PHENOMENAL CONSERVATISM AND THE PRINCIPLE OF CREDULITY

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Lycan (1985, 1988) defended a “Principle of Credulity”: “Accept at the outset each of those things that seem to be true” (1988, p. 165). Though that takes the form of a rule rather than a thesis, it does not seem very different from Huemer’s (2001, 2006, 2007) doctrine of phenomenal conservatism (PC): “If it seems to S that p, then, in the absence of defeaters, S thereby has at least some degree of justification for believing that p” (2007, p. 30).1 My Principle was differently motivated and put to uses different from Huemer’s. In this paper I shall explore some of the differences.

I Comparison

To make an initial comparison: The Principle was put forward as an epistemic norm, and in particular as an ought rather than merely a permission. It seems fair to suppose that one who obeys an epistemic ought is to some degree justified in holding the resulting belief (by “accept” I meant merely, believe2). Thus, if we convert the Principle into declarative mood, we may infer “If S believes at the outset a thing [= proposition] that seems (to S) to be true, S’s belief is to some degree justified.”

Three remaining differences between that formulation and PC deserve comment. First, “at the outset.” Outset of what? I proposed my Principle in aid of developing a
coherentist epistemology, specifically an explanationist one. My purpose was to solve the problem of what Keith Lehrer (1974) called “explained unexplainers”: Some explananda that justify their explanantia are themselves justified by explaining more primitive data in their turn. But many of the explananda, such as spontaneous perceptual beliefs or memories, cannot be justified in that way, because they themselves do not explain anything else. So now an apparently vicious circle: An explanatory hypothesis is supposed to be justified by the data it explains, but it can be so justified only if the data propositions are themselves justified; and the data propositions are justified “by being explained” only if the explanatory hypotheses are themselves justified. Since an explanans presupposes an explanandum, how is the whole explanatory enterprise to get started in the first place? There must be data propositions of some sort that are independently justified before explanatory coherence can come into play. Hence my Principle of Credulity. As written, it applies only to such data propositions, so in that respect it is weaker than PC.

Second difference: Huemer adds the qualification “in the absence of defeaters.” I am not sure why he does, for it seems redundant. Possibly, where I am speaking of prima facie justification only, leaving it understood that prima facie justification can be defeated, Huemer means justification overall. If that is right, the present difference between the formulations is insignificant.
Third, where I speak of justified belief, PC alleges only “justification for believing that \( p \).” As Huemer (2007) emphasizes, that is an important distinction (going back, in my memory, to Lehrer (1965)). A person may possess any number of justifications or evidential reasons for believing that \( p \), and believe that \( p \), and yet not be justified in her/his belief that \( p \), if that belief is not based on any of those reasons. So in this regard the Principle of Credulity seems to be stronger than PC.

II Capitulatory adjudication

The first and third differences need adjudicating, because each would be the basis for a Huemer objection to my Principle. Regarding the first, Huemer would complain, as he does (2007, pp. 36-37) against views that privilege some seemings over others as eo ipso conferring justification, that I have shown no epistemically relevant difference between my “outset” data propositions, the explained unexplainers, and any other seeming. (The point is not that the Principle is untrue, but that it is arbitrarily weak.) He would be right about what I did not show; my Principle as first introduced had only the very limited purpose mentioned above and did not need to be stronger. More to the point, I cannot even now think of an epistemically relevant difference, so I concede, and hereby delete “at the outset,” leaving: “If \( S \) believes a proposition that seems (to \( S \)) to be true, \( S \)’s belief is to some degree justified.”
Anent the third difference: At first reading I thought it was illusory. Consider Lehrer’s original example and then an adaptation of it intended as a counterexample to the Principle of Credulity.

