

PERCEIVING MULTIPLICITY

by

Anjana Jacob

B.A. (Hons.) in Philosophy, St. Stephen's College, Delhi, India, 1999

B.A. in Philosophy, Cambridge University, Cambridge, England, 2001

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This dissertation was presented

by

Anjana Jacob

It was defended on

07/02/2012

and approved by

Anil Gupta, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh

John McDowell, Distinguished University Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh

Stephen Engstrom, Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh

Edouard Machery, Associate Professor of History and Philosophy of Science, University of

Pittsburgh

Dissertation Director: Anil Gupta, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of

Pittsburgh

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Anjana Jacob, PhD

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Experience presents us with multiple entities and with connections and differences between them. This multiplicity in experience is the basis of the justification experience is supposed to provide for belief. I argue that neither the newly resurgent Relational approach to perception nor the predominant Representational approach can account for this core feature. The former views experience in terms of a primitive experiential relation between the subject and the world, and the latter in terms of a subject's relation to representational contents.

My arguments emphasize that experience which justifies a complex proposition, such as that something has multiple properties, must also justify the propositions entailed, such as that something has each of those individual properties. This requires the experience to have multiple "objects" (ranging over ordinary objects, properties or states). When these are treated as terms of a relation, there is no room to explain the presentation of connections between them as required for the justification of the complex proposition. This difficulty assails the Representational view as well for it appeals to multiple contents treated as multiple terms of a representational relation. I argue that no explanation of the justificatory unity of the terms is forthcoming.

This failure stems from inadequately distinguishing empirical justification from rational justification. The difference must lie in empirical justification being sensitive to the object of perception in a way that rational justification is not. I argue that for this to be so, experience must

be understood as necessarily partial and the only way to adequately account for this is to regard the subject as the unity of the experience. The common failure of Relational and Representational views then traces to their adopting a framework that wrongly reifies the subject.

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1.0 SETTING THE CONTEXT

Our experience of the world provides us with beliefs about it. These beliefs, we say, are justified by our experiences. There can be other sources of justification. We may believe something on the authority of an expert or by using reason to infer that it is so. Experience provides a basis for belief that is different from these other sources. Experience justifies because it puts us in touch with the things the beliefs are about. In this dissertation I set out to understand how experience does this and whether it provides a distinct kind of justification.

Causal processes starting in the world and leading up to a perceptual belief cannot constitute justification for the belief. This is because belief is “about” something in a way that physical processes are not. If this feature of belief, its intentionality, can be explained by the causal formation of the belief then perhaps so can its justification. I do not examine such physicalist accounts in my dissertation. What they seem to lack is the element of “spontaneity” central to norm governed phenomenon. This is just another way of saying that intentionality is irreducible. The cost of accepting a physicalist account is seen most sharply in the context of ethics and action. It is a widespread and deeply ingrained human practice to assess actions in terms that are not merely causal. Physicalist interpretations of intentionality offer unsatisfactory accounts of such assessment. The cost of accepting non-physicalist accounts is the greater difficulty in offering a coherent account, a difficulty arising simply because there are more categories at play, the physical and the mental. A third possibility would be to reject or minimize the physical; such an account would share the weakness of physicalist theories by offering an error-prone interpretation of much of human practice, and is a view that is in disfavor today.

Once we admit both categories, the physical and the mental, perceptual justification offers an ideal area of study because both categories come into play here in a way that they do not in inferential justification. In my examination of perceptual justification, it turns out that an account of justificatory experience is one side of a coin the other side of which is an account of the self. The theories of perception that I pay close attention to are of two types, with some overlap. The first type argues that a perceiver's experience is to be understood as her bearing a primitive relation to the world. The second type argues that it is to be understood as her representing the world. I set out these ideas and their motivations briefly below.

1.1 Relational theories

The conception of experience as a primitive relation to the world derives from Russell's notion of "acquaintance". He used it to pick out a special kind of relation between a subject and an object, "a direct cognitive relation".¹

I say that I am acquainted with an object when I have a direct cognitive relation to that object, i.e. when I am directly aware of the object itself. When I speak of a cognitive relation here, I do not mean the sort of relation which constitutes judgment, but the sort which constitutes presentation. ... That is, to say that S has acquaintance with O is essentially the same thing as to say that O is presented to S...[T]he word acquaintance is designed to emphasize, more than the word 'presentation, the relational character of the fact with which we are concerned.²

The objects with which we are acquainted in such a manner are, according to Russell, sense-data and universals, and not the ordinary objects of our world. Unlike ordinary objects, sense-data are dependent on the perceiving mind for their existence and are accessible only to that mind.

Russell introduces such entities as the objects of our acquaintance on the basis of his argument

¹ In a quick retracing of history, Hellie says, "Russell was renaming his teacher James Ward's notion of *presentation*, arguably adapted in turn from Kant's *intuition*, itself an adaptation of still older notions." Hellie (2009), p. 5

² Russell (1910), p. 108-9

that the notion of acquaintance is required for thought to be about something, combined with his assumption that when we seem to be thinking of something we really must be thinking of something.

Whenever a relation of supposing or judging occurs, the terms to which the supposing or judging mind is related by the relation of supposing or judging must be terms with which the mind in question is acquainted. This is merely to say that we cannot make a judgment or a supposition without knowing what it is that we are making our judgment or supposition about. It seems to me that the truth of this principle is evident as soon as the principle is understood.³

Russell argues here that acquaintance is required for thought because we cannot think about something without knowing what we are thinking about. This seems true enough and “self-evident” in the way Russell suggests it is. It points to a felt need to provide a grounding for thought. Russell goes on to recast this idea in terms of his own conception of acquaintance which not only sees it as a relation but also seems to eschew “ideas” from it, showing that the understanding of the demand for a ground for thought is as a demand for a non-circular ground.⁴ When to this is added the notion that thought is such that there cannot be as it were an ‘illusion’ of thinking, he is led to posit sense-data as unfailing objects of acquaintance and as providing the ground for thought. Can we retain the idea of acquaintance as a relation, but regarded as a relation to the ordinary objects of our world? If we think of experience as a relational state of affairs in this way, one immediate implication is that a different account will have to be given of hallucinations. No ordinary objects of the world are presented to us in hallucinations and so the relational conception cannot be extended to hallucinations in the same way. Accordingly, the view of acquaintance with the world as a relation is presented as a Disjunctive thesis, separating experience into two different kinds, saying that experiences are such that either they acquaint us

³ Russell (1910), p. 118

⁴ ib. p. 119-120. In his discussion of Russell’s argument, McDowell points out the slide that Russell makes in moving from the simple requirement of “knowing which object” one’s thought is about to the requirement of “knowing the object which” one’s thought is about. See McDowell (1986), p. 135-141.

with the world or they merely seem to. Disjunctivism urges here particularly that the experiences are to be viewed as fundamentally different. This is because what is important to the view is the idea that veridical experience is a presentation of or acquaintance with the world: this is not understood as achievable by the addition of some further element to an experience that lacks the ability to acquaint us with the world. In other words, the guiding idea here is that veridical experience is *sui generis*. This implies that hallucinatory experience, whatever similarities it may bear to it, is to be understood as fundamentally different. What is distinctive about the Disjunctive thesis, and the feature from which it gets its name, is thus the denial that there is a certain kind of common element to veridical experiences and illusions or hallucinations. Veridical experience is not understood as obtained through the addition of some condition to what is already an experience, enabling the Disjunctivist to deny that a veridical experience and its corresponding subjectively identical non-veridical experience have a common epistemic significance. My concern is primarily with the one disjunct, veridical experience. The Disjunctive thesis was introduced by Hinton, though he did not use the term “Disjunctivism”. Among the proponents of the view are Brewer, Campbell, Martin, McDowell, Sedivy and Snowdon who propose a relational view of some experiences in the form of a Disjunctive thesis, for varying reasons.⁵

1.2 Varying motivations

Martin’s chief motivation for proposing his version of Disjunctivism is a metaphysical concern. He regards it as part of our commonsense view of experience that the objects we experience are *constituents* of the experience, and tries to preserve this view by using the Disjunctive thesis to rebut the argument from hallucination.

⁵ Campbell (2002), Martin (2004 and 2006), McDowell (1982 and 1986), Sedivy (2008), and Snowdon (1990).

The disjunctivist takes naïve realism to be the best philosophical articulation of what we all pre-theoretically accept concerning the nature of our sense experience: that in veridical perception we are aware of mind-independent objects, and that the kind of experience we have of them is relational, with the objects of sense being constituents of the experiential episode.⁶

The Naïve Realist, however, claims that our sense experience of the world is, at least in part, non-representational. Some of the objects of perception – the concrete individuals, their properties, the events these partake in – are constituents of the experience.⁷

The argument from hallucination, simply formulated, suggests that since from a subject's point of view hallucinations seem the same as other experiences, and hallucinations are not experiences of a subject-independent world, we must conclude that no experience is experience of a subject-independent world. Such an argument provided some incentive to propose the sense-datum view of perception according to which experiences are presentations of sense-data. This view of experience respects the intuition guiding the argument from hallucination by giving a uniform account of all experiences. Since, however, it involves giving up the commonsense idea that what we experience are ordinary objects of a world that exists independently of us and of our perceptions of it, Disjunctivism provides an alternative response, one that its proponents urge is closer to commonsense. At the same time, Disjunctivism does not see itself as denying the observation driving the argument from hallucination, viz. that hallucinations and veridical experiences can seem the same to the subject. What it denies is the further assumption the argument makes, that the fact that the experiences seem the same to the subject means that they are fundamentally of the same type.

There can be motivations for Disjunctivism other than the desire to uphold Naïve Realism as understood above. A dissatisfaction with the way other theories incorporate demonstrative reference and thereby give an account of thought and action, can propel one

⁶ Martin (2006), p. 404

⁷ Martin (2004), p. 39

towards Disjunctivism; for in Disjunctivism the object itself has been understood as made available to the subject in veridical experience, and not merely the object via a representation of it or via a proxy like a sense-datum. This is what propels Campbell, and to some extent Snowdon, to a Disjunctive view.

McDowell's motivation for proposing a simple Disjunctive outlook is primarily epistemological; it is neither a metaphysical concern nor an apparent need to find a ground for thought that guides the proposal here. His presentation of Disjunctivism is in terms not so much of the subject bearing a certain "relation" to the world as some of the above proponents understand it, but in terms of the exercise of a fallible capacity to know the world that sometimes delivers knowledge of the world and acquaints us with it, and at other times fails to. Against the skeptics, he argues that "we *can* make sense of the idea of direct perceptual access to objective facts about the environment" – of a "fact that such-and-such is the case making itself perceptually manifest to someone" – if we adopt a view that distinguishes our experiences in a certain way.⁸ McDowell suggests we distinguish those experiences in which our fallible capacities to know the world have been employed deceptively from those in which they have not, such that we do not conceive of the experiential intake in the two cases as "*a highest common factor* of what is available to experience in the deceptive and non-deceptive cases alike".⁹ He proposes this simple Disjunctive view to reject the skeptic's argument that since our capacity to know the world is fallible and since we are indeed misled in some exercises of it, it can never deliver knowledge of facts.

⁸ McDowell (2006), p. 21-22, and McDowell (1988), p. 211

⁹ McDowell (1988), p. 210

In considering a view of perception in terms of a primitive relation, my chief question is this: how does the view of the subject as bearing a relation to the world in experience integrate with the view of her as a subject who has beliefs and who seeks reasons? Is, for instance, her relational state in experience to be regarded as itself a state of justified belief? Or are we to regard them as distinct? To address these questions, I select for critical study Martin's account of experience which appears to leave room for integrating the relational experiential state with a belief state, and Campbell's account which treats perception as a relational state that is conceptually prior to, but which enables, a state of justified belief.

1.3 Representational theories

Representationalists claim that perceptual experience is a representational state of the subject, and that the justificatory character of experience is determined (at least in part) by its representational content. Since experience is here understood as a state of the subject that represents the world, it can be regarded as correct or incorrect. Further, being representational, it can be regarded as being about the world itself, without any mediating entities. In this sense it can be seen as giving us "direct" access to the world, without any mediating entities like sense-data. So this view of experience competes with the relational view in the claim that they deliver direct access to ordinary objects of the world. If experience is itself just a form of representation and experiences are about the world like our thoughts are, how do they differ? For this, experience will have to be regarded as a special kind of representation. Such a move is also useful because the phenomenological nature of experience, its distinctive feel (what it is like to have the experience), can then be explained in terms of the special nature of experiential representation. The thesis is thus often expressed in terms of a relation between the representational content of experience and its phenomenology.

Representationalism can be of varying degrees. It might express the complete determination of phenomenology by representational content. Such a view might then express the supervenience of phenomenal character over representational content or it might identify the two. Alternatively, it might be held that in addition to representational content, some experiences also have intrinsic, non-representational, purely qualitative properties (sometimes called “sensations” or “qualia”, though the use of these terms varies widely). Note that there are accounts of experience on which experience is necessarily conceptual, and so representational, but which also make room for the determination of phenomenology by the object itself. It is not surprising that this is the position held by those who advocate a necessary conceptual element in experience.¹⁰ For unlike proponents of special kinds of contents which are not conceptual, treating experience as conceptual would seem to blur the distinction between experience and thought, unless a special role is given to the object itself in experience.

Perceptual verbs are intensional. Just as one can think about something that does not exist, one can also talk of experience of something which does not exist. We are familiar with the idea that the “directedness” or “aboutness” embodied in a representation can be in place both where the object the mind is directed upon exists and where it does not exist. An artist’s representation of a scene might be of one that is real or equally of one that is imaginary. I can form the intention to eat an apple tomorrow, whether in fact I do so or not. Representations can be uniform across cases where the represented object exists and where it does not, prompting a Representational view of experience which is sometimes directed at objects in the world (as in veridical experiences) and sometimes not (as in hallucinations). Such a view offers a response to the argument from hallucination both by respecting the intuition driving that argument (that the

¹⁰ See in particular McDowell. Brewer’s earlier work (1999) tries to maintain a combined position but in later work (2011) he gravitates towards rejecting representational contents in his account of experience.

different kinds of experience are of essentially the same type) as well as by respecting the commonsense claim that our experiences are of ordinary objects.

When experience is viewed as a representational state, we need some way of distinguishing between experience and other representational states such as thoughts about mathematical theorems or intentions to act. The distinction has largely been made by introducing “nonconceptual contents”. These are representational contents, evaluable as correct or incorrect, but which do not require that the subject in such a contentful state must possess the concepts used to ascribe the content to her.¹¹ The source of such content – the source of its being about the world – is often located either in the subject’s causal-informational links with the world, or in terms of its functional relations with other representational states. Some form of Representationalism is therefore a welcome strategy for those who want to locate all features of intentionality in the physical world. Yet, there are also Representationalists who, while locating the source of thought in a similar way, also maintain that it cannot be fully explained in terms of the features of the physical world. This is usually seen in their view of demonstrative concepts, concepts like “that” or “this” employed in perceptual experience which ostensibly refer to an object without describing it. Among the proponents of some version of Representationalism are Dretske, Lycan, McDowell, Peacocke and Tye.¹² I select for critical study Peacocke’s account of experience as a representational state with nonconceptual content. Using my critical studies, I will argue that neither the Relational nor the Representational approach will satisfactorily explain the role of experience in providing justification.

¹¹ There is sometimes lack of clarity in the use of the term “nonconceptual content”, it being used sometimes to refer to the state a subject can be in without possessing the concepts used to attribute content to her, and sometimes to refer to the content itself as being characterized without concepts. Stalnaker (1998) and Byrne (2005) point this out.

¹² Dretske (1969, 1981), Lycan (1996), McDowell (1994), Peacocke (1999), Tye (1995).

2.0 SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE RELATIONAL VIEW:

A STUDY OF MARTIN

2.1 Martin's Basic Claims

It seems, at least *prima facie*, that there is a distinctive feature common to veridical perceptions and hallucinations: a kind of phenomenology that we associate with all and only sense experiences. Disjunctivists presumably do not want to deny this.

Of course, such views do not deny the evident truth that in both cases of perception and hallucination of a pig one can correctly describe the situation as one in which it looks to one as if a pig is present.¹

What Disjunctivists deny is not that these experiences are subjectively identical, but that they have the same epistemic significance, and further, in Martin's case, that they have the same constituents; in particular, he denies that they share the same experiential state as a constituent. The Disjunctivist thus does not deny that there is something in common between veridical experiences and hallucinations; she claims just that they are two fundamentally different kinds of experience. On Martin's conception of veridical experience, the object experienced and the subject's relation of awareness to it are essential constituents of the experience, so that no experience of the same fundamental kind could have occurred without these. Thus, for the kind of Disjunctivism proposed here to be non-trivial,

We need some conception of the privileged descriptions of experiences. For it to be a substantive matter that perceptions fail to be the same kind of mental episode as illusions or hallucinations, we need some characterizations of events which reflect their nature or what is most fundamentally true of them.²

¹ Martin (2002), p. 393

² Martin (2006), p. 360-1

This emphasis on the different natures of hallucinations and veridical experiences must not lead us to think that they do not form a proper category. How is their common aspect to be understood? A natural suggestion would be to treat this as a common determinable property, with hallucinations and veridical experiences exhibiting different determinations of it. According to Martin, it will be unstable for a Disjunctivist motivated by the kind of naïve realism he is motivated by to adopt such a view of experience, and so he presents another way of understanding the commonality between the two fundamentally different kinds of experiences. In setting out the basic commitments of a Disjunctivist, Martin proposes three claims.³ Claim I expresses the idea that veridical experiences and hallucinations are of fundamentally different kinds. Claim II sets out the commonality between them in terms of an epistemological property that relates them: an experience is to be understood as an event that is introspectively indiscriminable, or indiscriminable through reflection, from a veridical experience. This, Martin urges, is a “modest” conception of experience, and one that is extensionally equivalent with our use of the term. The third commitment, Claim III, uses this conception of experience to characterize a class of hallucinations in solely such terms. These are “causally matching hallucinations” which have the same proximate causal conditions as a veridical experience. According to Claim III, such a hallucination is simply a state that is introspectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience, with there being nothing more to its phenomenal character than just this feature.⁴ According to Martin, the Disjunctivist must adopt this austere characterization for once one gives a more substantive characterization, it is possible that a state so characterized can also be present in a veridical experience, threatening to pre-empt the explanatory role of what is special to the case of veridical experience. It is also for this reason

³ ib. p. 356-370.

⁴ Brewer (2011) adopts this view of Martin’s.

that he urges a view of the common character of experiences in terms other than of a determinable property.⁵ It is unclear why the mere logical possibility of a hallucinatory state occurring with a veridical experience, if such a possibility is even coherent, would explanatorily pre-empt the role of veridical experience for a Disjunctivist who seeks an account of experience that acquaints the subject with the world in a relational state of experience. Rather than press here the need for a better motivation for his second and third claims, my interest below is in Martin's account of veridical experience. In the next two sections I examine how his interpretation of experience as a mode of self-consciousness fits with his relational conception of veridical experience. The last section of this chapter then examines Martin's proposal to characterize hallucination solely in terms of an epistemological feature. I argue that he is unable to rescue the hallucinating subject from being radically cut off from the world.

2.2 Self-consciousness and Disjunctivism

In the view of experience Martin proposes, it has been claimed that the object of experience is a part or constituent of the experience. Might experience also have a representational component? Martin appears to leave it as an open possibility, saying about this just that:

The Naïve Realist, however, claims that our sense experience of the world is, *at least in part*, non-representational.⁶

The qualification "at least in part" seems to leave room for introducing a representational element in experience for those who might wish to for various reasons. It suggests that according

⁵ For were we to offer such a characterization of experience in terms of a determinable property that can be understood independently of any of its determinations, notably, of veridical experience, we would need to characterize the above kind of hallucination in substantive terms opening the threat of explanatory pre-emptiveness, according to Martin. Martin (2006), p. 370-2

⁶ Martin (2004), p. 39, emphasis added.

to the view adopted here we can understand the direct presentation of the world in experience independently of considering whether the experience has representational content.

However, a closer look at Martin's other claims shows that a definite stance concerning this is forced upon him, at least in the case of some subjects – self-conscious subjects like us. This becomes clear when we consider the elucidation of Claim II, the notion of experience in general that Martin urges as the modest conception of experience. In elaborating the idea of introspective indiscriminability employed here, a contrast is drawn with visual indiscriminability. Consider a lemon and a life-like model of it made of soap such that the naked eye cannot tell which the real lemon is. We can say that the lemon and the soap bar are visually indiscriminable. Martin stresses that the impossibility of vision revealing the real lemon among the two items here comes with a certain objectivity attached to it:

In being visually indiscriminable they share something: the same appearance, or look. ... In general, then, with respect to the senses, indiscriminability of objects of sense correlates with a shared appearance, or shared object of sense.⁷

When *introspective* indiscriminability is used to characterize the notion of experience, Martin points out that he cannot be thinking of it on the lines of visual indiscriminability. For that would imply that the two items said to be introspectively indiscriminable, the veridical experience and the hallucination, share a property detectible by introspection, whereby they share an appearance the way the items said to be visually indiscriminable do. This would contradict Claim III according to which hallucination is characterized just by the negative epistemological property of being introspectively indiscriminable from veridical experience, without having any additional intrinsic properties. So Martin must contrast visual indiscriminability with introspective indiscriminability.

⁷ Martin (2006), p. 384

He does so by pointing out that vision is a mode of being aware of a realm independent of it. He suggests that this is why we are led to posit something in common between the items that are visually indiscriminable. So introspection is not to be thought of as a mode of awareness that is like sight. Introspective awareness – or self-awareness – is not to be understood as a mode of detecting features of some realm of facts given independently of one's introspection.

In saying this, self-consciousness is not being urged as a necessary feature of experience. Since Martin is keen to include animals as experiencing subjects, where these do not possess self-consciousness, Martin does not impose such a requirement. We, however, are subjects who are self-conscious in our experiences. What does the above interpretation of self-awareness or introspective awareness imply about the perceptual experiences of such self-aware subjects?

When a subject is self-conscious in having an experience, where self-consciousness is not understood as a mode of being aware of an event obtaining independently of that self-consciousness, there are two ways of understanding the relation between experience and self-consciousness. The experience could be treated as distinct from and dependent on that self-consciousness, the way, perhaps, that consciousness of a sense-datum is consciousness of something that is distinct from and dependent on that consciousness. Alternatively, experience and self-consciousness of that experience can be treated as identical. Martin adopts the latter view saying that nothing is added to our consciousness in experience to get self-consciousness of it; rather, in the case of some subjects like us, experiential consciousness is just a mode of self-consciousness.

[I]ntrospection cannot be a mechanism. There is therefore nothing which has been added to phenomenal consciousness and through which we come to be aware of how the character of phenomenal consciousness [is] when we contrast our situation with that of the dog. It seeming to the subject that things seem a certain way to her can constitute things seeming that way to her. So for a self-aware subject, phenomenal

consciousness can thereby exemplify self-awareness in itself. That which in us is simply a mode of self-awareness is what we attribute to other creatures even when we do not take them to be self-aware.⁸

...[S]uppose that we can fix the facts of phenomenal consciousness independently of the higher-order perspective on it, in as much as we think of the latter as correctly reporting or reflecting these additional facts. And once we acknowledge this, then we must think of the phenomenal facts that we pick up on in this way as being independent of the experience being a veridical perception, for the properties in question will have to be common to the causally matching hallucination and the veridical perception it is indiscriminable from. So it could not be that one's experience being this way in itself (as opposed to being this way in certain circumstances) constituted the kind of contact with one's environment which would explain one's ability to think about things around one and come to know how they are.⁹

Our reflective standpoint on our own experience cannot stand outside of it.¹⁰

Thus, not only does Martin treat experiential consciousness and self-consciousness in certain subjects as identical (in an experience), he points out that he must do so. For if self-consciousness is a matter of reporting on a realm (experience) whose features are fixed independently (this includes cases where the experience is considered as distinct from but dependent on self-consciousness), then the report of self-consciousness must be seen as picking out features of the experience that are shared with hallucinations, for we cannot distinguish veridical experience from hallucinations through introspective self-awareness. But if what is available to self-consciousness is a common phenomenal factor, then to the extent that self-conscious experience is the basis of thought, the common features of veridical experience and hallucinations that are thus picked out by self-consciousness will be the source of thoughts about things. The veridical experience itself, understood as a subject's relation with the object, will not be the source of our ability to think about things. This would undercut a Disjunctivist's

⁸ Martin (2006), p. 395

⁹ Martin (2006), p. 398

¹⁰ ib. p. 397.

motivation for his thesis. So, Martin points out, he cannot treat introspective awareness as a mechanism. The experience of self-conscious subjects is simply a mode of self-consciousness, not something to which self-consciousness is applied or attached.¹¹

We also note that Martin talks of self-awareness as “introspective reflection” and “introspective judgment”. The reason self-awareness is not attributed to animals like dogs is because it is understood as a conceptual activity, an activity of judgment.

