PERCEIVING AND THINKING: INQUIRY INTO TWO TYPES OF PHENOMENOLOGY.

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A mio padre

ABSTRACT

I call the fact that there is an introspectable phenomenological difference between paradigmatic conscious perceptual states and paradigmatic conscious cognitive states, such that each 'feel' or 'appear' differently to the subject, the *phenomenal datum*. This dissertation addresses the datum in two parts.

In the first part, I argue that the introspectable phenomenal difference between conscious states of perceiving and conscious cognitive states cannot be fully accounted for by differences in representational content, against so-called strong representationalism (see e.g., Dretske 1995; Tye 1995). Chapters 2 to 5 explore all the possible ways in which strong representationalism might explain the distinctive character of perception vis-à-vis thought. I will refer to these strategies as *content* or *representational strategies*. We can identify two kinds of content strategies: Object theories and Kinds-of-content theories (see Kriegel 2019a). *Object theories* (Chapters 2 and 3) claim that perceptual and cognitive states differ in terms of what they represent, i.e., in terms of the kinds of objects (broadly intended) they relate the subject to. *Kinds-of content theories* (Chapters 4 and 5) state that the crucial difference between perceptual and cognitive states is in terms of *how* they represent what they represent. I will argue that even in cases in which these theories identify features exclusively belong to perceptual or cognitive representational contents, these features eventually fail to account for the phenomenal datum.

Given the failure of content strategies, in the second part of the dissertation I move to the *attitude strategy*. The attitude is the component of an intentional mental state that relates subject and content. The attitude strategy relies on the thesis that the attitude component makes a distinctive phenomenal contribution to the overall phenomenal character of the state. The strategy thus claims that the phenomenal datum can be accounted for in terms of attitudinal differences between typical perceptual and typical cognitive states. Depending on whether one regards attitude as a representational or a non-representational component of mental states, the attitude strategy may or may not be considered a kind of representational strategy. In Chapter 6 I will discuss the attitude strategy in detail and explain how it addresses the phenomenal datum. Finally, Chapter 7 will discuss two main obstacles to accepting the view.

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I used to have this mistaken idea of Philosophy an individual activity mostly done on one's own. You sit down at your desk, alone in your room, desperately scrambling your mind for some brilliant idea that will revolutionise Philosophy as we know it. I know now, at the end of this path, that I could not have been more wrong. It often takes an entire community of philosophers to craft a single good idea. Bit by bit, I was moulded and nurtured by every question, every conversation, every remark, every presentation, every paper, every class, every interaction I had, directly or indirectly, with my peers, teachers, and other members of the philosophical community. And so if there is a single good idea in this dissertation, I owe it to all the people that, in these four years and a half, have at some time and in some fashion, crossed my path. Naturally, some of them have left a deeper mark than others, and they deserve a special mention.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction: Three questions

The general aim of this thesis is to inquire into the phenomenal nature of perceptual states vis-à-vis cognitive states. We can put the question in these terms: is there a *phenomenal mark of the perceptual* and a *phenomenal mark of the cognitive*? By the term 'phenomenal', I mean the qualitative and subjective character of a conscious mental state, and by 'phenomenal mark', I mean a "phenomenal signature" (Kriegel 2015c) that all and only perceptual states, on the one hand, and all and only cognitive states, on the other hand, possess.

What about the terms 'perceptual' and 'cognitive'? We can find an intuitive, folk-psychological grip on the difference between the perceptual and the cognitive domain in our ordinary language. Apart from some metaphorical uses (e.g., "I *see* what you mean"), ordinary English seems to have a class of perceptual terms used exclusively to refer to experiences in some sensory modality. This happens in clear opposition to terms for non-perceptual mental states (Phillips 2019, p. 319; Stokes 2021, p. 11-12). For example, suppose you tell your friend that you think that the dog is in the yard, but you sound uncertain; your friend might insist: Do you *think* it is in the yard, or did you *see* it there?[1] Using this semantic specialisation as our initial reference point, we can put together the following naïve list:

- *Perceptual states*: states of seeing, touching, hearing, feeling, and tasting;

[1] See Stokes (2021, ch. 1). for more examples of this linguistic specialization.

Perceptual states are thus intuitively categorised as those on which we rely to get first-hand information about the physical world. As shown by the example above, this function becomes apparent especially when compared to terms for the non-perceptual domain. While reasoning is also a good way to collect information about the world, we seem to naively reserve a privileged epistemic role for the five Aristotelian senses, absent obvious defeaters.

This criterion will assist us in drawing the distinction between two domains that are often conflated, namely, the perceptual and the mere sensory. Sensation is undoubtedly a fundamental constitutive part of perception, in the sense that when we perceive something, we always perceive it in some sensory modality. But sensation in itself is not, nor it purports to be, about the world. Afterimages, tinnitus, as well as bodily sensations such as the feeling of crawling ants in your limbs, pains, and orgasms are not about the world. Additionally, sensation, in the form of sensory imagery, can participate in other forms of consciousness beyond the perceptual. Imagistic episodes of imagination, like perception, represent information in some sensory modality; but they do not appear to be directly about the world.[2] Thus, even though sensation is a fundamental part of perception, it is not to be identified with it.

To provide reliable information about the physical world seems to be the rationale behind the folk-psychological distinction between perceptual and cognitive states. Thus, we can complete our naïve list with a second set of states that are ordinarily opposed to perceptual states in that they do not seem to provide information about the physical world:[3]

[2] This is true even though, according to some, imagination can instrumentally be used to this purpose, as when one uses their imagination to learn whether the sofa will pass through the door. Even if we admitted that imagination can occasionally absolve this epistemic role, it is clear that the kind of information it provides is of a different status than perceptual information. Linguistic considerations will show again that terms for imaginative experiences are used in opposition to terms for perceptual experiences (e.g., 'did you see the dog or only *imagined* it?'). On the epistemic use of imagination, see Kind and Kung (2016).

[3] This dualist paradigm is also largely standard in the cognitive sciences (Firestone & Scholl 2016). The paradigm is effectively illustrated by the so-called sandwich model (Hurley 2001). According to the model, cognitive systems are composed of a layer of input modules, a layer of output modules, and a cognitive 'filling'. Perception is "the processing of external information by the sensory systems, such as visual or auditory information. […] Perceptual information processing often leads to the subjective experience of that information, for example, of seeing an object or hearing a sound." (Montemayor & Haladjian 2017, p. 5). Cognition is what is left out of this.

- *Cognitive states*: states of thinking, wondering, assuming, doubting, desiring, imagining[4]…

The questions 'is there a *phenomenal mark of the perceptual*?' and 'is there a *phenomenal mark of the cognitive*?' Are Big Questions, complicated by the fact that the naïve distinction I have just provided is just this: a *naïve* distinction. I will not dwell on the countless criteria for the perception/cognition divide out there, let alone the many models of the architecture of the mind. My interest lies in exploring a certain phenomenon that seems to me undeniable. This is the introspectable fact that there seems to be a phenomenal difference between paradigmatic conscious perceptual and paradigmatic conscious cognitive states. But I am not only interested in the most appropriate phenomenological description of this datum; I am also curious about the best way to account for it. In this dissertation, I thus divide the two Big Questions into three, more modest and approachable, sub-questions:

1. Is there a phenomenological difference between conscious states of perceiving and conscious cognitive states?
2. And, if there is, in what terms should we describe it?
3. And, once we have accurately described it, how do we account for it?

Question (1) can be answered in more than one way. One can reject it outright, claiming that there is no phenomenological difference between conscious states of perceiving and conscious cognitive states either because (a) their phenomenal character is identical or (b) neither have any phenomenal character. Neither position is very popular.

We might consider Hume as holding a view similar to (a). Hume thought that all consciousness is quasi-perceptual, and that differences between mental states could be explained

[4] I place imagination in this list because of the reasons discussed in fn. 2.

in terms of differences in the degree of intensity and vividness of our mental contents (1739/40; see Owen 2003). The view is subject to obvious problems, such as distinguishing between contents with different functions but whose degrees of vividness and intensity are very similar, as we will see in Chapter 3.

Someone who holds (b) has an eliminativist or at least sceptical position toward phenomenal consciousness. Illusionists, for instance, hold a view close to (b). According to Illusionism, phenomenal consciousness only seems real, while in actuality is a matter of systematic misrepresentation of the nature of our inner experience (Frankish 2016). As Frankish himself recognises, a major challenge for Illusionism is to explain the illusion of phenomenal consciousness itself (as well as its strength; see Kammerer 2018).

A more popular approach is to accept (1) but argue that the relevant phenomenal difference consists in the *absence* of any cognitive phenomenal character. The intuition behind this view is that paradigmatic cognitive states do not 'feel' like anything to the conscious subject. While it is striking that there is a what-it's-likeness of pains, moods, seeing colours, or hearing sounds, there seems to be nothing it is like to think that two plus two equals four or that there is life on Mars.

I believe that cognitive states have their own distinctive phenomenal character and that this is different from and non-reducible to the phenomenal character of perceptual states. Throughout this discussion, I will refer to the fact that there is a phenomenological difference between conscious paradigmatic perceptual states and paradigmatic conscious cognitive states, *such that each 'feel' or 'appear*[5] *differently to the subject* as the *phenomenal datum*. This is the thesis defended, among others, by Strawson (1994); Siewert (1998); Horgan and Tienson (2002); Pitt (2004); Kriegel (2013); Montague (2016); and Mendelovici (2018a).

Naturally, how one answers question (1) partly depends on one's definition of phenomenal consciousness. This leads us to question (2): if there really is a distinctive and

[5] I shall return to the issue of what terminology should better be used in section 2.

proprietary phenomenal character of cognitive states, how should we describe it? Are our current definitions of 'phenomenal' suited to capture it? Or might they be misleading us into thinking that there is no such character? I shall address these questions in section 2.

We have come to question (3). I shall frame question (3) as a challenge for strong representationalism. Representationalism about perceptual experience says that sensory qualities are representational qualities. Strong representationalism is the thesis that *all* sensory qualities of an experience are identical or supervene on the content of the experience. It differs from weak representationalism in that weak representationalism allows for non-intentional qualitative properties of mental states to partly explain the state's phenomenal character. Representationalism about cognitive states explains their intentional character in representational terms. If there is some phenomenology of cognitive states, this will also be explained in terms of their representational content.

The thesis that I will defend throughout this dissertation is that the phenomenal character of our conscious mental experiences cannot be fully exhausted by their representational content. More precisely, the strong representational thesis cannot explain what I have called *phenomenal datum,* i.e., the phenomenal contrast between perceptual and cognitive states. This will be the *pars destruens* of my discussion. In the *pars construens*, I will defend a kind of attitude strategy, for which there is a phenomenology of intentional attitudes, and this only can fully explain the *phenomenal datum.* I will add new arguments to a tradition that stretches back to Austrian phenomenologists such as Brentano and Husserl, and which has been recently defended by some analytic scholars such as Jorba (2016, 2020) and Kriegel (2015a,b, 2017a).

Thus, question (3) can be so revised:

(3*) Can the phenomenological difference, if any, between conscious states of perceiving and conscious cognitive states be fully explained in representational terms?

I will spend the remainder of this Chapter clarifying my answers to (1) and (2). This will require, among other things, addressing the problem of phenomenality for cognitive states and cashing out the phenomenal datum in more detail. Once this is done, we will be ready for question (3), which will occupy us for the rest of the dissertation.

1.2. Question 1: Is there a phenomenological difference between conscious states of perceiving and conscious cognitive states?

As we saw in the previous section, a good number of philosophers agree that there is a difference between perceiving and thinking of a tree, but only in the sense that the first is a phenomenal state, whereas the second is not. There is obviously something it is like to see red but not to think that Martians are green. In this section, I present and dismiss some reasons against counting cognitive states as phenomenal.

According to Horgan and Tienson (2002), the widespread assumption behind this stance is *Separatism*, i.e., the thesis that there is no deep metaphysical connection between phenomenal and intentional properties. Consequently, there are two types of mental states: states that are phenomenal but not intentional (paradigmatically, perceptual states) and states that are intentional but not phenomenal (paradigmatically, cognitive states).

The thesis has deep roots in early analytic philosophy. One of the first to voice it was C.I. Lewis (1929), who famously contrasted 'qualia' – the subjective items of one's immediate experience – with the conceptual nature of thought. The same idea, albeit in different terms, was defended by Gilbert Ryle:

> Whatever series of sensations an intelligent person may have, it is always conceivable that a merely sentient creature might have had a precisely similar series; and if by 'stream of consciousness' were meant 'series of sensations', then from a mere inventory of the contents of such a stream there would be no possibility of deciding whether the creature that had these sensations was an animal or a human being; an idiot, a lunatic or a sane man […] (1949, p. 204–5).

Today, many philosophers reject Separatism in favour of the view that there is a metaphysical link of some sort between intentional and phenomenal properties. The most popular version of this view states that a mental state's phenomenal properties either supervene on, or can be reduced to its intentional properties. The thesis is known as *Intentionalism* or *Representationalism* because it explains intentionality in representational terms.

Representationalism originated as a thesis about the nature of *sensory* qualities. This reflects a still widespread tendency to restrict the qualitative to the sensory. This is yet another type of separatism, which I would like to call *Residue Separatism*, because it only partly overcomes the original version of Separatism. According to Residue Separatism, the cognitive is not part of the phenomenal. Cognitive states have intentionality but lack phenomenal character or have a phenomenology that is reducible to the phenomenal character of the accompanying sensory states (Tye & Wright 2011, Prinz 2011, Robinson 2011, Pautz 2013, Carruthers & Veillet 2011).

Residue separatism yields an odd view of the mind, divided into two domains: the domain of the *phenomenal* conscious and the domain of the *non-phenomenal* conscious. Ned Block's (1995) distinction between phenomenal and access consciousness provides the relevant explanatory framework. The distinction is between those mental states available to the subject qua phenomenal, and those available to the subject *qua* accessible (i.e., poised for use in reasoning and rational control); perceptual states are of the first kind, cognitive states of the second.