[A] detective who rejects the truthful testimony of a reliable eye-witness to a crime, but accepts the lying testimony of an ignorant meddler, when both tell him that Brentano committed the crime, would fail to be completely justified in believing this. For his belief is not based on the adequate evidence supplied by the truthful eye-witness but is instead based on the inadequate evidence supplied by an ignorant man. (p. 169)

The adaptation:

It seems to S that p, but S for whatever reason rejects that seeming; yet S does believe that p because S trusts some clearly unreliable extraneous source. S’s belief is not completely justified, indeed not justified at all.

But for what sort of reason does S reject the seeming? Two subcases here. In the first, S has evidence that the seeming is meretricious and not to be trusted. Here certainly S is not justified in believing that p. –But that is because S’s phenomenal prima facie justification is defeated by S’s evidence against the trustworthiness of the seeming. This is no counterexample to my Principle.
Yet, second subcase: What if there is no such impugning evidence, but for whatever (other) reason $S$ still does not believe on the basis of the seeming? That would be psychologically anomalous; if it seems to $S$ that $p$, and $S$ has no reason to distrust that seeming, then presumably $S$ does believe at least to some small degree that $p$.

That sounds nearly analytic, but it is not. As has been widely argued,⁴ seemings are not per se beliefs, but only give rise to beliefs. The situation I have imagined may be psychologically anomalous, but it is not metaphysically or likely even psychologically impossible. So I think we must grant that I am not strictly entitled to say that the belief would be justified. I must fall back to: “If $S$ believes a proposition at least in part because it seems (to $S$) to be true, $S$ has some degree of justification for doing so.”

And that last formulation is not wildly different from PC. I seem to have turned into a phenomenal conservative. (And so, I believe that I have done so.) Nonetheless there are still differences in motivation and in uses, and in liability to objections.

III A different defense

PC has been defended on each of several grounds: that, vs. the justification skeptic, it (obviously) does vindicate gabillions of our commonsense beliefs; that considered as policy it conduces to our pursuit of truth (Huemer (2001)); that to deny it is self-defeating (Huemer (2001), (2007)); and that it is the best explanation of internalist intuitions (and thereby supports epistemological internalism; Huemer
(2006). But my argument (1988, Chs. 7 and 8) for the Principle of Credulity was entirely different, and I believe it extends to PC.

It was an argument from engineering design. I used the fanciful example of a benevolent Mother Nature (a slightly Panglossian personification of natural selection), and asked, with what epistemic norms would she endow creatures of our general physical type in an environment like that of ours on earth? I argued that she would implant the usual principles of explanatory theory preference: given two theories that explain the same data, prefer the simpler; the one that explains more in addition; the more readily testable one; the one that leaves fewer messy unanswered questions behind; the one that squares better with what you already have reason to believe. (I should have added, the more fruitful or fecund one.) There were some much-needed qualifications, most notably that such principles often mutually conflict and have to be weighed against each other.

In each case, I offered reasons why the preference would make for good cognitive design. For example, regarding simplicity (I apologize, but not sincerely, for quoting myself):

(1) Simpler hypotheses are more efficient to work with. A simple handbook of rules, such as the Boy Scout Manual, is easier to use than is the 1976 U.S. tax code. (2) As Russell (1957) observed in defense of his version of Occam’s Razor, complexities incur greater risk of error.
A simpler device has less that can go wrong with it (think of a simplified phonograph turntable or automobile engine). (3) Simplicity is itself a form of efficiency. The whole point of obtaining simple and unified hypotheses in science is to achieve plenitude of result (in the way of data explained and results predicted) with parsimony of means. If we were not able to mobilize a few simple hypotheses and thereby obtain maximally informative analysis of the news, especially in the way of experimental predictions, we would be far less competent in coping with environmental developments; the world would present us with too many surprises, and they would overwhelm us. (pp. 140-41)