[I]f we are asking of the dog’s own knowledge of the sameness or difference of his or her experiences, then we already have the answer that the dog does not know of the distinctness of any of their experiences. For the dog lacks all knowledge that any given experience is of this or that kind, lacking the conceptual resources to make any such judgement.¹²

Self-consciousness in a subject, her forming introspective judgments and being introspectively aware, is a conceptual state; or more appropriately, a conceptual activity. Since experience is understood as a mode of self-consciousness in the case of subjects like us, our experiences must be understood as conceptual.

Thus, for certain subjects – subjects like us, we have the following two claims:

- i. Experience is a mode of self-consciousness
- ii. Self-consciousness is a conceptual activity

How do these two claims cohere with the view that experience is a relational state of affairs where the subject bears a relation of awareness to the object that is a constituent of her experience?

¹¹ The claim here has been that experience in the case of self-conscious beings is not to be understood as having features fixed independently of that self-consciousness, that is, experience in such cases is not to be understood as having features whose source is independent of self-consciousness. This is the reason why experience being a mode of self-consciousness is not to be read as experiences being an instantiation of self-consciousness where that which instantiates self-consciousness – experience – is understood as having additional characteristics that it instantiates.

¹² Martin (2006), p. 379

2.3 Self-consciousness and the Relational View of Perception

Now there is no difficulty in conceiving of an event where a subject conceptually represents something to which she also bears a non-representational relation. Subject S can think of O as well as be the mother of O. Here, S's conceptual representation of O is distinct from and independent of her bearing the non-representational relation of motherhood to O. In contrast, S's experience of O, a relational state of affairs as elucidated above, is just a mode of her judging. How are we to understand this?

We might here inquire into the content of the judgment in self-consciousness. We might wonder whether the representation involved here is of the self or of the object being experienced or of something else altogether. It seems to me, however, that Martin's claim that his conception of experience can be understood as a mode of self-consciousness in certain subjects can be examined without knowing the content of the concerned judgment. We need simply to ask: what is the source of consciousness in such an experience?

In a relational state of awareness, as Martin conceives experience, what makes the state one of awareness is a relation.

[V]eridical perceptual experience is constituted through one standing in a *relation of awareness* to the objects of perception.¹³

We might place restrictions on the subject in some cases, such as that it must be of a certain degree of physical complexity or that it must stand in a "space of reasons", for it to be a subject that can bear such a relation of awareness. The latter restriction, that the subject must belong to the space of reasons, is not a restriction that Martin can introduce on pain of excluding animals as bearers of this relation. In any case, no matter whether we choose to place restrictions on the subject or which ones we choose to place, what makes a state of affairs one of experiential

¹³ Martin (2006), p. 394, emphasis added.

awareness is the obtaining of a specific relation in that state of affairs. What makes an activity one of judging, and thereby of self-consciousness, is in contrast not specifiable independently of other judgments and states.¹⁴ We see this in the commonly accepted claim that Evans formulated as the Generality Constraint. To judge that *a* is *F* requires the capacity to judge that *a* is *G*, that *a* is *H* and so on for other concepts that the subject possesses.¹⁵ If we do not want to conceive of the subject as a Cartesian subject who has such capacities without having yet exercised them in experience, then it means that the source of a subject's judgment and of her consciousness therein cannot be specified without reference to other such experiential episodes. An experiential episode understood as a relational state of affairs whose source of awareness is simply the obtaining of a relation of awareness between the subject and the object of awareness (and not the obtaining of other relations that the subject might bear to other states), cannot therefore itself be a mode of judging whose source of awareness involves relations to other states. What makes a state one of experience, where there is a relation of awareness in addition to whatever conditions we might place on the subject, cannot be exactly what makes the experience one of self-consciousness understood as an activity of judgment. Yet, without such identification, experience cannot be regarded as a mode of self-consciousness.

The above difficulty arises because the object of experience is made a constituent of the experience and the experience is regarded as a relational state of affairs in this sense. If the object is not so regarded as a constituent of the experience, we can try to carve out a class of judgments which are such that they cannot be made without the existence of the object which they are about. We can then term the relation between the subject who makes such a judgment and the corresponding object or state of affairs as a relation of acquaintance. But here the relation of

¹⁴ For my purpose in this paper, I will not provide much elaboration of this, nor provide a full characterization of the Generality Constraint I mention below.

¹⁵ Evans (1982), p. 100-105

acquaintance is introduced and defined simply as that which makes such judgments possible; the relation is deprived of any other independent characterization, and in particular is not independently characterized as “a relation of awareness”. Such a relation, therefore, does not fall prey to the difficulty raised above.¹⁶ It can be objected here that when pressed, the relation so defined does not explain how judgments can be about the world since it does not provide any more primitive characterization of the relation other than in terms of the capacity for judgment (which already takes it that judgments can be about the world). This, however, would be a different objection, of a kind different from the one facing a relational view of experience that takes the object as a constituent of the experience. Martin’s relational view of veridical experience does treat the object as a constituent of the experience and as a relatum in a relation of awareness that is characterized independently of representational contents, falling prey to an incoherence in integrating the consciousness of a reflective subject with its relational view of experience.

This conception of experience cannot be rescued by retreating and regarding self-consciousness as a mechanism, a mode or source of knowledge of something whose features are fixed independently of that self-consciousness. If self-consciousness is understood in such a way on the model of perception, then the above objection cannot be brought into play; yet, it is an unattractive alternative. It embodies a Cartesian conception of the self in which consciousness and its being about the world is not grounded in the world. Further, such a view is in any case not available to Martin who needs to reject the treatment of self-consciousness as a mechanism to provide a response to the objection that his account of hallucination deprives it of

¹⁶ This appears to be so in McDowell’s Disjunctivist writings (1982, 2006).

phenomenology, as pointed out below. I will argue that even having such a response, there is embedded in Martin's account of hallucination a Cartesian conception of the self.

2.4. The Hallucinating Subject and the Cartesian Subject

The previous section examined the account that Martin must give of veridical experience. It was found that an adequate, stable account of the veridical experiences of subjects like us has not been offered. This section examines the proposal to characterize hallucination solely in terms of an epistemological feature, something Martin sees as a natural development of a Disjunctivist theory of perception and which can be regarded as his special contribution to the view.

Martin claims that the Disjunctivist must adopt a "modest" view of experience as an event that is introspectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience. Correlatedly, he claims that this must be the only characterization offered of causally matching hallucinations in contrast to veridical experience which is additionally characterized as a relational state.

To see what this characterization proposes, we can note that according to it hallucinations and veridical experiences share a property, a relational property of being indiscriminable from a veridical experience. What is important for Martin is claiming that these share a feature showing them to form a proper category, while denying that they share any intrinsic properties, for fear that such properties might be explanatorily pre-emptive leaving redundant the distinctness of veridical experience in an account of experience. A common relational feature uniting hallucinations and veridical experiences avoids this difficulty while leaving the Disjunctivist thesis intact, for the way in which a veridical experience bears an indiscriminability relation to itself is fundamentally different from the way a hallucination bears this relation to it. However, doesn't this view of hallucination solely in terms of a negative epistemological feature of being

indiscriminable on reflection from a veridical experience, suggest an event that has *only* a relational property? Martin's interpretation of introspection is perhaps to be taken as addressing this. As seen earlier, according to Martin, introspection is not to be understood as a mechanism of being aware of a state that exists independently of introspection. His suggestion is then that being introspectively indiscriminable from veridical experience can itself be the constitutive, phenomenal character of a state.

The rejection of introspective reflection viewed as a mechanism operating on an event obtaining independently of that operation is used to answer Smith's charge that in characterizing hallucination solely in the epistemological terms of introspection, hallucination has been deprived of phenomenology. Smith points out that intuitively we would say that cases such as of post-hypnotic suggestion or inattention lack the phenomenology of experience. These cases lacking in phenomenal character may however have the same cognitive consequences as perceptual experiences. If hallucination is characterized solely in epistemological terms then we seem to assimilate it to such cases. This characterization seems to deprive it of phenomenology.¹⁷ Martin uses the interpretation of introspection as a mode rather than as a mechanism of awareness to rebut this objection, saying that the epistemological condition properly understood delivers phenomenology. In addition, he goes on to provide a further characterization of hallucination and experience. This is now in terms of having "a point of view on the world" and is introduced in order to accommodate the idea that animals incapable of introspective reflection nevertheless have experiences. The negative epistemological criterion of introspective indiscriminability from veridical experience would seem inappropriate to apply as a characterization of the experience of creatures not capable of introspection in the first place, and

¹⁷ Martin (2006), p. 373-4

so it is now suggested that what the epistemological criterion specifies is a subject's point of view on the world. The suggestion is that this is how the epistemological criterion delivers phenomenology. We might wonder if the connection between the epistemological criterion and a "point of view" here is any more than stipulative, but let us set that aside. If a subject's point of view on the world in a veridical experience, yielding phenomenology, is a relational state of affairs, how is there phenomenal consciousness in hallucination in the absence of such a relational state of affairs? Martin answers that in a hallucination the subject has a point of view on herself, and thereby has a point of view on the world, albeit limited.

It appears now that with this further characterization we can understand experience simply as a subject's having a point of view on the world, with these terms replacing earlier talk of introspective indiscriminability from veridical experience as the characterization of experience. With this, however, the claim that the notion of veridical experience is primary and that experience is to be understood in terms of its relation to veridical experience is lost. A hallucination too, like a veridical experience, is understood as an event of the subject's having a point of view on the world, that is, on an object in the world – in this case, herself. We have here a characterization of experience as a determinable, a point of view, with the two kinds of points of view constituting determinations understood independently of each other, a view Martin earlier ruled out as unviable for the Disjunctivist. More importantly, this seems to treat the subject and the world in such a way that they are to be understood as independent of each other. For if not, the subject's having a point of view on herself in hallucination would imply her having some point of view on the world other than herself, and the Disjunctivist's fundamental distinction between hallucinatory and veridical experience would be lost. On the other hand, if it is possible for me to have a point of view on myself without therein having some view on the

rest of the world, it seems the subject is here being seen as detached and independent of the world, as though existing in a vacuum. Yet, contradictorily, it is precisely the subject's being a member of the world that allows her point of view on herself to count as a point of view on the world and therefore as an experience.

The above instability in the conception of the subject and the world and how they are to be understood with regard to each other, is an echo of the instability in combining a representational state of the subject with a certain relation to the world that was examined before. As I suspect, this is the pernicious difficulty underlying and vitiating most attempts at understanding our acquaintance with the world in experience. It arises from the effort to combine in a certain way the subject and the object of experience when these are understood both as independent of each other and yet as dependent on each other. To arrive at a consistent view respecting these intuitions, we have perhaps to re-conceive our understanding of the subject and the object in experience, and the contributions they make.

Returning to Martin, one can press the question, how is "a point of view on the world" to be understood? If taken as an unanalysable term, then it explains nothing about experience, even less than is explained by introducing a primitive relation of awareness as the explanatory element in an account of experience, for in the latter we are at least told there is a relation. How is a "point of view on the world" to be understood? Speaking simply, it appears to be a phrase most easily interpreted in terms either of a relation to the world or a representation of it. Since it is employed in a Disjunctivist account as what yields the phenomenal character of experience, it might perhaps be interpreted as referring to the subject's relation to the world in experience. Hallucination then is a state of the subject's bearing a certain relation to itself, a part of the world (an alternate interpretation available here is discussed below). This, we note, closes room for the

explanation of error in hallucination, unless representations are introduced. If experiential awareness consists of a certain relation to an object in the world, and hallucination is an experience because it is a relation to such an object in the world – the subject – then we might have here a view of veridical experience and hallucination being of fundamentally different kinds, in virtue of having fundamentally different kinds of objects, but it is not clear what the error or defect in a hallucination consists in. It does not here consist in the absence of an object, nor in the unreality of the object. It cannot consist in the absence of a relation for it is the relation, delivering a point of view, that makes it an experience. The error or defect in hallucination must lie in an error in representation. This (apart from assimilating hallucinations with illusions) requires the subject to represent in a hallucination, without having any point of view at all on the world other than itself. This is a strikingly Cartesian conception of the self, one that Martin and most Disjunctivists are precisely at pains to avoid.

Suppose, however, that we are not to think of a subject's hallucination as simply her having a point of view on herself, which would imply the Cartesian conception above, but rather as having a point of view on herself as seeming to have a point of view on the external world. That is, rather than read Martin as characterizing hallucination as the having of a point of view, we might interpret him more charitably as merely characterizing hallucination as a seeming to have a point of view. However, it seems that for Martin the Cartesian conception is still not far behind. We see this by contrasting the account with one that also regards hallucination as merely a seeming to have a point of view but which nevertheless regards a hallucination as an exercise, albeit a poor one, of a *capacity* (say, perhaps, a representational capacity). In this case, one's consciousness in a hallucination is rescued from being Cartesian even when it delivers only a seeming to have a point of view on the world, by its being an exercise of a capacity that is itself

well grounded in experiences that acquaint one with the world. To talk of a capacity is precisely a way of linking various episodes which are regarded as exercises of it. Where experiential awareness is understood as the exercise of a capacity for such awareness, a poor exercise of it that does not yield awareness of anything is already bound up with other exercises of the same capacity that do yield awareness of the world, and so one's consciousness in a poor exercise is not condemned to be Cartesian. But Martin's conception of experience is not as the exercise of capacities. It is simply in terms of standing in relations with the world or as seeming to stand in such relations, where the relations of awareness are understood independently of capacities such as of representation. The only way Martin can try to rescue consciousness in hallucination from being Cartesian is in terms of the indiscriminability of the experience from a corresponding veridical experience. Yet this does not provide the desired link, for the corresponding veridical experience need not be an actual experience. It then seems that in hallucinating the subject really is radically cut off from the world.

3.0 CONSCIOUS ATTENTION: A STUDY OF CAMPBELL

Campbell's opening remark in *Reference and Consciousness* is a general one about the connection between experience and thought. He remarks that it is experience that makes thought possible:

It is experience of the world that puts us in a position to think about it.¹

Campbell's project is to elucidate this connection. When we employ a demonstrative term in the context of a perceptual experience, we think about or refer to an aspect of the world in a way that seems to be clearly made possible by perceptual experience. This relation between demonstrative reference and perceptual experience is thus the point of his special focus. Campbell's aim is to provide a "theoretical analysis" of this connection which is already compelling to common sense.

In the first section of this chapter I lay out Campbell's project, with a special emphasis on trying to understand its motivations and compulsions. Section 3.2 gives an exposition of his claim connecting the level of conscious experience and the level of cognitive processing. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 outline four points on which this connection seems to come apart. 3.4 ends with an examination of whether Campbell can indeed maintain the distinction he needs between experience and the highlighting of an object in experience.

¹ Campbell (2002) p. 1. All references in this chapter are to this book unless otherwise mentioned.

3.1 Campbell's Project

Campbell's project is to understand the relation between experience and thought. How can experience be understood as grounding thought? The idea that guides his inquiry is this: the characterization we give of experience must be such that it can explain how experience can make thought possible. Where an account of experience does not illuminate this possibility, it is to be rejected, no matter whatever else it might achieve. This is the pivot on which his rejection of other accounts of experience turns, and around which he shapes his own view.

If experience is itself understood as conceptual, we fail to provide a non-circular grounding for thought.

The problem with this reply [which invokes a conceptual view of experience] is that it takes for granted the intentionality of experience. That is, it takes for granted that experience of the world is a way of grasping thoughts about the world. To see an object is, on this conception, to grasp a demonstrative proposition. There are many ways in which you can grasp a demonstrative proposition: you can grasp it as the content of speech or as the meaning of a wink or a sigh. One way in which you can grasp a proposition is as the content of vision.²

The guiding strategy in Campbell's proposed view of experience is thus made clear:

The argument turns on an appeal to the explanatory role of experience. Experience is what explains our grasp of the concepts of objects. But if you think of experience as intentional, as merely one among many ways of grasping thoughts, you cannot allow it this explanatory role.³

We are not to take the intentional character of experience as a given; rather, experience of objects has to be what explains our ability to think about objects. That means that we cannot view experience of objects as a way of grasping thoughts about objects. Experience of objects has to be something more primitive than the ability to think about objects, in terms of which the ability to think about objects can be explained.⁴

² p. 121.

³ p. 122.

⁴ p. 122. The move to thinking of experience as non-conceptually representing the object does not amend the situation, for Campbell's demand for an explanation of the grasp of concepts is treated more generally as a demand for a non-circular explanation of the grasp of representational content. p. 147-8.

Thus, Campbell sharply separates experience from states that are representational. This is taken as intuitive to the extent that animals and babies, creatures without conceptual ability, are nevertheless subjects of experience. According to Campbell, the explanatory role of experience is violated by any account that does not provide a strictly non-circular grounding of concepts in experience. This is seen again in Campbell's rejection of a functionalist analysis of consciousness of an object:

On this functionalist analysis, experiencing the object is the very same thing as having a collection of dispositions to use a demonstrative term in various ways...We would lose the right to say that use of the term is explained by knowledge of reference, which in turn is explained by experience of the object.⁵

How is experience to be characterized then if it is to provide a non-circular grounding for thought? Campbell argues that it cannot be simply in terms of informational states and cognitive processing which are not conscious. This is because the objectives of cognitive processing cannot be determined merely by informational states; "we may have to appeal to the deepest aspects of an agent's personal life" to explain why his experiences have the focus they do, and "and we have no way of recasting this causal-explanatory work in information-processing terms".⁶ Thus, it is urged that experience must be characterized as a non-representational conscious state: it must be a purely relational state.

On a Relational View, the qualitative character of the experience is constituted by the qualitative character of the scene perceived. I will argue that only this view, on which experience of an object is a simple relation holding between perceiver and object, can characterize the kind of acquaintance with objects that provides knowledge of reference.⁷

On a Relational View, the categorical objects and properties being perceived constitute the content of perceptual experience. We can characterize the phenomenal content of experience by saying which 'view'

⁵ p. 135.

⁶ p. 14

⁷ p. 114-5.

the perceiver is enjoying...The constituents of the view are the categorical objects and properties themselves. I am not appealing here to the idea that the perceiver represents the objects and properties in question; there is no representation into whose meaning we can inquire.⁸

Though the requirement of a non-circular grounding for thought is introduced only late in Campbell's presentation of his project, it is only against the background of this constraint that his project can be understood. Campbell does try to also provide an independent argument in favor of the relational conception; this will be discussed in 3.3.1. The task for Campbell now is to explain in detail how experience understood as more primitive than thought and representation can ground thought and representation. It is here that he appeals to the notion of conscious attention. According to Campbell it is an intuitive claim that

To refer to the perceived object, it is not enough that I have it in my field of view. As I look over the scene, it is not enough that the gold-domed building be there somewhere in my visual field. I must separate it visually, as figure from ground, I must visually discriminate it from its surroundings. I have to attend to it.⁹

Conscious attention to an object "singles" it out; it is a "highlighting" of your experience of the object. If we can make sense of such highlighting, then it can be seen as a forerunner of thought wherein you formulate propositions about things singled out through concept application. Thus, Campbell addresses his project of grounding thought in experience by focusing on demonstrative concepts, shaping his inquiry around the question: what role does experience of the object play in providing me with knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative? He answers this by invoking conscious attention, a phenomenon of singling-out or highlighting an object in experience. We note in passing that Campbell does not explain how other terms come to be understood or how they might depend on experience, but focuses solely on the role of experience in understanding demonstrative terms. His thesis about conscious attention is that,

⁸ Campbell (2005), p. 109

⁹ p. 25.

Knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative is provided by conscious attention to the object. And conscious attention to the object is what causes and justifies the use of information-processing routines in acting on the basis of demonstrative thoughts about the thing, and it is what causes and justifies the use of information-processing routines in verifying propositions about that thing.¹⁰

Campbell typically presents his thesis as the claim that the knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative is *provided* by conscious attention to the object. “Provided” is not specific about the relation between knowledge of reference and conscious attention. Is it a causal relation, a constitutive one, a supervenience relation? There seems to be only one place where Campbell is explicit about the relation:

Your knowledge of the reference of the demonstrative is constituted by your conscious attention to the object itself.¹¹

So Campbell is using three levels, or kinds of vocabulary, in providing his picture. There is the information-processing level which is not conscious, there is the level of conscious attention which constitutes the understanding of demonstratives but is devoid of concept use, and there is the level of conceptual activity such as verification and intentional action. That Campbell does regard conscious attention as constituting knowledge of the reference of demonstratives and not merely as “providing” or “supplying” it, can be seen also in the following way. If knowledge of the reference of demonstratives is assimilated with the level of conceptual activity, then the motivation for his project is undercut. For, we observe that we can think demonstratively about objects and can act on them and verify propositions about them. It may be that we can characterize experience as devoid of such concept use but as also nevertheless causing the selection of information and leading to action. But on such a picture, experience does not seem to be playing a role in grounding thought. All we have are two parallel lines of conceptual activity

¹⁰ p. 28.

¹¹ p. 34.

and of experience both leading to action, or rather perhaps, action on the one vocabulary and movement on the other. But as far as the project of grounding thought in experience is concerned, such a distinct level of experience plays no explanatory role, and in that sense, given the kind of explanatory role being sought for experience, it is not much better than a conceptual view of experience. So Campbell's project constrains him to regard knowledge of the reference of demonstrative terms, which is required for conceptual activity such as action and verification of propositions containing them, as distinct from conceptual activity. This knowledge of reference then only need be attached to experience to have a grounding of thought in experience. The attachment must then be regarded as constitutive, for the alternatives are to have a level of understanding demonstratives that is not conceptual and which in that respect only duplicates the level of experience regarded here as sans concepts, or to have a level of understanding demonstratives that is conceptual and which returns us to the difficulty of showing how experience is explanatorily connected with the conceptual level. This also throws light on Campbell's use of the phrase "knowledge of the reference of a term". The phrase is ambiguous and could indicate knowledge of the *referent* of a term, or an understanding of a term, that is, an understanding of its sense. Campbell in fact introduces the phrase in the latter context when talking about understanding what another speaker asks using a perceptual demonstrative term.

Campbell thus holds what he calls the Classical View about the grasp of meaning and the verification of propositions containing them:

Knowledge of what it is for a proposition to be true is what causes, and justifies, your use of particular ways of verifying, and finding the implications of, that proposition.¹²

¹² p. 24.

He calls the view “classical” probably to contrast it with later views which regarded grasp of meaning as identical to verification and acting on the basis of propositions containing them. In the context of demonstrative terms, the view is that the knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative is what causes and justifies the use of particular ways of verifying and finding the implications of propositions containing the demonstrative. Campbell’s next task is to show that experience of an object, more specifically, conscious attention to it, causes and justifies the use of verification methods; this will be considered in the next section. Together they will yield his thesis that conscious attention provides knowledge of the reference of demonstratives.

Knowledge of the reference of the demonstrative is what causes and justifies the use of particular procedures to verify and find the implications of propositions containing the demonstrative. Conscious attention to the object, I will argue, is what causes and justifies the use of particular procedures for verifying and finding the implications of propositions containing the demonstrative. Hence, knowledge of the reference of the demonstrative is provided by conscious attention to the object.¹³

As it stands, this is not a valid argument because it might be just that there are two parallel causes of the use of particular methods of verification and action. But as we saw from the compulsions outlined above, in the context of Campbell’s project the relation of “provision” is the only acceptable one, and furthermore, it is specifically to be interpreted as a constitutive relation (in the context of beings capable of conceptual activity).

Providing everyday examples of how we are unable to understand another’s use of a demonstrative till we ourselves look and experience the object, Campbell had urged that there is an intuitive relation between knowledge of the reference of demonstratives and experience. This has now been given an interpretation that stands in need of much defense. We also observe here that Campbell introduces his Classical View in the context of the grasp of the meaning of

¹³ p. 25-6.

propositions (beginning with the example of understanding the Goldbach conjecture without having means of verifying or finding its implications), where grasp of meaning is a conceptual matter even if distinct and prior to verification. In the case of demonstrative terms as opposed to propositions, in the context of Campbell's project, the view translates into regarding grasp of a demonstrative term as not just distinct from and causing verification and action, but also as more primitive than such conceptual activity. This is a departure from the context in which the "meaning is use" thesis was raised. This was concerned with rejecting, while opposing views were concerned with maintaining, the coherence of the idea of an *inner, mental* world, where both sides might agree that understanding reference is a conceptual activity (whether inner or not). It seems at least *prima facie* that the above way of keeping knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative distinct from methods of verification for propositions containing it is inappropriate because, unlike in the case of other referring terms, it seems as if in simply understanding the reference of a perceptual demonstrative one has already verified at least some propositions containing it – for we cannot perceive an object without perceiving some of its properties. Campbell argues that by distinguishing the use of an object's possession of a property to single it out visually, from the verification of a proposition to the effect that the object has that property (which uses conceptual skills), the Classical View can be maintained even for perceptual demonstratives. He points to animals and babies who do not have concepts of motion or colour but nevertheless use an object's motion or colour to single it out visually. If it seems the parallel cannot be drawn in the case of people who do have concepts of objects, Campbell says that the example of young children shows that the ability to refer on the basis of colour vision can be in place well before colour concepts have been grasped.¹⁴

¹⁴ p. 30.