Another group of analytic philosophers rejects both Original and Residue Separatism to advocate for *Inseparatism* (Horgan and Tienson 2002). Inseparatism states the inseparability of phenomenology and intentionality. It is composed of two theses:

(i) *The Intentionality of Phenomenology*: paradigmatically phenomenal states have an intentional content that is inseparable from their phenomenal character.

(ii) *The Phenomenology of Intentionality:* paradigmatically intentional states have a phenomenal character that is inseparable from their intentional content.

These so-called "liberal" philosophers believe that cognitive conscious states are phenomenally conscious as much as sensory states. Cognitive states are phenomenal, and cognitive phenomenology is not reducible to other, more basic kinds of phenomenology (Strawson 1994; Siewert 1998; Horgan and Tienson 2002; Pitt 2004; Kriegel 2013; Montague 2016; Mendelovici 2018a). The philosophers in this list also believe in the *Phenomenal Intentionality* Thesis (from now on, PIT). That is, they hold that the deep metaphysical connection between phenomenology and intentionality runs in the direction of the first towards the latter, in that there is a basic kind of intentionality – phenomenal intentionality –grounded in phenomenal character. PIT is in a sense the 'converse' of Representationalism, for it reverses the grounding relation between intentionality and phenomenal consciousness by positing the latter as more fundamental. But notice that PIT is a stronger commitment that is independent of the weaker thesis that there is a kind of phenomenology proprietary of cognitive states.

Original Separatism found its motivation in the belief that some phenomenal states are non-phenomenal; but today philosophers of different schools have dismissed this idea. Despite the "phenomenological turn" [6] pushed by proponents of PIT as well as the 'intentional turn' brought forward by Representationalism, many still hold Residue Separatism. This invites the question, why does Residue Separatism continue to prosper?

[6] I borrow this label from the title of this forthcoming issue of the journal *Argumenta*: https://www.argumenta.org/cfp/the-phenomenological-turn-in-analytic-philosophy-of-mind/ (last consulted 11 March 2023).

Many reasons have already been identified and discussed at length in the literature. Mechanistic models of thinking, for instance, are certainly an obstacle to considering cognitive states as phenomenal. The idea of the mind as a computational system, introduced to philosophy by Putnam (1967), has permeated the cognitive sciences and philosophy thoroughly and has even entered popular culture. The problem extends to the underpinning functionalist model, which as such is not suitable to accommodate phenomenal properties.

The wider the class of phenomenal states, the more difficult to naturalise phenomenal consciousness. This is the second reason why philosophers might want to resist the idea of cognitive phenomenology. As Bayne and Montague (2011, p. 30) write, accepting cognitive phenomenology might be seen as the ultimate nail in the coffin of the projects of closing the explanatory gap and solving the hard problem of consciousness (normally formulated only in terms of sensory qualities); however, it might also be welcome as a much-needed change in perspective, where the old sensory-only approaches have failed.

The final reason resides in the notion of phenomenal consciousness. I am under the impression that the quarrel about the existence of cognitive phenomenology is, to a great extent, a merely verbal one, one that arises from a confusion about the meaning, and thus the extension, of the technical term *'phenomenal consciousness*'. To see this, consider the standard way of cashing out 'phenomenal' through the no-less-mysterious notion of 'what-it-is-likeness'. Coined by Thomas Nagel (1974), the notion of what-it's-likeness is supposed to capture the first-person conception of what makes a state phenomenal (Van Gulick 2019).

But while it is striking to most that there is something for a subject to see red, or to feel pain – that, that is, there is a *qualitative* aspect to these experiences –, most philosophers are puzzled by the idea that there is something for the subject to *think* that two plus two equals four, or *wonder* whether it is going to rain tomorrow, or any other cognitive attitude, for that matter. One reason that might explain such bewilderment is that the expression what-it's-likeness is not neutral: in fact, the expression naturally evokes a sensory, bodily, and affective dimension that

makes it unsuitable to capture any phenomenal character that cognitive states might manifest. Notice that this is a semantic point: the verb 'to feel' and the expression 'there is something it is like to φ' correctly apply, in English, to words concerning a creature's sensory, bodily, and affective sphere. It is *semantically appropriate* to say that one feels sadness or pain but not that one *feels* a thought. Hence it is no surprise that, when intent to introspect their own conscious life, some philosophers have (mis)understood the quest for cognitive phenomenology as the quest for a cognitive *feeling* - something like a 'cognitive itch' or a 'cognitive headache' -or simply could not introspect any cognitive quality.[7]

If this is right, an alternative, more neutral, understanding of 'phenomenal' is desirable; but where to find it? I will explore these alternatives in section 1.4. Before that, it is time to give a positive answer to question (1): there is a phenomenological difference between conscious typical perceptual states and conscious typical cognitive states such that both 'feel' differently to the subject. This is what I call the *phenomenal datum*.

1.3. The Phenomenal Datum

Philosophers have tried to capture the character of perception in various ways. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's entry on 'The problem of perception' (Crane & Craig, 2021) lists two usual starting points. First, perception presents a world of ordinary objects distinct from one's experience and from oneself: chairs, tables, dogs, and even, perhaps, *Volkswagen* cars (Heidegger 1977, p. 156). Second, these objects are given in a distinctive way. Strawson speaks of

[7] The famous bat example used by Nagel in his 1974 to introduce the expression what-it's-like is also unfortunate to this extent. Nagel invites us to imagine what it is like to be a bat. This point is crucial to his argument – the difficulty of imagining what it is like to be a bat for us humans should resemble the difficulty Martians would have to imagine what it is like to be a human, and yet it is no reason to think that there is nothing to be like either creature. But bats are creatures whose conscious life, if any, is probably mostly occupied by sensory and bodily feelings only.

perception as "an immediate consciousness of the existence of things outside us" (1979/2011, p. 132), and McDowell of experience's "openness to the world" (1994, p. 111).

These two starting points are meant to capture that in the conscious character of perception which sets it apart from other states of the mind – including non-perceptual states that are similarly directed at the world (e.g., demonstrative thoughts). By contrast, standard definitions of the conscious character of cognitive states are, so to say, negative, in the sense that they tend to state what cognitive phenomenology is *not*, i.e., non-sensory:

> This phenomenology— 'cognitive phenomenology', as it has come to be called—can initially be defined negatively as a kind of phenomenology over and above sensory phenomenology. (Bayne & Montague 2011, p. 2-3)
>
> There is a difference in what it is like to see a green meadow and to think about the greenness of the meadow. Perhaps the best explanation of this difference is that, in thinking, the green meadow is phenomenally present in a non-sensory manner. (Dorsch, 2016, p. 6).

There are two problems with these standard negative characterizations of cognitive phenomenology. The first is that they are obviously quite uninformative: what does it mean to present something "in a non-sensory manner"? This does not elucidate the matter of how cognitive states are phenomenally conscious; a positive, more informative, characterization is needed. Second, they assume that there is no difference between *sensory* and *perceptual* phenomenology, even though we have seen that it is a mistake to conflate the sensory with the perceptual. Because mere sensations do not present anything beyond themselves, and because sensory imagery often contributes to cognitive processes, we can fully appreciate the phenomenal character of cognitive states only in contrast to the phenomenal character of *perceptual* states. The following proposal aims at addressing both points.

Sometimes, cognitive phenomenology is characterised in terms of *emptiness* (cf. Husserl 1900-1901/2001, p.137; Hopp 2015). To see this, consider the experience of perceiving a tree in a garden on a summer day. As the sun is high on the garden, the hard sunlight reflects on every

leaf and blade of grass before you; you are flooded with colours and every shape is sharp in the light. Most importantly, everything looks as being *here-and-now*, *bodily present* before your eyes. In a sense, you know you could walk towards the tree, around it, and touch the rough trunk and velvety leaves. Compare this experience with merely thinking of a tree in a garden. Your thinking activity is likely accompanied by a mental reproduction of the scene just described. Depending on your imagistic abilities, the scene before your mind's eyes might be more or less vivid and realistic. Or it might be accompanied by a different image, perhaps that of a bright light or a green leaf. Or you might just say to yourself the words 'a tree in a garden during a summer day'; perhaps you also 'hear' them in inner voice. But the imagined tree is nothing like the perceived tree: one does not 'feel' an imagined tree as being here-and-now, one cannot walk around it and touch its parts; the imagined tree is not manifest with a 'full-bodied' presence. The mere thought of a tree, whether accompanied by sensory imagery or not, is nonetheless present before one's mind, but in a totally different manner – *emptily*, as it were – compared to the presence of perceived objects.

I believe this theory to have a strong intuitive appeal, but it needs to be defended from some serious problems. I will discuss them in Chapter 6. For now, let us just grant that the following is a good initial description of the phenomenal datum: objects of perception are presented to the mind "intuitively" or *leibhaftig* (in person) while objects of thought are present *emptily*. The phenomenal datum is grounded in systematic introspective analysis and its correctness has intuitive force. Yet, the claim that cognitive states are phenomenal – whether in the Husserlian sense just described or in any other – is resisted. This skepticism, I contend, has likely to do with the philosophical notion of 'phenomenal'.

1.4. Question 2: And, if there is, in what terms should we describe it?

Coined by Thomas Nagel (1974), the notion of what-it's-likeness is supposed to capture the first-person conception of what makes a state phenomenal (Van Gulick 2019). This latter notion can be declined both in terms of state and creature consciousness (Rosenthal 1986): a state is phenomenally conscious if there is something that it is like to be in that state, and a creature is phenomenally conscious if there is something that it is like to be that creature. However, I have suggested that this understanding might be biased towards the sensory domain. In other words, the vocabulary of 'feeling' and 'what it is like' correctly applies to the sensory but not to the cognitive domain. This has the consequence of biasing the philosophical analysis against cognitive phenomenology.

Other philosophers have similarly raised their annoyance towards this understanding of phenomenal. Lycan, for instance, has complained that the notion of what-it's-likeness "sends the struggling mind of even the most talented philosopher into yet another affect-driven tailspin of confusing a welter of distinct issues" (1996, p.77). In this section, I will briefly examine a few alternative understandings of the term 'phenomenal'. We will see that many of them are, to a first inspection, far more neutral and encompassing than the expression 'what-it's-likeness'. Only a few of them, however, point to a character that genuinely applies to any type of phenomenal state.

1.4.1. Phenomenal as mysterious

One first way of thinking of phenomenal as a unifying term is as that property which, "in the actual world, is responsible for the mystery of consciousness" (Kriegel 2009, p. 3). In this sense, phenomenal consciousness is whatever makes philosophers and non-philosophers wonder at the nature of consciousness as a mysterious phenomenon to explain; this mystery could be, for

example, the sense that the facts of consciousness are not deducible from the physical facts. According to Kriegel, this description of phenomenal consciousness is the most accurate and profitable, because it captures the reason why the notion has become so central to philosophical and non-philosophical investigations. Notice that Kriegel does not advocate for a kind of mysterianism about consciousness: the mystery of consciousness is an *initial* mystery that sets off our rational investigations (2009, p. 5).

The understanding of phenomenal as mysterious has the advantage of bringing together what different views about consciousness share, calling our attention to a certain naïve *je ne sais quoi* that makes the problem of consciousness attractive. The worry is that it does so because it is too general to be informative and viable to be used in philosophical discussions. At best, phenomenal as mysterious is a temporary signpost in the absence of a proper definition.

Kriegel would likely push this objection back. The idea of phenomenal as mysterious is that even if we could agree on an ultimate definition, phenomenal consciousness would still be mysterious – for instance, it would still be mysterious how phenomenal consciousness fits into the physical world, or how it is brought about, and so on. In fact, Kriegel seem to assign consciousness a somewhat special status among other mysterious phenomena: "many philosophers have a sense that consciousness involves a certain mystery not found in other aspects of nature, and use the term "phenomenal consciousness" to refer to whatever produces this mystery" (2009, p. 5), as the development of problems such as the hard problem of consciousness and the explanatory gap are supposed to show. But it is contentious that phenomenal consciousness is a mysterious phenomenon unlike any other. The birth of the universe or the possibility of life are at least as puzzling as phenomenal consciousness; but describing the property of being alive as that which is responsible for the mystery of life would be little informative. That phenomenal consciousness is mysterious is everyone's starting point, but we need a more informative notion in order to engage in meaningful philosophical discussions.

1.4.2. Phenomenal as introspectable

The second sense of phenomenal that I want to discuss is phenomenal in the sense of *being introspectively accessible*. Here is how MacPherson and Dorsch define the idea:

> A feature may be said to be phenomenally present in an experience whenever it is part of the phenomenal character of that experience, such that it becomes accessible from the inside through attending to the experience in question. (MacPherson & Dorsch 2018, p. 2).

In this sense, conscious states are phenomenal in that they can be introspected by the subject. Notice that the definition does not say that a feature becomes phenomenal *once* it is accessed (as is the case for Block's access consciousness); but that if a feature is phenomenal, then it can be accessed by the subject through introspection.

This sense of phenomenal applies to perceptual and cognitive states equally. A thought is phenomenal because it is manifest to the subject, who can access it 'from the inside', so to say. And one might think that the phenomenal and the introspectable overlap, so that there cannot be phenomenal aspects of an experience that an ideal subject cannot in principle introspect.

This latter claim is not universally accepted. Suppose that phenomenal consciousness is broad (Dretske 1996). It would then be true that yours and your phenomenal twin's experience of a glass of water are subjectively indistinguishable, even though your experience is an experience of water while your twin's is an experience of twin-water. If this is the case, then there are phenomenal aspects of one's experience that the subject cannot introspect (Gomes & Parrott 2022, p. 325-6).

Whether one accepts this position or not, other problems affect the idea of the identity between the phenomenal and the introspectable. Not only it seems conceivable that a feature can be introspectively accessible to the subject in ways that are non-phenomenal; but we can also very well imagine subjects incapable of introspection, who are nonetheless phenomenally

conscious. Because of this, the notion of being introspectable, rather than explaining 'phenomenal', seems to be explained by it. In other words, it is *because* a feature is phenomenal (for some other relevant senses of phenomenal such as phenomenal as manifest; see below) that it is open to introspection.