Of course the explanatory virtues are open to many skeptical challenges. The Mother Nature argument is not intended as a reply to any such; I had already given entirely independent replies to as many as I could fit in (1988, Ch. 7). Nor, n.b., did I claim either that our explanatory virtues’ adaptive utility justifies them in the epistemological sense or that they per se provide any guarantee of true beliefs as output. I take the canons of theory preference to be epistemologically basic and not susceptible of justification by being derived from or being tested against some more fundamental norm(s); as Bentham said, “That which is used to prove everything else cannot itself be proved.” (Formal probability theory, in particular, is not a more fundamental norm.) At best, the canons are justified by reflective equilibrium, which is
itself an explanatory coherentist method. The point of the Mother Nature argument was, rather, to offer a convincing reason why it is good and desirable for us to be designed to use the methods we (ideally) do use rather than being designed in some other way. And that reason explains the important sense in which our use of those methods is not arbitrary and is not just a matter of “making our minds feel good” (Hacking (1982)).

IV Conservatism

The most contentious of the usual canons of theory preference is that of conservatism. Above, I expressed it as the policy of choosing the hypothesis that best squares with what you already have reason to believe, but actually I myself defend an even bolder version: prefer the hypothesis that best squares with what you already do believe, reasonably or not. That is the really contentious version; critics who do not mind simplicity, testability, fruitfulness and the rest sometimes balk at conservatism in this bolder sense, because it sounds particularly dogmatic, bigoted, pigheaded.

The Mother Nature argument for it would be that arbitrary and gratuitous changes of belief, like arbitrary and gratuitous changes of institutional policies, come only at a price; they draw on energy and resources. (“Arbitrary” and “gratuitous” in the sense of gaining no offsetting advantage; see sec. VII below.) Also, the instability created by a habit of capricious belief change would be inefficient and confusing. –As before, these are not deeper justifications of the conservative policy; according to
Conservatism has a slightly startling consequence (1988, p. 162). Consider my present belief set $B$, and two theories $T_1$, and $T_2$. $T_1$ is logically stronger than $B$; $T_2$ is incompatible with $B$, though $T_2$ and $B$ may overlap. Now, $T_2$ may outweigh $T_1$ in explanatory virtue, in which case we should reject $T_1$ in favor of $T_2$. But suppose it does not. Then according to our strengthened canon of conservatism, we should prefer $T_1$. But $T_1$ entails $B$, my present belief set. It follows that I am justified in accepting $B$, merely in virtue of my already holding $B$. Our rule of conservatism, then, entails the claim that the *bare fact of one’s holding* a belief renders that belief justified, to some degree however slight; for any belief at all. So be it.

Conservatism applies to beliefs and not directly to seemings, but I think a parallel argument supports the Principle of Credulity. Though the appearance-reality distinction is (of course) vitally important, separating appearance from a differing reality is costly, again drawing on energy and resources. As before, there is sometimes an advantage to be gained by questioning an appearance rather than just maintaining the corresponding belief, but when none is in prospect, to hold the appearance at arm’s length just runs the battery down. And suppose we are not to take most seemings at face value. Though (according to me) we would still hold
many spontaneous beliefs that are not based on seemings, there would still be at least a slight fog of unresolved seemings that probably would slow down action.

And these points apply not only to explained unexplainers, but to all appearances or seemings. Thus they recommend, though does not demonstrate, PC.

V Internalism

Regarding the four other arguments for PC mentioned above: The first (vindicating commonsense beliefs) should be uncontroversial. I am neutral on the second, about pursuit of truth. I will not address the self-defeat issue, except to note that in the matter of intuitions in particular, no philosopher is in a position to deny often taking them at face value. (Nor any logician, nor any linguist.) Intuitions are addressed directly in the next section.\(^{11}\)

But I do want to comment on the matter of internalism vs. externalism, because therein lies a large difference in motivation between PC and the Principle of Credulity.

