

VISUAL CONTENT: NARROW OR WIDE?

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Abstract

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Both. An attractive view is as follows. There are two very different kinds of representational (semantic, intentional, non-pictorial) content, in general: wide and narrow. Wide content is directly referential singular content, much like the content of an interpreted free variable in logic. All other representational content is narrow. Narrow content is somewhat like Fregean sense. All mental representations have narrow contents.

The visual system is the microcosm. I will consider how the general view applies to contents of visual representations. I will suggest that visual object-tracking mechanisms supply directly referential singular contents. I will argue that singular visual representations have both wide and narrow contents: narrow contents are needed for cases of illusion, in which the visual system constructs an empty singular representation. I will offer two arguments that other visual contents are narrow. The first argument will be based on Swampman. The second argument will be based on methodological considerations relating mainly to the attribution of error.