1.4.3. Phenomenal as manifest

Phenomenal comes from the Greek verb *phainomai*: to appear, to be manifest. *Phenomena* are literally the things that are manifest. Hence, it can be argued that for something to be phenomenal is just for it to appear, to be manifest (to someone). Brentano expresses this thesis as follows:

> [W]henever something appears in consciousness, whether it is hated, loved, or regarded indifferently, whether it is affirmed or denied or there is a complete withholding of judgement and—I cannot express myself in any other way than to say—it is presented. As we use the verb 'to present,' 'to be presented' means the same as 'to appear.' (1874/2009, p. 62)

This alternative understanding of phenomenal is rather appealing, and *prima facie* more inclusive than the expression 'what-it's-likeness'. Yet, it might still not be as universal as we would like it to be.

A more accurate reading tells us that according to Brentano in any act of consciousness there is always *something* that is present to someone.[8] This something is what he calls a *Vorstellung*, i.e., a presentation (a term akin to today's 'representation'). The notion of presentation plays a central role in Brentano's theory: it is the most general character that fits all mental states. In any act of consciousness – and in fact what makes any act of consciousness possible – there is something that appears to one's mind; any piece of consciousness is something *in which*

[8] I am indebted to Mark Textor for this point.

something *else* appears. This presentation is the *phenomenon*, properly speaking. In other words, the thesis goes hand-in-hand with intentionality being 'the mark of the mental'. It is thus not by chance that Crane, a champion of intentionalism, subscribes to this understanding of 'phenomenal':

> When consciously thinking about something, things can appear to you a certain way – you might be imagining something, reflecting on it intellectually, or preoccupied by memories of it. But all these cases involve the appearance of things in the world, and (as we noted above) this is the original meaning of 'phenomenal'. (2013c, p.160).

As mentioned, this understanding, while fitting enough to thought and perception, might not be universally valid. An old issue of the thesis that intentionality is the mark of the mental is that not all mental states seem to have an object, that is, not all states seem to present something. States such as pains and moods, for instance, are controversial cases.[9]

Those who do not want to abandon the understanding of phenomenal as manifest can propose to distinguish two senses of phenomenal: mental states that are phenomenal *qua* representational, and mental states that are phenomenal *qua* modifications of one's consciousness. But this means giving up on the original project of a *unitary* sense of phenomenal and a return to Separatism.

[9] The intentionalist can try to address this problem in two ways. They can accept that a mental state has non-intentional phenomenal properties in addition to its representational properties (Peacocke 1983; Block 1990, 1995). Or they can try to prove that seemingly non-representational states are in fact representational. Pain, for instance, is taken to represent damage to the body (Tye 1995) or someone's body parts as hurting (Crane 2003; see also Chalmers 2004). It is however doubtful that the representational properties of pain states so identified can account for the complex phenomenal character of pain (especially its affective-motivational component), nor that this strategy can be extended to all the controversial cases (what do afterimages represent?). See also Papineau (2021) for the claim that mental states represent, but do not do so essentially.

1.4.4. Phenomenal as qualitative

In a very general sense, the qualitative properties of an experience are its what-it's-like properties. The *quale* of seeing red just is the what-it's-likeness of seeing red. If this is true, then the term quale, like the label what-it's-likeness, might not naturally apply to cognitive states. The term quale, however, has been used in several other ways and thus requires disambiguation.

Following Tye (2021), it is possible to isolate at least three additional uses of the term quale. On a restrictive reading, qualia are ineffable, subjective, private, intrinsic, and non-representational properties of mental entities such as sense data. This is the sense in which C.I. Lewis used the term in 1929. It is also similar to the way it is understood by "qualia freaks" such as Peacocke (1983), and Block (1990, 1995), minus the commitment to sense-data. According to their use, qualia are intrinsic, introspectable, non-representational, properties that are partly responsible for the phenomenal character of mental states. For instance, visual qualia are intrinsic features of visual experience of which one is aware in addition to the experience's representational content. In other words, sensory qualia are properties of an experience that can vary independently of the experience's representational content. In yet another restrictive (and implausible) sense, qualia are mysterious, nonphysical properties of mental states to which the subject has infallible access; this is often the sense targeted by qualia eliminativists like Dennett (1988, 1991).

Often, qualia are defined as *sensory* qualities (Block 1995; Dretske 1995; Tye 1995). Against this definition, Lycan (1996, 2019) argues that a state's phenomenal character and sensory qualities may come apart, in that a quality can occur outside of the subject's awareness. The possibility of disassociation between phenomenal character and sensory qualities motivates Lycan to distinguish between two readings of what-it's-like:

- *What-it's-likeness as a first-order quality*: this is what the world is or seems like. It can be described in one's public language (via terms like red, green, cold, hot, and so on). According to Chudnoff (2000), qualia in this sense are properties of worldly objects.
- *What-it's--likeness as a second-order property of that quality*: What it's like for the subject to be in a particular mental state, or to experience a particular qualitative property. This is something over and above the quality itself: "the property of what it's like to experience that quality" (Lycan 2019). Unlike the first sense of what-it-is-likeness, this sense is ineffable and requires the subject's awareness.

This distinction might not be completely genuine. First, the higher-order awareness of a quality might not be itself qualitative; one might become aware of a quality Q in non-phenomenal terms, for example by directing a non-phenomenal higher-order state towards Q (as in HOT theories). Second, it is also not clear that a quality that occurs outside of the subject's awareness is a genuine phenomenal property. This partly depends on our definition of phenomenal. For some, being phenomenal is a matter of being presented to the subject, as we are going to see. Thus, a qualitative property that does not feel like anything to the subject is a contradiction in terms (but see Pitt 2004).

In any case, Lycan's distinction is useful insofar as it brings our attention to the question of whether phenomenal character is monolithic, as it were, or has different components. Some philosophers maintain that the phenomenal character of a mental state is not exhausted by its qualitative component, but it has an additional *subjective* component, i.e., what it is like *for the subject* to experience a certain quality (see next section). The subjective component or *for-me-ness* of an experience differs from Lycan's higher-order what-it-is-likeness because the first cannot come apart from a quality's first-order what-it-is-likeness (see the details of this view in the next section). Both Lycan's higher-order awareness and *for-me-ness* are ways of intending 'phenomenal'

that naturally apply to cognitive attitudes. This means that we are on the right track, slowly moving toward a sense of phenomenal that encompasses all kinds of mental states.

1.4.5. Phenomenal as subjective or for-me

According to some philosophers, the phenomenal character of mental states has two components, one qualitative and one subjective. In being conscious of the tree in the garden, there is something it is like to see the tree in the garden and, at the same time, this what-it's-like is *for me* (from which the alternative label '*for-me-ness*'). Any accurate description of conscious mental states should count these two components of phenomenal character. The qualitative component is what makes a state M the phenomenally conscious state it is, while the subjective component is what makes M a phenomenally conscious state at all. My experience of the tree in the garden is the experience it is in virtue of the way it is presented to me, and it is a conscious experience at all in virtue of its being given *to me*. This captures the intuition that a quality that occurs outside of the subject's awareness is not genuinely conscious (Kriegel 2009, p. 106).

There are different views on how to conceive of this subjective character. Following the phenomenological tradition, some philosophers like Zahavi (2005, 2014) intend the subjective character of a mental state as a kind of pre-reflective self-awareness of the conscious episode toward itself. According to phenomenal versions of self-representationalism, the subjective character of mental states should be intended as a kind of representational awareness. The idea is that, in having a conscious mental state M, the subject is *implicitly* aware of their having M – as opposed to explicit self-awareness, which occurs in virtue of a higher-order mental state directed at M.[10] According to this view, it is in virtue of the subject's for-me-ness of an experience M that

[10] HOT is a non-phenomenal version of self-representationalism, where the subject's awareness of a state M is brought about by a *non*-phenomenal state that different from M itself (see Kriegel 2003 and 2009 for the difference between phenomenal and non-phenomenal self-representationalism; about HOT, see Rosenthal 1986).

M becomes conscious (Kriegel 2003, 2009). Finally, according to awareness theorists, for-me-ness is explained in terms of non-representational direct acquaintance (Gertler 2011).

It seems to me that a certain understanding of qualitative, together with the notion of for-me-ness is broad enough to encompass all types of conscious states, whether perceptual or cognitive, and whether intentional or non-intentional (the last on some non-representational understanding of for-me-ness). For this reason, I shall use the term 'phenomenal' to refer to this composite sense of a state's phenomenal character, unless otherwise indicated.

To sum up our findings, I have discussed in this section five understandings of 'phenomenal' that are alternative, or complementary, to a state's what-it's-likeness. I have dismissed the first two of these readings, namely phenomenal as mysterious and phenomenal as introspectable; the first because uninformative, and the second because potentially controversial or at any rate non-basic. I have then moved to the etymological understanding of phenomenal, namely phenomenal as manifest; this too I have discarded because it excludes non-intentional conscious states from the phenomenal domain. I have then concluded with two different but closely related notions, namely phenomenal as qualitative and phenomenal as subjective or *for-me*; these characters are taken by some philosophers to explain, together, a state's phenomenal character. This seemed to me the most transversal and accurate understanding of 'phenomenal', at least for my purpose.

1.5. Question 3: Can the phenomenological difference, if there is any, between conscious states of perceiving and conscious cognitive states be fully explained in representational terms?

> The appeal to intentionality tends to play down or ignore the difference between perceptual experience and other kinds of mental activity where the relevance of intentionality is less controversial. The object enters into perceptual experience more thoroughly than into other kinds of mental acts. If you are radically ignorant of the physical properties of an object it is no use trying to find them out by thinking of it, hating it, loving it or desiring it; you must try to come by a perceptual experience of—or as of—it. […] [other mental states or attitudes] are characterised by the fact that they do not require the presence of the object in question; whether an object is there when you think of or desire it is immaterial to the phenomenology of thought and desire as such. They are essentially acts tailored to the absence of their objects. (Robinson 1994, p.166)

By means of the notion of representation, intentionalists hope to explain at least two things: why it is that our mental states seem to be directed or about something even when the objects they purport to be about do not exist; and what it is the nature of the phenomenal qualities of our mental states. Representation is supposed to solve both issues at the same time.

Suppose you are seeing a yellow lemon in good light; you are visually representing the yellowness of the lemon, and the yellowness you are experiencing just is the yellowness of the worldly lemon. Now suppose you are hallucinating a yellow lemon; there is yellow patch in your visual field, and this is the yellowness of an external physical lemon. Only, the lemon is not real. Similarly, suppose you are looking at a very intense yellow light, then close your eyes to see the afterimage impressed on your retina. Again, the yellow you experience is not of a mental object; to experience a yellow afterimage is just to visually represent a yellow patch. The yellowness is only "intentionally" present in your experience.

The above paragraph by Howard Robinson, however, contains a serious problem for the representationalist. The problem is a symptom of the more general problematic metaphysical connection between representational and phenomenal character. As David Papineau writes, conscious sensory character and representational content play very different metaphysical roles. One is the experience's what-it's-likeness, "a here-and-now illumination of the subject's mind" (2021, p. 39); while the other is supposed to explain the way mental states relate to incoming stimuli and interact with other such states within the cognitive system. Given this prima facie

difference, "strong representationalism stands in need of some explanation of why character and content should be metaphysically intertwined" (*Ibid.*).

The additional problem is that the notion of representation is supposed to explain the intentional character of *different* states, a character which changes dramatically from psychological kind to psychological kind. To see this, compare the states of seeing a yellow lemon, imagining a yellow lemon, and thinking of a yellow lemon. As Robinson correctly highlights, perceptual states have a distinctive kind of phenomenology vis-a-vis other kinds of mental states, such as acts of imagining, desiring, or thinking of a yellow lemon. The intentionalist explains the intentionality of these different states in the same way: by virtue of their representing a yellow lemon. But it is not clear what the notion of representation does in order to explain the differences between them:

> The challenge is that if there is nothing about representation as such which explains the character of a [perceptual] experience, how is experience supposed to be distinguished from mere thought? (Crane & Craig 2021).

The notion of representation seems to fall short of this task. Here is how I will argue for that.

Chapters 2 to 5 follow up on Robinson's challenge and explore all the possible ways in which strong representationalism might explain the distinctive character of perception vis-à-vis thought. I will refer to these strategies as *content* or *representational strategies*. We can identify two kinds of content strategies: Object theories and Kinds-of-content theories (see Kriegel 2019a).

Chapter 2 discusses Object theories. Object theories claim that perceptual and cognitive states differ in terms of what they represent, i.e., in terms of the kinds of objects (broadly intended) that they relate the subject to. I discuss three versions of these theories and conclude that none of them picks out a type of object that either all and only perceptual states have, or that all and only cognitive states have, and that explains their respective phenomenal character.

Chapter 3 focuses on a family of Object strategies that argues for the elimination of the attitude component from the metaphysics of conscious intentional states. According to these theories, for each type of mental state M there is a corresponding type of representational content C, such that if the experience instantiates C, the subject is *ipso facto* in M. Against these views, I will defend the irreducibility of the attitudinal component by showing that some differences between types of mental states cannot be accommodated into the content alone.

Chapter 4 discusses a second family of representational strategies that I call Kinds-of-content strategies, which maintain that the crucial difference between perceptual and cognitive states is in terms of *how* they represent what they represent. Two dichotomies are central to these theories: conceptual vs. nonconceptual, and propositional vs. nonpropositional. I explore each of these kinds of content, and pairings thereof, in turn, and show that no kind of representational content is prerogative of either perceptual or cognitive states alone (with some caveats); appeal to kinds of content thus fails to explain the phenomenal datum.

Chapter 5 explores a possible objection to the conclusion reached in Chapter 4. The objection is that perceptual states must be propositional to have justificatory power. Against this, I defend a view that I call perceptual objectualism, according to which some perceptual states have objectual content and can offer prima facie defeasible justification.