The Principle has little to do with the internalism/externalism debate. All it does is furnish the explanatory-coherence machine with initial data propositions.\(^{12}\) For that matter, I have never been sure whether the explanatory virtues themselves are internal or external.\(^{13}\) Can I tell from the inside which of two hypotheses is simpler, or which explains more, which is more testable and so forth? Sometimes I think I can, and it is possible I always can subconsciously. But I could not say with confidence.
I myself have no stake in the internalism/externalism debate. For the record, I incline toward the view of Kornblith (1983) and Battaly (2001) that there are two simply different though related notions of “justification,” answering to two separate interests we have in cognition. One is that of a person’s usefulness as an informant in one context or another. Reliabilism and hence externalism are appropriate accounts of that. The other is the person’s epistemic responsibleness, whether s/he is behaving as s/he ought. There some however loose version of “‘ought’ implies ‘can’” applies, and it is reasonable to think that the properties figuring in the relevant norms are internally accessible to the subject.

(Granted, that is not the end of the matter. Consider cases of “lost justification” as appealed to by reliabilists. I know that the speed of light in a vacuum is a bit over 186,000 miles per second, but I have no idea when or where I learned that and I could not begin to defend that belief out of my head. I am, I think, a reliable informant on that momentous issue. But does my inability to produce evidence make me epistemically irresponsible? It could be argued that I currently remember that I learned the fact somewhere, and I am justified in trusting that memory. Or it could be argued that my belief is supported by buried memory traces, or some such. I grant that I do not feel irresponsible.)
VI Intuitions

Opinions differ as to what an “intuition” (in contemporary philosophers’ sense of the term\textsuperscript{15}) is. In this section I shall argue that intuitions fall into the category of seemings, and so are subject both to PC and to the Principle of Credulity.

I would begin by maintaining that intuitions are about cases, actual or hypothetical—Gettier examples, moral situations, particular sentences or argument forms, hypothetical scenarios.\textsuperscript{16} We might call an intuition a verdictive judgment on a case, not consciously based on inference or on any other particular reason. But that characterization would already be controversial, and I think it is not quite right.

Plantinga (1993, p. 105) speaks of “finding yourself utterly convinced that the proposition in question is true…[, and that it] is not only true, but could not have been false.” That is consistent with an intuition’s being a judgment, but as noted in sec. II above (and fn 4), Sosa (1998, 2006), Bealer (1999), Huemer, and also BonJour (1998) question Plantinga’s assumption that intuiting is a type of believing. Rather, Bealer calls it an intellectual seeming, “a sui generis, irreducible…propositional attitude that occurs episodically” (p. 207). BonJour actually assimilates it to perception or apprehending, a matter of “seeing” that a proposition is necessary; the proposition \textit{appears} to be necessarily true. BonJour (2001, 2005) moves even further in the perceptual direction, maintaining that intuitions are not propositional at all but are more like perceptual sensations.
But Plantinga’s and BonJour’s common focus on the necessity of a proposition as the object of an intuition is far too restrictive: though we do have modal intuitions, and perhaps intuitions of some types do have as their contents the necessity of some proposition, there is no reason to think that a syntactic intuition or a moral one takes that form. (Someone might argue that in the moral case, what is intuited to be necessary is the conditional from the facts of the case to the moral verdict, but (a) that is not the phenomenology, and (b) to say that the conditional was necessary would be at best controversial in the first place.)

Also, I see no motivation for assimilating intuiting to perceiving, once a seeming has been clearly distinguished from a belief. BonJour is right to speak of “appearing,” but the sort of appearing that constitutes an intuition is no more perceptual than cognitive.  

Intuitions, then, are intellectual seemings-true. And so both the Principle of Credulity and PC apply to them—fortunately for us philosophers.

In what remains of this paper I shall address one class of objections to PC.

VII The charge of liberalism

It has been objected to PC that PC is too liberal. The same objection has (understandably) been made to conservatism and to the Principle of Credulity. Obviously, if anything that seems true is to be believed, and if any belief whatever is to
some degree justified by the mere holding of it, then many completely crazy and paradigmatically irrational beliefs will count as justified.