The connection that Campbell wants to assert is thus between demonstrative reference and conscious attention understood as a relational state, via processes of information selection that are used in methods of verification. In the context of rejecting Davidson's picture of the interplay between language and the world, Campbell says,

The fundamental point of contact between language and the world is not between the sentence and the patterns of stimulation which cause assent or dissent; the fundamental point of contact is rather between the demonstrative and the conscious attention to the object which sets the standards of right and wrong for the information-processing that swings into play to allow you to verify or act on the basis of propositions about the object.¹⁵

3.2 Conscious Attention and Information Selection

The claim of a connection between conscious attention and processes of information selection is introduced as the Causal Hypothesis:

When, on the basis of vision, you answer the question, 'Is that thing F?', what causes the selection of the relevant information to control your verbal response is your conscious attention to the thing referred to.¹⁶

There will usually be many objects with various properties in one's visual experience and accordingly there will be many cells firing in the part of the brain that registers visual information. When I am asked on the basis of vision whether a particular object is F, the relevant cell firings have to be selected to control my verbal response. What causes the selection? This is really a question about commensurability – causal commensurability – between the level of consciousness and intention on the one hand and the level of information processing on the

¹⁵ p. 228.

¹⁶ p. 13.

other.¹⁷ Campbell invokes conscious attention, the highlighting of an object in experience, to explain this:

To sum up, if you are to act intentionally on an object, you must consciously attend to it, in the common-sense use of the term; but that act of attention must also cause the selection of suitable information for processing, and suitable processes to operate on it, if the information-processing of which you are capable really is to be harnessed to your objects.

The concept of conscious attention thus plays a role here in connecting our psychology, at the level described by common sense, with the information-processing described by psychologists.¹⁸

But how exactly does conscious attention select information? This needs to be spelled out to show that there is commensurability between the various levels. The key here lies in the visual system's use of the "binding parameter".

There has to be some commensurability between the way in which an object is identified at the [information-processing] level of feature maps and by the motor system, and the way in which the object is identified at the level of conscious attention.

So what is the point of contact? I want to propose that it is found in what I will call the binding parameter. By the 'binding parameter', I mean the characteristic of the object that the visual system treats as distinctive of that object, and uses in binding together features as features of that thing.¹⁹

According to Campbell, conscious attention uses the same binding parameter to single out the object in experience.

There is no visual information processing stream in which all the information about an object is carried; rather, processing is carried out in specialized streams. Each stream carrying information about colour, shape, movement, etc, also carries information about the location of that property, and location is what is used in cross-referencing information processing streams.

¹⁷ Campbell urges that information selection cannot be explained by further information processes alone (p. 13). He also justifies the kind of commensurability he is aiming for by arguing that there is already level-crossing between space-of-reasons explanations and information-processing explanations and that it is probably a mistake to suppose that there is competition between them (pp. 15, 26).

¹⁸ p. 27.

¹⁹ p. 37.

Location is thus the binding parameter that the visual system uses to bind together various properties of an object.²⁰ Campbell suggests that we should view conscious attention as using the binding parameter to single out and identify the object. This will provide a point of commensurability and explain how conscious attention to an object can single out the information processing streams that carry information about that object.

It is not just that conscious attention to the object will cause the right information-processing content to be selected. Conscious attention also defines the objective of the information-processing: it determines which object the information-processing has as its target.²¹

Regarding conscious attention in this way helps us characterize the sense of a demonstrative without appeal to descriptions. This is essential for Campbell's proposal for his overall claim is that conscious attention constitutes understanding of a demonstrative (in the case of beings with conceptual capacities) and that this is a purely relational state without concept application. The sense of a demonstrative is "the way in which the object is given to you in consciously attending to it".²² Campbell notes that it has often been held that the sense of a demonstrative involves the location of the object seen.

But the problem for the traditional insight has always been that articulating it seems to involve ascribing something like a descriptive sense to the demonstrative. It seems to involve supposing that the demonstrative 'that box' must mean something like 'the box at that place'. And this proposal always runs into the problem that you may in vision be having an illusion about where the thing is, and yet be demonstrating it successfully. The proposal I am making is that the sense of the demonstrative is indeed given by the seen location of the object, but the role of the experienced location of the object is not to provide a descriptive identification of it. It is, rather, to organize the information-processing procedures that you use to verify, and to act on the basis of, judgements involving the demonstrative.²³

²⁰ Campbell notes that this is a simplification and that some Gestalt grouping principles will also be part of the complex binding parameter. p. 18.

²¹ p. 16.

²² ib.

²³ p. 18-9.

Campbell argues that on his account, even if the experienced location of an object in conscious attention is illusory, it can nevertheless successfully select information about the object because the property used to single out the object in attention is the same as the binding parameter used by the visual system.²⁴ Thus Campbell says,

The complex binding parameter in effect provides an address for the object, by which it can be identified, at the level of conscious attention, in a way that can be used in recruiting information from various processing streams to allow verification of propositions about the object, and action on the object.²⁵

Those who consider conceptual use essential to experience argue that it is not possible to single out in conscious attention things like a tree or a lion without the use of sortal concepts because there can be “different things of different kinds in the same place at the same time”; conscious attention to an object has to be focused by the use of a sortal concept which delineates the boundaries of the object to which one is attending. According to Campbell, however, the work assigned to sortal concepts should be assigned to the binding principles the visual system uses to bind together the features of an object. Whether one is attending to a river or a mass of molecules, for example, will be determined by how the visual system binds the features over time. If one has to move to keep track of the object of attention, then one is attending in this case to a collection of water molecules. If information from various points in the river is being bound together, then you are attending to the river itself.

²⁴ This also explains why when the subject’s conscious experience of a thing is illusory with regard to shape or size, the subject is nevertheless sometimes able to accurately pick it up and perform other actions on it.

²⁵ p. 62.

3.3. Non-circular Grounding of Thought

3.3.1 The Intrinsicness Condition

Campbell is motivated to propose a relational view of experience because he is moved by the need for a non-circular ground for thought. He also provides an independent argument for the relational view. He introduces the Intrinsicness Condition according to which “Experience is experience of the categorical”, and contends that to maintain this condition we must hold a relational view of experience.²⁶ Note however that a Representationalist who holds a purely representational view of experience, not assigning anything more than a causal role to the object itself in an experience, can also maintain that experience is experience *of* the categorical. On the Representational view, as much as on the Relational view, there are no sense data or intervening entities of experience. For many Representationalists too, what is experienced is just the independent, categorical world out there. So they need have no quibble with the claim that experience is experience of the categorical. The Intrinsicness Condition therefore does not of itself argue in favor of a relational view. How then does Campbell’s argument proceed? It seems to ride on the equivocation of “experience of an object” with “experience of an object *as* an object”. Campbell slides easily from the Intrinsicness Condition which says that experience is *of* the categorical, to talk of experience of things *as* categorical. The claim then seems to be that if I have access to an object only through its effects on me, through the representations I have of it, then I cannot have the conception of the categorical. Campbell says,

²⁶ p. 137.

The reason why experience of the object can provide knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative is...that it is experience of the object that provides you with your conception of the categorical object itself.²⁷

That is, Campbell seems to argue that if all we had access to were the dispositional effects of the objects on us, then we could have at best only descriptive access to the object, and not the acquaintance with it which allows for demonstratives. Yet, even if it is true that I have access to an object only through the dispositional effects on me of its categorical properties, why must this imply that I do not have a conception of the object as categorical? Why must it imply that my representation of it is as dispositional rather than as a categorical object? The move is not valid unless we induct some form of the disputable idea that we can have a conception of only that which we experience in itself: if what I experience in itself are dispositional effects of the categorical object, and the categorical object is experienced only in virtue of these dispositional effects, then one can say that experience is of the object, but not that it is experience of the object as categorical. Further, this suggests that for the relational conception of experience to provide us with our idea of the categorical object, it would need to present us not merely with the object, but with the object *as* an object. This however raises the question: if experience on the relational view is experience of an object as a categorical object, is it really explanatorily prior to and devoid of all representational and conceptual content?

3.3.2 Binding *as*

Campbell often talks of the visual system binding properties *as* the properties of an object. It seems, however, that it is one thing to say that an information system “binds” together certain

²⁷ p. 138.

features, and another to say that it binds them *as* belonging to one object. The informational level and the level of conscious attention are more primitive than the conceptual level on Campbell's account; this is what provides the non-circular grounding for thought that he requires. But it does not seem that binding, when characterized in terms of binding *as...*, can be relegated merely to the more primitive levels. If we run a command on a computer to pick out the occurrences of a certain name from a set of documents, the information from the various information streams (documents) that are picked out as a result can be said to be bound together by a binding parameter (in this case, the occurrence of the name), but it does not seem that the system has bound that information together *as*, say, belonging to one document. It is simply that information from various streams has been picked out on one command. This seems to be the case in the visual system as described by Campbell. We can call this process "binding", but it does not mean that the system views all the information picked *as* belonging to one object; thinking so would be to surreptitiously bring the conceptual back into the realm of what is being held as more primitive. It might be that were the visual system to use a binding principle radically different from what it does, it would fail to allow the subject to see the objects around her. We might therefore allow that there are goal-oriented constraints on binding, but this still would not mean that the visual system binds features *as* belonging to one object even though we regard the principle of binding in a non-impaired visual system as enabling the subject to see individual objects, or as Campbell says, as "revealing" the individual objects to the subject. If the visual system cannot be regarded as binding properties as belonging to one object, it does not seem that the binding parameter can play the role assigned to concepts in conceptualist accounts. It also does not seem that the binding parameter can serve as the point of commensurability between conscious attention and information processing. This is seen clearly in comparing conscious

attention to an object with conscious attention to a property or state. The information processing stream containing information about redness also carries information about the location of the property. This is the same location as the location of the object and in fact this is supposed to be why location can serve as the binding parameter, binding different properties “as” belonging to one object. But conscious attention to the object is presumably different from conscious attention to a property; it must be so if conscious attention is to ground demonstrative reference, for demonstrative reference to an object is different from demonstrative reference to a property. How then can the binding parameter, namely, location, serve as the point of commensurability between conscious attention to the property and information processing? For this would be the very same point of commensurability between conscious attention to the object and information processing. In other words, it is not clear how conscious attention can harness information processing with regard to a property rather than with regard to an object in a particular case.

More generally, there is a difference between an object and its being an object. The binding “as” that takes place at the level of information processing cannot distinguish the two; so also relational experience cannot distinguish the two. It does not then seem that a relational account of experience of the object is explanatory in yielding a *conception* of the object, of the object *as* an object. It can at best account for experience *of* the object. This significant inadequacy of conscious attention when regarded as a purely relational state devoid of conceptual and representational content recurs in the context of difficulties in distinguishing an object from its background, thus collapsing the very distinction between experience and conscious attention, as will be considered later.

On a relational picture of experience, sortals are not required to carve up the subject’s world the way they might be required on some conceptualist pictures. For Campbell, it is the

binding principle and not concept application that results in the world being presented to the subject in the way it is carved up independently of that presentation. Yet, even if not specifically sortal concepts, it seems that concepts or representational content more generally is required, not so much to carve up the world, but to determine which aspects of the independently carved up world are being presented to the subject.

3.4 The Relational View and Experiential Singling Out of Objects

3.4.1 Binding and Illusion

The inadequacy of regarding the binding principle as determining which object is singled out and presented to us as a result of binding is seen also in the case of certain illusions. Campbell considers the example of matchboxes being manipulated so deftly that the subject thinks there is just one matchbox, and of a pink X and a yellow T being manipulated so quickly that the subject perceives a pink T. In these cases the binding process has resulted in the properties of different objects being bound together in such a way that we cannot say on the basis of the use of the binding parameter, which object the subject consciously attended to. So Campbell introduces an external constraint:

It is not enough, to have a way of thinking demonstratively of an object, that you be consciously attending using a particular complex binding parameter. For there to be an object you are identifying, it must be that the bulk, the overwhelming majority, of the perceptual information that you are binding together does indeed all causally derive from just one object. Otherwise, if there are, for example, two different objects in play, as in the case of the matchboxes or the pink T, there is no saying which one you are identifying demonstratively.²⁸

²⁸ p. 99

There is however something odd about the conclusion that the subject has not consciously attended to anything in these cases of illusion. In the cases described above, the subject has experienced some real properties, for instance, pinkness and the T shape. This is what distinguishes such cases of illusion from hallucinations where the subject is not presented with any real properties. In the illusory cases, I might be mistaken in binding together the properties in a certain way, and mistaken in thinking that there is one object to which they belong, but I have not erred in my perception of some of the properties. But if I did experience some of the properties, it must be that I did experience the object bearing them, for one cannot experience the properties of an object without experiencing the object; when I can be said to have experienced an object, what constraint *external to the experiencing* can make it impossible to have consciously attended to it?

It may be that I am unable to discriminate the two matchboxes in the illusory case, but this does not mean that I failed to consciously attend to either one when it did make its appearance in the magician's hand. If I attend, for instance, to an object which turns out on examination to be actually two objects in a certain arrangement, have I failed to consciously attend altogether? In Campbell's own example of future generations curiously looking at a teacup and concluding that it is a religious object, it may be that what is present is a teacup on a saucer, and not being familiar with such items, a subject does not discriminate the presence of two objects the way we would. She might simply think demonstratively that that is a religious object. It seems clear that even when one knows that what one is presented with is an arrangement of several objects, one can think using a demonstrative singular that *that* is, say, beautiful. In that case, even when I don't know it is an arrangement of several objects, I should still be able to think the same demonstrative thought and consciously attend to the arrangement

in the same way, for conceptual knowledge that I might have about the composition and mechanism of the arrangement is not a determinant of perceptual experience on Campbell's account. Similarly, in the case of the illusion, someone might say "That's a pink T" and another person who has prior knowledge about the trick can still understand this. But Campbell's argument concerning the knowledge of demonstrative reference is that to understand another's demonstrative reference one has to consciously attend to the thing concerned. It does not then seem that there has been a failure of conscious attention to something. The second person can in fact respond and say "That's not what it looks". These exchanges would be meaningful. Since one person can successfully use a demonstrative when she knows that it is a trick, it does not seem that lack of conceptual knowledge about the mechanism of the trick should nullify the other's having attended to anything at all.

3.4.2 The Role of Cognitive Maps

While Campbell emphasizes the primitive relational element of perception in his theory, he adds that:

On the Relational View of experience, we have to think of experience of objects as depending jointly on the cognitive processing and the environment.²⁹

It is noteworthy that Campbell should here accord the binding of features using the cognitive system's map of locations anything more than the status of a causal condition of experience. Instead, he seems to give it the kind of status that the objects in the world, the environment, has on a Relational View when he says that experience depends "jointly" on cognitive processing and the environment. He regards cognitive processing as "revealing" objects to us in experience:

²⁹ p. 118

On a Relational View of perception, we have to think of cognitive processing as ‘revealing’ the world to the subject; that is, as making it possible for the subject to experience particular external objects.³⁰

It is clear that in his theory, the sense in which the cognitive processing makes experience possible is not merely in the causal sense. Animal bodies being the complex systems they are, there are many causal prerequisites for experience, a pumping heart and a functioning nervous system being among them. Yet none of these has been isolated and dignified to share space with the Relational aspect of experience as that which experience of objects “jointly” depends on. It thus seems that the cognitive system’s map of locations and the “reassembly” of objects it effects has been called upon to play the role of differentiation within experience which is required for experience to provide justifications.

In more recent work, Campbell states more explicitly this difference in roles. A primitive experiential relation to the object is necessary for knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative. It does not however play a role in perceptual justification.

Justification of the pattern of use of a term is one thing, and justification of a belief involving the term is another. The two types of justification are indeed related...but they are not identical, and the relation between them is not straightforward...What I am arguing is that an experiential relation to the object justifies the pattern of use that one makes of the demonstrative. It is a different claim to say that the experiential relation to the object is an element in the immediate justification of a belief involving the demonstrative. In fact, on the view I am advocating, the experiential relation to the object will not be an element in the immediate justification of a belief involving the demonstrative. Rather, the immediate justification of a belief involving the demonstrative will be provided by an information-processing content at the level of the feature-map, such as: “Redness at place p.”³¹

The difficulty with this separation of roles is that the phenomenal character of experience, which has been identified with the qualitative character of the object perceived, has been explained in terms of the experiential relation to the object. If the experiential relation to the object is not an

³⁰ ib.

³¹ Campbell (2010), p. 199-200

element in the “immediate” justification of a belief involving demonstration to it, then this means that the phenomenological character of experience does not play a role in this justification. Yet Campbell’s example of justification provided by content at the level of cognitive maps is of “redness at place p”. It is hard to understand such content providing justification without phenomenal experience of redness. As I argue below, the connection between the relational element, phenomenology and experiential discrimination seems unstable on Campbell’s account.

3.4.3 Experiential Multiplicity and Singling Out

On Campbell’s view, in some experiences we only differentiate, and in others we also single out an object that has been thus differentiated. Campbell draws attention to this when he emphasizes that conscious attention to an object, singling it out in perceptual experience, is what grounds demonstrative reference, in contrast to experiences where the subject is aware of several distinct things but is not attending to any one in particular and which cannot ground demonstrative reference. In urging that the notion that conscious attention provides knowledge of reference is a commonsense one, Campbell says,

To refer to the perceived object, it is not enough that I have it in my field of view. As I look over the scene, it is not enough that the gold-domed building be there somewhere in my visual field. I must separate it visually, as figure from ground, I must visually discriminate it from its surroundings. I have to attend to it.³²

Note that visual discrimination is here regarded as the same as conscious attention, as the bringing of the object into the foreground. Talk of discrimination seems distinctly absent in merely having the object in one’s field of view, in merely perceiving it. It seems, however, that discrimination is a feature of every experience, whether the experience is specifically a case of

³² p. 25.

conscious attention or not. Every experience seems to differentiate or distinguish one object from another, or one property from another. At the very least, where experience is spatial, experience differentiates one area of space from another, or the perceptual subject herself from what is perceptually experienced. Experience, in other words, seems to always be experience of a multiplicity, whether of objects, properties, spaces, or directions. This means that even when we focus on a particular object, and talk of experience of that object, the experience is at the same time an experience of multiplicity. Further, if this were not so, there would be no sense in which conscious attention differs from having a mere experience. For Campbell does say that one experiences not just objects but also scenes. Since all experience is to be understood relationally, mere experience of a scene is a case of one's bearing an experiential relation to the scene. It then differs from the bearing of such a relation to an object only in that the relatum is different; the two cases here do not differ any more than does a case of consciously attending to a table differ from a case of consciously attending to a chair. They do not then seem to differ in the kind of experience they are. Relational experience of a scene and relational experience of an object in the scene would both be either cases of mere experience or both cases of conscious attention. If there is to be a distinct notion of conscious attention, it must involve differentiating, with this differentiation taking place within the experience in which one consciously attends and the same kind of differentiation also to be found in a case of mere experience of the scene. That is to say, one cannot perceptually focus on an object unless one perceptually differentiates a multiplicity. It seems then that it is experience itself, and not merely a "precondition" of experience, which must present the subject with a multiplicity of distinguished objects or properties. Since the binding of features using the location maps is an event distinct from experience (the former is not a conscious event unlike the latter, to begin with), it cannot be what accounts for experiential

multiplicity. How is the multiplicity of experience accounted for in the relational characterization of experience and conscious attention?

In order to experientially differentiate object m from n , I must have access to both. This is because to differentiate m from n is to differentiate n from m . The point here is to emphasize that there must be access to both objects and not that the quantity of information delivered about them must be equal. Any form of special access to one object over the other will have to be either a further distinct event or an added feature of the earlier situation. If a further distinct event of special access is what constitutes the kind of experience that grounds demonstrative reference, then experiential differentiation can at most serve as a distinct event that is a condition for experiential singling-out. The fundamental feature of differentiating a multiplicity has been lost as a feature of experiential singling-out itself. Rather than treating them as distinct episodes, suppose we try to incorporate experiential singling-out, in the form of special access, to the earlier situation of differentiating the two objects. Since any experience is a relational state of affairs on the Relational view, an experience which does not single-out an object is a relational state of affairs. To incorporate special access to one of the objects experienced, a further relation (say, of conscious attention) can be taken as obtaining in the same state of affairs. If this relation is not treated as a distinct experiential relation, then we would have reduced all experiences to experiences of singling-out, or vice-versa. Now, however, since the two experiential relations involved are both primitive, we have lost all understanding of why singling-out an object requires differentiating it from others. We can stipulate that the former primitive relation cannot obtain unless the latter does. The connection between the relations themselves is however lost. We are left without an understanding of why in singling-out an object, some entities that are not

singled out and which form the background are, and must, also be experienced, that is, why in singling-out there must also be differentiation of a multiplicity.

The argument can be recast in the following way. For Campbell, experience is a relational state of affairs where the phenomenological character of the experience is constituted by the properties of the objects experienced. When I consciously attend to an object in a scene which I was merely experiencing without consciously attending to anything, Campbell claims that my conscious attention has a distinctive phenomenology, which is what makes it possible to provide knowledge of reference. Yet conscious attention, being experience, is also a relational state, and the items in the experience have not changed. This renders the phenomenology of the two experiences the same, and leaves conscious attention playing a superfluous role. The distinction between experience on the one hand and conscious attention to one item out of many items presented to the subject on the other hand has not been maintained in a way that explains how conscious attention can ground demonstrative thought.