Chapter 6 finally shifts the focus of the thesis to the attitude component. Having exhausted all the representational options, the best explanation for the phenomenal datum is that the attitude component of conscious mental states makes a distinctive contribution to the overall phenomenology of the subject. I individuate some historical reasons behind the resistance to the claim and explain how the attitude strategy accounts for the phenomenal datum. I also offer a model of the interaction between attitude and content of a mental state.

Finally, Chapter 7 examines two objections against the claim that there is a phenomenology of intentional attitudes, namely Fregean anti-psychologism and Transparency. Against the first objection, I suggest that the friend of attitude phenomenology should endorse a

different model of the source of intentionality. Against the second, I argue that attitude phenomenology is compatible with a certain weak interpretation of transparency, and I proceed to examine several cases that support the claim that one can introspect properties of cognitive experiencing.

CHAPTER 2 - REPRESENTATIONAL STRATEGIES: OBJECT-STRATEGIES

2.1. Introduction

The first group of representational strategies draws a wedge between perceptual and cognitive states based on the type of *objects* that figure in their respective representational contents. Advocates of what I call object-strategies believe that perceptual and cognitive states are different because they relate the subject to different objects.

These objects are not physical objects (at least, not in the naïve realist sense), but rather and more generally types of properties, or complexes of properties and individuals. According to the first of the three object-strategies I have identified, perception relates the subject to simple objects (mental items or universals), while cognition to complex objects (of properties and individuals); according to the second, perception represents only low-level properties, while cognition can represent both low-level and high-level properties; finally, according to the third theory, the only distinction there is, is between the representation of sensory phenomenal properties vis-à-vis cognitive phenomenal properties. I shall briefly present them in turn.

The first Object-strategy I discuss is Russell's. To be more precise, Russell developed more than one strategy to draw a divide between perception and cognition, but all of them share the thesis that the crucial difference is only partly explained by postulating different kinds of mental acts. We will see the historical problems that affected his views and the unsuccessful ways in which he tried to address them; most importantly, I will point out the influence Russell had on what we still consider today the admissible contents of perception and thought.

I will then move to the debate between the Thin Content View versus the Rich Content View of perceptual content. The Thin Content View maintains that perceptual states represent only low-level properties while cognitive states represent both low and high-level properties.; this can be turned into a criterion to distinguish between perceptual and cognitive states when supported by the relevant considerations about the architecture of the mind. I will side with the Rich Content theorist in claiming that perception does not represent only low-level properties. Contra this view, however, I will argue that perceptual experience involves more than mere sensory phenomenology. My position is that a full-blown perceptual state involves cognitive phenomenal properties whenever it happens to involve conceptual capacities.

This latter claim has recently been defended by Michelle Montague (2023); hers is the third type of Object-strategy I will discuss. Even though we share the same starting point, Montague and I arrive at quite different conclusions. While she takes the presence of sensory and cognitive phenomenology in perception as a fact that precludes "making a perception/thought distinction on the basis of their phenomenology" (2023, p. 7), I take it as proof that the perception/cognition distinction cannot be drawn according to what properties they represent.

2.2. Bertrand Russell's Object Strategy

Let us start with the first of our object strategies. We should immediately notice that the difference between perception and cognition was to Russell less significant than that between sensation on the one hand, and perception/cognition on the other. As we are going to see, this was likely the consequence of his theoretical need to distinguish between two kinds of relations: an immediate and infallible relation that is not yet knowledge but nonetheless grounds it; and a mediated and fallible relation that amounts to knowledge. The first is the relation of acquaintance or presentation, while the second is the cognitive relation, to which perception is assimilated. It is for this reason that Russell did not conceive of the line between perception and cognition as

clearly demarcated as we deem today, but actually assimilated them under the same epistemic role.

More important than the evolution and the details of Russell's account, is the decisive influence it had on what the analytic tradition would consider as the admissible contents of perception and thought. Roughly, if perception is a type of cognition, and cognition is cognition of something that can be true or false, then perception can only have propositional content. This argument will reappear several times and in several fashions during the course of this dissertation. Thus, even though the discussion of Russell's object theory is a partial a partial detour from the representationalist framework, it is nonetheless essential to understand some of its central commitments. We will clearly see this ramification of Russell's perception/cognition distinction for the epistemology of perception in Chapterss 4 and 5.

Let us now move to the discussion of the Russell's first theory of the distinction between sensation vis-à-vis perception/cognition. Between 1904 and 1907, Russell distinguishes between the attitude of *acquaintance* with, or *presentation* of, the subject with *a simple object* (i.e., as a sense-datum, the self, or a universal) and the attitude of *cognition* of *a complex* that can be true or false (i.e., a proposition).[1]

A lesson learnt from G. E. Moore was likely the reason behind Russell's division (Textor 2021a, p. 10). This lesson was part of Moore's attack against Brentano and the Brentanians regarding the meaning of 'sensation'. According to Moore, we must disambiguate between two senses of this term. In the first sense, sensation is the cognition of the existence of a simple quality. The simple object combines with the property of existence to form a complex object, which is a *fact* that can be known, i.e., the fact of the object's existence. In the second sense, sensation is the awareness of simple objects that are not facts; this second sense of sensation

[1] Later, Russell will argue that there is another kind of knowledge beside knowledge of truths, i.e., knowledge of things. I won't dwell on this difficult issue here. See Proops (2014) for an accurate historical reconstruction, and Duncan (2020) for a recent take on knowledge of things.

does not confer knowledge, because it does not relate the subject to something that can be true or false (Moore 1902/1903, p. 88-89).

The Brentanian theory that is the target of Moore's criticism was that perception is the act of "simple acknowledgment" of an object. The idea was that simple objects can be presented in *any* act of consciousness, including judgments. In fact, Brentano held that not all judgments require that something is predicated of a simple object, for "a single feature which is the object of a presentation can be affirmed or denied too" (1874/2009, p. 207). Moore thought that this Brentanian thesis rested on the confusion between the first and the second sense of 'sensation' above. In Chapterss 4 and 5, I shall take issues with Moore's and Russell's assumption that perception and judgment cannot be directed at simple objects. But for the sake of our present discussion, let us grant the point for now.

Following Moore, Russell held that presentation and cognition are distinguished partly based on the type of objects they relate subjects to.[2] Perception falls on the cognitive side of this distinction because it can confer knowledge. Since only propositions can be judged, this distinction plants the seed for Russell's theory that the content of perception is propositional:

> Mere awareness, having as its object something neither true nor false, is widely different from cognition; and perception, in its usual significance, is a kind of cognition, namely cognition of existence. (1904, p. 216)

Awareness and perception/cognition thus enjoy a different epistemic status in that they relate the subject to different objects: in the first case, to a simple object, and, in the second case, to the *fact* of the object's existence. Perception is thus the apprehension of the fact of the existence of an object (Russell 1907, p. 45).

[2] Partly, because complexes can also be presented, but simple objects cannot also be judged, and thus acquaintance/presentation and judgment must also be distinguished according to their mode. According to Textor (2021a, sect. 3.1), presentation and judgment are different modes because only judgments have assertoric force. I will return to the problem of assertoric force in Chapter 4.

We have seen that, on the Moorian-Russellian view, perception is directed at the complex of the object itself together with the property of existence. Moore also tells us that when we judge, what we judge is a complex, that is, a fact. This raises the following two problems. The first is to distinguish the perception of a fact from the judgment of the same fact. The second is about false beliefs; for what do we believe when we believe falsely? Either we claim that we do not believe anything or we accept the existence of negative facts. Both solutions are problematic. In his 1907, Russell provides a new theory of judgment that aspires to solve both problems.

According to the new theory, presentation is a two-place relation between a subject and an individual. Judgment, by contrast, is not a single mental act, but it consists of several related ideas: an *n*-place relation between a subject and at least two objects. This solves the second problem above, i.e., the problem of false beliefs, in the following way. Take the belief that A is B. I have the ideas of A and B, related in a certain way; if the objects of the idea stand in the corresponding relation, the belief is true; but if they not, there is no objective complex corresponding to the belief. Yet, the belief is not empty: it is about A and B. According to Russell, this also solves the first problem above, namely that about the difference between a perception and a judgment of the same fact:

> The view that a belief is a complex of ideas, not a single idea, has the merit of distinguishing between the perception of a fact and the *judgment* which affirms the same fact. We may look at the sky and perceive the sun shining; we may then proceed to judge that "the sun is shining". The same fact, in this case, is first perceived and then judged; the question is: How can the perception and the judgment differ? We may reply that, in the perception, the actual fact or objective complex is before the mind, i.e., there is a single state of mind which has the said objective complex for its object, while in the belief, there is merely a complex of presentations of constituents of the objective complex, these presentations being related in a manner corresponding to that in which the constituents of the objective complex are related. (1906/1907, p. 47; orig. emph.)

The metaphysical picture resulting from the new 1907 theory has now perception and judgment distinguished not only by the *number* of objects they relate their subject to but also by their *type*. Perception and judgment, unlike awareness/presentation, both take complexes, that is,

facts, as their object. But while perception is a two-place relation ("a single state of mind") that relates the subject to "the actual fact" itself, judgment relates the subject to a multiplicity of (re)presentations of the constituents of the fact.

Russell thus solves the problem of what we believe when we believe falsely; but the same problem resurfaces in the case of falsidic perception: for if what we perceive is "the actual fact or objective complex", what do we perceive when we perceive falsidically? Again, either we admit negative facts to our ontology, or we deny that we perceive anything. Russell seems to have taken another route. He likely took falsidic perception to be impossible, for the same reason why falsidic *presentation* is impossible: because presentation is a two-term relation, and two-term relations are infallible:

> From the fact that presentation is a two-term relation, the question of truth or error cannot arise with regard to it: in any case of presentation there is a certain relation of an act to an object, and the question whether there is such an object cannot arise. (Russell 1913b, p. 76)

The question of truth or error thus "cannot arise" for perception qua a two-term relation. Either perception occurs, and thus the fact that is its relatum exists; or it does not occur. We can question Russell's claim. In fact, I would like to distinguish two claims that are gestured at in the above quote. The first is that two-term relations are always true. This does not seem to correct, for, as Textor notices, my judging that it is raining or believing in God might be called into question, even though their adicity is no greater than two (2021a, p 6). But this claim will be only accepted by those who already believe that one can judge simple objects, and thus it is not the right ground on which to dispute Russell's claim.

The second claim is that two-term relations are infallible because the relation can obtain if and only if all its relata exist. In the case of presentation, the relation obtains only in case something is presented; if nothing is presented, the relation simply does not obtain. Given that perception is also a two-place relation, we can imagine that it is subject to the same principle.

This interpretation gets along very well with Russell's philosophy of perception.[3] But one can hallucinate pink elephants, go on a quest for the Fountain of Youth, or think of the Golden Mountain. Representationalists have long rejected the thesis that intentionality is a relation in which both relata must truly exist.[4]

Given these objections, Russell's attempt at distinguishing perception and cognition partly based on the type of objects to which they relate the subject (real vs. represented; simple vs. complex) and partly based on their adicity, fails. The theory has however influenced much of the philosophy to come. The idea that perception is propositional, whether it relates one to facts in which the object appears as one of the constituents, or whether it relates one to a truth-evaluable content, is still lively. And so is the theory that only facts or propositions can be known. I will discuss these topics in Chapterss 4 and 5.

2.2. Thin and Rich Content view

2.2.1. The Thin Content View

Let us start this section by distinguishing between low-level and high-level properties. Low-level properties are properties whose representation is arguably concept independent, in the sense that the representing subject does not need to possess the concept of the represented element. A second way to identify low-level properties that does not take a stance on concept possession is as those properties that precede object-identification. Examples of such properties are colours, sounds, shapes, illumination, motion, depth, and so on. High-level properties are what is left out of this inventory. Siegel calls these "K-properties":

[3] Consider Robinson's Phenomenal principle (1994), according to which if it appears to the subject as if F, then there is something that is F, which is at the heart of the argument for sense-datum theory; isn't this principle grounded in the idea of the infallibility of two-term relations?
[4] Although there might be objects that do not exist. See Lycan (1987) and Crane (2013b).

> properties that categorize objects (person, bicycle, mountain, porch), to those that categorize actions (carrying a dog, climbing a mountain), mental states (feeling sad, being inquisitive, trying to balance on one foot), and words (being a word of Russian, being a phrase that means that the highway exit is just ahead). (2010, p. 99)

According to the so-called Thin Content View, perception can represent *only* low-level properties (Tye 1995, 2010; Dretske 1995). The Thin Content view is opposed by the Rich Content View, which maintains that high-level properties *can* figure in the content of perception. The most prominent defender of the Rich Content View is probably Susanna Siegel (2006, 2010; but see also Peacocke 1992a; Siewert 1998; Bayne 2009; Block 2014).

Because low-level properties can be represented both in perception and thought, the Thin Content View might seem to fail to qualify as an Object-strategy. However, I would now like to suggest that The Thin Content View can in fact be used to draw a distinction between perceptual and cognitive states based on the types of properties each state can represent, but only if supplemented by some considerations regarding the architecture of the mind. Here is how we might find additional support to the view.

Some representationalists who advocate the Thin Content View individuate perception via reference to Jerry Fodor's modularity theory (1974) as well as David Marr's theory of vision (1982; see, e.g., Tye 1995, 2000; Dretske 1995).[5] According to Fodor's theory, sensory modules are peripherical, fast, and informationally encapsulated from other modules. The idea (as proposed by Byrne in Siegel & Byrne 2017, p. 65-6) is that the dispute between Thin and Rich view can be understood as one about the outputs of the sensory modules (and about the visual module specifically): are the informational states that are outputs of the visual module about high-level properties or only about low-level properties?[6] In this way, the Thin Content View

[5] Notice that my claim is not that there are no ways of motivating the Thin Content View that are independent of modularity, but that the appeal to modularity is the only way to make the Thin Content View into an Object-strategy.
[6] In the same paper, see Siegel's rejection of Byrne's proposal.

could explain the fact that perceptual states represent only low-level properties with the fact that conscious perceptual states are the outputs of peripheral modules that compute only low-level, nonconceptual information. Conscious cognitive states might also represent low-level properties, but, because they are the output of central modules, must do it in a different way; for instance, their content would plausibly be conceptualised. The Thin Content View might then eventually partly overlap with the strategy of distinguishing perception vis-à-vis cognition in terms of nonconceptual vs. conceptual content. I discuss this strategy in Chapters 4.