That sounds fatal, but it is not. I shall begin by clarifying my own (1985, 1988) position, and then turn to a few more specific versions of the complaint.

In my case, it comes down to the degree of justification. In my scheme, the justification furnished by the Principle of Credulity is minute, the faintest edge, infinitesimal if you like. (That is all it needed to be, to feed the explained unexplainers into the coherence apparatus, and to break ties.) And as before, the justification is only prima facie, outweighed by any defeater or explanatory advantage however small (1988, p. 175). So although I do maintain that “anything that seems true is to be believed” and that “any belief whatever is to some degree justified by the mere holding of it,” those ways of putting it are misleading. They make it sound as though the subject is epistemically fine and can go around freely acting on the beliefs in question without compunction. Of course the latter is not so. I should have emphasized the qualification, “at least to the minutest degree.”

There is still a problem, originally put to me by Robert Vishny: Even if the force of conservatism is vanishingly small, why does it go nonexistent in the face of compensating explanatory advantages? What about a situation in which two hypotheses differed so slightly in their other explanatory virtues that conservatism managed to bring the lesser just precisely up to the level of the former in overall
goodness? In that case, we would have a tie, and no conservative canon left to break it.

That point requires a concession: We cannot regard conservatism as a first-order rule on a par with simplicity, power, and the rest; it must be a metarule, to be invoked only after the first-order rules have been applied and weighed against each other. That is already signaled by the formulation (1988, p. 176) “Do not change your view for no reason,” because that last qualification is recursive; “reason” has to mean “advantage in terms of the other epistemic virtues.” Thus, conservatism occupies a slightly specialized place in our cognitive design. I have never been entirely happy with that feature, but it would help explain why critics are more skeptical about conservativeness than about the other explanatory virtues.

I turn now to other charges of liberalism. I think they are bad arguments, and my replies to them will not depend on my particular view that the justification afforded by seemings is minute.

Matthias Steup (2004) makes the following two objections to PC.

Asserting that seemings are a source of justification no matter what, PC would appear to be Ipso Factism about seemings [the view that a sense experience that P is, ipso facto, a source of justification for believing that P]. But in worlds whose inhabitants have evidence of perceptual
unreliability, perceptual seemings are not a source of justification. Even in our world, seemings are not always a source of justification. Suppose it seems to S as if P because S has an intense desire that P. S does not thereby have justification for believing that P. So not all kinds of seemings are a source of justification. Some are not because we have evidence for thinking they are unreliable. (p. 415)

But each of these ignores the merely prima facie nature of the justification (or in Huemer’s (2007) terms, the absence of defeaters). In a world whose inhabitants have evidence of perceptual unreliability, that evidence defeats the conservative presumption.

The case of wishful thinking is slightly more complicated, depending on whether the subject is able to consider that the thinking may be wishful. Suppose (a) the subject does so consider and inclines to admit the fault. Then, obviously, the justification is defeated. If (b) the subject merely concedes that the thinking may be wishful the justification is at least partially defeated. If (c) the subject does not consider, despite having reason to (such as knowing s/he is prone to wishful thinking on the topic in question), In that case I think the justification is defeated. But if (d) the subject does not consider because s/he has no reason to, then it seems to me her/his belief is still to some degree justified, so long as there is no other defeater in the form of countervailing evidence or the like. To insist otherwise would be to beg the question against PC.
Peter Markie (2005) offers two alleged counterexamples to PC. The first (pp. 356-57) is a case in which a prospector who yearns to strike gold finds a pebble and it wishfully seems to him to be gold. So far, my previous reply would suffice, but Markie adds the wrinkle that to a co-prospector, the same pebble seems to be gold, but in his case because of his “learned identification skills.” “[C]ertainly my wishful thinking should not gain my perceptual belief the same positive epistemic status of defeasible justification as your learned identification skills.”

