As I mentioned above, in my discussion of  $(\ddagger)$ , I don't think this is Brewer's considered view about  $P$ . Later on, Byrne himself realizes that Brewer's "recognition requirement" (RR) should be understood in terms of  $(\ddagger)$ :

[Brewer's] "recognizing reasons as such" ... is a notational variant of ... "being guided by" reasons.

But, he doesn't seem to appreciate that this adjustment would have, as a consequence, that  $P \neq C$ . More precisely, as I mentioned above (and as Pryor correctly attributes to Brewer!) it seems that  $P$  will have to represent  $S$ -as-being-in- $\mathcal{J}_C$ , so that it may be used (by  $S$ ) in reasoning involving an epistemic norm "When in  $\mathcal{J}_C$ , believe that  $C$ " that she is being *guided by* in the context. So, Byrne gets off on the wrong foot here, I would say, and this clouds the rest of his discussion. Nonetheless, Byrne does make some probative points.

First, Byrne rightly notes that it is not clear why a non-conceptualist *can't* tell a plausible story about how it is that  $P$  could "support"  $C$  — *even if*  $P$  had the non-conceptualist content he suggests. He says:

Our non-conceptualist is about as well placed as the conceptualist to accommodate [ $P$ 's "supporting" or "supplying a reason for"  $C$ ]. If  $S$ 's perceptual state is a "mere sensation," then it certainly seems puzzling how it might supply a reason to believe that  $o$  is blue, as opposed to, say, that  $o$  is red, or that some other object  $o^*$  is square, or whatever. ... However, our non-conceptualist ... denies that  $S$ 's perceptual state is a mere sensation: it has content, and moreover content that *strictly implies* that  $o$  is blue.

That's a good point. Of course, it's not sufficient to address all of Brewer's concerns, since it doesn't (by itself) explain how  $S$  is "guided by reasons" in coming to believe that  $C$ . This is where Peacocke's alternative brings in a lot more structure (and subtlety) to try to explain how there can be an analogous "guiding by non-conceptual reasons" (in addition to guidance by conceptual reasons). But, I won't get into that here.

Byrne also makes some interesting points *in favor of* conceptualism (or *against* the non-conceptualist):

- ...perceiving is like a propositional attitude, such as believing or intending; the issue is whether the contents that perceiving is a relation to are conceptual. When it is put like that, non-conceptualism is decidedly puzzling. When one has a perceptual experience, one bears the perception relation to a certain content  $p$ . The non-conceptualist claims that it is impossible to bear the *belief* relation to  $p$  — but why ever not? Absent some argument, the natural position to take is that the contents of perception can be believed.
- Distinguish between thinking *about* a proposition (" $\langle o, \text{blueness} \rangle$  is a singular proposition") from thinking *with* a proposition (" $o$  is blue"). When one thinks *with*  $p$ , one's thought has  $p$  as (part of) its content. According to the non-conceptualist one can only think *about* the content of one's experience. But, *e.g.*, "My present perceptual experience has non-conceptual content" is not a thought *with* the content of (my) experience. But then it is hard to see how reflection on experience could possibly lead one reasonably to suspect that its content is non-conceptual. One starts with a thought like "It appears to me that my environment is thus-and-so," and ends with something like "So I suppose the content of my experience is rich/perspectival/phenomenal/non-conceptual..." If the premise is to bear on the conclusion, mustn't the content one ends up thinking *about* be the content one started thinking *with*? If so, *how* can one (reasonably) conclude that perceptual content is non-conceptual?
- Even non-conceptualists (*e.g.*, Peacocke) concede that when  $S$  *sees that*  $(C) o$  is blue, then there *is* conceptual content ( $P$ ) in  $S$ 's experience, and a Brewer-style story (about being guided by conceptual reasons) is appropriate. But, they claim that when  $o$  (merely) *looks* blue to  $S$ , then there *needn't be*, and it will sometimes be non-conceptual content  $P^*$  that "supports"  $S$ 's belief that  $C$  (*via*, say, some Peacocke-style story about being guided by non-conceptual reasons). This is puzzling, since — from the "internal/rational" point of view of  $S$  — these two cases may (presumably) be *indistinguishable*. But, then, does the content of  $S$ 's experience *fully capture* the way things perceptually appear to  $S$ ?