4.0 NONCONCEPTUAL CONTENT: A STUDY OF PEACOCKE

The striking feature of nonconceptual content is that it is supposed to be representational without being conceptual. “It is content that is evaluable as correct or as incorrect”.¹ This evaluability for correctness is what makes it representational. Pure representationalists about perception regard it as a positive element in their theory that, unlike in an appeal to experiential relations, veridical and nonveridical experience can be given the same account. Experience is understood as a representational state of the subject and nonveridical experience specifically is understood as misrepresentation. Different representationalists appeal to different kinds of representational content in characterizing perception. Nonconceptual content can be either propositional or non-propositional. Russellian contents contain objects or properties; their components are therefore nonconceptual but they are like conceptual contents in that they are abstract, structured entities to which the subject bears a propositional attitude. A more different kind of nonconceptual content, like in Peacocke’s proposal, is non-propositional in addition. Peacocke offers the most developed view of such nonconceptual content. In the first section I lay out his notion of scenarios and protopositions, and discuss the motivations for his view. Section 4.2 examines protopositional content in detail considering the roles assigned to its two constituents, an object and a property. I argue that there are difficulties in understanding how these roles coordinate with the other layer of content called scenario content. Section 4.3 focuses on complex representational content and critically examines its ability to account for differentiation or multiplicity within experience

¹ Peacocke (2001), p. 240

4.1 Peacocke's Account of Nonconceptual Content

4.1.1 Positioned Scenarios and Protopositions

According to Peacocke, a “positioned scenario” is literally the content of an experience. A scenario is “a spatial type”. It is a way of locating surfaces and their features with respect to a labeled origin and a set of axes. One kind of origin might be given by the property of being the center of the chest of the human body and one way of locating surfaces and their features around this origin and axes would be in terms of distance and direction from the origin and in terms of texture, hue, orientation, etc.² A scenario is thus a way of filling out a space. If the representational content involving a specific scenario or spatial type is correct, it means that the world around the perceiver instantiates that type. What is to be noted is that the concepts used in describing this way of filling out a space around a perceiver need not be concepts possessed by the perceiver herself. “The spatial type itself is not built up from concepts at all: it is well suited to be a constituent of a form of nonconceptual content”.³ Peacocke now goes on to say that the content of an actual experience is just the space around the particular perceiver filled out in this way. The content is a scenario assigned a time and actual directions and a place for its labeled axes and origin. Peacocke calls this a “positioned scenario”.⁴

Peacocke also describes another kind of nonconceptual content in addition to positioned scenarios. The need for this arises because an object which fills a positioned scenario in one way may nevertheless be *perceived* in different ways. So, there must be something different in the contents of the two perceptions even though the positioned scenarios are the same. For instance,

² Peacocke (1999), p. 62-5

³ ib. p. 63

⁴ ib. p. 65

in the positioned scenario of my experience of the floor, the floor tile may occupy a square space. Yet, I may perceive the same tile sometimes as a square and sometimes as a diamond.⁵ This means that in addition to positioned scenarios, another kind of nonconceptual content is required to fully explain the perceptual experience in nonconceptual terms. Peacocke suggests that the difference between the two experiences lies in the way in which the object's symmetry is perceived. If we perceive the tile as symmetrical around the bisectors of its sides, then we perceive it as square, and if we perceive it as symmetrical around the bisectors of its angles, then we perceive it as diamond. So to account for perception of the tile as diamond, we need to account for perception of the kind of symmetry the object possesses. Peacocke does this by introducing "protopositions" as a second layer of nonconceptual content. Protopositions contain individuals and properties (or relations). An experience with a certain protopositional content represents the individual in the protoposition as having the property it contains. "Symmetrical about" would then be a property that is contained in the protoposition of the experience of the diamond. Thus, Peacocke says,

I suggest that perceptual experience has a second layer of nonconceptual representational content. The contents at this second layer cannot be identified with positioned scenarios, but they are also distinct from conceptual contents. These additional contents I call *protopositions*. These protopositions are assessable as true or false. A protoposition contains an individual or individuals, together with a property or relation. When a protoposition is part of the representational content of an experience, the experience represents the property or relation in the protoposition as holding of the individual or individuals it contains. I write of *protopositions* rather than *protothoughts* because protopositions contain objects, properties, and relations, rather than concepts thereof. I write of *protopositions* because in this account they are not determined as part of the content of an experience by being fixed by some conceptual content the experience possesses. The protopositions that enter the representational content of ordinary human visual experience contain such properties and relations as SQUARE, CURVED, PARALLEL TO, EQUIDISTANT FROM, SAME SHAPE AS, and SYMMETRICAL ABOUT. (I use small capitals for a word to

⁵ ib. p. 74-6

indicate that I am referring to the property or relation to which it refers, rather than to the concept it expresses.)⁶

For something to be perceived as square, the symmetry about the bisectors of its sides must be perceived, and this is a restriction at the level of protopositional content. When something is perceived as shaped like a regular diamond, the protopositional content of the experience includes the proposition that the object is symmetrical about a line that bisects the object's corners. The difference between perceiving something as a square and perceiving it as a regular diamond is a difference between the protopositional contents of the two perceptions.⁷

In more recent works, Peacocke talks of this kind of nonconceptual content simply in terms of “ways of being perceived”.⁸ These ways contribute to the correctness condition of an experience (for what is presented to me as being a certain way may or may not actually be so). Ways of being perceived are “inherently general” in that different objects can be presented in the same way, but they are not built of concepts.⁹

4.1.2 Motivations

In the debate among representationalists about whether experience has conceptual or nonconceptual representational content, one major motivation for those who adopt the latter view is its ability to account for the experiences of non-rational beings like babies and animals in the same terms in which it accounts for the experiences of rational beings. Since babies and animals are not concept possessors, their experiences cannot have conceptual content. It is argued that if our experiences are to be understood as like the experiences of such creatures, we must conclude that our experiences also do not have conceptual content. In response, conceptualists assert that

⁶ ib. p. 77

⁷ ib. p. 79. One wonders, however, what the need is of including SQUARE in the protopositional content as Peacocke does in the previous quotation, if perceiving something as a square is explained in terms of SYMMETRICAL ABOUT. Presumably, an object's squareness considered merely as a way of filling out a space, has already been accounted for in terms of scenario content.

⁸ See, for instance, Peacocke (1998), p. 381-388, and Peacocke (2001), p. 239-264, 247

⁹ Peacocke (2001), p. 247

while our experiences are like that of animals and babies in some relevant respects, they need not be alike in every relevant respect; further, it is argued, this does not imply that the content of our experiences must have two components, one shared with non-rational creatures and another that is special to us. So McDowell says,

We do not need to say that we have what mere animals have, non-conceptual content, and we have something else as well, since we can conceptualize the content and they cannot. Instead we can say that we have what mere animals have, perceptual sensitivity to features of our environment, but we have it in a special [thoroughly conceptual] form.¹⁰

Another important motivator for adopters of nonconceptualism in the content of experience is the ability of such content to account for the rich and detailed character of experience, or its “fineness of grain”. When I look at a mountain, I see it as being jagged and shaped in a very specific way though I do not have concepts to pick out that specific shape. Since the grain of experience seems to be finer than that of our conceptual repertoire, Peacocke argues that concepts are not a necessary component of experience or that if they are, there is at least another equally necessary nonconceptual component. Other cases which are seen as implying the same conclusion are the following. Someone who does not possess the concept of vertical symmetry can sort out inkblots into those that look better to her than the others. Such a person would most likely perceive the vertical symmetry of certain blots without conceptualizing it as such.¹¹ Similarly, ordinarily speaking, we want to say that when a scientist and a child look at a cathode ray tube, they see the same thing and their experiences have the same phenomenal character. Yet, we cannot attribute to the child some of the concepts the scientist might employ in her experience. One way of explaining the similarity in such experiences is in terms of nonconceptual content.

¹⁰ McDowell (1994), p. 64

¹¹ Peacocke (1999), p. 81-2

The above cases are nevertheless not sufficient to establish the need for nonconceptual experiential content, because the conceptualist can simply attribute to the perceiver an employment of *demonstrative* concepts such as “that shape” or “that color” where sophisticated nondemonstrative concepts such as of vertical symmetry cannot be ascribed. The nonconceptualist must therefore try to argue that even the employment of demonstrative concepts cannot account for experience in the above cases.

When the scientist and the child look at the cathode ray tube, we would ordinarily want to say that they have the same kind of perceptual experience or at least that their experiences have something in common. The conceptualist cannot appeal to an identity of their conceptual repertoire, but she can appeal to their use of identical demonstrative concepts. She can say that the sameness of the experiences is a result of their employing a common denominator of demonstrative concepts such as “that shape” and “that color”. But what makes the scientist’s and the child’s employment of “that shape” an employment of the same concept when they are looking at the same thing, and not an employment of the same concept when they are looking at different things? It is the perceived particular or property which is partly responsible for the sameness of demonstrative concept application. There is a circularity here. The experiences are said to be the same because the same demonstrative concepts are applied, while the same demonstrative concepts are said to be applied partly because the perceptual experiences are the same. The possession condition of the demonstrative concept is given in terms that include the perceptual experience, especially since demonstrative concepts are made available by the

perceptual experience and last only as long as the experience lasts.¹² This means that an account of the perceptual experience in terms of the demonstrative concept will be circular.

If one requires that the conceptualist must give an account of concept mastery that does not involve her in circularity, then there is an argument for postulating nonconceptual contents to ground such concept use. We can note the similarity here with Campbell's motivation for proposing a relational view. Campbell aimed to give a noncircular account of experience that could ground demonstrative reference. But he also aimed to provide an account that could ground intentionality. He therefore tried to avoid appeal to representations altogether and gave a relational account. We saw reasons to doubt that he succeeded in doing so. Peacocke, more modestly, wants to avoid circularity in accounting for conceptual ability and not in accounting for intentionality more generally. He is therefore free to appeal to representational content, constrained only in that it be nonconceptual. The notions of a scenario or spatial type and of a protoproposition seem to fit the bill. So Peacocke says,

[A] theory of nonconceptual content that employs the notion of a spatial type promises one way in which a hierarchy of families of concepts can be grounded in a noncircular way.¹³

[W]e should recognize scenario and protopropositional contents as forms of nonconceptual representational contents. These nonconceptual contents must be mentioned in the possession conditions for perceptual and demonstrative concepts. A proper appreciation of their role allows us to explain the possibility of noncircular possession conditions for these very basic concepts and to give an account of the relations between perception, action, and a subject's representation of his environment.¹⁴

The conceptualist can of course reject both Campbell's and Peacocke's approaches by rejecting the need for a non-circular explanation for thought and demonstration. She can say that neither

¹² It may subsequently serve as a memory demonstrative.

¹³ Peacocke (1999), p. 67.

¹⁴ *ib.* p. 97

experience nor concept-use is taken to be prior to or independent of the other, so that the question of circularity does not arise.¹⁵

I will argue below that there are difficulties in understanding how Peacocke's two layers of content coordinate with each other. The problem arises from the inability to adequately explain the presentation of an object under a mode of presentation. This holds some lessons for appeals to conceptual content as well.

4.2 The Role of the Object and the Property in the Protoposition

4.2.1 The Role of the Property

Protopositions contain objects and properties and were introduced to account for the way in which an object or some property of it is perceived. In Peacocke's example, scenario content accounts for experience of a square shape but not for experience of it as square or diamond. He accounts for the particular way of experiencing it by appealing to a further property – the shape's being symmetrical about the bisectors of its angles, and includes this property within the protoposition. If the way in which a property (shape) is perceived is accounted for in terms of a further property (symmetrical about), then it seems we have only pushed the difficulty one step back, for we now need to account for the way in which this further property is perceived. We need to introduce a still further property to account for the way in which the symmetry of the shape is perceived: do we perceive the symmetry as rotated a little away from us or towards us?

¹⁵ Peacocke considers this argument in Peacocke (2001), p. 242-52. That the demand for such noncircularity is misguided is a view espoused by McDowell.

Once this is accounted for in terms of the object's rotation, a further property will have to be introduced to account for the way in which we perceive the rotation, and so on.

If we try to stop the regress by introducing a property that simply cannot be presented in different ways – one that does not have different modes of presentation, as in Russell's non-perspectival sense data – then it is hard to see how ordinary objects get constituted out of such a property. Yet if we do not stop the regress, then we have an account of experience according to which we perceive an object through infinite modes of presentation, which would then require on our part extensive cognitive abilities, precisely what someone appealing to nonconceptual content does not want to accommodate. The difficulty arises because a mode of presentation when understood in terms of an object's properties is an objective aspect of the world, and so does not serve the function of an experiential mode of presentation which is essentially a mode of presentation *to a subject*. When we represent an object by representing some of its objective properties, we cannot have fully captured experience of the object for there is always a particular way that an objective property is experienced.¹⁶ If we then also represent this way of being perceived, by representing the object's properties in relation to the subject *qua perceiver*, that is, by representing the object's properties-as-perceived, it does not seem that experience can yield knowledge of the intrinsic properties of things.

The difficulties above point to a lack of clarity in the roles assigned to the two levels of content in Peacocke's account. Scenario content is said to be a way of locating surfaces and

¹⁶ The notion of a "mode of presentation" and its central role in perceptual justification is explored in detail in chapter 6. For current purposes, we can say that *prima facie*, if a property is an objective, external property, it will sometimes be the case that we perceive the property in two different contexts but are not aware that it is in fact the same property. That is to say, the property will be perceived in a particular way in each case.

features in relation to an origin and set of axes centered around the perceiver. In filling out the space around the perceiver, Peacocke says we need to do at least the following:

For each point...identified by its distance and direction from the origin, we need to specify whether there is a surface there and, if so, what texture, hue, saturation, and brightness it has at that point, together with its degree of solidity. The orientation of the surface must be included. So must much more in the visual case, the direction, intensity, and character of light sources; the rate of change of perceptible properties, including location; indeed, it should include second differentials with respect to time where these prove to be perceptible.¹⁷

If perceptible properties of the surface such as its orientation are represented by the scenario content, cannot a surface's being symmetrical about its sides be also so represented? The problem of course is that since scenario content has been defined as a way of filling out space, the same way of filling out a space, even setting the orientation of a surface, might nevertheless be perceived differently by us. There simply are some properties like symmetry which cannot be captured in terms of ways of filling out space. But this is not because the property of symmetry around the sides or around the bisectors of the angles of the surface are special properties. They are no more special as properties of the object than is its orientation and they are no more special in our experience of the object either. The use of the specific example of perceiving a diamond-shape instead of a square-shape suggests that the property of symmetry included in the additional layer of content, the protoproposition, is a special type of property, for the case seems like those of gestalt perception. But elsewhere Peacocke considers asking someone to sort out a set of inkblot shapes into those that look better to him than others, and says,

¹⁷ Peacocke (1999), 63

Such a subject may separate out the vertically symmetrical ones on the basis of the way they look...In my terminology, the property SYMMETRICAL features in the protopositional content of this subject's experience.¹⁸

Since the shapes here are irregular blots, their occasional symmetry around a particular axis does not seem to be any more a special property of theirs that we perceive than are their colors, orientations on the paper, or other features. The reason for including symmetry in protopositional content rather than in the scenario content seems to be that the way scenario content has been defined, it cannot include such properties as symmetry. The need for two layers of content then does not in fact reflect any special aspect of experience or any special division among properties perceived. The second layer seems merely a way of fixing the inadequacies of the first, and the determination of which properties perceived go into the second layer is based on this rather than on anything special about these properties. As I suggested earlier, there is then no special reason why the properties that serve as modes of presentation in the protopositional content must not themselves have different modes of presentation. Experience thus seems to be rich in a way that Peacocke's account of modes of presentation, in terms of the object's properties, does not capture. A protoposition containing the object and some of its properties does not do the job of accounting for the particular way of experiencing the object as it only pushes the need for a full explanation one step back.

4.2.2 The Role of the Object

According to Peacocke, an experience with a protopositional content containing an object and a property represents the object as having that property. Consider the role of the object in the protoposition. The motivation offered for introducing protopositional content is ostensibly

¹⁸ ib. p. 81-2.

to give a role to a further property of the object in addition to what is captured by the positioned scenario. Yet, when the further property is introduced, it is not introduced alone. It is introduced together with the object itself. Note that there is no discussion of the need for the object. After providing much discussion of the need for introducing the property in a separate layer of content, when the property is introduced, so is the object itself. The motivation for this is what we need to press.

Why aren't scenario content and the representation of a further property (such as symmetrical about), which provides the mode of presentation of the object on Peacocke's view, adequate to provide a representational account of experience? The silent introduction of the object itself to supplement the scenario content and the property that is supposed to serve as a mode of presentation can perhaps be explained by the urge to bottom out modes of presentation. A mode of presentation is usually understood as a general type, a repeatable, such that different objects can be presented in the same mode at various times. This is so in Peacocke's account of them in terms of properties. If experiential access to an object is accounted for in terms of such modes of presentation alone, then the notion of the particularity of experiential access drops out. Having included modes of presentation in an account of experience, there might be a residual urge to retain particularity, and a natural way to do this would be to include the object itself in the account.

But if the account of scenario content has enough resources to tie the properties perceived to the object perceived, there seems no need to introduce the object in the second layer of content to allow for the property this contains to be attributed to the object. If, on the other hand, the object needs to be introduced in a second representational content to allow us to attribute to the

object the property this second content contains, it seems that the two layers of content are not “coordinated”. What would allow the subject possessing the two distinct contents to know that what is represented in the one (scenario content) and presented in the other (protopositional content) are connected? If the connection between the contents is not “transparent”, why might she not take herself to be perceiving two objects instead, one possessing the properties represented in the first layer, and another possessing the properties represented in the second layer? If the connection is transparent and the property in the protoposition is perceived to belong to the object presented in the scenario content, the incorporation of the object in the second layer of content seems unnecessary.

The notion of modes of presentation plays an important role in explaining and allowing connections between contents. In Frege’s use of the notion in the context of language, when an object is presented under different modes to have different properties, the subject has no justification to infer that the same thing has those properties, but when the object is presented under the same mode the subject can infer that it is the same thing that has multiple properties. After having introduced two distinct contents in his account, Peacocke seems to turn to the object itself to allow the property in the protoposition to serve as a way of perceiving the object. The idea of a way of perceiving at play here then diverges from the Fregean use of the notion of a mode of presentation in the context of language and resembles instead the use of complex or compositional representations in language. Terms combine to form a sentence. The representation of an object is combined with the representation of a property and the complex representation that results then represents the object’s having that property. When we attribute different properties to a thing, we can in a sense be said to be presenting the thing in different ways. This sense of a “way of presenting” something does not serve to link up or disconnect

different representations of it. Rather, *these* “ways of presenting” a thing are themselves the complex representations of which we ask: how do they interlink? The interlinking would still need to be done by the representation of just the thing, that is, by the simpler representation that is a constituent of the complex representation. If there are no different ways of presenting the thing at the lower level, the level of the simple representation of the thing that is part of the complex representation attributing a property to the thing, then multiple complex representations which attribute different properties to the thing will always be representations attributing the properties as belonging to the same thing. There would be “transparency” in this sense. It is for this reason that Frege introduced the notion of different modes of presentation of a thing. The use of the same mode would be a case of transparency; the use of different modes for the same thing would obscure the identity of the thing to which different properties are attributed. In contrast, the roles of the object and the property in the protoposition, it would seem, are to be understood as analogous to the case of complex representations. We can explain their roles in terms of Frege’s context principle rather than in terms of his notion of a mode of presentation of an object. According to Frege, it is only in the context of a sentence that a word has meaning. Though Peacocke is dealing with nonconceptual content, the parallel with Frege’s principle is clear. Peacocke might say, as far as his second layer of content is concerned, that only in the context of a protoposition containing an object as well as a property, is there experience of either the object or its property.

The object in the protoposition thus does not play a role in the account of experience when considered independently of the property or “way of perceiving” accompanying it. This can then be the reason for introducing the object as well into the protoposition. The object is there simply to allow the property in the protoposition to serve as a “way of perceiving” the

object. But what can then serve to interconnect or disconnect multiple perceptual contents the perceiver might possess? A person might perceive something in two ways. In some cases she may perceive that it is the same thing which has both properties, that is, she may be aware that it is the same thing which is presented in two ways, and in other cases not. Peacocke gives very few examples of ways of perceiving which are included in protopositional content. Apart from perceiving symmetry, elsewhere he says that texture or a musical interval can be perceived in different ways, but does not explicitly place these ways of perceiving in protopositional content.¹⁹ Suppose then that a person stretches out her hands, touches an object at two ends and perceives its texture in a certain way. Because the middle portion is obscured she does not perceive that it is the same thing she is touching with each hand. What is the protopositional content of this experience? It cannot simply contain the object and the property concerned for this is presumably the content of the experience when she touches the object with just one hand and perceives it to be textured in a certain way. The difficulty arises because there is no “way of perceiving” in this account that plays the role of interconnecting and disconnecting contents as in Frege’s understanding of a mode of presentation. Since the property that is the way of perceiving in Peacocke’s account functions only in the context of the object, and there is no other provision for a way the object is presented, every way in which the object is perceived will be in the context of the object itself. There will be the kind of “transparency” of the fact that it is the same object being presented in the different ways to avoid which Frege introduced the notion of a mode of presentation.

Peacocke might respond that it is not the object that is to be included in the protoposition in this case but its part or surface. Since there are two surfaces of the object

¹⁹ See Peacocke (2001)

involved when the subject touches the object with two hands, there is no question of the same thing being perceived in the same way and of this not being transparent to the perceiver. The protoproposition will here simply contain the two surfaces and their “ways of being perceived”. This however suggests a difficulty for scenario content. How does it capture the distinctness of different entities? In the protopositional content this might be explained by simply including the distinct surfaces as distinct entities. Scenario content is however a way of *locating* surfaces and features, but distinct surfaces may be contiguously located and in fact are typically so located. The square tile is laid amongst other tiles and this large surface, the floor, is located in my scenario content. How does scenario content distinguish the tiles? What is required is not merely their being distinguished in terms of colors, orientation, etc. Such distinctions can be perceived on a single surface that is not composed of distinct objects. It does not seem that scenario content has the resources to explain the presentation of the distinctness of different objects, characterized as it is simply as a way of filling out space. This means that though Peacocke ostensibly introduced protopositional content to explain some special ways of perceiving, it seems central to explaining perception of things at all. The object in the protoproposition is not there merely to provide a context for the property. It is there to account for the perception of objects. But then we cannot resort to positing surfaces or parts of the object in the protopositional content to account for why it is not transparent to the subject that she perceives the same object. In the next section I examine whether protopositional content can account for differentiation within experience, and relatedly, whether they do adequately account for perception of the object.

4.3 Simple and complex contents

4.3.1 Complex content

A simple representation is one which is not made of other representations. On an account of representation such as Kripke's, representation is achieved through a causal chain.²⁰ Simple representations might represent complex entities and maybe even states of affairs. This is by no means the only account of the way representation takes place. On a Tractarian account, representation takes place through a one-to-one correspondence and it is not possible for a logically simple representation to represent a complex state of affairs. What is not disputed however is that a simple representation, even on the accounts which allow it to represent a complex entity, can never represent a complex as a complex. Thus, the standard view of representation is that to represent states of affairs as states of affairs, you need to have structured representations. Now there is a distinction between the vehicle of representation and the content of the representation. If the content is not itself a state of affairs but is a Fregean proposition, the same considerations can apply both at the level of the vehicle of representation (sentences) and at the level of the content. So it is usually held that a Fregean proposition is composed of the senses or modes of presentations of the terms in the sentence. The proposition, like the sentence that expresses it, has a certain unity. The proposition is not merely a collection of its components. It is then the internal structure of the proposition that enables it to do the job of representing states of affairs as states.

A proposition that is structurally complex seems ideally suited to reflect the complexity and structure of the world's states of affairs. The same feature seems to make it ideally suited to

²⁰ Kripke (1980)

also capture the complexity and multiplicity inherent in experience. Yet, experience itself cannot be understood as structurally complex in the way that a proposition is. Experience of the book on the table is not composed of experience of the book and experience of the table. There cannot be simple experiences that are united to form a complex experience in this sense. This is because it seems to be an inherent feature of experience that any experience must differentiate, at least in some minimal sense. An experience of a plain wall must at least differentiate for us different spaces or different directions. This makes it difficult to understand the multiplicity in experience as obtained through the combining of various “simple” experiences. So it is never suggested that experience is itself to be understood as analogous to a structured proposition. It is only the content of the experience that is, depending on the theory, said to be propositional. The subject of the experience is then regarded as bearing a relation to the proposition the way a thinker bears a relation to a proposition. This model of experience as a propositional attitude does not depend on the type of proposition the content of experience is taken to be. So it might be Fregean or it might be Russellian. If it is a Fregean content, what the content represents might fail to obtain in the world; if it is a Russellian content the content simply is a state of affairs in the world. While the type of content may differ, the model of experience here remains the same. Experience is the subject’s bearing a certain relation to a propositional content. It seems to me that there are differences between thought and experience which make it difficult to understand it as a relation to a proposition. The difficulty centers around the role of the object as opposed to the state perceived and this in turn is linked to the kind of multiplicity there is in experience. I set out some preliminary considerations below and develop the theme fully in the subsequent chapters of the dissertation.

Consider first Fregean propositions. If such a proposition represents a state of affairs, it is its component that represents the object in the state. We cannot, strictly speaking, say that the proposition itself represents the object, for then it would represent both the state and the object. This violates the understanding of the content as determining reference and there would be no coherent sense of representation left. If we are to speak of a proposition as representing an object, it can be only in an inexact and informal way. Strictly speaking, it is the component of the proposition, the sense associated with the referring term in the sentence, that represents the object. Let us move now from the proposition to the attitude to the proposition. When a subject has a thought, it similarly follows that what her thought represents is, strictly speaking, a state of affairs. So when someone says “I’m thinking about my mother”, this must be understood as a contracted way of saying something like “I’m thinking about my mother being happy on hearing the news”. On the now standard understanding, thoughts are complete and we can only think such thoughts. The propositional attitudes we bear to the thought or the proposition is not readily transferrable, if at all, to the components of the proposition. But experience seems different in this regard. While one may not perceive an object without perceiving some property or some state of it, there is a distinct sense in which one does experience each of these entities. Talk of perceiving the object does not seem to be merely an inexact way of talking of perceiving a state of it. If we regiment the notion of experience and take it be of states of affairs and only nominally of objects in the state, we paradoxically produce a view of experience analogous to that of a simple representation, that is, as not differentiating. For the only sense of multiplicity that remains is a multiplicity in the state of affairs that is experienced. *Experiential* multiplicity has been pushed out from experience onto the world. While the content of the experience may be said to distinguish the elements in the state, there is no distinct sense in which experience does

so. But whatever the sense in which a content differentiates, it does not itself represent multiple distinct entities, only multiple contents (or multiple components of content) can represent multiple entities. Experience however does not seem to be such. On the view of experience as the subject's bearing a relation to a content, my experience is then of a state of affairs the way a simple representation is of a complex: my experience is of a complexity but that complexity is not available to me.