Of course not, but PC does not rule otherwise, even in case (d) above. Even if the justification provided by seeming is more substantive than my own minute sort, it is hardly as weighty as a seeming based on expertise. The wishful prospector is justified to some degree; the learned one is better justified, certainly on grounds of reliability and probably on grounds of coherence. In the skilled co-prospector’s case, there will be other supporting beliefs about the appearance of the pebble, its disposition in the setting, the locale, the co-prospector’s own track record, etc., all of which the wishful prospector lacks.

In Markie’s second example (p. 357), I see a walnut tree in my yard, and the tree both seems to me to be a walnut and seems to me to have been planted on April 24, 1914. The first seeming is due to my ability to identify trees; the second is due to sheer cognitive malfunction.
Its seeming to me that the tree was planted on that date outstrips the phenomenological character of my experience and my identification skills. My perception cannot directly justify my belief about the planting date. Nonetheless, according to (PC), both my belief that it is a walnut tree and my belief that it was planted on April 24, 1914 are *prima facie*, and so defeasibly, justified for me.

Markie goes on to insist that no appeal to a defeater will help, for his objection is that the belief about the date should not count as even defeasibly justified.

Here there is an even more obvious difference than in the gold nugget case between the two beliefs. But as then, that *alone* does not show that the belief about the date is not justified to some tiny degree. The point would have to be that the belief could not possibly be justified by the subject’s perceptual experience. Which is indisputably true, but not pertinent: in this case, the phenomenal conservative would not cite perceptual experience as justifying, but rather the seeming itself.

Markie might still insist that in the absence of empirical evidence, the belief is not even prima facie justified. But that would just beg the question.²⁰

Another putative counterexample is put forward by Michael Bergmann (2011, pp.12-13): It seems to Jack that he has a hard spherical object in his hand, because he has in fact grabbed a billiard ball and has the appropriate tactile
sensations; so he believes that he has a hard spherical object in his hand. It seems
to Jill that she has a hard spherical object in her hand, and so she believes as well.
But Jill’s seeming is based, not on any tactile sensations, but on a smell as of a lilac
bush (cognitive/brain malfunction again). Bergmann contends that Jill’s belief is
(entirely) unjustified, because “[h]er seeming about the hard spherical object is
improperly caused.”

So of course it is, and her belief is not nearly as well justified as is Jack’s, who
could cite the vivid feel of the actual ball in his hand. But it does not follow that
Jill’s belief is not justified to any degree at all. The case is a little hard to imagine—
Jill has no appropriate tactile sensations, but it seems to her that she has a hard
spherical object in her hand? We would need to hear more (for example, is she
aware that she has no such tactile sensations?), and perhaps depending on the
details we would agree that her prima facie justification is defeated; but Bergmann
has done nothing to show that she does not have even a smidgen of prima facie
justification.

VIII Conclusion

Though the arguments for PC are not crushing, I stand by my own. I also find
PC plausible in itself, though not everyone else will. Moreover I have rebutted the
strongest direct objections to PC known to me. 21
References


Footnotes

1 “Phenomenal” here has only its etymological meaning of seemings or appearances; it does not
mean what philosophers of mind do in speaking of “phenomenal states,” “phenomenal
character,” and “phenomenal consciousness.”

2 No reference to the more recent distinction in philosophy of science between mere
“acceptance” of a scientific theory and actual belief in it.

3 Huemer (2001) did speak of prima facie justification, and that formulation did not contain the
qualification about defeaters.

out that a seeming may not even be a disposition to believe.

And here for your delectation is a novel argument for the distinction. Lycan
(forthcoming) argues that we philosophers do not believe our own views in the same sense in
which we believe ordinary things. As Hume and Moore pointed out, there is often a large and
striking gap between our doctrines and our behavior. (Similar points have been made about
religious belief, notably by van Leeuven (2011).) It is important to see that these are typically
not cases of hypocrisy or other insincerity; when we avow a philosophical thesis and defend it,
sometimes passionately, we mean what we say. Nonetheless the thesis does not show in our
nonverbal behavior (think of betting), or even in our off-duty verbal behavior. Philosophical
“belief” does not have the functional profile of everyday belief; I think it is a somewhat
different propositional attitude, which might be called “taking the position that.” Yet there is
no doubt that philosophical propositions often strongly seem true to us, in the everyday sense of “seem.” Thus another reason for not understanding seeming as belief.