I regard the criterion based on the Thin Content View as problematic for two reasons.

First, I have argued that the criterion can be motivated by an appeal to modularity, but modularity faces serious problems. The distinction between early and late perceptual modules was initially introduced to interpret findings in visual perception, according to which early sensory modules seemed impenetrable to the interference of cognitive influences, whereas later stages were likely to be cognitively driven by central modules (see, e.g., Pylyshyn 1999). This model is clearly threatened by the phenomenon of cognitive penetration, if genuine (see MacPherson 2012).[7] Because there is no agreement about the boundaries between perception and cognition, or even whether there are any, some philosophers feel that the debate about what properties perception represents is simply "intractable" (Phillips 2019, p. 341). Further issues with the modularity model are the problem of integrating information for high-level cognitive functions and the problem of accommodating the phenomenon of neural plasticity.[8]

[7] We should notice that the notion of cognitive penetration is quite debated. MacPherson (2012) defines cognitive penetration as the case when cognitive processes causally affect the processing of sensory information. Many cases of prima facie cognitive penetration are often misleading; for instance, a case where sensory information is interpreted under the light of some cognitive state does not count as cognitive penetration unless the cognitive state directly affects what is perceived. The debate is divided along three lines: (i) cognitive penetration is a genuine phenomenon that blurs the boundaries between perception and cognition (MacPherson 2012) (ii) cognitive penetration is not a genuine phenomenon because there are clear-cut, impenetrable boundaries between perception and cognition (Block 2014 and Firestone & Scholl 2016); (iii) cognitive penetration is not a genuine phenomenon because there is no genuine distinction between perception and cognition (Bruner 1957; Clark 2013; Lupyan 2015).

[8] See Carruthers (2006) for a systematic restructuration and defense of Fodor's system.

But one can reject the appeal to modularity even independently of the success of the theory. This is the second reason against the criterion under scrutiny. Susanna Siegel (in her debate with Byrne, 2017) rightly maintains that the debate about modularity does not really matter for the study of visual experience in particular and perceptual experience in general. It may well be that conscious perceptual experience goes well beyond early visual modules, to be the sophisticated end product of later central modules or even of the whole modular system. Moreover, modules are defined functionally, and functions are likely unsuitable to capture phenomenal consciousness. It is thus better to treat the discussion about our experience of the world as independent of any sub-personal perception/cognition distinction.

The criterion inspired by the Thin Content View rests on shaky ground. But the Thin Content View itself is not more solid. Siegel (2010) has conducted a systematic attack against this it. I will now move to discuss her alternative, i.e., the Rich Content View. Because of its more liberal stance, the Rich Content View seems better equipped to account for cases of phenomenal contrast such as that between the experience of seeing pine trees before and after acquiring the capacity for recognising pine trees. I believe Siegel identifies a genuine case of phenomenal contrast, but I disagree that the best explanation for it is a change in sensory phenomenal content. I will argue that perceptual experience involves more than mere sensory phenomenology. My position is that a full-blown perceptual state involves cognitive phenomenal properties whenever it happens to involve conceptual capacities.

2.2.2. The Rich Content View

To reject the Thin Content View is not to claim that perception always represents high-level properties; only that it *can*. If perception can sometimes present high-level properties, it can also directly justify a larger and more interesting number of propositions, not only those concerning low-level properties. This seems to fit our epistemological practice: the proposition that your

mother is in the living room seems to find plausible immediate justification in the state of *seeing your mother* in the living room. More problematic examples are those involving, for instance, social properties, like hearing *a Volkswagen* in the street, causal properties, meaning, and the like. But since I am here only concerned with the possibility that *some* high-level properties are represented in perception, I luckily do not have to take a stance on these more controversial cases.

Because of its more liberal stance, the Rich Content View seems better equipped to account for cases of phenomenal contrast. One such famous case is that of the expert pine tree spotter. Suppose you are learning to recognize pine trees. Let us call E_1 the experience of seeing a pine tree *before* acquiring the capacity to recognize pine trees. E_2 is the experience of seeing a pine tree *after* having acquired such capacity. Siegel's claim is that there is a (sensory) phenomenal difference between $E_1$and E_2, and that the best explanation for it is that there is a representational difference between E_1 and E_2, in that E_2 but not E_1 represents the K-property 'being a pine tree'.

Here is the argument paraphrased from Siegel (2010, p.101):

0) E_2 differs in its phenomenology from E_1;
1) If E_2 differs in its phenomenology from E_1, then there is a phenomenological difference between E_1 and E_2.
2) If there is a phenomenological difference between E_1 and E_2, then the two experiences differ in content.
3) If there is a difference in content between E_1 and E_2, the difference is with respect to K-properties.

Premise (0) gets the argument off the ground; I agree with Siegel that the premise is intuitive, and I do not wish to reject it. Premise (1) specifies that E_1 and E_2 differ phenomenally. To reject (1) is to claim that the relevant phenomenological contrast is *not* between E_1 and E_2. Premise (2) can be

rejected on grounds that the difference between E_1 and E_2 is phenomenological but not representational. Against this objection, Siegel replies that one cannot feel a sense of familiarity without *representing* something as familiar (p. 109-110). Finally, against premise (3) one could argue that there is a representational difference between the two episodes, but this is not a difference in the representation of K-properties.

The point of disagreement between me and the proponents of the Rich Content View regards the kind of phenomenology associated with the representation of high-level properties in perception. I agree with Siegel that there is a phenomenal difference between E_1 and E_2, as well as a representational difference, but neither of these is solely sensory. Seeing something *as* plausibly involves concept deployment; and concept deployment comes with its own phenomenology, which is non-sensory. This thesis is defended also by Montague (2023; see next section).

Why does Siegel hold that the perceptual representation of high-level properties is associated with sensory phenomenology? Montague discusses two hypotheses. In Siegel's argument, coming to learn how to recognize pine trees determines a shift in representational content and the associated phenomenology, but holds that the latter is associated with sensory phenomenology only. According to Montague, either Siegel drives a wedge between the exercise of recognitional capacities and concept deployment, so that seeing something as a pine tree only requires the first but not the latter; or she accepts that the exercise of recognitional capacities is a matter of concept deployment, but holds that the latter is associated with sensory phenomenology only (Montague 2023, p. 239ff.). I think these are plausible interpretations, but I would like to suggest a somewhat different reading.

Here is how Siegel introduces the cognitive phenomenological objection to her argument:

> There are various kinds of phenomenally conscious states besides sensory states. There are bodily sensations, visual imagery, background experiences (such as moods), and perhaps […] cognitive experiences. If the phenomenological change described in the two cases is due to a difference with respect to any of these states, the two most plausible suggestions seem to be that it is a change either in some sort of cognitive

> phenomenology or in background phenomenology. Someone might be tempted to re-describe the text and tree cases so that, as far as visual phenomenology is concerned, the experiences had with and without recognitional dispositions are the same, but the difference in phenomenology of overall experiences is due to a non-sensory factor. If these descriptions were correct, then the examples would not bear on what properties visual experience represents at all, and hence would not bear at all on the Rich Content View. (p. 102)

And here is how I reconstruct the objection as Siegel presents it (p. 102ff.):

1) As far as visual phenomenology is concerned, E_1 and E_2 are identical;
2) Yet, there is still a phenomenal difference between the overall experiences of E_1 and E_2;
3) Thus, there is a non-sensory phenomenal difference between the overall phenomenology of E_1 and E_2.

The relevant "non-sensory factor" is, according to Siegel, a feeling of familiarity that results from gaining a recognitional capacity for pine trees, and that "[this] familiarity […] is reflected in cognitive phenomenology" (p. 103). Notice that Siegel considers the view to be a rejection of premise (1), i.e., the denial that "the phenomenological contrast is a contrast *between* E_1 and E_2" (p. 101; my emph.). Hence, she must take the friend of cognitive phenomenology to argue that the relevant phenomenal contrast is *not* between E_1 and E_2, but *extrinsic* to them, as the result of a change in some cognitive or background state. The relevant phenomenal change thus results from *another* accompanying state that co-occurs with the perceptual experience. This is a crucial point whose importance will become clearer with the examples discussed below.

Siegel then turns to discuss the possible attitudes and their relative contents that can account for such 'feeling of familiarity'. Let us, with Siegel, conceive of this feeling of familiarity as a propositional attitude of some sort (as cognitive states are usually conceived to be). In our list of attitudes, some will be committal (e.g., beliefs, judgments, hunches and intuitions), and

some will not (e.g., contemplations). Based on the committal or non-committal character of the attitude, Siegel raises two sets of objections.

If the attitude that explains the feeling of familiarity was committal, then it would be defeated by countervailing evidence. For the sake of simplicity, I will follow Siegel in focusing only on the case of dwelling on a belief with the content 'that kind of tree is familiar'. The argument meant to support this claim involves a thought experiment about virtual reality. Suppose that you are an expert pine tree spotter walking in a pine tree forest; after a while, someone tells you that the whole forest is just a hologram. According to Siegel, this knowledge would cause you to cease to hold the belief that you are looking at a familiar tree. If it is the holding of the belief that is responsible for the phenomenal change from E_1 to E_2, then

> we would expect your acceptance of the hologram story to make the hologram look as the forest looked to you before you knew how to recognize pine trees. But, intuitively, the hologram could look just the same as the forest looked to you after you became an expert. So, the familiarity with pine trees does not seem to have its phenomenological effects at the level of belief. (p. 105)

As I understand the argument, the point is that losing the belief that 'those are familiar trees' should cause the holographic pine trees to look as they looked to you before you knew how to recognize pine trees, that is, they should look *un*familiar to you. However, it is likely that the pine trees would still look familiar to you, even after learning that those are just holographic pine trees. Therefore, your belief that 'those trees look familiar' cannot explain the phenomenal contrast between E_1 and E_2. Let us call this the *Holographic Forest* Case.

The second objection concerns non-committal attitudes, e.g., merely entertaining that *p* without committing to the truth of *p*; in our case, the relevant *p* is the same as before, i.e., 'that kind of tree looks familiar'. In this version of the cognitive phenomenological argument, when you look at a pine tree after having acquired the relevant recognitional disposition, "you get into a phenomenally conscious mental state different from sensing" (p. 105). Notice that this other state, which by hypothesis is the one of merely entertaining the proposition that 'that kind of tree

is familiar', has to be occurrent in order to be responsible for the phenomenal contrast between E_1 and E_2. But Siegel argues that the phenomenal change from E_1 to E_2i s *not* akin that of being in an *occurrent* state of recognition of something as a pine tree. Rather, it is a sort of "tacit recognition (or misrecognition)" (p. 106). Simply undergoing the phenomenon of recognizing someone or something does not seem to involve "an extra episode (or occurrent state), beyond sensing, for the phenomenological change to take effect" (*ivi*). The point is supported by the case

> of being bombarded by pictures and captions on billboards along the highway […]; understanding the text on the billboard as you drive by isn't a deliberate affair; rather (if the billboards have been positioned correctly), it just happens. The advertisers would doubtless be happy if you lingered over every billboard's message, but no such event need occur in order for you to take in the semantic properties of the text as you whiz by. This suggests that the taking in can be merely sensory. (p. 108)

I take it that the main point of this example is phenomenological: in understanding a sentence, there seems to be no other (non-sensory) state involved except for the (sensory) state of reading a text. I call this the *Billboards Case*.

Let us now assess Siegel's argument. Siegel claims that the crucial difference between E_1 and E_2, according to the advocates of cognitive phenomenology, consists in the fact that E_2, but not E_1, involves an *additional* cognitive representational state, caused by the recognition of the tree; and that this additional cognitive state is accompanied by a feeling of familiarity which underwrites the content 'that tree is familiar'.

Against Siegel's reconstruction, we should notice that it is not clear why the cognitive phenomenology strategy should invoke an additional, extrinsic cognitive state to explain the pine tree case. This might be explained by Montague's point above that Siegel seems to drive a wedge between the exercise of recognitional capacities and concept deployment. But it might also be that Siegel does not consider recognitional capacities as cognitive in nature. This is an empirical question that is not yet settled. But if this is the reason, it is worth noticing that neither Siegel nor

Montague offer enough reason to decide on the question of whether recognitional capacities are a case of perceptual learning or not.[9]

It is thus incorrect to ascribe to the defender of cognitive phenomenology the view that the experience of recognising a pine tree involves a cognitive quality in virtue of causing *another* state (a belief or a non-committal propositional attitude) that is accompanied by a feeling of familiarity. In fact, it is not altogether clear why the relevant cognitive phenomenal feeling should be a feeling of familiarity. The exercise of recognitional capacities is linked to the feeling of familiarity, but it can be disassociated from it.[10] Vice-versa, one can have the feeling that someone is familiar while failing to recognize them.[11]

What is, then, the correct analysis of the two cases from a cognitive phenomenal point of view? The defender of cognitive phenomenology can very well claim that the experience of recognizing a pine tree is *itself* at least partly a *cognitive* experience endowed with its own proprietary character.