The complexity of a content is ideally suited to capture the multiplicity in the world. It appears on face value that it is therefore also ideally suited to capture the multiplicity in experience. What I have suggested here is that the multiplicity in experience is of a rather different sort from the multiplicity in the world. Note that the above considerations apply to any view of experience as a relation to propositional content. It applies when the content of experience is regarded as a Russellian proposition as well. A Russellian proposition contains objects and properties that are constituents of the world. While it does not need to be so identified, it is in fact often identified with a state of affairs in the world, in which case it cannot be said to represent anything the way a Fregean proposition does. Peacocke's protopositional content seems to be a Russellian proposition though he doesn't term it as such. He notes that his account of experience is not a "purely propositional account":

By a "purely propositional account" I mean one that identifies the representational content with a set of propositions (whether built to Frege's, Russell's, or some other specification), where the constituents of these propositions do not involve scenarios directly or indirectly.²¹

But his account does introduce a distinct layer of purely propositional experiential content and the above considerations apply to that extent. At bottom, his two-layer account does not

²¹ Peacocke (1999), p. 70

adequately capture the distinct sense in which we experience objects, and relatedly, it doesn't satisfactorily account for the kind of multiplicity we find in experience as distinguished from the kind of multiplicity in what is experienced. I end by considering simple representations, and analogously, experience as having simple contents, that is, experience as being of objects rather than of states.

4.3.2 Simple Content

It will be useful to first discuss some terminological matters. Nonconceptual content is typically regarded as analog in character, and is contrasted with conceptual content which is digital.

Analog content is content that exhibits gradation or continuity, as opposed to giving limited “on-off” type of information. A conceptual representation such as “The ball is red” tells us just that the ball is red. It doesn't tell us where on the scale of redness the ball's color lies. This is therefore said to be a digital representation. Contrast this with a color-reading apparatus whose needle moves down a color chart. The position of the needle will then indicate not just that the ball is in the red range but will also tell us where within that range it lies. The information it provides is therefore richer and is characterized as analog. The contrast between analog and digital content is well illustrated by the contrast between pictorial and verbal representation. The rich informational nature of analog content makes it particularly appealing in accounts of experience for it seems to make room for saying that experience is richer than our conceptual repertoire and need not be constrained by it. Peacocke remarks,

To say that the type of content in question has an analogue character is to make the following point. There are many dimensions – hue, shape, size, direction – such that any value on that dimension may enter the fine-grained content of an experience. In particular, an experience is not restricted in its range of possible contents to those point or ranges picked out by concepts – *red*, *square*, *straight ahead* – possessed by the perceiver. This fact is accommodated by attributing to the experience a scenario as part of its content. It is

accommodated for characteristics of points in the environment because any values of a perceptible dimension may be mentioned in the ways of filling out the space around the perceiver that comprise the scenario. The restrictions on the environment determined by the veridicality of the experience need not be formulable using concepts possessed by the subject independently of the occurrence of the experience.²²

There are thus three sets of distinctions at play in talking about representational content:

conceptual/nonconceptual, complex/simple, digital/analog. Often, the three sets of distinctions are run together. But let us look more carefully at how these distinctions map onto each other.

Conceptual content is capable of combining to form a complex content and it is digital. This then tempts us to say that nonconceptual content is simple and analog. But a little consideration will show that this need not be so. For instance, it is not obvious that there cannot be a primitive representational system which is simple and digital. Imagine a broken gas gauge, which can show only the values of “empty” and “full”. This makes its representations digital, but at the same time it is not obvious that they can compose into a more complex one the way conceptual representations do. Similarly, it is not obvious that analog representations cannot compose to form a more complex representation. This is especially so in the case of pictorial representation. The redness of the ball may be depicted in analog form using a particular shade of red paint, but when the artist adds a hill beneath the ball whose steepness will also be depicted in analog form, we nevertheless seem to have a more complex representation composed of representational parts. It is therefore useful to note that while conceptual content may be complex as well as digital, it does not mean that the converse of each of these categories maps on to each other in a neat way. Several nonconceptual representational accounts of experience run together simple or non-compositional representation and analog representation, and focus on the latter characteristic in their account of experience. My concern here is with the representational character of a simple

²² Peacocke (1999), p. 68-9

representation. It is accordingly not relevant whether the concerned representation has an analog character or not.

We have already seen that a simple representation, though it can represent a complex, cannot represent the complex as a complex. Even though the simple representation cannot discriminate the parts of the complex or state of affairs it represents, this need not be the only kind of discrimination involved in representation. For there to be directedness or intentionality, some notion of discrimination must be at play. A complex representation is composed of representations for say an object and its properties. This representation discriminates or differentiates to the extent that it employs different representations for the object and for its properties. What feature is at work in a simple representation by which it discriminates and can thereby be said to be directed at or about some thing or state? To represent A rather than B or C, there must be some feature at work in the representation which discriminates A from B and C. A natural suggestion is to appeal to causal discrimination. Consider a simple case of causal discrimination. An electron moving about is repelled by another electron. There seem to be two kinds of discrimination that we can pick out here. Firstly, there is a very broad sense in which the electron by its movement discriminates every thing in the universe. In moving away from the repelling electron it also moves some distance with regard to every other thing. If by the former we say that the electron discriminates the repelling electron from other things, we must also say that it discriminates everything else. Such a notion of discrimination or differentiation is too broad to be useful in an account of experience for we would not want to say that the kind of differentiation there is in experience is such that experience differentiates all there is in the universe. This is why, if it is merely an object that is perceived, it is hard to see how it can yield justification to believe some true propositions rather than others. Therefore, if merely an object is

said to be perceived, it is typically held that it is some other aspect of the experience that explains justifications for beliefs. Secondly, there is a counterfactual sense of discrimination whereby the electron that moves can be said to discriminate the repelling electron from say a proton even when no proton is present. This is because if there had been a proton instead of the repelling electron, the electron concerned would have moved towards it rather than away from it. This sense of discrimination is particularly useful in scientific explanation. It provides little help, however, in an account of experience, for intuitively the sense in which experience differentiates is such that there is differentiation or multiplicity within that experience. It is of no avail to say on the basis of a counterfactual that an experience differentiates what is available in it from what is not. What needs to be captured instead is a sense in which there is differentiation and multiplicity within experience.

5.0 CAN RELATIONAL FRAMEWORKS ACCOUNT FOR PERCEPTUAL MULTIPLICITY?

5.1 The Relational View Reviewed

In this chapter I argue that though they express an important insight, relational views of perception fail to account for perception in a way that can explain the possibility of perceptual justification. I find that relational views fail for reasons that also extend to representational views. These theories of perception fail to adequately accommodate a central feature of experience, namely, the presentation of multiplicity. Experience presents us with multiple *interconnected* entities. This feature of experience needs to be accounted for if experience is to be understood as providing justification for beliefs about the world. I begin by reviewing in this section some features of the relational account.

There has been of late a resurgence in the view that perception is essentially a relational state of a subject and the world. Those who espouse the view take the apparently short step from saying commonsensically that the world is presented to us in experience, to saying more philosophically that (successful) perception consists of a primitive presentational relation between a subject and the world. Subscribers to the view, whom I will call Relationalists, include among others Brewer, Campbell, Martin, Sedivy, Snowdon, and less explicitly McDowell.¹ We find the first four of these proponents, for instance, saying:

¹ See Brewer (2011), Campbell (2002), Martin (2004 and 2006), McDowell (1982 and 1986), Sedivy (2008), and Snowdon (1990).

[T]he most fundamental characterization of perceptual experience is to be given in terms of a relation of conscious acquaintance with certain direct objects of perception.²

[O]nly this view, on which experience of an object is a simple relation holding between perceiver and object, can characterize the kind of acquaintance with objects that provides knowledge of reference.³

[V]eridical perceptual experience is constituted through one standing in a relation of awareness to the objects of perception.⁴

[T]he ‘fabric of perceptual consciousness’ is relational...⁵

The more dominant approach to perception is the Representational view which regards perception as a representational state of the subject, with the subject bearing representational relations to representational contents. There is room to hold both Relational and Representational views, as in fact do Sedivy and McDowell.⁶ To refer to one or the other view as held exclusively, I use the prefix “pure”.

Different proponents of the Relational view conjoin it with different theses. This is unsurprising for they have different but related motivations, with two focal points: first, to counter skeptical threats, especially from the argument from hallucination, and second, to ground thought and representation, especially demonstrative thought. The argument from hallucination, in its simplest formulation, suggests that since from a subject’s point of view hallucinations seem the same as other experiences, and hallucinations are not experiences of a subject-independent world, we must conclude that no experiences, even purportedly successful ones, are experiences of a subject-independent world. This move from a claim about the qualitative identity of how

² Brewer (2011), p. 93

³ Campbell (2002), p. 115

⁴ Martin (2006), p. 394

⁵ Sedivy (2008), p. 349-50

⁶ McDowell understands experience in terms of the exercise of conceptual representational capacities. He is also drawn to a Relational view in his discussion of skepticism (1982) and of demonstrative reference (1986), though he does not explicitly endorse such a view. Sedivy, who aligns closely with McDowell in taking perception to involve conceptual capacities, more plainly invokes an additional relational element. See Sedivy (2008).

things seem in successful and unsuccessful experience to a claim about identity of epistemic status can be resisted by adding on further features to the successful cases. This in fact is the view taken by Representationalists who think of experience as a matter of successfully or unsuccessfully representing the world. Others continue to sense a gap. The worry is that if all I do in experience is represent the world, then knowledge of the world through experience would depend on additional factors whose role would be to ensure that the representation, in successful cases, amounted to knowledge of the external world. Such additional factors are often found to be unsatisfactory, and the threat of skepticism continues to loom large.⁷ A conception of successful experience as the obtaining of a primitive experiential relation to the world seems to provide a more robust response to the argument from hallucination. Martin regards such a Relational conception as part of our commonsense view of experience. Since the argument from hallucination attacks this view, he bifurcates experience, regarding the successful cases as of a “fundamentally distinct kind” from unsuccessful cases. So the Relational view for him, as for most others, leads naturally to a Disjunctive view of experience.

For Relationalists who do not begin with the Relational thesis as the default interpretation of perception, the concern with countering the argument from hallucination is linked to a concern with anchoring thought. Representationalism too, after all, provides a solution to the argument from hallucination. Those who are unsatisfied with this solution typically feel that if representations never invoke a direct relation to the object represented, they do not succeed in reaching out to it, especially in the case of demonstrative thoughts. In the perceptual context that makes demonstrative reference possible, it is urged, we are presented with the object in some fundamental sense rather than in virtue of representing it or via a proxy like a sense-datum.

⁷ See Stroud (2009) for an elaboration of this point.

Campbell takes this approach, seeking to show how “It is experience of the world that puts us in a position to think about it.”⁸ The Relational account of experience then does double duty. It takes aim at the argument from hallucination and also tries to provide some grounding for thought, and intentionality more generally.

Most Relationalists are motivated by some combination of the above concerns, and depending on how this shapes up, they are sometimes more and sometimes less concerned with providing an account of unsuccessful experience. My concern here is with how they account for the successful cases. This is the common thread running through all Relational views: in a successful experience a subject’s having the experience is (at least partially) a matter of the subject’s bearing a primitive awareness relation to what is experienced. It is the feasibility of this Relational thesis that I propose to examine. In the next section I very briefly review Campbell’s position, raising initial objections that help bring out a central question of this chapter, set out in section 5.3: how does a Relational view account for ordinary perceptions of complex scenes with multiple objects? In section 5.4 I examine the resources provided by a polyadic relation, drawing some historical parallels with Russell’s theory of judgment of a time. Section 5.5 considers a solution that appeals to multiple experiential relations and introduces a state of affairs as an object of experience. I find that the Relational view leaves us with a fractured picture, unable to distinguish the multiplicity *in* experience from a multiplicity *of* experiences. Section 5.6 then considers objects as the only fundamental objects of experience, as on Brewer’s account. Since the success of such object-perception in playing an epistemological role is found to undermine the distinct sense of presentation it offers, section 5.7 then explores and tries to better articulate what drives the Relationalist. I find that the Relationalist has a core insight into the demands on

⁸ Campbell (2002), p. 1

an adequate account of empirical justification which is however undercut by her very appeal to relations. This, surprisingly, points to a parallel weakness in the opposing pure Representational approach for it too appeals to relations, even if representational relations.

5.2 Early Warning Signs

Campbell's account of experience focuses on its role in securing demonstrative reference. He finds that it is conscious attention within experience that specifically plays this role. Conscious attention to an object "highlights" it or "singles" it out. So Campbell says:

To refer to the perceived object, it is not enough that I have it in my field of view. As I look over the scene, it is not enough that the gold-domed building be there somewhere in my visual field. I must separate it visually, as figure from ground, I must visually discriminate it from its surroundings. I have to attend to it.⁹

One may of course experience a scene without singling out any object in it. Conscious attention is thus a matter of selection. Selection of an object in experience takes place at two levels, both at the conscious level and at the level of sub-personal information processing. It is the former that is used in everyday explanation, and because he is interested in issues of "commensurability" between the two levels, Campbell engages in detailed considerations of how they relate. He then argues that the former, conscious attention, is to be understood in relational terms if it is to explain grasp of demonstrative reference. Some obvious questions here are obscured by the details of the intervening discussions of commensurability.

First, on Campbell's view, both cases of experience – those in which one singles out an object and those in which one merely looks out without singling out anything – are to be understood relationally. Further, since experience on the Relational view is supposed to be a

⁹ Campbell (2002), p. 25

simple openness to the world, the qualitative or phenomenal character of the experience is said to be constituted by the objects and properties perceived:

On a Relational View, the phenomenal character of your experience, as you look around the room, is constituted by the actual layout of the room itself: which particular objects are there, their intrinsic properties, such as color and shape, and how they are arranged in relation to one another and to you.¹⁰

Put together, however, this means that if the scene remains the same through a case of merely experiencing it and a case of consciously attending to one object in it, then the qualitative character of the two cases must remain the same. This leaves conscious attention without a distinct qualitative character, making it unclear how it can ground demonstrative reference.

When he introduces the notion of conscious attention Campbell does so intuitively, through everyday examples suggesting that there is some qualitative change in the experience when one attends to an object. If one is at a crowded dinner table and you make a remark about “that woman”, Campbell says,

There are a lot of people around; I can’t yet visually single out which one you mean. So on anyone’s account, I do not yet know which woman you are talking about...My visual experience remains as before: a sea of faces. I cannot consciously single out the person you mean.¹¹

He suggests that the experience changes with attention:

It is only when I have finally managed to single out the woman in my experience of the room, when it *ceases* to be a sea of faces and in my experience I focus on that person, that I would ordinarily be said to know who was being referred to.¹²

Attention is here said to bring about a change in visual experience, for Campbell says it *ceases* to be of a sea of faces. It is when this is added to his Relational view of experience that it is not clear how the two elements are supposed to fit together. On the one hand there is the experiential

¹⁰ Campbell (2002), p. 116

¹¹ Campbell (2002), p. 8

¹² Campbell (2002), p. 9, emphasis added.

relation which relates you to the same scene in both cases keeping the qualitative character of the experience invariant, for that is here constituted by what the relation is to, the same scene. On the other hand there is conscious attention which apparently changes the qualitative character of the experience, enabling demonstration in just the one case. The uncomfortable fit seems to have been eclipsed by concerns about information processing.

Second, there is a distinction between demonstratively referring to an object and demonstratively referring to its shape or color. If conscious attention provides knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative and this is to be understood relationally, it is not clear that there is room for making this distinction. When I attend to the object rather than the property, perhaps it is the object alone that I bear a relation to and not the property. But even when I cease to attend to the property and attend to the object instead, the property continues to be presented to me and to be a determinant of the qualitative character of the experience. Isn't this to be understood relationally? Perhaps when one attends to the object, one bears a presentational relation to it in *addition* to bearing a presentational relation to the property. Is this then different from the sense in which simply experiencing the object without attention is still a relational presentation of it? It is not clear here what role the relational element is playing or how attention and therefore demonstration which take place in some cases of experience and not in others, are supposed to map onto it. The difficulties arising here are symptoms of far more fundamental problems underlying the Relational thesis.

5.3 Multiple Objects of Perception

In presentations of the Relational thesis, what one experiences – the object of experience – is usually taken to be an ordinary object. If one relatum in the awareness relation is the subject of

experience, another is an ordinary object experienced, such as the gold-domed building, the white picket fence, or the person across the room. At other times, however, the object of experience is said to range from ordinary objects to properties and scenes. So Campbell says,

We can then view our ordinary perceptual experience as being a relation to those objects and *properties* [of the mind-independent world], just as we ordinarily suppose it is. When you see a mountain and a tree, your experience is a relation between you and that *scene*.¹³

Similarly Martin says,

Some of the objects of perception – *the concrete individuals, their properties, the events* these partake in – are constituents of the experience.¹⁴

Whatever our view of experience, it is undeniable that our ordinary experiences present us with multiple entities in various relations, or in my terms, a multiplicity. When one looks around the room in normal circumstances and assuming no relevant occlusions, does one see the book? The table? Does one see their arrangement, the book's lying on the table? The answer provided by Relationalists is "yes" in each case. It would be extraordinarily inconvenient to deny any of these as a matter of course. We invoke such presentation of multiplicity in our everyday explanations. When you refuse to eat the soup, it is because you see not just the fuzzy thing, and the soup, but the fuzzy thing in the soup.¹⁵ The question arising for a Relationalist is whether the subject bears distinct experiential relations to each of these items. Does the subject bear a distinct experiential relation to the book, another to the table, and perhaps yet another to the book's lying on the table? Such a question arises from unease prompted by the observation that a conjunction of experience statements is quite different from a statement expressing experience of a conjunction.

¹³ Campbell (2011), p. 47, emphasis added.

¹⁴ Martin (2004), p. 39, emphasis added.

¹⁵ For simplicity, I restrict my arguments to the case of visual experience.

Following Russell, suppose the experiential relation is to be understood as a simple two-place relation with the argument places occupied by the subject and the object of experience. This is the kind of picture that Campbell initially seems to have in mind when he says that “experience of an object is a simple relation holding between perceiver and object”.¹⁶ A straightforward way to try to capture multiplicity will be to employ several such relations, each to an object in the scene. Yet this does not adequately reflect the kind of multiplicity we find in experience for we have a sense that we experience all these distinct items together in one experience, and part of what this seems to mean is that we experience some relation between them. Such experience of connectedness and differences seems to be lost when we appeal to multiple experiential relations. Intuitively, the multiplicity *in* experience is not to be understood as a multiplicity *of* experiences. So let us set aside the straightforward answer at present and turn to a polyadic relation, one that has more than one argument place for objects of experience.

5.4 Polyadic Relations

An appeal to a polyadic experiential relation to account for experiential multiplicity more closely follows Russell’s theory of judgment (held for a time) than his theory of experience. As I argue in this section, it is then not surprising that such an appeal undercuts the intent of the Relational thesis. Consider a polyadic experiential relation one of whose arguments is the subject and others are the various items experienced. On first pass at least, this does not treat experience of multiplicity as a multiplicity of experiences. Note however that the items experienced are here united and brought together by the experience. They may also be united and stand in certain relations out there in the world outside of the experience. But the unity of the items which makes the experience an experience of a specific combination of these items, that is, of a state of affairs,

¹⁶ Campbell (2002), p. 115

is ascribed to the experience. It is this connection between the items brought about by the experiential relation that is in the first instance relevant to experience of the state, and only second, the state itself. This state is no more “directly” available to the subject here than if her representational content were to correspond to it as on a pure Representational view.

The Relationalist can invoke the primitiveness of the experiential relation at this point. She can build into the characterization of the experiential relation that it is one that obtains between the subject and items experienced only when those items are appropriately united in a state of affairs in the world. There is no room for a parallel move on a pure Representational view because it is taken to be characteristic of empirical representations that what they represent may or may not obtain in the world. The Relationalist, by making the appropriate state a necessary condition for the obtaining of the experiential relation, can ensure that such successful experience is fundamentally different from illusory or hallucinatory experience. However, the purposes for which the Relational thesis is mooted are not served merely by pointing to *a* fundamental difference in kinds of experience. Rather, the point of fundamental difference has to show why one of these kinds, the successful kind, “opens” up the world to us in a way that successful experience on a pure Representational view cannot. It is because of a special openness that Relationalists claim we don’t have to look outside of experience to bridge an epistemological gap that threatens to appear between the subject and her world. However, once experience is separated from the world’s states of affairs by making the latter an *external* condition for the former, making it a necessary condition as well does not show that experience taken by itself overcomes the epistemological gap. An external condition, even when necessary, may be no more linked to a state than is a cause to its effect. But a causal relation between the world and experience is acknowledged by all parties to the debate, and yet Relationalists have

suspected an epistemological gap between the two. If there is a gap then, it is not one that can be bridged by regarding a state of affairs in the world as a necessary condition of experience of it, as long as that condition remains an external – rather than a constitutive – condition of the experience. This is the intuition on which the appeal to a primitive experiential relation originally rests. It tries to avoid any suggestion of an epistemological gap between the subject and the world in experience by simply incorporating the world into experience. On pure Representational views, successful experience is a veridical representational state which does depend on a state of the world for its veridical quality. If such representational experience does not provide adequately direct epistemological access to the state, then neither does relational experience that depends on a state external to it for its epistemological role.

Russell, from whom Relationalists derive some inspiration, endorsed for a time a polyadic view not of experience but of judgment. He viewed judgment initially as a dyadic relation between the subject and a proposition which contained the objects they were about (rather than Fregean senses). Since people can judge falsely, this view required the existence of false propositions or objective falsehoods, something he wanted to avoid. So Russell adopted a polyadic theory of judgment on which when Othello judges that Desdemona loves Cassio, the judging brings together the items Othello, Desdemona, loving, and Cassio. The relation of loving appears here in the role not of a relation but of an object:

But this relation ['loving'], as it occurs in the act of believing, is not the relation which creates the unity of the complex whole consisting of the subject and the objects. The relation 'loving', as it occurs in the act of believing, is one of the objects -- it is a brick in the structure, not the cement. The cement is the relation 'believing'.¹⁷

¹⁷ Russell (1912), p. 200. Russell later abandoned this theory that he called the “multiple relation theory of judgment”.

This raises serious difficulties for Russell in accounting for the unity of the judgment. An unstable dual role is pressed on the relation that appears as an object in the polyadic relation. This relation must function as object for it to be related to the other objects by the main relation, but at the same time it must serve the role of a relation, or a “relating relation” in Russell’s terms, in order to secure the unity of the judgment that Desdemona loves Cassio.¹⁸ The problem is pertinent to any similar model of experience. I want to emphasize that even if this were to be fixed, an element of reflection or correspondence would still remain on a similar model of experience of a state. Russell regarded judging as a polyadic rather than a dyadic relation precisely to account for falsehood without reification. In the polyadic relation of judging, if the unity of the elements of the judging relation does not correspond to a similar unity in the world, then the judgment is false; if it does, it is true. This element of correspondence to a state becomes a feature of the model simply from judging being a *polyadic* relation bringing together the objects of the state in a certain way. If judging were a dyadic relation to the state we could not talk of correspondence as much as of containment, which is what made it difficult to account for falsehoods without reifying them. An account of experience of a complex scene in terms of a polyadic relation uniting its components cannot avoid a similar tinge of correspondence for this ensues from the polyadicity of the relation, and not from its specific primitive nature, from whether it has been termed a relation of experience or a relation of judgment.¹⁹ What the Relationalist then loses is the desired, distinctive sense in which experience is simply an openness to how the world is.

¹⁸ Though Russell’s example involves a relation as argument, the problem of the unity of the proposition arises more generally even with simpler subject-predicate propositions.

¹⁹ Removing any problematic dual-rolled relation from an argument place and building it into the main experiential relation is for this reason besides the point, for it would still be the experiential relation which unites the objects in a certain way. The experiential availability of the corresponding state would then be no more direct on such a Relational view than on a pure Representational view which appeals to correspondence to that state.

5.5 Multiple Relations Theory

To avoid modeling experience of multiplicity on a Russellian theory of judgment, let us now reconsider in more detail if we can work with the simple Russellian two-place experiential relation. We can suppose that when the subject experiences an ordinary complex scene, she bears multiple such experiential relations, one to each distinct object experienced, and further, we can introduce the relevant state of their connection as also an object of this experience, as a relatum. In this way we can hope to account for the presentation of distinct individuals as well as for the presentation of their connections without these being generated by the experience. An appeal to multiple experiential relations however had initially seemed suspect. It seemed to conflate experience of multiplicity with a multiplicity of experiences. But perhaps this intuitive difficulty is merely terminological. An appeal to multiple experiential relations does not of itself indicate multiple experiences. The Relationalist can in any case simply declare the whole complex of relations as the experience of multiplicity. The test of such a multiple relations model however lies in whether it can account for the empirical justification of beliefs.