5 Huemer also deploys apposite examples that go directly against externalism.

6 For those of you old enough to know what a phonograph turntable is. --WGL

7 See Lycan (2012, in press).

8 I do suggest that the goodness, in the cost-benefit sense, of Mother Nature’s design for cognizers is the ultimate ground of the value notions of epistemology (“justification,” “warrant,” “good reason,” “legitimacy,” “license”).


10 Harman (1986) makes similar arguments.

11 I should add on the opposing side that I do not endorse Huemer’s premise that “when we form beliefs, with a few exceptions not relevant here, our beliefs are based on the way things seem to us” (2007, p. 39). The premise may or may not be right if seemings can be unconscious and “based on” is a merely causal notion, but it is certainly wrong if seemings are necessarily conscious states. In addition, I deny that seemings are always or even very often data for explanation; normally our explained unexplainers are propositions about the external world.

12 However, conservatism more generally has a second role: It breaks ties, when two hypotheses are otherwise equal in explanatory merit. See Lycan (1988), pp. 174-75.
Huemer (2006) usefully distinguishes five different versions of the “internal”/“external” distinction.

It is remarkable that this view has received so little discussion.

That sense is technical, and differs from those of ordinary English speakers, psychologists, and Kant.

What about intuiting the truth of a general principle, say PC itself? That could be a linguistic or conceptual intuition to the effect that PC is conceptually necessary, or it could be a modal intuition that the scenario: its seeming to S that p and S’s having no defeaters but S’s being to no degree justified in believing that p, is impossible.

However, for further defense, see Chudnoff (2011).

Williamson (2007) grants this, but offers a deflationary account of it in turn: “For myself, I am aware of no intellectual seeming beyond my conscious inclination to believe...” (p. 217). We may or may not grant that every seeming-true is a conscious inclination to believe, but such an inclination is hardly sufficient for being an intuition. There are many things I am consciously inclined to believe: that my daughter was born in Sydney, that there is a moth flitting over to my left, that since the coin has come up heads six times in a row it will almost certainly come up tails on the next toss, and that classes begin on Monday. (Some of these I do also actually believe, some not.) But none would qualify as an intuition in the philosophers’ sense. Not all are even seemings of any kind.
Earlenbaugh and Molyneux (2009) too hold an “inclination to believe” view, but dropping the qualification “conscious.” They defend it ingeniously and at considerable length. (Far less convincingly, they also argue that despite advertising and appearances, intuitions are not actually treated as evidence by philosophers.) N.b., like Williamson’s, their view is entirely compatible with that of intuitions as seemings.

My main complaint here is the same as against Williamson except more so: If not every conscious inclination to believe is an intuition, then certain not every inclination to believe is one. Earlenbaugh and Molyneux anticipate this (p. 89n2): “[W]e think it is possible to informatively classify a species as belonging to a genus without giving a full specification of its nature (consider the case of classifying a platypus as a mammal.” —Agreed, but our project in this section of this paper is to say what an “intuition” is, not merely to assign it to a much broader genus. (Mind you, I am not entirely sure that all intellectual seemings are intuitions in the philosophers’ sense.)

19 At the maiden presentation of Lycan (1985), at the University of Pittsburgh, Adolf Grünbaum held forth at great length and at high volume.

20 For a different but related reply to Markie, see Chudnoff (2012, forthcoming).

21 I am grateful to Kevin McCain and to Chris Tucker for lavish and very helpful comments on my penultimate draft (one of which saved me from an embarrassing error).