In *Holographic Forest*, Siegel mistargets the cognitive phenomenal state responsible for the phenomenal switch from E_1 to E_2. The right cognitive state is the deployment of the recognitional capacity for pine trees. The deployment of this capacity causes a cognitive phenomenal change sufficient to explain the phenomenal change occurring between E_1 and E_2. A second affective state, i.e., the feeling of familiarity, or a related cognitive state, may or may not co-occur. This is why learning about the holographic nature of the pine trees before you will not cause them to look unfamiliar or not pine-tree-ish. Real and virtual pine trees (if the hologram is well done) are indistinguishable and thus trigger the deployment of the same concept. Your

[9] While Montague adamantly states that she considers recognitional capacities a conceptual matter, Siegel is more ambiguous. In her paper with Bayne, she first writes that learning to recognise pine trees is a form of perceptual learning, only to later clarify that "the contrast method doesn't care which processes produce the phenomenal contrasts" (2017, p. 68), i.e., whether perceptual or not.

[10] As in the Capgras syndrome. People affected by this syndrome recognize people, objects and places for what they are but fail to experience them as familiar. As a result, they develop the paranoid thought that, for instance, their beloved ones have been replaces by lookalike impostors (Shah et al. 2022).

[11] Indeed, it is because the recognitional process is so to say 'jammed' that the feeling of familiarity may arise; if I had to speculate, I would say the feeling of familiarity should better be thought as a metacognitive feeling that tracks sub-personal cues, rather than a cognitive state with a distinctive representational content.

recognitional capacities are unaffected, and so is your cognitive experience of deploying them. What changes is the background belief that you find yourself in the real world. Furthermore, things can look familiar in a virtual world too. What the sense of virtuality challenges is one's sense of reality, not the feeling of familiarity. If this is correct, then learning that 'those trees are not real trees' should not cancel out the belief that 'those trees are familiar'.

As for the second case, the defender of cognitive phenomenology can argue that the state of understanding a meaning is individuated by its type-specific kind of cognitive phenomenology (per the stronger view[12] of cognitive phenomenology). In *Billboards*, Siegel takes the friend of cognitive phenomenology to pose a separate occurrent state, beyond the sensory one, that is responsible for the phenomenal change. She dismisses the view by arguing that the sensory experience of the written words seems sufficient to bring about the relevant change. The friend of cognitive phenomenology would agree to this extent: there is no reason to posit a *separate* phenomenal and occurrent state that explains the phenomenal change. One's reading a string of words in a language she understands *just is* one's experience of understanding the sentence. But Siegel needs a further argument to claim that this understanding is merely sensory.

In fact, *Billboards* may contain a tacit argument of this sort. The idea is that one can take the semantic properties of a text in quite quickly, "as you whiz by" – quickly that it is more likely to be a perceptual than a cognitive, slower, process. But this is a rather poor argument. First, it relies on the assumption that the cognitive system is slower than the perceptual; this is an independent and empirical claim that, albeit widespread (see e.g., Block 2022), and presupposes a hierarchical understanding of the borders between and the roles of perception and cognition that can be challenged (see Williams, 2023). Second, I doubt that the experience in *Billboards* is a full-blown experience of understanding. If you "whiz by" too fast, you can only get a generic

[12] According to weak cognitive phenomenology, every tokening of an intentional content-type can have different phenomenal properties on different occasions. According to the strong version of the view, each intentional content-type is associated with a unique cognitive phenomenal property, necessarily instantiated whenever a conscious thought with that intentional content-type occurs (see Montague 2023).

understanding of what is going on, e.g., that the words on the billboards are in a language you are familiar with, or that they are likely trying to sell you something. Let us grant that what you take in is too fast to be processed cognitively; but is this an experience of understanding? Perhaps seeing something as meaningful is a property that can be taken in perceptually; but this is unlike the full-blown experience of understanding the meaning of a text.

To summarize, I have argued against the Thin Content View that it seems plausible that perception *can* represent high-level properties. Against the Rich Content View, however, I have argued that the kind of phenomenology accompanying the perceptual representation of high-level properties is cognitive. This is because recognitional capacities are plausibly conceptual, and concept deployment likely comes with its own cognitive phenomenal character. In order to argue for this claim, I have dismissed Siegel's reason against the cognitive phenomenological strategy to account for cases of phenomenal contrast such as the pine tree spotter, *Holographic Forest*, and *Billboards*. While this might not be a knock-down argument against the Rich Content View, it at least puts the cognitive phenomenological strategy back on the market.

2.3. Michelle Montague's object strategy

The deployment of conceptual capacities is a cognitive activity; as such, it is likely to make a non-sensory phenomenal contribution to the overall state of the subject. Perceptual states may thus be 'contaminated' with cognitive phenomenological features when cognitive capacities, such as recognizing something *as* F or seeing something *as* meaningful, are involved.

As mentioned, Montague (2023) holds a similar position, from which she and I draw however very different conclusions concerning the contrast between perceptual and cognitive states. She suggests distinguishing not between perception and cognition, but between *sense* and cognition, or more precisely between *sensory* and *cognitive phenomenology*. Sensory phenomenology is the phenomenology typically associated with the exercise of sensory modalities and the

representation of low-level properties. Cognitive phenomenology is the phenomenology typically associated with thoughts and the representation of high-level properties. While the representation of low-level properties is not conceptual, the representation of high-level properties, whether in perception or though, is always conceptual. In other words, we could say that, according to Montague, cognitive phenomenology is the phenomenology associated with concept deployment.

Sensory phenomenology is not exclusive to the perceptual domain and cognitive phenomenology is not exclusive to the cognitive domain. On the one hand, all conscious perception, according to Montague, involves concept deployment, and thus a complex of sensory and cognitive phenomenological elements (although in principle there could be pure sensory phenomenal states); on the other hand, sensory phenomenology can, in the form of mental imagery, accompany thought as well as other non-perceptual sensory states such as bodily sensations. Montague claims that "these facts preclude making a perception/thought distinction on the basis of phenomenology", i.e., a distinction based on their *attitudes*:

> A lot more needs to be done to defend this view, but the claim is that these distinctive kinds of content explain the felt differences between perceiving, believing, wondering, desiring and so on, but these felt differences do not warrant classifying beliefs, desires, and wonderings, for example, into a single fundamental class that is distinguishable from perception. Rather, these content differences provide a way of individuating mental states without appealing to a distinctive metaphysical element we have traditionally called 'attitudes'. (2023, p. 243)

Montague's sense/cognition distinction is part of a larger eliminativist strategy against the attitude component of intentional mental states, which I will discuss in the next Chapter. I shall also discuss the role of attitudes in determining the phenomenal character of psychological kinds in Chapterss 6 and 7. In the remainder of this section, I want to focus on Montague's thesis that the felt differences between sensory phenomenology and cognitive phenomenology are reducible

to the representation of low-level properties on the one hand and high-level properties on the other.

I am not unsympathetic to the spirit of the proposal. I too believe that the boundaries of perception and cognition are more blurred than not, and that perception can cognitive phenomenological features. I also agree that perceptual phenomenology is not exhausted by sensory phenomenology only. Sensory phenomenology can occur in the form of sensory imagery in non-perceptual states. Moreover, pure sensory states are likely non-intentional. Compare the experience of a green afterimage with that of seeing a green meadow (suppose that you see the green meadow as a green expanse that occupies your entire visual field). One way to explain this difference is in terms of intentionality: while the experience of seeing a green meadow clearly presents something *beyond* the experience itself, the experience of a green afterimage does not. Thus, sensory phenomenology is likely insufficient for perceptual intentionality (or any intentionality whatsoever, for that matter).

But how does Montague explain the phenomenal difference between having a green afterimage and seeing a green meadow? One idea is that the phenomenology of the green afterimage is exhausted by sensory phenomenology only, while the experience of seeing a green meadow features *cognitive* phenomenal properties *in addition* to sensory ones. Notice that Montague holds that the deployment of any concept C is accompanied by a distinctive type of cognitive phenomenal character. In this way, the difference between seeing a green meadow and having a green afterimage is explained by the fact that the first experience, but not the second, involves the relevant concept. The interplay of sensory and cognitive phenomenal properties (and thus the representation of low- and high-level properties) would then result in the experience of perceptual intentionality.

Notice that this explanation would commit Montague to claim that the contents of perception are always at least partly conceptual. This is a rather unpopular claim.[13] Nonetheless,

[13] On the topic of experiential conceptualism, see Chapter 3.

this seems to be Montague's preferred strategy. To see this, consider her discussion of detection of an object's boundary (also in her 2023). According to Montague, the role of concepts within the perceptual system is that of *unifying* and *organizing* the subject's sensory array into separable, independent objects. In the case of shape detection, Montague notices that not all shapes that are present in the subject's environment indicate an object's boundaries; some might be internal to such boundaries, or over-imposed, like on a cow's mottled coat. It is then likely that a given shape is perceived as forming the boundary of an object only *after* the system has already perceived such shape as belonging to a distinct individual object. Because the experience of a shape *as* the boundary of an object can occur only *after* object detection, which is arguably a quite late stage of the visual process, usually located somewhere between high-level perception and early cognition, shape detection must be a cognitive process.

This story is quite interesting, and I can grant it for at least some cases; consider the Gestalt Dalmatian: the switch from seeing some scattered black dots to seeing the dog's contours happens only *after* we realize that some of those dots belong together to form a figure. It could be however objected that, as with the case of the pine tree spotter, it is not clear that this switch is cognitive in nature.

Apart from the (for some, controversial) commitment to some form of experiential conceptualism, Montague's strategy has a further problem, namely that of distinguishing between the experience of seeing a green meadow and merely *imagining* a green meadow. In fact, it is highly plausible that imagining a green meadow requires having and deploying the concept of a meadow – in fact, it is arguably more plausible than the idea that perceptual experience is always conceptual. If this is correct, then both perceptual experience and imagination figure the same 'mix' of qualitative properties, i.e., sensory and cognitive. Hence, the combination of sensory phenomenology and cognitive phenomenology does not seem to exhaust perceptual phenomenology.

My take on this issue is that the deployment of any concept, in this case, that of meadow, makes a phenomenological contribution to the overall phenomenology of the state all right; but so does the phenomenology of the attitude component. The experiences of seeing and imagining a green meadow bear some resemblances because they both plausibly involve the deployment of the concept of a meadow along with some sensory phenomenal properties (e.g., some green phenomenology). Yet, the meadow 'feels' differently to the subject. The attitude phenomenology is not reducible to any mixture of more basic phenomenal qualities.

In her (2022), Montague advances a more plausible view than her present Object-strategy, according to which different kinds of mental states are individuated by different kinds of contents altogether. Thus, a green afterimage, a visual experience as of a green meadow, and imagining a green meadow instantiate three different kinds of content. Again, I will claim that her view ultimately fails to account for the differences between certain types of mental states. I discuss this in the next Chapter.

Finally, I should mention Kriegel's (2019a) objection against Montague's view. Kriegel argues that the possibility for low-level properties to be represented by both cognitive and perceptual states automatically rules out Montague's strategy as a viable account for the phenomenal difference between these two states. He then suggests shifting the focus from *what* type of properties is prerogative of either perceptual or cognitive states, to *how* the same type of properties is represented by the two kinds of mental state. We shall do so in Chapter 4.

To summarize my discussion so far, the contribution of the cognitive activity to perception makes a phenomenal difference to the subject's overall experience of that state. This can be made manifest through the method of phenomenal contrast. Yet, the overall experience retains a marked perceptual 'feel'. This proves that the phenomenal character of perceptual states as a whole cannot be accounted for solely in terms of what kind of properties are represented in its content, whether we argue that sensory representational properties exhaust the possible contents of experience, or whether we open such content to the representation of cognitive

elements (such as shapes or kind concepts); in both cases, we fail to account for the distinctive character of perception vis-à-vis other attitudes.

2.4. Conclusions

The Chapter dealt with what I called Object-strategies. Object-strategies are varied, but they all distinguish between perceptual and cognitive states based on the type of *objects* (broadly intended) that figure in their respective contents. We have discussed three examples of this strategy. The first is Russell's; according to Russell, perception relates the subject to simple objects and cognition to complex objects. In a later version of this theory, Russell claims that perception is a relation that has adicity not greater than two (in which one of the relata is the subject), while cognition has adicity greater than two. I have showed that Russell's theory hardly deals with unsuccessful cases of perception and judgment. Nonetheless, his take on the nature of perception and cognition will greatly influence later conceptions of the admissible contents of knowledge, which we will discuss in Chapter 5.

Second, we have dealt with the thesis that perception represents only low-level properties, while cognition can represent both low-level and high-level properties. I have argued that the Thin Content View can become ground for a criterion to distinguish between perceptual and cognitive states, but that this rests on the shaky ground of Fodor's modularism. The Thin View has a formidable opponent in the Rich Content View. However, even though the Rich Content View treats cases of phenomenal contrast like the pine tree spotter more successfully than the Thin Content View, it does not rule out the cognitive phenomenal strategy as a possible competitor.

The cognitive phenomenal treatment of cases of phenomenal contrasts like the pine tree spotter might lead to the third Object-strategy I have discussed. According to this third theory,

represented by Montague, the key distinction is between the representation of sensory phenomenal properties vis-à-vis cognitive phenomenal properties. I have argued that the phenomenal character of perceptual intentionality is underdetermined by any mixture of sensory and cognitive qualities. Moreover, there is no phenomenal match between the representation of low-level properties in perception vis-à-vis in cognition (as suggested by Kriegel 2019a), nor between the representation of high-level properties in perception vis-à-vis in cognition (thus suggesting that the mere representation of high-level properties does not exhaust the cognitive phenomenal character).

In the next Chapter, I will discuss the new version of Montague's Object-strategy alongside other similar theories according to which the differences between mental states are exhausted by differences in types of representational contents. In other words, these groups of theories argue that for each type of mental state M there is a corresponding type of representational content C, such if the experience instantiates C, the experience is *ipso facto* of type M. Against these views, I will defend the irreducibility of the attitudinal component by showing that some differences between types of mental states cannot be accommodated into the content alone.