Appealing to multiple relations to each of the individuals in a state as well as to the state itself, instead of capturing the presentation of connections or differences between the individuals, simply pushes the problem one step back. To capture experience of connections between the distinctly presented individuals, we now have to account for experience of connection between each of these individuals and the state that was introduced to account for connections in the first place. In other words, we now need to explain how, as far as the subject is concerned, an object presented through a distinct relation that the subject bears to it, is the very same object in the state of affairs to which she bears another distinct relation. Without something in the experience to account for this, the subject, from her point of view, might as well be standing in multiple

relations to unconnected entities. To adapt an example of Campbell's for this purpose, it would be as though she were to look out simultaneously through three narrow windows in a wall and see a tree through one, a snake through the second, and a snake on a tree through the third, without her experience allowing her to know that the tree and the snake she sees through the first two windows are the same as the tree and snake she sees through the third. In an account of experience that appeals to multiple experiential relations there must, that is to say, be some explanatory analogue to the role that anaphora plays in linguistic discourse if we are to make sense of the subject being presented with the appropriate multiplicity. Without such an element in the multiple relations theory, the picture offered of the justification the subject has for knowledge of appropriate multiplicity is the same as what is offered when she sees object *a*, another *b* and as it happens, the state of affairs of *a*'s being on *b*, without there being anything in her experience that would allow her to know that she sees two objects rather than four, say *a*, *b* and a *c* on a *d*. When the subject merely bears a distinct presentational relation to *a*, another to *b*, and yet another to *a*'s being on *b*, she is not presented in the right way with the connection between the arguments in the first two relations. The omission, as this suggests, might be that in focusing on the objects of experience, the notion of a way of presentation has not here been brought adequately into play.

Proponents of the Relational thesis have tended to treat the matter of providing some account of ways or modes of presentation as secondary, as a detail to the basic thesis that can be subsequently worked out. When they do turn attention to it, as in more recent presentations of the view, it is introduced as a third relatum in the experiential relation. Brewer emphasizes that

[P]erceptual experience is a matter of a person's conscious acquaintance with various mind-independent physical objects *from a given spatiotemporal point of view, in a particular sense modality, and in certain*

specific circumstances of perception (such as lighting conditions in the case of vision). These factors effectively conjoin to constitute a third relatum of the relation of conscious acquaintance ...²⁰

Similarly Campbell, moving from a neat two-place relation, in more recent work talks of experience in terms of a three-place relation between a subject, an object, and a standpoint or point of view. He uses the third relatum to explain in relational terms how the same object can be experienced in different “ways”.²¹

Suppose such a third relatum is to serve the function of explaining how experience presents us with connections between the items experienced in order to explain the presentation of the appropriate multiplicity. The items experienced are arguments of distinct, now triadic, relations. There is need for a unity to the way these items are presented if we are to explain why one of the items (the object) presented in a distinct relation should be known to be a component in another of the items (the state) presented distinctly. Without such an explanation, the multiple experiential relations cannot be said to justify knowledge of the appropriate multiplicity. What is needed for providing this justification seems to be an encompassing way of presentation bringing together the ways of presentation of the individual items. So we might suppose that one of the ways of presentation, the relatum in the relation presenting the state, is composed of the ways of presentation that are relata in the other relations. But on a closer look, this does not provide the required explanation if the same way of presentation can attach to different items as is commonly supposed. For now there is nothing to tell us that the way of presentation which is a part of the composite one supposed to confer unity, presents the same object in this occurrence as it does when it occurs on its own as a relatum in an accompanying relation. But to stipulatively link a way of presentation with just one item in all its occurrences would amount to no more than a

²⁰ Brewer (2011), p. 96. Emphasis in original text.

²¹ Campbell (2009). Brewer makes similar use of his third relatum, (2011), p. 96-97

stipulation of the desired unity and so of the desired justification. Whatever else the third relatum might achieve, the encompassing way of presentation needed to confer and explain the unity of the presentation is not adequately accommodated when introduced as a further relatum in the experiential relation.

What the Relationalist needs is perhaps simply the same third relatum in each of the experiential relations. This suggests a still simpler point of unity. Rather than appeal to a further relatum, she might appeal to a relatum that is already at work and is identical across the distinct relations, namely, the subject. So it might be the mere fact that the multiple experiential relations are borne by the same subject which secures the unity of presentation required to justify knowledge of the appropriate multiplicity. But the example of the person looking out through different windows shows that this does not fit the facts. The same subject who is in multiple relations might sometimes perceive the connections between what is presented and sometimes not. It is nevertheless useful to briefly note here a more fundamental reason why appealing to the identity of the subject in the relations cannot explain the required unity of presentation. If the appeal to the identity of the subject is a stipulative way of securing the unity of presentation, the justification it delivers is also stipulated. Recall here that a Relationalist does not simply appeal to experience itself as a primitive; she appeals only to the primitivity of the experiential relation. If such an account of experience is to show how experience can contribute to justification and knowledge, it must do more than stipulate a required element. In turning to the identity of the subject across multiple experiential relations, can the Relationalist instead take herself to be pointing to an explanatory source of the required unity? Note that a subject must enjoy some perception to be considered a perceptual subject. A relatum in the perceptual relation is a perceptual subject only in so far as she does bear such a relation, not independent of it. In general

then, when there are multiple relations of this kind, the required unity cannot lie in their having the same perceptual subject as such; at best it can arise from the sameness of what serves as the perceptual subject in each of the perceptual relations. This sameness will lie in some nonperceptual (perhaps physical or rational) feature of the relatum. But it cannot follow from the notion of such a feature (unless it in turn appeals to perceptual experience) that primitive relations borne by a relatum with this feature must have the appropriate *perceptual* unity. Appealing to the sameness of the relatum to secure perceptual unity is then explanatorily empty. The Relationalist has simply insisted on experience providing justificatory access to the multiplicity in the world, not shown it to be possible.

The multiple relations model thus cannot relevantly distinguish the multiplicity *in* experience from a multiplicity *of* experiences. It must be emphasized however that the issue here is not that of individuation, of what to count as “one” experience. In a bid to accommodate openness to connections in the world, the polyadic model considered earlier can introduce a state of affairs as also an argument in the experiential relation in addition to the objects it already takes as arguments. Since there is only one experiential relation at work here, there is more clearly only one experience to begin with. But the problem arises here too because when a state and its components are treated as objects of experience and these are interpreted as *arguments* of a relation, no explanation is forthcoming of how knowledge of the appropriate connection between the distinct arguments is justified by such presentation. Without this, we are left with a fractured picture of experience, notwithstanding late attempts to add in modes of presentation.

5.6 Object Perception as Fundamental

The overwhelming majority of our experiences are of complex scenes presenting us with multiple objects in various relations. Typically, these are also the very experiences that ground demonstrative reference to a particular object; when we single-out in experience we single-out from within a multiplicity. While Relationalists are not unaware of this, it often drops out of their theorizing. Campbell for instance, does initially remark that to attend to something one must discriminate it as figure from ground. Yet that ground drops out when he characterizes conscious attention to an object in relational terms; only the object is now mentioned and a dyadic (later triadic) relation is invoked. This ambivalence towards the role of multiplicity in experience, observed earlier on, is not surprising once we see that a Relational approach cannot adequately account for it. The strength of such an approach is instead held to lie in its account of perception of particulars as opposed to multiplicities. This tendency to separate the two is however odd not only because most perception of particular objects takes place within the context of perceiving a multiplicity, but also because ordinary objects are themselves complex entities. So it seems quite in order to say that seeing a flower is sometimes simply a matter of seeing petals attached to a corolla, or that seeing a head attached to a chest is just a way of seeing a torso. In this section I argue that “object perception”, when distinguished from perception of a multiplicity, cannot perform a justificatory role in a way that respects the Relationalist’s core intuition. That intuition, as I show in the next section, does pick out a defect in a purely representational approach to perception; but it is deeply connected with the perceptual presentation of multiplicity which is undermined by the appeal to relations.

Brewer, who develops the idea of object perception in most detail, calls the entities which provide “the most fundamental characterization of the nature of perceptual experience” its “direct objects”. He emphasizes that:

[I] is a crucial component of the early modern framework, only in the context of which my technical notion of a direct object of perception makes sense, that these are *objects*, or things, as opposed to facts, propositions, or contents.²²

Brewer then uses the term “acquaintance” for the relation a person bears to the direct objects of her perception. This follows Russell’s view of acquaintance very closely. Russell’s acquaintance relation is different from the relation of judging in the following sense among others:

acquaintance is paradigmatically with an individual as opposed to a state of affairs. Russell’s treatment of experience as acquaintance was however a by-product of a notion he advanced primarily as a form of knowing in the context of a theory of meaning. So for Russell experience does not have its own distinctive epistemological character. It is a subset of cases of acquaintance including cases of introspection, certain memories and acquaintance with universals. Further, Russell’s acquaintance relation seems to relegate any complexity in the item of acquaintance to a veiled and obscure role, as suggested by the glossing over of the transition from acquaintance with it to judgment about it.²³ To see what a contemporary Relationalist might hope to gain by appealing to object perception modeled on Russellian acquaintance, let us first press her point of disagreement with a pure Representational view.

²² Brewer (2011), p. 6-7

²³ What Russell at first regarded as acquaintance with a state of affairs he came to regard as judgment understood in terms of a polyadic judging relation. When a state of affairs now appears in an acquaintance relation, it functions as an “object”. When it functions as a state of affairs, that is, when its complexity becomes relevant to its relation with the subject, we have moved from acquaintance to judgment. So acquaintance is paradigmatically with “objects” (including universals and perhaps the self), rather than with states of affairs.

First, many Relationalists emphasize the fact that on their view the object of experience is a constituent of experience of it. But a pure Representationalist, who does intend the successful and unsuccessful cases of experience to have different epistemic merit, can produce a similar result. She can say that experiences are states which are of two kinds; the unsuccessful ones are representational states of the subject and the successful ones are representational states of the subject being rendered veridical by the world. Though the successful cases are now states that incorporate the world, the pure Representationalist suffers little loss because the kind of access to the world that experience equips the subject with remains the same, namely, purely representational. Secondly, Relationalists emphasize that on their view a particular experience of an object could not be that very experience without that object being the object of experience rather than a similar one or nothing at all in its stead. Again, a pure Representationalist can potentially meet this aim simply by individuating successful experience of an object in terms of that object external to it. Thirdly, in emphasizing “direct” access and “openness” to the world in experience, Relationalists cannot be aiming merely to reject proxy objects of experience like sense data. A pure Representationalist too avoids such a veil of perception in her appeal to representational contents which are, importantly, not treated by her as the objects of perception. So a Relationalist’s disagreement with a pure Representationalist cannot turn on the constitution or the individuation of experience, or the rejection of proxy objects. Rather, in disagreeing with pure Representationalists, Relationalists seem to be seeking a special kind of conscious access to the world in experience: access which is basic in the sense that it is *not further grounded*. The idea, as Brewer expresses it, is that

[P]erceptual experiences in which a person's subjective condition constitutes a simple openness to the mind-independent physical world are both explanatorily and metaphysically basic.²⁴

Keeping this in mind, however, it is no longer clear that Russell's notion of acquaintance, which he employed with regard to some special particulars, namely, sense data, can be reinterpreted by a Relationalist as object perception. Sense data are special entities in that there is nothing more to a sense datum than what is revealed in experience of it. It has no hidden parts; Russell in fact emphasized that knowledge of it in acquaintance is complete. Ordinary objects however are complex, with many parts and aspects. If a Relationalist insists on the fundamentality of the presentation of an object, she must not allow the grounding of this presentation in that of some part of it. This is indeed awkward for, given that our experience is perspectival, it is some such move that would presumably help a Relationalist avoid having to whittle down the objects of experience to surfaces or edges. To see why a Relationalist might be pushed towards this unhelpfully strict interpretation of the notion of fundamental presentation, consider three objects, a , b and c . Suppose a is attached, say it is closely glued, to b . If one had so chosen, one might have instead attached it to c . To make the case vivid, imagine a large piece of wallpaper being affixed to one wall rather than another. If in virtue of seeing a I can be said to also see the product $a+b$ – the whole of which it is now a part, then had circumstances been different, my perception of a , otherwise unchanged, would instead ground perception of another whole $a+c$. This now very closely parallels the way in which on a pure Representational view, having the same representational content would in one circumstance be the basis of my perceiving one thing and in another circumstance another thing. If what the pure Representationalist offers is an inadequate account of the presentation of a thing itself, how is the

²⁴ Brewer (2008), p. 168

Relationalist's account here really different, at least as regards perception of the whole? If the Relationalist intends to salvage a sense of presentation of an object distinguished from what a pure Representationalist has to offer, then she must take her own idea of explanatory fundamentality more seriously and quite unhelpfully bar ordinary complex objects (or their equally ordinary parts) from being the direct objects of perception.

Suppose we overlook the impoverishing retreat forced above. What purpose does the notion of object perception serve? Merely being able to carve out *a* sense of presentation of the external world is of little relevance in the larger project of regarding experience as a justificatory source of knowledge if that sense of presentation cannot be shown to contribute to justification. It is then not surprising to find Brewer assigning to object perception a further role, a “crucial role” in the explanation of how empirical knowledge is possible. He says,

According to my own development of the position, factive perceptions are intelligible *only in terms of* more basic perceptual acquaintance-relations between subjects and physical direct objects...²⁵

But perceiving a fact about an ordinary object can never be merely a matter of having that object as an object of perception, for then perception of it would either imply perception of all facts about it or of some and not others arbitrarily. Some “mechanism” needs to be provided in basing factive perception on object perception. Brewer appeals to the third relatum in his experiential relation (the spatiotemporal point of view and other conditions of experience) which is not itself an object of experience, and also to relevant similarities the object bears to certain other objects, which abstract similarities are not even relata in the experiential relation. In the details of his view, empirical justification for a categorical judgment about an object *o* is then based both on *o* *and* on the abstract similarities it has with certain paradigms (that is, on its “properties”), but

²⁵ Brewer (2011), p. 7, emphasis added.

only *o* is a fundamental object of perception, and Brewer focuses only on *o* as the “reason” for the correctness of the judgment.²⁶ Notice this slide when he says regarding the perceptual judgment that *o* is *F*:

The reason for the correctness of her judgment of *F*-ness is *o* itself, *along* with the paradigms that give this concept its content; and *this* reason, *o*, is precisely what enters into the fundamental nature of the subject’s perceptual experience.²⁷

Elsewhere, Brewer says,

I would say myself that this truth [that *o* is *F*] consists in the fact that *o* resembles the *F* things; and this is how *o* makes ‘*o* is *F*’ true.²⁸

Here he seems to suggest that *o*’s being a reason for the correctness of the judgment is to be understood in terms of its role in the fact that *o* resembles the *F* things, for it seems to be this *fact* which in the first place constitutes the truth of the judgment and the reason for its correctness. This apparently reverses the thrust of the object perception account. At any rate, what I want to emphasize is that in the object perception account, the subject is not simply “open” in an explanatorily basic way to the grounds for the correctness of her judgment. She is *fundamentally* perceptually presented neither with the fact that *o* resembles the *F* things nor with *o*’s resemblance to *F* things, but only with the object *o*. Whatever may be gained on the one hand by giving priority to the object over its properties and states in an account of experience of it is then lost on the other. Once an object’s having a certain property – its being in a certain state – is not itself a fundamental or “direct” object of experience, any explanatorily basic manner of justification that experience can provide is lost. What Brewer gets from his account of object perception is special “access” to the object, what he loses is explanatorily basic justification for

²⁶ See Brewer (2011), section 6.2 for the full account.

²⁷ Brewer (2011), p. 144, emphasis added.

²⁸ Brewer (2011), p. 142, footnote 4.

empirical judgment. In this loss he is paradoxically less akin to other Relationalists who admit states of affairs or facts as “direct” objects of perception, and more akin to pure Representationalists. A pure Representationalist can treat perception of an object as an ordered pair consisting of a representational state of the subject and a relevant object; experience so understood can be said to provide the subject with special “access” to the object, but what provides her with justification for empirical judgment about it is her representation of it. What provides empirical justification on Brewer’s object perception account is no more explanatorily basic, notwithstanding special perceptual access to the object. We are then led to wonder whether a Relationalist’s intuition concerning the need for an explanatorily basic openness to the world is after all simply off the mark, as a pure Representationalist will want to point out, or whether we can charitably credit her with some insight into the demands on an account of empirical justification.

5.7 What is the Relationalist After and Why?

It is easier to begin with what the Relationalist does *not* aim for. The aim of a Relational account of experience is *not* that of supporting an empiricism that works out to be transcendently ideal. The contemporary Relationalist is a realist, sometimes styled a “naïve realist”. She broadly aims to show that (and how) experience of the real, experience-independent world justifies knowledge of it. This broad empiricist aim is something she shares with the Representationalist. It contrasts with what the transcendental idealist aims for because though such an idealist might also acknowledge a world independent of experience, she is satisfied with the structure of what is experienced accruing to the experience itself. What the realist – the Relationalist and the Representationalist – seeks instead is justification for beliefs about intrinsic division in the world. She is not served merely by showing that experience does reveal the world to be intrinsically

structured if all details of what is thus structured are withheld from her. If all that experience can justify is belief in some bare distinction, as might be expressed by “something is distinct from something”, and experience does not go towards justifying our richer beliefs about how the experience-independent world is, then we are still set on the path to idealism. Our alternatives are to embrace a wide-reaching skepticism about our epistemological capacities or to seek out nonempirical sources of justification. Breaking away from these approaches, the realist who is an empiricist wants to show that experience can provide justification for enriched beliefs about intrinsic divisions and interconnectedness in the world. While this is the standard empiricist approach, not all empiricists regard experience as justifying propositions. Gupta has recently defended a form of empiricism that regards experience as providing only conditional justification and not as itself yielding justification for propositions.²⁹ I work below with the standard empiricist approach in mind.

Consider then a marginally richer proposition telling us that something is as large as something and also as bright as it. This is a proposition expressed using anaphoric reference. The conjunction falls within the scope of an existential quantifier and each conjunct makes a reference to the same entities. The proposition entails that something is as large as something, and it also entails that something is as bright as something. Neither of these propositions on their own is the kind of proposition accounting for the empirical justification of which satisfies the empiricist’s purposes. Taken on their own they cannot convey the interconnections between them. So the straightforward conjunction of these two propositions will also not serve the empiricist’s purposes. What the empiricist wants is to show how experience can justify the richer kind of proposition which expresses not just some divisions in the world but also its

²⁹ Gupta (2006)

interconnectedness as indicated by the wide scope existential quantifier. Many of the propositions of ordinary experience are richer still, but what is important is that they tend to be complex propositions containing conjunctions and entailing their conjuncts.

If we now introduce the assumption that whatever experience provides justification for the richer proposition must also provide justification for the simpler ones entailed, we are on the way to acknowledging multiple entities as objects of presentation. Let us see more closely how this comes about since providing an adequate account of such presentation is especially problematic within the relational framework. First, if the assumption introduced has the ring of a controversial closure principle, note that it does not concern the actual formation or holding of a belief by the subject. That is, it does not concern doxastic justification. When a belief is justifiedly formed, it may not lead to the justified formation of a belief entailed by it because of some psychological or other interruption. But when we are talking about propositional justification, that is, the justification of a proposition for a subject which she may or may not believe, a perceptual episode that justifies for her a complex proposition must also justify for her the simpler propositions entailed. Without this it is hard to understand her perceptual episode as providing her with evidence for the richer proposition at all. So by adding this assumption to the Relationalist's concerns we are not introducing a vulnerability.

Second, if empirical justification of a proposition for the subject is understood in terms of the presentation of a state, the presentation of the state that justifies the complex proposition must in some way "involve" the presentation of the more minimal state that justifies a conjunct (or other simpler proposition entailed). Apart from noting this, we do not need to insist here on any specific manner in which the presentation of the two states must be related. With regard to

the earlier example, there must simply be room to regard as objects of experience, both the simpler state of something being as large as another as well as the more complex state of its being as large and bright as the other. It may be that the presentation of the simpler state is a necessary accompaniment to a distinct presentation of the complex state or that the former is grounded in the latter. What is important is that the presentation of the one cannot simply be identical to the presentation of the other such that whenever one of the propositions is justified the other is too. For it is not the case that whenever the proposition that the two things are as large as each other is justified for the subject, the proposition that they are as large and bright as each other is also justified.

Once such a distinction to the presentation of the states concerned is admitted, the empiricist must also supply an explanation of their unity. This is required for such presentation to justify, for instance, that it is the *same* objects which are both as large and bright as each other, rather than leaving it unconfirmed whether or not there are two pairs of objects each bearing one of these relations. Similarly, a unity to the presentation of the states is required to justify the proposition that there is here just one pair of objects bearing both relations and not two such pairs. The “state”, experience of which provides justification for a proposition, simply refers to an object’s being a certain way. Any empiricist who is a realist must understand this as obtaining independently of the experience – as intrinsic to the world. This is all that is relevant here, not how exactly she unpacks the notion of an object’s being a certain way. So she might treat it as involving properties or tropes. She might regard the object as fundamental and its state as somehow derivative, or she might take this as reversed; accordingly, she might regard one of these as the fundamental object of experience and regard experience of it as the ground for experience of the other. What is important is that as long as an object’s being a certain way is

intrinsic to the world, and experience of this is understood as capable of justifying a complex proposition, such experience must also be understood as involving experience of more minimal states of the object; there must then be a unity to the experience for the complex proposition to be justified. Since such unity is a requirement for the experience being justificatory, it cannot simply be stipulated as a feature of the experience when that very role is what is supposedly being accounted for. As Strawson says in his attempted “rehabilitation” of Kant, “This conception [of the world as experience-independent] would be empty unless experience contained such a ground for it as it does in that connectedness which makes possible the employment of ordinary empirical concepts of objects.”³⁰ The empirical justification of propositions about an intrinsically complex and interconnected world has its ground in the connectedness of experience of distinct states; this connectedness must then be explained if experience is to be understood as providing such justification.

In the Relational framework, a multiplication of the objects of experience is reflected as a multiplication of arguments. What kinds of entities these are vary with the metaphysics with which one starts and with one’s other motivations. So though Brewer admits only objects as the fundamental objects of experience, another Relationalist might admit only states, while Campbell admits both. What I have argued for is that irrespective of this, as long as we are realists about intrinsic divisions in an interconnected world, there is a need to accommodate *multiple* objects of experience as well as a unity to their presentation if we are to understand experience as fulfilling its justificatory role. We have seen in detail how a search for this unity however turns up empty within a relational framework. The fundamental weakness of the approach is its inability to accommodate a unity of presentation, given that multiple objects of

³⁰ Strawson (1989), p. 91

experience are treated as distinct arguments of a relation, that shows the subject to be fully receptive to interconnections intrinsic in the world. This issues from the very role an object of experience is assigned – as an argument in a relation, and its corollary treatment of the subject as also an argument of a relation.

The shadow that this casts is long. A Relational account of experience shares this much with its opponent; it shares the role assigned to the subject which in a pure Representational account is the relatum of a relation to a content. A demand for multiple objects of experience will in this framework be reflected in multiple contents interpreted as multiple arguments, most likely with the subject bearing multiple relations to them; the need remains for unity to such content possession if experience so understood is to provide justification for a complex proposition. For reasons already rehearsed, once multiple arguments of a relation are in play, this unity cannot be adequately provided by a mode of presentation interpreted as a further relatum. Nor is it provided by anaphoric devices in the vehicles of representation (or by analogous elements in the contents of representation). Such devices do display distinct contents as interconnected, but their employment presupposes some shared context, which, in the case of perceptual representation, is usually grounded in the unity of the subject employing them. This subject cannot merely be the perceptual subject for the notion of a perceptual subject is intertwined with that of her perception, the unity of which is what is being accounted for. While the appeal to representational devices cannot thus simply bypass the need to explain the unity of experience having multiple contents, it can suggest we fall back on, say, the unity of the subpersonal representational system to do so. But we remain in need of explanation why this particular marker provides for the unity of experience of distinctions and interconnections in the world. Without this we fail to show how it is that experience can justify a proposition about a complex,

interconnected world; we have merely asserted that it does. Thus, once we are within the relational framework, appealing to multiple arguments to accommodate multiple objects of experience, it does not matter whether the relation invoked is primitively experiential or representational. The account fails to explain the justificatory role of experience on the same count.