CHAPTER 3 - DEFENDING (PERCEPTUAL) ATTITUDES

3.1. Introduction

We commonly say things like *Mary believes that Santa Claus wears red pants*, *Donald thinks he won the elections*, *the dog believes that the cat is on the tree*. We can identify three components of these intentional standard mental state ascriptions: the *subject* (Mary), the *attitude* (of belief) that they entertain towards the content, and the *content* that they believe (that Santa Claus wears red pants). For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the content as the part of intentional attitude ascriptions usually (but not exclusively) introduced by the that-clause, and as the attitude as what makes a mental state the kind of state it is, e.g., a belief rather than a desire.

Standard intentional mental states ascriptions suggest the following, tripartite, metaphysics:

> *Tripartite View:* for any intentional mental state M, the logical form of M is R*ab*, where R is the attitude, *a* is the subject, and *b* is the content.

In this Chapter, I am going to defend the Tripartite View against views that propose the elimination of the attitude component from the metaphysical structure of intentional mental states. These views support the following simplified metaphysics:

Dual view:[1] for any intentional mental state M, the logical form of M is *ab*, where *b* is the content and *a* is subject.

My claim is that attitudes are a fundamental psychological and theoretical element of intentional mental states that cannot be reduced to the content of the state. In what follows, I will discuss the characteristics of the Tripartite and the Dual View more in detail. I shall argue that philosophers who cast doubt on the Tripartite View usually take issues with the following two claims: (i) that in being in a given intentional mental state, the subject its related to some content (for some sense of content to be defined) that exists independently of this relation (*Abstract*); (ii) that attitude and content are two distinct components of mental states that have different metaphysical natures (*Separateness*).

I will then argue for my claim in two steps. First, I will show that the Dual View cannot address cases of cross-modal perception nor can properly distinguish between episodes of perception and imagination directed at the same content. Montague's (2022) recent proposal will be my preferred example. During this discussion, I will restrict my attention to the case of perceptual attitudes for the sake of brevity and focus; a thorough discussion of the Dual view for cognitive states would deserve a separate Chapter, but I will extend my objections to the cognitive domain whenever I see fit. Second, I will undermine the Dualist strategy by showing that one can reject (a version of) *Abstract* and (a version of) *Separateness* without thereby being forced to abandon the Tripartite View.

[1] I borrow the labels 'Tripartite' and 'Dual Views' from Montague (2022).

3.2. Tripartite versus Dual Views

Arguments against the Tripartite view often start by questioning the following claim:

> *Relational*: in being in a certain mental state, the subject is related to some content, such as concrete items, properties, sense data, combinations of these items, and so on (see Mendelovici 2018a, p. 196ff), that exists independently of this relation.

I shall here focus on the case in which these contents are abstract, intrinsically representational objects. I thus reformulate *Relational* in the following narrower sense:

> *Abstract*: in being in a certain mental state, the subject is related to some abstract, intrinsically representational content, that exists independently of this relation

Abstract is a thesis about the source of intentionality, i.e., how mental states gain their intentional character. The reference is to the Fregean view, according to which mental states do not intrinsically represent but represent in virtue of being suitably related to essentially representational entities (see, e.g., Hanks, 2007). These entities are usually taken to be propositions, which are essentially representational *qua* bearers of truth values.[2]

Within the Fregean picture, it is customary to draw a sharp distinction between the content of the mental state so identified, and the attitude that is directed at it. Third-world Fregean senses are put into relation with states of the subject via an act of 'apprehension' or

[2] *Abstract* an also be extended to sub-sentential items like concepts, properties, and relations. The problem for this option is that of explaining how sub-sentential entities can be intrinsically representational or at least determine the representational character of the states that have them as their content. A further problem with non-propositional relational views is that of 'empty' attitudes, such as searching for the Fountain of Youth (Prior, 1971, p. 130). See Buchanan and Grzankowski (2022) for possible solutions to these problems.

'grasping' of the sense. In the same way a perceived object remains extraneous to the act through which it is perceived, so the sense remains extraneous to the act through which it is apprehended:

> The apprehension of a thought presupposes someone who apprehends it, who thinks. He is the bearer of the thinking but not of the thought. Although the thought does not belong to the contents of the thinker's consciousness yet something in his consciousness must be aimed at the thought. But this should not be confused with the thought itself. (Frege 1957, p. 307)

According to the Fregean view, the attitude is *not* part of the content: they are two distinct metaphysical entities that belong to two different ontological plans (see also Kusch 2020, sect. 4; McIntyre 1987; Rowlands 2015). Let us call this core anti-psychologistic thesis *Separateness*:

> *Separateness*: the attitude and the content of a mental state are two distinct, metaphysically independent (in a way to be defined) components of our mental states.

I have formulated *Separateness* as a direct consequence of the Fregean view of the source of intentionality, according to which attitude and content are separate in the sense of being, respectively, concrete and abstract. But *Separateness* can be independently motivated by other views about the source of intentionality and the nature of intentional contents. For instance, if one takes contents to be worldly objects, content and attitude will both be concrete but nonetheless separate, for one is a public, physical object, and the other a private, subjective item.

Let us return to the Fregean View. The view seems to easily accommodate several important features of intentional mental state ascriptions. Here is a non-exhaustive list. First, attitude and content seem to be independent and recombinable elements of intentional attitude ascriptions (e.g., thinking that *p*, thinking that *q*, desiring that *p*…). Russell, for instance, was a famous advocate of this view (see also Perry 1994):

> What is believed […] I shall call the "content" of the belief. […] We must distinguish between believing and what is believed. I may believe that Columbus crossed the Atlantic, that all Cretans

> are liars, that two and two are four, or that nine times six is fifty-six; in all these cases the believing is just the same, and only the contents believed are different. (1921, p. 232–4)

Second, the Tripartite view accommodates valid inferences of the sort that if Mary believes P and Adam believes P, then there is *something* that they both believe. This inference is valid also across different attitudes: if Mary believes P and Adam desires P, then Mary believes exactly what Adam desires, namely P. Third, different attitude-types have distinct functional profiles, so that the difference between believing P and desiring P can be cashed out in terms of how each state acts within the system (e.g., 'belief' and 'desire' boxes). Fourth, different intentional attitudes appear to have different 'directions of fit', depending on their 'conditions of satisfaction', i.e., conditions *that* such-and-such is the case (Searle, 1983); propositions thus provide the means to evaluate different attitudes.

One pressing issue for the Fregean view is to explain how subjects can make cognitive contact with entities beyond space and time. This is a problem for all Platonic views in general that in this case is aggravated by the fact that the *explanandum*, namely the intentional character of our mental state, is an everyday phenomenon with causal force in the physical world. Jubien thus voices a common concern when he writes that "it borders on the absurd to suppose that any inert, non-spatiotemporal entity" could have a part in the representational relation: "representation is ultimately the business of beings with intentional capacities, in short, thinkers" (2001 p. 54). Further issues with propositions themselves regard the lack of clear identity conditions for propositions (Quine 1960) and Benacerraf's dilemma for propositions (Jubien 2001).

Because of the interdependence of *Abstract* and *Separateness*, those who wants to reject the Fregean view of the source of intentionality are naturally brought to reconsider the role and nature of attitudes. On the Fregean picture, attitudes are essentially defined in relational terms, but, with the rejection of *Abstract*, attitudes must be found a different role. Notice that the challenge to *Abstract* can also arrive indirectly, that is, via rejection of *Separateness*. In other words,

rejecting the idea that content and attitude are independent elements of intentional mental states invites one to rethinking one's view about the source of intentionality.

Here is an example of the latter approach. One way to challenge *Separateness* is via rejecting Frege's distinction between the content and force of an assertion. Content and force are clearly separated in Frege's philosophy of language, in that "the propositional contents of speech acts are supposed to be bare, forceless representations that are put forward in different ways in different speech acts. The force of a speech act is the way in which a proposition is put forward" (Hanks 2007, p. 142).[3] Act-theorists offer instead a unified view, in which the force of a speech act or a mental state "corresponds to the way in which a subject has combined together objects, properties or relations" (Hanks 2007, p. 152; see also Hanks 2011; Soames 2013; Davis 2021). States with assertive force thus involve a subject applying a property or relation to some objects; states with interrogative force involve a subject asking whether a property or relation holds of some objects; states with imperative force involve a subject wanting to bring about that a property or relation holds of some object.

As a result of this view, the act-theory rejects the Platonic view of propositions as abstract entities that have representational powers independently of the subjects that represent them. The order of representation is, so to say, inverted. Propositions are *acts or states of thinking beings*, such as the act of asserting that F is *a* (Davis 2021, p. 667). Mental states do not gain their representational power through being directed at propositions; rather, propositions inherit their representational features from being types of concrete tokens of mental actions performed by subjects.

As we can see from the example of the act-theory of propositions, challenging *Separateness* forces us to rethink the role of attitudes and contents, thereby abandoning *Abstract*. But, as I

[3] One of Frege's arguments for the content-force distinction is the fact that a sentence in the indicative form can be uttered without being judged or asserted, as the antecedent or consequent of a conditional (see Frege 1979, p. 251).

mentioned above, this strategy can also run backward, i.e., from the rejection of *Abstract* to the rejection of *Separateness*.

This kind of strategy, I believe, is at play in Montague's recent 2022 paper. Like the act-theorist, Montague endorses the claim that a state is intentional *not* in virtue of being related to some abstract content, but at least partly in virtue of some intrinsic properties of the subject. To be more precise, Montague is a supporter of the Phenomenal Intentionality Thesis (PIT), i.e., the claim that phenomenal consciousness grounds a basic, narrow, kind of intentionality, i.e., phenomenal intentionality.[4] While it is true that they can fulfil more than one role, attitudes are often essentially defined in relational terms; one might then wonder what role is left for them to fulfil, if not that of relating the subject with some independent content. Her answer, simply put, is that attitudes are redundant in that "in being in an intentional state the subject is simply in a complex contentful state rather than being related to something else, a content" (p.272).

I shall now move to discuss versions of the Dual View concerning perceptual states more in detail.

3.3. The Dual View for Perceptual States

> The phenomenal difference between seeing an aeroplane overhead and hearing one is partly a matter of the content—*what* is experienced—but also a matter of the mode of apprehending this content, the intentional mode in Searle's[5] sense (Crane, 2003, p. 51; orig. emph.).

Crane's quote is an example of how the Tripartite view can account for the phenomenal differences between sensory modalities. Crane is a self-acclaimed strong representationalist, i.e., he holds that

[4] For an introduction on the phenomenal intentionality theory, see Kriegel (2013).

[5] However, Searle denies that propositional attitudes are relational. See Searle (1983).

all phenomenal differences between states are differences in representational features; strong representationalism contrasts with weak representationalism, according to which not all phenomenal differences between sates are accounted for by representational differences. According to Crane's version of strong representationalism, these differences are the result of two representational components of the state: the *content* and the *mode*. The content is "what one puts into words, if one has words into which to put it". The *mode* is what relates[6] the subject to the content and makes a state the kind of state it is (see also Chalmers, 2004). This relational structure serves to accommodate the phenomenon described in the quote, namely that the same content can be presented under various modes, as well as different contents under the same mode (see also Block 1996). This version of representationalism is also known as *intramodal representationalism.*[7] (following Byrne's 2001 terminology).

According to *intra*modal representationalism, the phenomenal character of perception is fixed by both mode and content, not by the content alone. The Dualist would disagree: all differences in conscious perceptual states can be fully explained in terms of the content of the states. There are at least two versions of this thesis for perceptual experience, a representationalist and a non-representationalist one.

The first is what Byrne (2001) calls *intermodal representationalism*. The view has it that for each sensory modality there is a type of content such that if the experience represents it, then the experience is *ipso facto* in the relevant modality. For instance, an experience involving colours is *ipso facto* a visual experience; and an experience involving sounds is *ipso facto* an auditory experience. Dretske (1995) and Tye (1995, 2000) are intramodal representationalists. Both Chalmers (2004) and Bourget (2017a) offer arguments in favour of intramodal representationalism but are not explicitly committed to it.

[6] Though Crane's modes are relational, not all forms of intramodal representationalism have to share this commitment. For instance, Bourget (2017a) defines modes for the intramodal representationalist in a neutral way as "as functions from contents to phenomenal characters" that "determine how a content feels" (p. 253).
[7] Following Byrne's (2001) terminology. The same distinction is also done by Block (1996), who calls it *quasi*-representationalism and by Chalmers (2004), who calls it *impure* representationalism.

A non-representational variant of the Dual View has been recently put forward by Montague (2022). According to her view, to have a given perceptual experience of type T is to experience a certain type of phenomenology T that determines its T-type intentional content; these two elements alone exhaust any phenomenal differences between perceptual experiences of different types (p. 278). To give an example, "the most one could mean by 'visual attitude' […] is that all visual experiences share a certain kind of distinctive phenomenology, for example what it's like to see colour/shape" (p. 279). Likewise, all there is to auditory experiences is that they all share the same distinctive kind of phenomenology, i.e., auditory phenomenology. Hence, the difference between visual and auditory experiences is exhausted by their instantiating different kinds of phenomenology which in turn determine different intentional contents; attitudes are simply redundant. Here are some examples of perceptual states rewritten to fit the Dual View's *ab* (content-subject) structure (p. 277):

(1) A visual experience of a red round ball → red–round–object *a*.

(2) An auditory experience of quiet clarinet middle C → middle C–clarinetish–quiet *a*.

(3) A tactile experience of a smooth round rock or ball → smooth- feeling–round-feeling– object *a*.

In what follows, because of the abundance of arguments pros and cons intermodal representationalism, I will mostly focus the non-representationalist version of the Dual View about perception. Notice that it is crucial for this type of Dual View, as for any view of this sort, that one can successfully accommodate all the relevant differences between different experiences in the content alone. This task looks particularly difficult in two cases: (1) multi-modal perception, where the very same property is apparently perceived *in different ways*; this difference seems to be more naturally accounted for by the attitude-element and not by the content; (2) differences between

attitudes whose phenomenology is quite similar, as for instance imagination and perception. I shall now discuss each case separately.