5.8 Conclusion

A pure Representationalist regards experience as a matter of possessing representational content. Experience is here taken to differ from thought in the kind of content it involves; for a pure Representationalist the content of experience is typically (wholly or partially) nonconceptual. If the source of the justificatory role of such content possession lies outside of it, the kind of content (that is, its being nonconceptual) does not by itself indicate a special kind of justification. For there does not seem to be any reason why the external source cannot render similarly justificatory the possession of some other kind of content. That is, the justificatory powers that here attach to the experiential state could in principle belong to some other state of the subject. The difference in the potential that experience and thought have to justify propositions about the external world is then contingent. The existence of a suitable benevolent demon, putting thoughts into us according to how things are in the world, might, for instance, make thought as effective as experience in justifying knowledge of the intrinsic character of the world. For the Relationalist, this is not so. What she finds lacking in a pure Representational view is the sense that experience serves as a special basis for knowledge in that the justification it provides is not grounded in anything further. The Relationalist understands that for this to be so, experience must incorporate the world. Interpreted this way, experience carries the justificatory source of

the knowledge it provides. Experience is conceptually justificatory because it is receptive. But an insufficient appreciation of the reasons for which such an account of experience is desirable misleads the Relationalist into offering an inadequate account set within a relational framework.

We were looking for an account of the presentation of the world in experience such that experience can be understood as providing knowledge of it. The explanandum here is the presentation of the world to some subject, for presentation is always *presentation to*. It might seem then that we can simply help ourselves to the notion of the subject in providing the account. This is the approach of the relational framework which treats the experiential subject as a constituent of experience and as merely the relatum of an experiential or representational relation to the world. On the contrary, if we are to explain the justificatory character of experience, we must instead view the subject as playing a very special role in the unity required of the presentation of multiple objects. Though she spots the special role of receptivity in experience, this is the more trenchant lesson that the Relationalist misses. The appeal to a relation in an account of experience and its corollary effect of treating the subject as an argument in it is what opens up the very possibility of a gap stretching between the subject and the world, which ironically it is then supposed to be the job of that very relation to bridge. What the Relationalist is aiming for is undermined by her very appeal to relations.

The appeal to a relation crystallizes the vague sense we might have that experience is a bridge to the world. That it is a fundamental kind of bridge is regarded by those who subscribe to it as the best philosophical articulation of common sense. I have argued that as a philosophical thesis, intended to solve a philosophical problem – that of accounting for empirical knowledge of the intrinsic character of a complex external world, the Relational thesis fails. If the appeal to an

experiential relation, or to relations more broadly speaking, is indeed a distillation of commonsense, we must make ourselves comfortable with the thought that commonsense might not distill palatably into a philosophical theory.

6.0 FREGE'S PUZZLE FOR PERCEPTION

Frege poses the following question about identity statements.¹ How can statements of the form $a = a$ and $a = b$ differ in informativeness or “cognitive value”, when a and b refer to the same thing? The two statements will here simply refer to the thing’s identity with itself, and yet the second statement appears to be more informative. Concluding that the difference cannot be explained simply in terms of the referents concerned, Frege appeals to what he calls the sense of an expression. The sense determines which entity is being referred to, but that entity can be referred to using expressions having different senses. So though they refer to the same thing, it is because a and b have different senses that $a = b$ is more informative than $a = a$. Frege says little about what senses themselves are, adding only that the sense of an expression contains a mode of presentation of it. The two terms “sense” and “mode of presentation” are today often used synonymously. Note that in Frege’s solution, the mode of presentation associated with an expression plays a dual role. It serves to explain not just why the two statements above differ in cognitive value, but also to explain why each is about a particular thing, and the same thing, at all.

If perception provides justification to make assertions, and the statements asserted are of the above sort, that is, if the statements can refer to the same thing but differ in cognitive value, we can expect a parallel problem to arise for perception. If what is perceived remains the same, how can the statements justified by perception differ in cognitive value? An acknowledgement of such differences is however very much a part of empirical practice. It is the reason why we post different observers at the same event. When a tennis ball bounces on the court, there is

¹ Frege (1993).

presumably just one event. Though a number of people perceive the same event, they glean something different from it. This is why several line umpires are posted around the court. Though they perceive the same event of the ball bouncing on the court, only one may be justified in declaring that it bounced just off the line. What accounts for this difference? The question might be answered by introducing “perceptual modes of presentation” analogous to or even identified with the semantic modes of presentation already introduced. Despite structural similarities in the problem for perception and for language, the problem in the case of perception is concerned with justification. This is unlike the case of explaining a difference in the informativeness of sentences, for merely understanding a sentence or having a thought is not justificatory in the same way. As a result, a different range of questions is opened up in the case of perception. An insufficient appreciation of this leads to accounts of perception intended for, but fundamentally unsuitable to, explaining justification.

In the next section I set out the problem for perception in more detail. In Section 6.2 I focus on the distinction between perceptual justification and rational justification considered with regard to the role played by the object of these intentional states. I argue that the distinct mark of perceptual justification is opacity in the statements justified by perception. An important implication of this characteristic, which I draw out in section 6.3, is that for experience to yield distinctly empirical justification it must necessarily be partial. In the last section I show why accounts of experience modeled on acquaintance or on thought cannot accommodate this feature and so fail to account for a distinct kind of justification. I end this chapter with a brief sketch of justificatory experience.

6.1 Perceptual Modes of Presentation

Let us suppose, going along with Frege, that a referring expression has a mode of presentation (or mode for short) associated with it. What the expression refers to is not the mode but a thing determined by the mode. A sentence resulting from combining the referring expression with a predicate expression attributes some property to this thing. The sentence attributes the property to the thing *simpliciter* even though the thing is determined by a mode. That is, the sentence attributes the property to the thing *which* is presented by the mode (a *de re* attribution), not to the thing *as* presented under the mode (a *de dicto* attribution). Consider such a statement from the other end of the line, that is, not from the direction of statement to world but from world to statement. How might experience of the world justify the statement? Since the statement attributes a property to the thing itself, irrespective of which mode of presentation it employs in doing so, to be perceptually justified in asserting the statement one must, presumably, experience the thing itself being in possession of the property. For the justification delivered by experience to concern external things, what is experienced must themselves be external things, and not merely the thing as it appears in experience. This is the standard interpretation of empiricism today. The fault with sense data theories in contrast is that they regard sense data which are perception-dependent entities as the objects of perception. While it may be considered obvious today that for empirical justification concerning the external world, the objects of experience must be objects of the external world, how these external entities perform their justificatory role is not obvious. To begin with, the relation between Fregean modes and their referents is that the modes determine the referent. Different modes can have the same referent. There is a many-one relation between them. For perceptual justification, we however begin with the latter end of this, with the referent which is what is perceived. How then do we move back to a particular mode or

proposition as justified? This is further complicated in perception because it is often suggested not that a mode of presentation determines what is presented but that, to the contrary, there is a one-many relation between them with the same mode sometimes presenting different objects. The link between mode of presentation and object is thus not clear in the case of perception. To see how this plays out in an account of perceptual justification, consider perceptual-demonstrative statements.

Suppose you are examining various wires trailing behind a desk. You point to one end of a wire and say “This is identical to ...”, and now pointing to the other end of the wire, “...this”. Such a statement expresses a proposition justified by one’s experience and is cognitively significant. Its informational value is different from that of the statement “This is identical to this” when both utterances of the demonstrative are accompanied by pointings to the same end of the wire. Because the statements here are perceptual-demonstrative statements, perception is required both for investing the statements with meaning and also (at least in one case) to justify asserting them. But the two roles do not align perfectly. When you assert the non-trivial identity statement, the meaning but not the justification of the statement can derive from perception. Say you are looking at the wire from across the room. The middle portion of the wire is obscured from view and the justification you have for asserting the identity does not come from perception but derives instead from testimony (call this case T). In another case, both the meaning of the statement and its justification derive from perception; say you are now examining the wire for yourself from behind the desk (call this case P). Going with a Fregean view of demonstratives, let us suppose that the two referring expressions used in T and P have different meanings even though they refer to the same wire. Since the referring expressions are perceptual demonstratives, their meanings are provided by the perceptual context. So let us say that there is

a perceptual mode of presentation from which the meaning or semantic mode of presentation of the demonstrative term is derived. One may even choose to simply identify the perceptual and semantic modes of presentation. Now the meanings of the statements asserted in T and in P are the same, for the two demonstrative terms in T are accompanied by pointings to two parts of the wire and the two demonstrative terms in P are accompanied by similar pointings to the same two parts of the wire; the two cases share perceptual modes of presentation. Further, the statement asserted in both cases is about the same state of the same wire, its identity with itself. This state of identity, if we allow that it is perceived in the one case, is perceived in both cases, for to the extent that the wire itself is perceived in T, some statement of identity must be perceptually justified in T as well. For instance, the perceiver in T is justified in asserting an informative identity statement accompanied by pointing to two adjacent parts of the wire in the portion that is not obscured. Thus, while the state of identity can be said to be perceived in both cases, a certain proposition asserting that identity is not perceptually justified in both cases. It follows that justification for the proposition does not issue merely from what is perceived. We are inclined to say that it is something about how the wire is presented in P, which is missing in T, that yields the required justification in the one case but not the other. Perceptual modes of presentation thus seem to play a role not merely in fixing the meanings of the demonstratives employed, which is the same in both cases, but also in justifying the assertion in the one case.

A similar point can be made for other predicative statements. I can perceive the same thing under two different perceptual modes of presentation, and perceive the thing's having a certain property, but still have justification for asserting only one and not the other relevant proposition. For example, I may perceive one end of the wire being frayed in T. I will then have perceptual justification for asserting "this wire is frayed" where "this" derives its meaning from

one but not the other of the two perceptual modes under which I perceive the wire. The wire which I perceive under the other mode is however the same wire which I perceive to be frayed. Therefore, it seems to be not merely what is perceived that sources justification here. Perceptual modes of presentation seem to play a role in grounding justification and not merely in setting the meanings of demonstratives. This is where the empiricist story, if not carefully told, can fast unravel.

For perception to justify assertion of the identity proposition, it is not enough that the subject perceive the identity of the thing with itself. It seems instead that her perception must provide justification for the fact that the thing she perceives under one mode is identical to the thing she perceives under the other mode. But this fact, unlike the fact that the thing is identical with itself, is individuated in terms of the subject's perceptions. If her justification for asserting the identity statement lies in her perceiving this fact, her justification issues from perception of something perception-dependent. Any justification gained then seems to concern her perceptions or the relation between them and an external object rather than the intrinsic character of the object. We have now quickly moved from justification explained in terms of an external thing to justification explained in terms of something perception-dependent. Yet we have been led here by attempting to explain how there can be perceptual justification for one particular proposition but not another that nevertheless makes the same attribution to the same external thing perceived. This is the space in which skepticism about knowledge of the external world operates and in which private entities like sense data are invoked.

The above Fregean cases for perception show that we need to clarify the role of the object of perception in perceptual justification. The persisting weakness of the accounts of perception

considered so far is lack of clarity, when pressed, on the justificatory role assigned to the object of perception. We saw this in the last chapter in considering the justification of a complex proposition on the basis of perception of a multiplicity. Existentially quantified statements differing in scope may refer to the very same state of affairs. They may have the same truth-maker. If it is having the truth-maker as the object of perception that provides perceptual justification, then we do not explain why one but not the other statement referring to it is justified in some cases. This means that we have in fact failed to provide an adequate account of the justification of either statement as issuing from perception of the truth-maker. In the Fregean cases above, we see this problem arising for the perceptual justification of simple propositions. The same simple state of affairs, the wire's being frayed, is the truth-maker for two simple predicative statements differing in the names (here, demonstratives) they use for the object in the state perceived. Perception of the state of affairs that is the truth-maker might, however, justify just one of the statements. So also for identity statements justified in perception. Identity statements, however, provide a starting point for clarifying the justificatory role of the object of perception. What we need to do is focus on the distinction between experience and thought. The special role played by the object of perception in perceptual justification is supposed to be the basis for classifying such justification as different from what is gained in pure thought. As we see in the case of identity statements, however, some identity statements such as $a = a$ can be known by means of pure thought. The state of affairs that is here referred to is a necessary state of a ; this characteristic of the state does play some role in the ability of pure thought to provide justification for the statement. So the object of an intentional state, what the intentional state is directed at, can play some justificatory role both when the intentional state is a perceptual state as well as when it is a case of pure thought. In order to account for the special contribution that

the object apprehended makes in the case of perceptual justification, we must first distinguish its role from the justificatory role of the object of a pure thought. Note that I use the term “object of thought” to refer to the state of affairs picked out by a thought, and as before, in this chapter I use the term “object of perception” to refer to what is perceived, that is, the grammatical object of perception which might be an object, a property or a state.

6.2 Opacity in perceptually justified statements

Frege, in presenting his original puzzle concerning identity statements, simply asserted that statements of the form $a = a$ and $a = b$ sometimes differ in cognitive value even when a and b refer to the same thing. He did not explain what this difference in cognitive value consists in. Commentators usually explain the difference by pointing out that $a = a$ is an instance of a logical law (and can therefore presumably be known to be true by any person who simply understands the term “ a ”), while $a = b$ is not an instance of any logical law even if in fact a is identical to b . Therefore, addition of the statement $a = b$ to a body of knowledge can be said to extend it and to be cognitively significant in a way that the former is not. We may then associate pure thought with the former kind of justification and knowledge, and experience with the latter kind. But this way of characterizing empirical justification does not in fact provide a distinguishing characteristic based on the contribution the object of perception makes to justification. For the object of perception here, if it is taken to be the state of affairs which “ $a = b$ ” refers to, remains the same as the object of the pure thought, namely, the same thing’s identity with itself. Rather, the characterization of empirical justification on the basis of whether the statement justified is an instance of a logical law or not, distinguishes empirical justification from rational justification simply on the basis of the logical properties of the statements justified. For all that has been said

here, we might equally well draw a distinction of justificatory faculties on the basis of other logical properties, say, on the basis of whether it is a simple or a complex proposition that is justified. We regard the distinction between empirical and rational justification to however be of more significance than such a classification on the basis of an arbitrarily chosen logical property. We have no reason to do so unless we can say more about empirical justification than that the statements it justifies, in contrast to those justified by pure thought, are not instances of logical laws. Note however that a distinction drawn on the basis of the logical properties of statements justified might also be one drawn on the basis of the properties of the states they represent. What we have to keep in mind then is that merely invoking the objects of perception and of pure thought in this way, and appealing to their characteristics, such as that they do or do not obtain necessarily or that they are simple or complex states, is not the same as distinguishing faculties on the basis of the role played by these objects of our intentional states in providing justification.

By extending the initial distinction drawn above we can formulate a better characterization of empirical justification in terms of the special role of the object of perception. A series of applications of logical laws to an instance of one such law can result in a statement that is not immediately recognizable as itself an instance of a logical law. In this sense the derived statement can be said to be cognitively significant. Nevertheless, it will not be cognitively significant in the way that empirically justified propositions are. While the thinker may have had to take some effort to derive the statement and may even be surprised at it, there remains a sense in which the derived proposition has no more cognitive value than is possessed by the original statement. For if we are dealing only with deductive reasoning and begin with logical laws, what is derived is also effectively an instance of a logical law. The distinction between propositional justification and doxastic justification discussed in the last chapter is

useful here. As far as the thinker's justification to actually form a belief is concerned, that is, as far as doxastic justification is concerned, she may gain something new in working through her proof. But as far as propositional justification is concerned, that is, as long as we are concerned with the statements for which she possesses justification irrespective of her awareness of this justification, her exercise of her rational faculties adds nothing new to the body of statements for which she possesses justification. The statement she derives is as much an instance of a necessary truth as her initial statement is, and was already justified for her just as her initial statement was. To see what role, if any, the object of thought plays here, take the derived statement to be one that is logically equivalent to the original statement. While the derived statement might differ in meaning from the original, each will refer to the same state of affairs (perhaps to a special kind of state for we are concerned here with the referents of necessary truths). Whatever role this object of pure thought might play in the propositional justification of the original statement, it plays the same role in the justification of the derived statement. That is to say, if two statements refer to the same necessary state of affairs, then having propositional justification for one implies having propositional justification for the other. If intellectually apprehending the (necessary) state of affairs represented plays a role in the propositional justification of either statement and is sufficient to justify either statement, then it plays the same role in the justification of the other statement and is sufficient to provide propositional justification for the other statement. This contrasts with the role the object of the intentional state plays when the intentional state is perceptual. Perceptually apprehending a state of affairs that is represented by two different statements need not equally provide justification for the two statements. This means that the object of perception functions differently in contributing to justification in contrast to the object of thought. Its operations are different, not merely its

properties; while the two may well be related and its operations may derive from its properties, it is how it operates in providing justification rather than its properties such as its being contingent, that we need to focus on to show that the justification provided by experience is indeed of a relevantly different kind from what is provided by pure thought.

In the case of pure thought, while the exercise of the thinker's rational faculties may yield a statement that is of cognitive value when we assess the justification for it in doxastic terms, it has no cognitive value when we assess the propositional justification available to her. In the case of perception in contrast, what provides the perceiver with propositional justification for a certain statement may not provide her with propositional justification for another statement having the same reference. The statements justified by perception are opaque when the opacity is assessed in terms of propositional justification. That is to say, when two statements refer to the same state of affairs, the subject might have justification for one but not the other, and when she does have justification for both, the connection between the two statements – that they are about the same thing, for instance – may not be justified for her. This opacity, in assessing which we consider propositional rather than doxastic justification, is absent from the statements justified by pure thought. When the statements which are used as premises for making inferences are perceptual statements rather than instances of logical laws, any such opacity in the inferred statements accrues fully to the perceptual source of justification for the premises. Inference itself cannot contribute opacity to the statements it justifies when this opacity is assessed in terms of propositional justification. Such opacity in the statements justified by perception reflects a difference in how the object of perception contributes to justification and so serves as a mark for characterizing a difference in kind of justification.

When assessed in terms of doxastic justification, both experience and pure thought yield statements that can add cognitive value and which are opaque in that justification for one statement does not amount to justification for another statement with the same reference. So this does not serve as a mark of the difference in the justificatory role of the objects of these intentional states. The kind of justification that must be assessed in characterizing empirical justification is propositional justification. If there are any differences in how the two faculties behave in providing doxastic justification, they reflect at most limitations and variations in the psychology of belief formation. Frege himself might well have been concerned with doxastic justification. For though he begins by pointing to the difference in cognitive value between a logical truth $a = a$ and the statement $a = b$, the “senses” that he thereby introduces for terms is introduced also for the terms of mathematical statements and other statements dealing with necessary truths. If the difference in cognitive value between the statement “Hesperus is Hesperus” and “Hesperus is Phosphorus” is what prompts the introduction of senses for the terms and the senses are not then withdrawn for the former necessarily true statement, then the statements $2=2$ and $2=(10-8)$ seem to equally prompt the need to introduce senses for the terms of these necessary truths. To the extent that Frege’s theory of senses is uniform for the statements of a language irrespective of whether they are necessary or contingent statements, and whether they are obvious instances of logical laws or not, it seems that the cognitive value that is relevant for his purposes is doxastic. This is even though some of the contrasting identity statements he begins with differ in cognitive value when assessed in terms of both doxastic and propositional justification. The opacity I am concerned with is instead precisely one that is not uniform across the different cases because my aim is to mark out special justificatory characteristics of perception rather than to provide a theory of language. Accordingly, it is

opacity and cognitive value assessed in terms of propositional justification that is relevant for me. Since in the rest of this chapter I am concerned only with propositional justification, I drop the qualification henceforth, using “justification” to refer to propositional justification. Opacity in the statements justified is the mark of empirical justification that distinguishes it from rational justification.²

A quick response to the Fregean cases for perception considered in the last section is then not available to us. We cannot simply say that while there may be some such cases in our experience, they are not essential to justificatory experience, citing perhaps the case of sense data accounts of experience. For to suppose that when a statement representing a state of affairs is perceptually justified, so is any other statement representing the same state would be to fail to provide a criterion distinguishing experience from thought on the basis of the justificatory role (rather than of the properties) of the object of the intentional state concerned. The characterization of the distinction between empirical and rational justification in terms of opacity means that justification arising from perception of sense data, to the extent that it yields transparent statements, will not qualify as empirical justification. Depending on what we seek to explain, there are many different ways in which we can characterize what is special to experience. We may seek to account for the phenomenal character of experience. We may seek to account for justification yielded by intentional states with phenomenal character. My primary concern is not with either of these, but to isolate the sense in which experience is supposed to provide a distinct kind of justification from other sources of knowledge where this distinctness lies not so much in phenomenal character as in the justificatory role played by whatever is

² This may not, of course, be sufficient to distinguish it from other sources of justification.

perceived. Distinguishing perception merely on the basis of some properties of the objects of perception would still leave it open to us to say that there is just one kind of justification, justification that is rationally intuited, or perhaps divinely inspired, with differences accruing merely to what such a single faculty of justification is directed at, it being sometimes directed at necessary truths and at other times directed at contingent truths. There is in fact little reason here to give special consideration to the logical properties of the objects of perception over its physical properties. If we cannot show how the object of perception contributes to justification in a special way, the distinction between rational and empirical justification is left on par with the distinction between visual and tactile justification, or between oral and written testimony. In contrast, rather than focusing on the logical, physical or phenomenal properties of the objects of perception, focusing on the opacity of the statements justified by perception provides a better starting point, for the objects of the intentional states behave differently in the case of the different faculties, with the object of a pure thought providing justification for all statements referring to it while the object of perception contributes its justification to statements more selectively. Though sense data are quintessentially phenomenal in character and are a very different kind of entity from logical facts, the similar lack of opacity in the statements they justify shows that their being different kinds of entities plays no role in how they contribute to justification, no more than does the difference in kind between say stationary and moving entities. The causal properties, the phenomenal characteristics, the logical properties of objects of perception may all be of different kinds, but this does not amount to a difference in their justificatory contributions. This is seen most clearly in Russell's account of experience with sense data, universals, and even the self contributing to knowledge in the same way. The focus

on opacity allows us to consider the role of the object of perception in empirical justification without presupposing anything about its specific logical, physical or phenomenal characteristics.

Though opacity concerns statements and their meanings, the focus on opacity also allows us to study the contribution of the object of perception without presupposing any particular theory of meaning for the statements justified. In general, two expressions with the same referent have opaque meanings when understanding them does not imply knowledge of their referents being identical. It is such opacity in the meanings of ordinary names and descriptions that led Frege to introduce the term “mode of presentation” in the solution to his original puzzle. However, the term as it is used today in the philosophy of perception, is often divorced from this primary connotation of opacity. Peacocke, as was seen earlier in the dissertation, uses “way of presentation” to refer to properties perceived, with these properties playing no role in accounting for justification concerning the connections or lack of connections between the various contents of experience. But since the properties are perceived they at least play some justificatory role, like any other object of perception. Brewer and Campbell use the term for elements in their theories, such as for the spatiotemporal and other characteristics of experience, that do not themselves make a justificatory contribution but only go towards determining which fact is perceived. The original connection between the term “mode of presentation” and opacity, with opacity understood in terms of the justification available (whether doxastic or propositional), has been largely lost.

It is unfortunate that in the philosophy of language Frege’s use of the term “mode of presentation” has come to be equated with his use of the term “sense” or with the “meaning” of an expression, for in Frege’s theory, sense or meaning is distinct from the referent and

furthermore is understood as conceptual. These conflation which are common today and which are perhaps unproblematic in the philosophy of language are particularly misleading in the philosophy of perception. This is because whether an expression has a “mode of presentation” associated with it is assessed in terms of justification. For this reason, even one who rejects a theory of meaning which distinguishes meaning from reference and instead holds a theory that identifies the meaning of an expression with its reference, may in fact also associate a “mode of presentation” with the expression. Kripke’s theory of meaning serves as an illustrative case.³ On Kripke’s view, the meaning of a term is simply its referent and so all identity statements express necessary truths since a thing is necessarily identical to itself. But the identity statements differ in cognitive value. Putting this in the terms of the discussion above, identity statements differ not just in the doxastic justification they require but, more importantly, they can also differ in the propositional justification they require. Some identity statements, such as that Hesperus is Phosphorus, cannot be learnt from rational reflection even if they are necessarily true as in Kripke’s view. Kripke accommodates this important difference in the propositional justification they require by severing the link between necessity and a prioricity or non-experientiality. According to Kripke, some necessarily true statements can be learnt only through experience and are a posteriori. So it is possible for a speaker to understand the names “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” and to employ them in perceptual situations, but to need still further perceptual experiences to have the identity of their referents justified for her. The justification that experience provides is such that possessing justification for a statement using one of the names or descriptions for an object does not imply that one possesses justification for a similar statement using another name or description for it. So while Kripke identifies the meaning of a

³ Kripke 1980.

term with its referent and rejects senses for terms, he does appeal to modes of presentation to distinguish the kind of propositional justification experience makes available. Since the term “mode of presentation” has however come to be associated with a particular theory of meaning, I use the term “opacity”. Statements that refer to the same state of affairs, such as, “Hesperus is bright” and “Phosphorus is bright”, but which are such that having (propositional) justification for one does not imply having (propositional) justification for the other are opaque; conversely, statements that do not exhibit this feature are transparent. One can assert that the statements are opaque, and even that their meanings are opaque, without presupposing a particular theory of meaning. This also shows why it is unhelpful to characterize empirical justification in terms of the logical properties of the statements justified, associating pure thought with the justification of necessary statements and experience with the justification of contingent statements. Depending on one’s theory of meaning, one may, like Kripke, take some necessary truths to be justifiable only by experience. The special kind of justification experience makes available is marked by opacity in the statements (propositionally) justified, which is a reflection of the distinct way the object of perception contributes to justification. Thus, how an object of perception contributes to justification must explain why perception of it can justify one statement but not another representing it. An object of perception contributes to justification by being an object of perception; that is, what makes something an object of perception must explain opacity in the statements justified by perceiving it.

6.3 Implications

(1) The object of perception and truth-makers

Empirically justified statements are distinguished from rationally justified statements by their opacity which issues from the way the object of perception contributes to justification. We want to hold, in other words, that statements such as “Hesperus is bright” and “Phosphorus is bright” are not automatically justified one along with the other, and further that this is not because of psychological or intellectual limitations in making connections on the part of the subject. Rather, for the justification to be empirical, the justification must in each case trace to the object of perception. If we want to accommodate all of these requirements in an account of experience, we must refuse to implicitly identify two elements of the story that we are prone to run together, the truth-maker or referent of the proposition justified and the object of perception which contributes to its justification. The object of a perceptual episode providing justification for a statement must include the truth-maker of the statement but need not be exhausted by it. Our tendency to use the definite article and talk of *the* object of perception when referring to something perceived in a particular episode is partly to blame for obscuring the fact that the object of perception and the truth-maker of a statement justified by that episode need not always coincide. Our experiences are typically complex and the statements we take to be justified by experience are usually not statements expressing that full complexity. The truth-makers of these simpler statements are typically merely part of the object of perception which is a more complex state or scene. Once we acknowledge that what is termed “the object of perception” and what is termed “the truth-maker” don’t map neatly onto each other, we can easily see why when the same truth-maker is perceived in different episodes, different statements referring to it might be justified. There must

simply be some difference in the overall object of perception in each case. If we see the same star and the same property it has of shining brightly in two cases, but only one of the statements representing this state of affairs is justified in each case, there must be some difference in the overall object of perception in each case. In one case the star's shining brightly may be perceived against a light dawn sky, in the other it may be perceived against a darker dusk sky, or there may be different stars neighboring it in the different cases. If it is because of some difference in the overall object of perception in different perceptual episodes that there is opacity in the statements justified, we can accommodate perception of the truth-maker and its role in justification without which there could be no perceptual justification, and yet explain why perception of it justifies only some statements representing that truth-maker and not others.

Tracing the difference in the statements justified when the same entity – the same state of affairs – is perceived in different cases, to differences in the overall object of perception in each case explains why we associate different descriptions with the names or demonstratives picking out the same object in the different statements justified. “This” when used while pointing to the star in the morning sky will have a description associated with it, one linking the object most likely to the morning sky, which is not the description associated with the demonstrative used when pointing to it in the evening sky. Note that to say this is not to reduce the demonstrative to a description of it or to preempt the object itself from being made available in perception, for nothing has been said here about the perceptual link between subject and object and whether this is representational or relational or something else. The different descriptions associated with demonstratives for the same thing in different episodes of perception of it issue from a difference in the overall object of perception in each of these episodes, and they reflect the opacity in the statements justified by these episodes.

Note that when differences in the justification of statements are explained in terms of differences in the overall objects of perception, the boundaries of perceptual episodes become important for justification in a way that the boundaries of an episode of thinking are not. Once the boundaries of perceptual episodes are drawn, there will be opacity in the statements justified across the different episodes such that though one episode might justify a certain statement and another episode justify another statement, the relation between what these statements express is not perceptually justified. There will be no perceptual justification for the conjunction of the statements though in fact what is perceived in each episode is a truth-maker of one of the statements. Similarly, perception here does not provide justification for extending the scope of a quantifier even though the statement justified in each episode may in fact concern the same object. This was seen in the last chapter in the context of the difficulties of accounting for the perceptual justification of complex statements by appealing to multiple relations to the states of affairs represented by the component statements. This strategy failed because at bottom it could not distinguish the multiplicity in experience from a multiplicity of experiences. We now see more clearly the underlying reason why an appeal to multiple relations is bound to fail. The justificatory unity of objects of perception is tied to the unity of experience, and the latter was not accounted for. This also tells us why, if the account is in terms of multiple representational relations to multiple contents, appealing to the cross-indexing of the multiple contents through the use of demonstratives is inadequate for explaining the justification of the complex statement. Without an account of the unity of experience, the demonstrative element used in each content will be opaque with respect to the demonstrative elements used in the other contents. To stipulate the unity will be to simply insist that the complex proposition is justified in a particular case. On the other hand, to take the unity of the contents and the connections between them as given is to

fail to distinguish such content from that of pure thought. The unity of a pure thought, in contrast to the justificatory unity of the object of perception, is independent of the unity of an episode of having that thought. A thinker's having a conjunctive thought, one justified by pure thought, may be modeled as her bearing a single relation to the conjunctive proposition or as her bearing two relations one to each of the conjuncts. This difference is immaterial here unless we are concerned with actual belief and doxastic justification. Where simply having propositional justification is concerned, the justificatory unity of the thought is independent of the unity of the episode of thinking it. The Representationalist fails to have distinguished perceptual justification from rational justification if she appeals to the unity of the content of a perceptual representation to account for the perceptual justification of complex propositions.

The difference between perceptual and rational justification lies in the way the object of the intentional state contributes to justification in the case of perception, which is reflected in the opacity of the statements justified by perception. This, we have seen, traces to a difference in the overall object of perception in the episodes justifying the different statements. What remains to be seen is how we are to think of perception of an entity such that it will explain why there must be opacity in the statements justified. I address this in the last section, but to do so I first consider a further implication of opacity in the statements justified regarded as the distinguishing mark of empirical justification.

(2) The necessary partiality of justificatory experience

The justificatory character of experience is marked by the opacity in the statements it justifies. This opacity is defined in terms of the possibility of perception of a truth-maker justifying one but not another statement representing it. Since such difference in justification is now seen to

trace to some difference in the overall object of perception in different cases of perception of the truth-maker, opacity in the statements justified requires the possibility of multiple objects of perception. That is, nothing is gained by classifying an experiential episode as justificatory if no contrasting experiential episode is possible which can give substance to the claim that the justification the episode provides is particularly sensitive to the object of that intentional episode. A solipsist intellect which grasps all truths leaves no room for the opacity of empirically justified statements for its experience is complete. It is not possible for its experience to justify one statement rather than another that equally refers to what is perceived. In this sense, the justification it possesses is like the justification yielded by pure thought. The object of its intentional state does not contribute to justification in a different way than does the object of a pure thought. Therefore, not merely do our experiences happen to be partial and incomplete, they must necessarily be so if the justification they offer is to be of a different kind from what is offered by reason alone. The distinguishing feature of justificatory experience is thus that it is necessarily partial and the object of experience necessarily limited in the sense that for any justificatory experience, there must always remain a further entity experience of which would justify a further statement. This necessary partiality of experience coheres very well with the intuition that there is an inherently subjective element to perception, a feature absent in the case of pure thought. There are other senses as well in which experience can be regarded as subjective, as for instance, in its having a phenomenal character. But every kind of experience need not be justificatory; experience of pains and itches while having phenomenal character do not in any obvious sense provide justification. Partiality is a necessary feature of experience that is justificatory. This feature when combined with the opacity of perceptually justified statements yields a constraint on how we can think of justificatory experience.

6.4. Justificatory perception

There is opacity not merely at the level of the statements justified by experience, but also at the level of the terms in these statements. Though justification is always of statements or propositions and never, strictly speaking, of a term, opacity at the level of terms is still defined in terms of justification. Two terms *a* and *b* are opaque when someone can have justification for two statements containing them, such as *Fa* and *Fb*, or *Fa* and *Gb*, and still lack justification that the object in the two states are identical even when they in fact are identical. To eliminate opacity at the level of the terms is then to eliminate it at the level of statements, and to do so is to collapse the distinction between empirical and rational justification. So denying opacity at the level of terms cannot serve as a way of dissolving Fregean cases for perception. When perception of the frayed wire justifies the statement “This wire is frayed” uttered along with a pointing to one part of the wire, but does not justify the statement “This wire is frayed” when uttered along with a pointing to a different part of the wire, the two demonstrative terms employed refer to the same wire but this is not transparent to the subject. This is what creates trouble for the claim that perception of the wire’s being frayed provides justification, for only one but not the other proposition is justified here. We might then be tempted to deny the opacity of the demonstrative terms by having them refer not to the wire in each case, but to different parts of the wire. The object of perception will then be different in the two cases and it will not be surprising that the same proposition is not justified in both cases. Such a response, however, not only pushes us in the direction of less and less robust objects of perception, but by denying opacity in the terms it also undermines the distinct character of empirical justification. This applies not just to opacity in the names used in the statements but also for the predicates. One may for instance perceive the brightness of two stars in two different episodes and not have perceptual justification that they

are equally bright even though they in fact are. This reflects as opacity in the predicates used in the statements justified, such as “This is thus” uttered in the different cases.

If there is opacity at the level of terms and not just at the level of statements, the following possibility is however left open. It may be that all the names used in the various statements that can be justified by experience in fact refer to just one thing and all the predicates to just one property, that of identity. This would mean that all that is in fact ever experienced is the bare state of a thing’s identity with itself; experience here would be of a transcendently ideal sort in which though the matter of experience is independent of experience, the distinctions yielding knowledge are all imposed upon it and accrue to the perceiver. So while the contribution of the object of perception to empirical justification must be such as to yield opacity in the statements justified, it must also be such as to rule out the above kind of opacity. What explains the former must account for the latter. What allows the object of perception to contribute to justification is the subject’s perceptual link to it. This link must then be of such a kind as to explain why there is the appropriate opacity in the statements justified by that perception. To do so it must rule out not just that the object of perception is a bare state of identity and is rather a state with real distinctions between object and properties, but it must also rule out that it is a complete state of the object – for partiality in experience has been seen to be a necessary condition of the opacity distinguishing empirical justification from rational justification. Thus, while the subject’s link to what is perceived must make plain to her the distinction between object and property, it must also do so in a way that ensures the partiality of the experience.

The various explanatory tasks above are however split up among various elements in theories that work within a broadly relational framework (and further, some of these tasks are

sometimes fulfilled stipulatively). Relational and Representational theories distribute among various elements of the theory the explanatory tasks which must lie with the manner in which the object of perception contributes to justification and which are meant to secure opacity in justification, so that what is achieved is merely an extensionally adequate account of empirical justification. What makes a particular entity the object of a particular perceptual episode is, for instance, the obtaining of a representational relation between the subject and a particular content; what accounts for the subject's awareness of real distinctions between object and property is not so much the relation linking the subject to the object of her perception, a state, but is the special kind of complexity there is in a state; what can ensure the partiality of perception is simply something external to the experience altogether, namely, there being other accurate contents not part of this experience. For this reason, the kind of justification offered by experience on such theories fails to yield the kind of opacity needed and is not relevantly different from what is offered by thought. This is not surprising when the theories are modeled on acquaintance with sense data, which yields a completeness in knowledge lacking opacity, or are modeled on thought or representation more generally, which cannot introduce opacity in the propositional justification it provides.

Note that Relational and Representational views account for the partiality of experience by effectively stipulating it. They account for it, if at all, in terms of an externally imposed constraint. Nothing about the appeal to a primitive experiential relation, for instance, rules out its being borne to the complete state of affairs that is the world. Nor does appeal to representational relations rule this out by itself for there is no *prima facie* reason why a representation cannot represent everything there is. Partiality in experience must then be either imposed externally as a necessary condition for the relevant relation to obtain, or it must be treated as accidental. This is

the most common way of accounting for the partiality of experience. When an account of experience is inspired by intentional relations like acquaintance or by propositional attitudes which can be directed at the totality of what there is, the partiality in our actual experiences is implicitly regarded as incidental to its justificatory character; if we then show that partiality is a necessary feature of justificatory experience, it can be imposed as an external constraint on the obtaining of the relation invoked. An account of experience might, for instance, require that the experiential relation obtains with only portions of reality. The partiality of experience here does not derive from the kind of access the subject bears to the object of perception. This way of accommodating partiality is however ruled out once the need for partiality in experience is linked with the opacity of perceptually justified statements. What we have seen is that the kind of link the subject bears to the object of perception must explain the opacity in the statements justified by her perception. It is what must make plain to her the distinction between object and property, and it must do so in a way that ensures the partiality of the experience.

If it is the very link between the subject and the object of perception that must make plain to the subject real distinctions between object and property, then the subject cannot simply bear some relation to a content with the needed distinctions. It must itself unite object and property. But this not only suggests that the resulting unity of the state is then imposed by the subject, but it also does not explain the necessary partiality of what is thus united and what is thus the object of perception. Accounting for the availability to the subject of real distinctions between object and property and accounting for the necessary partiality of experience are two sides of a coin which accounts for the opacity in the statements justified by perception. So, while an external relation between subject and object of perception in a broadly relational framework must be rejected, the subject cannot at the same time merely be the unity of the object of perception.

What we are left with is that the subject must be the unity of the objects of perception regarded as part of the unity of a larger complex. It must be the unity of the actual world with parts of it taken out. Experience must be a partialization of the actual world where the objects of perception are what are not omitted in the partialization and the subject is the unity of the experience, a point of view on the world.

Note that since an object and its property must both be objects of perception to rule out that opacity in the statements justified by perception issues from distinctions imposed on a bare object of perception, there must be multiple objects of perception in an episode that justifies a simple predicate statement. It is differences in the manner in which these are united in experience that accounts for perception of connections or the lack of it when the objects and properties united remain the same in different episodes. This thus accounts for differences in the states perceived when the objects and the properties perceived remain the same. The differences in the manner of uniting objects of perception parallel differences in scope in the unity of existentially quantified propositions. There must be room to account for such variation if what is perceived is to provide justification and provide justification for opaque statements which are the characterizing mark of empirical justification. There is room to account for such opacity and at the same time trace the justification to the objects of perception only if we regard the justificatory unity of the overall object of a perceptual episode as dependent on the unity of the experience. We can do so in turn only if we reject a reification of the subject and its implicit conception of experience as a subject's bridge to the world.

7.0 SUPPLEMENT: THE SINGULAR SUBJECT

My concern in this dissertation has been with how to account for experience if we are to understand it as justificatory. Relational accounts of perception view experience in terms of a primitive experiential relation between the subject and the world, and Representational accounts regard experience in terms of a subject's relation to representational contents. I argue that multiplicity in the objects of perception is the basis of the distinct kind of justification experience is supposed to provide. Relational and Representational views fail to adequately account for this multiplicity, and thereby fail to show that the object of perception makes a special contribution to perceptual justification. I argue for this by focusing first on the justification of complex propositions where the role of multiple objects of perception is more readily evident, and subsequently show that such multiplicity is essential for the justification of simple propositions as well if the justification provided by experience is to be of a distinct kind from the justification provided by pure thought.

Experience which justifies a complex proposition, such as that something has multiple properties, must also justify the propositions entailed, such as that something has each of those individual properties. This requires the experience to have multiple "objects" (ranging over ordinary objects, properties or states). When these are treated as terms of a relation, there is no room for the presentation of connections between them as required for the justification of the complex proposition. This is irrespective of whether a single relation admitting many terms is appealed to, or several simpler relations. If the presentation of connection is itself a term, it merely produces more terms, and the presentation of connection between these terms then remains to be explained. I argue that the required explanation cannot be provided, but can only be stipulated, in the relational framework. The lesson extends to the Representational view. This

view must appeal to multiple contents treated as multiple terms of a representational relation to account for the empirical justification of a complex proposition. As before, I argue that no explanation of the justificatory unity of the terms is forthcoming. Both views then leave the empirical justification of the complex proposition in jeopardy.

This inability to adequately account for experiential multiplicity stems from inadequately distinguishing empirical justification from rational justification. The difference must lie in empirical justification being sensitive to the object of perception in a way that rational justification is not. I argue that this difference is marked not by the logical, physical or phenomenal properties of the object of perception but by opacity in the statements justified by perception. Perceptual justification is distinctive in that there can be justification for a statement representing a state of affairs with this justification accruing to perception of the state, and yet there can fail to be justification for other statements representing the same state. Such opacity in the statements justified by experience, while it arises from opacity at the level of terms, does not extend to opacity between kinds of terms. That is, when experience justifies two statements, it may not be evident to the perceiver whether the names used in the statements refer to the same object and whether the predicates used in the statements refer to the same property, but it is evident to her that what the name refers to in each case is distinct from what the predicate refers to in each case. The kind of opacity there is in experience cannot extend to this if experience is to provide us with knowledge of real distinctions in the object of perception. I argue that to account for the kind of opacity needed, experience must be understood as having multiple objects of perception. This means that even where the justification of simple propositions is concerned, experience must still be understood as presenting us with a multiplicity of entities – the object, its property, and the state of affairs they form – and cannot be understood merely as presenting

us with a single entity, a state of affairs. This is not surprising when we reconsider the argument requiring multiple objects of perception for the justification of a complex proposition. The guiding idea was that where propositional justification is concerned, experience that justifies a proposition must also justify the propositions it entails and that the justification for these cannot be identical (unless the proposition entailed is logically equivalent). Simple propositions entail existential generalizations. The justification for the simple proposition and for its entailments cannot be identical even though the truth-makers of the statements are identical. If the empirical justification for a statement is to have its source in an object of perception, then there remains a sense in which even experience that justifies a simple proposition must have multiple objects of perception. This is reflected in the sense we have that experience can be said to present us not only with states of affairs but equally with objects and properties. Thus, justificatory experience requires multiple objects of perception. By focusing on the opacity of statements justified by perception, I argue that this must be accounted for in a way that necessitates partiality in experience. To accommodate these requirements, we must regard the subject as the unity of the experience. The common failure of Relational and Representational views then traces to their adopting a framework that wrongly reifies the subject.

7.1. The necessary singularity of the perceptual subject

A perceptual subject – the subject of a perceptual episode – must enjoy some perception to be considered a perceptual subject. This is trivial but it implies that in a broadly relational framework – one which views experience as the subject's bearing a relation to an entity, whether object, state or other content – the subject who is said to bear the relation cannot, considered by itself, be the perceptual subject. The perceptual subject, at a particular time or over a time period, cannot be conceptually prior to her perceptual episode at that particular time or over that time

period. This dependence has the consequence that the individuation of the perceptual episode cannot be predicated on that of the perceptual subject. When we seek to explain the presentation of the world in experience, the explanandum here is the presentation of the world to some subject, for presentation is always *presentation to*. It might seem then that we can help ourselves to the notion of a subject and its individuation in providing the account. But the focus on accounting for the perceptual justification of complex propositions first reveals the weakness of this approach. The notion of *a* subject as opposed to many is itself at least partly determined by whether there is experience of multiplicity or simply a multiplicity of experiences. This brings out an implicit feature of our notion of experiencing a multiplicity. The various distinctly presented objects together with an overarching point of view needed for experiencing connections and differences between them must be enjoyed by a single subject. Experience of multiplicity *must* be enjoyed by one subject as opposed to many if it is to be experience of multiplicity as opposed to a multiplicity of experiences. It is not something that simply *is* enjoyed by one subject.

Perception has a singular first person character. The subject of perception is in this regard different from the subject of action. There might, *prima facie*, be genuine collective action. Consider a couple carrying a piano or a team building a house. No person taken individually can be said to be the agent of the concerned action, though they may individually be agents of other actions in that context. To draw a close parallel, take an action concerned with multiple objects. So consider a couple carrying a pair of gloves by each person carrying one glove. There is no corresponding case for perception. If one person sees the left glove and the other the right glove, there is no perception of a pair of gloves. It is not uncommon for philosophers commenting on perception to remark on its first person character – on its phenomenality. What seems to have

escaped equal attention is its singular character. There cannot genuinely be plural subjects of a perceptual episode. Grammatically, when the plural first person is employed, for instance when it is said “We saw the charging elephant”, it picks out a plurality of experiences each having a singular subject, rather than an experience that has a plural subject. The *singular* first person is an essential feature of a perceptual episode.

We can now also see why the subject of perception must be necessarily singular. The justification provided by experience is marked by opacity. In the last chapter, differences in the statements justified by experience of a truth-maker were traced to some difference in the overall object of perception in the different cases. This highlighted that the boundaries of a perceptual episode are significant in a way that the boundaries of an episode of thought are not. Without these boundaries, the justification available in perception would, like the justification available in pure thought, be transparent and perception of a truth-maker would justify all statements representing it. So if the justification provided by experience is to be of a distinct kind from that provided by reason, and is to be marked by opacity, the boundaries of perceptual episodes must not be regarded as fungible. This is unlike the case of thought. Where pure thought is concerned we have already seen that it matters little whether having justification for a complex proposition is regarded in terms of a relation to a single complex proposition or in terms of multiple relations to component propositions. This makes little difference because the justification we are concerned with here is propositional and not doxastic, and the propositional justification provided by pure thought is transparent. Consider the case when different thinkers are involved and when their initial premises are not instances of the laws of logic but are empirically justified. Each such thinker might have justification for a different proposition but when considered collectively, they can be said to have propositional justification for the conjunction of the

propositions involved, even if in fact they have not exchanged information yet and have not formed the conjunctive belief. This is because reason alone does not introduce opacity into the statements it justifies. So to the extent that there is this transparency (marred only by opacity in the perceptually justified premises) the group can be said to have propositional justification for the conjunction. Perception is different because it is precisely opacity in the statements justified by a perceptual episode that characterizes the justification it provides as of a distinct kind. Our account of perception must therefore show how justification for two statements issuing from perception of their truth-makers does not imply that there is perceptual justification for their conjunction, even though the truth-makers of the conjuncts are perceived. So when one each of the two statements is perceptually justified for a different perceiver, the group cannot be said to thereby have justification for the conjunction. The boundaries of perceptual episodes can therefore not be collectively assimilated if the statements that perception justifies are opaque. This tells us why genuinely collective perception is unintelligible. Perception understood on the broad relational framework, however, cannot accommodate this.

The vulnerability of the Relational and Representational approaches lies in their flawed conception of the subject for whom experiential presentation takes place. To be a subject is to have a point of view. It is for things to be some way for you – intellectually, perceptually, or otherwise. To be a perceptual subject is to have a perceptual point of view. The latter plays a constitutive role in the former. The claim is not that any particular point of view is constitutive of any particular subject; we can steer clear of issues about personal identity. The claim is simply that our subjectivity is thoroughgoing. To be a subject is to have some point of view or the other. If then the subject's having a point of view is constitutive of her being a subject, that is, if the subject's enjoying some perception is constitutive of her being a perceptual subject, then the

individuation of one cannot be conceptually prior to the individuation of the other. This is similarly true for the case of thought as well, but the individuation of episodes of having propositional justification in the case of thought does not have justificatory implications. In contrast, to account for the multiplicity in experience if multiple relations are invoked, they might simply indicate multiple experiences, but this would have significantly different justificatory implications. To get experience of multiplicity instead from such a view, some prior conception of the subject and so of her enjoying an experience must be already operative; this leaves it unclear what role the appeal to the relation itself plays. The broad relational framework is not rid of this fundamental weakness by pruning the relations. Even if just one such relation obtains, the relevant relatum cannot be considered a perceptual subject independently of the relation that is constitutive of her perception, since to be a subject is to enjoy some perception. But a singular subject is not guaranteed by stipulating that the relation concerned has only one argument place for the subject, and by imposing restrictions on the range of arguments for it such as by restricting the arguments to individual bodies, for a handcuffed couple might be said to be a single entity and so to qualify as a subject of perception. The necessarily singular subject of a perceptual episode is thus not guaranteed on a relational framework.

Without ensuring the singularity of the perceptual subject, we have not provided here an account of a perceptual episode at all. As always, suitable stipulations in this regard might tailor the account to make it extensionally adequate. But then the picture that is provided fails to show how experience makes the world available to us in a way that mere thought cannot. It amounts to no more than an insistence that experience is special and that its justification is of a distinct kind. At a crucial point then the broad relational framework turns up empty handed. The relation or attitude the subject bears in these accounts is not what in fact carries the weight of the

explanation. In any account of experience, this is a burden that must be borne by whatever it is that accounts for the necessarily singular character of the perceptual subject.

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