3.4. First Objection

Some properties of objects are uniquely perceived via one sensory modality. Colours are plausibly perceived only visually, hot and cold via the nociceptive receptors in our skin. Some properties are multi-modally perceived. Flavours and smells require the cooperation of the olfactory and gustative systems to be detected. Finally, some properties can be perceived cross-modally: an auditory-impaired person perceives sounds as vibrations; and we can 'see' the smoothness of a surface without touching it.

A popular line of arguments to test the tenability of the representationalist version of the Dual view takes off from multi- and cross-modal experiences. As mentioned in previous section, it is usually believed that intramodal representationalism is better equipped to deal with cases of the same object being perceived in different sensory modalities, such as seeing and hearing an airplane overhead.[8] My first argument against the non-representationalist version of the Dual View proceeds along the same lines.

Let us focus on the multimodal experience of seeing a red ball while also toying with it. As one does so, two sensory modalities are activated, visual and tactile. The roundness that is both *seen* and *felt* is perceptually attributed to the same object within an integrated representation. Let us call the roundness that is seen and the roundness that is felt respectively V- and T-roundness.

According to the non-representationalist version of the Dual View, V- and T-roundness are determined by the instantiation of two different phenomenal types. In (V) the phenomenal-content *round* tokens a visual-type phenomenology. In (T), the phenomenal-content *round* tokens a

[8] See however Bourget (2017a) for a more recent comeback.

tactile-type phenomenology. At the same time, the subject undergoing the multi-sensory experience of the ball is aware of V- and T-roundness as instances of the *same* property, i.e., roundness. The question that I want to raise is how one could recover the representational commonality between (V) and (T), namely the fact that in both cases one is presented with two instances of the same property (that of being round). For if phenomenology determines content, and (V) and (T) are experiences of different phenomenal types, then V- and T-roundness are different types of representational properties. At a first glance, it seems that V- and T-roundness, on the Dual View, should have nothing in common – no more than instances of redness and warmth, or beliefs and desires, have.

Montague seems to be accepting this conclusion, as she writes that it is a "plausible" result that experiences of the same object in different sensory modalities "cannot have exactly the same (total) content" (2022, p. 280). The reason why she does not take it to be a serious issue is that she allows for the modality-independent property of roundness to be 'also' attributed to the ball within the same intentional content:

> one can perfectly well allow that the modality-independent property of roundness is also attributed to the ball; that it's also part of the intentional content of the experiences in question. This is completely compatible with the existence of the modality-specific intentional content. When congenitally blind A feels and congenitally 'tactless'/'feelingless' B sees the ball, both attribute the same geometrical property. (2022, p. 280)

But it is not clear how this suggestion is to be implemented. In particular, it is not clear whether the geometrical, modality-independent property of roundness is *perceived* as belonging to the ball or *judged* to be so. I will address the first case in the rest of this section and the second in the next section.

In order to assess the first case, we should first ask what it means to perceive modality-independent properties. One idea is that the relevant recognitional concept (ROUND) is activated and thus deployed in feeling/seeing the ball. Given that Montague is committed to the view that

cognitive phenomenology is the phenomenology of deploying concepts (as discussed in Chapter 2), the suggestion is that in feeling/seeing the ball, the subject's state instantiates some sensory phenomenal property associated with the sensory apprehension of the ball's roundness, and, in addition, some cognitive phenomenal property associated with the deployment of the geometrical concept ROUND.

However, this suggestion is implausible on several grounds. First, it does not seem to us, phenomenologically, that when we see and touch a round object, we perceive modality-dependent roundness *and*, in addition, modality-*independent* roundness. It also does not seem a parsimonious and efficient way of perceptually experiencing the world around us to represent each property twice. Second, the solution seems committed to the fact that one cannot retrieve the common content of different perceptions if they do not possess the concept for that property. This move seems to unnecessarily complicate and intellectualize the contents of experience. Third, and most importantly, the proposed solution does not address the problem in the right way. The issue was that it seems to us that the very same property we can see we can also touch, and vice versa. But the proposed solution introduces a *new* property, commonly represented in a neutral way in both experiences, alongside the *old* property, for which the problem arose.

To summarise the point, it is simply not clear what the relation between old V- and T-roundness and the new modality-independent roundness is, and thus how the addition of this modality-independent content is supposed to solve our initial problem. If, on the other hand, the geometrical property is *judged* to belong to the ball, then the act of recovering the common property between (V) and (T) is inferential. I will address this move in the following section.

3.5. Reply to the First Objection: Abstraction

A possible defence of the non-representationalist version of the Dual View is to argue that the tactile experience of a sphere and the visual experience of a sphere determine different types of content whose 'common factor' can be recovered via inference. On the one hand, this move acknowledges the incommensurability of different types of contents in virtue of their respective sensory phenomenology: the tactile sphere is in some important sense *not* like the visual sphere. On the other hand, it explains our (inferential, according to the theory) knowledge that, when touching and seeing a red sphere, one is presented with *the very same property*.

This suggestion is not off-track. Montague does offer a similar treatment for cognitive attitudes that seemingly have the same content. While on the one hand, the contents of beliefs and desires are incommensurable – a fact that allegedly explains their different functional roles as grounded in their being different types of content –, on the other hand, "this is not to say that we can't recover (by 'abstraction') common 'factors' among the contents" (p. 286).

I suggest comparing this move to Leibniz's and Thompson's responses to Molyneux's question, as discussed by Evans (1985). Molyneux famously questioned Locke about the following problem: whether a blind-born man, whose sight is restored, would be able to recognize a sphere from a cube placed before him *before* touching it. In her reply, Thompson (1974) argues that the blind man would be able to 'work out which visual shape corresponds to which tactile shape, *on the assumption that he knows that some such correspondence exists*' (Evans, 1985, p. 378; orig. emph.). Similarly, Leibniz replies that the man can realize that the pointy shape must 'fit' better than the sphere his tactile concept of a square (ibid., p. 379-80).

Evans points out that Thompson and Leibniz add an extra condition to Molyneux's original puzzle. This asked whether the formerly blind man, confronted with a visual instance of his antecedently existing concept of a cube, would be disposed to apply it "without any additional information or instruction at all" (p. 378-9). But Thompson and Leibniz add the condition that the formerly blind man *knows* that there is a correspondence between his antecedently existing

tactile concept of a cube and some visual content. According to Evans, this addition falsifies their answers, for in this way "the one [the tactile cube] *represents* the other [the visible cube], rather than being both instances of a common concept. It remains the case, that is, that there is an intelligible and *separable* [my emph.] conceptual capacity whose range is restricted to the set of tactually perceived squares" (p. 380).

More precisely, Evans's point is that according to Leibniz and Thompson there is no *unitary* concept of a square that applies to both the tactile and the visual experience of squareness. Rather, there are "*two* genuine, i.e. simultaneous, concepts of a square" that "apply to arrangements of simultaneously existing objects" and "rest upon two separable and conceptually unconnected abilities" – like "*two* genuine concepts of *between, straight line*, etc. each set of concepts generating its own geometry" (p. 374). In this sense, T-squareness and V-squareness are not instances of a common concept, but two different concepts between which the subject institutes a *representational* relation.

By contrast, Evan's position is that there is *one unitary concept of squareness* that is represented *once haptically* and *once visually*. If the blind man genuinely possesses the concept of roundness and successfully applies it to his tactile experience, then if presented with something that falls under the same concept (and has a visual experience of the same character that leads the normally sighted person to apply the term[9]), he will be disposed to apply the term in the new case.

To strengthen this point, Evans develops the following alternative version of Molyneux's problem. A man born deaf is taught to apply the concepts' continuous' and 'pulsating' via stimulations on his skin; when he gains his hearing, he is asked to apply these concepts to a

[9] This point is crucial to understand the answer Evans, or any Evans-inspired view, would give to Molyneux's question. Evans's answer to the problem is positive. However, the formerly blind man might not *immediately* be capable of applying his old tactile concept of square to the new visual experience of a square, because of his inability to interpret the visual information correctly. In this case, the experience he would have would not (yet) be of the type that leads the normally sighted person to apply the term. In other words, it might take him time to learn how to navigate the world visually. See Noë for a reply along these lines (2005, p. 100ff).

continuous and a pulsating tone. Few people, writes Evans, would doubt that he would immediately be able to do this; and if the man failed to do so, we would question his understanding of the concepts in question (p. 371-2).

My claim is that Montague's position is closer to Leibniz's and Thompson's replies to Molyneux than Evans's, and thus suffers from the same problem. If we were to recover via abstraction the identity between the T-roundess and V-roundness, we would be like the formerly blind man who resorts to inference to make sense of his newly acquired experience. But, in fact, we are more like Evans's formerly deaf man, who *immediately*, *non-inferentially* applies the concepts of continuous and pulsating to the tones.

Moreover, the point is not whether a subject seeing and touching a ball makes subconscious inferences, consolidated through experience, from T- and V-roundness to her unitary geometrical concept of a sphere. This picture is in fact compatible with both inter- and intra-modal views. The point is that, according to the Dual View picture, there must be *two* different concepts represented in (V) and (T), namely V-roundness and T-roundness, which by abstraction are reconducted to the modality-independent geometrical property of roundness. Thus, if the Dual View is correct, we can never experience V-roundness and T-roundness *directly* as the same property; this is the consequence of postulating that the contents of different sensory modalities are incommensurable. My claim is that we do not have to *recover* any common factor between seeing and touching a sphere: the sameness is immediately, non-inferentially given to us. It is not that V-roundness *represents* the T-roundness or vice versa; they are *the same* property.[10]

[10] As a side note, notice that Evans later recognized that his deaf man case is not alike Molyneux's case in all respects. The properties 'continuous' and 'pulsating' in fact apply to the experience itself, and not to its representational content, as is the case with spheres and cubes. The deaf man case and the red ball case thus do not quite align. However, although my red ball case is, like Molyneux's, about the representational content of two different sensory modalities, my position is that our knowledge is accurately represented by the deaf man case. In fact, it would be odd to maintain that the way we 'work out' our knowledge in the red ball case is analogous to the way a blind man 'works' his way 'out' of Molyneaux's puzzle.

3.6. Second Objection

The second objection involves the contrast between phenomenal experiences of different psychological kinds whose phenomenal character appears nonetheless to be quite similar: perception and imagination. In what sense are they similar? One way to put it is to say that imagination 'is perception-like but not quite perception, or belief-like but not quite belief' (Kind & Kung, 2016, p. 3). Imagination thus resembles to some extent perception, for instance in its sensory nature, and to another extent belief, for instance in its being mostly stimulus independent. A second, but by far not the last, source of puzzlement about imagination is the question of whether all imagination is imagistic or not, i.e., accompanied by sensory imagery or not. I am open to cases of non-imagistic imagination (e.g., imagining that the universe had started two minutes ago), but for the sake of simplicity, I will limit the following discussion to imagistic imagination.

The discussion in this section will follow the same structure as before: we will consider two conscious episodes, in this case, one imagistic imagination and one perception, and show that Dual View is ill-equipped to account for their phenomenal differences. Let us dive straight in.

Focus your gaze on a nearby red ball. Then close your eyes while holding its image in your mind. Let us call these two experiences respectively (V) and (I). There is something for which (V) and (I) differ and something for which they are similar. Their similarity seems obvious: they both represent the same object. How can the proponent of the Dual View accommodate their differences?

The options seem to be only two (a) phenomenal differences between typical[11] cases of seeing and imagining are explained in terms of *degrees* of representation; (b) phenomenal differences between typical cases of seeing and imagining are fully explained by differences in content.

Let us start with (a). According to this option, typical cases of seeing and imagining are explained in terms of degrees of representation. Hume is a famous advocate of this view. According to Hume, all mental contents are in some sense imagistic or quasi-perceptual (Hume, 1739/40; see also Owen. 2003). Consequently, Hume saw no difference in kind between the products of perception and of imagination, but only in degree; images are merely 'faint' copies of our 'impressions', a term for 'all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul' (1987, p. 8).

I call a Humean theory one for which there is no difference in kind between percepts and images but only in *degree.*[12] Can we accommodate the Humean view into the Dual View? This question raises the general worry that the Dual View might be ill-equipped to account for different *degrees of intensity* with which we entertain some mental content. This is true not only in the case of faint and vivid perceptions and images, but also of cognitive and affective attitudes. Some examples are one's degree of credence in P, one's degree of desire that P, one's degree of fear that P, and so on. Intuitively, the degree with which a given content is entertained regards the *way* in which it is entertained, and thus it is naturally accommodated by the attitude-component. But with the attitude-component out of the picture, it is hard to see how the Dual View could account for this common feature of our mental states.[13]

[11] I write 'typical' to exclude cases, such as the Perky effect, in which subjects seem unable to distinguish between episodes of seeing and imagining and that however seem to take place in extraordinary settings. For a recent discussion about the Perky effect (1910), see Nigel (2020) and Reeves et al. (2020).
[12] I take Peacocke (1985), Noordhof (2002), Nanay (2016), and Phillips (2019) to accept this model.
[13] To overcome this problem, one might claim that perception and imagination have similar phenomenology in that they use the same kind of representation, but that imagination requires only a 'reduced use' (Nordhoof, 2002, p. 446). What this might mean, and whether it successfully explains the functional differences between images and percept, is not clear to me.

To make this point more vivid, let us try to accommodate the vividness and blurriness of an experience into the Dual View's schema. We can write the content of the imagistic experience (I) as follows:

(I) RED-ROUND-BLURRY[14]

And of the visual experience of the same object thus:

(V) red-round-vivid a

RED-ROUND-BLURRY seems a legitimate content for the imagistic experience of visualising a red ball; but so it is for the experience of seeing a red ball in dim light, or from afar, or without prescription glasses. This issue should remind us of an old argument against the Humean view, namely that it generates the problem that one cannot decide on simple inspection whether a perception is an impression or an idea, for there can be vivid impressions and faint ideas, as well as faint impressions and vivid ideas.[15] Moreover, it is plausible that to see a red ball at the periphery of the visual field, or under a dim light, is phenomenally unlike visualising a red apple (see e.g., Cavedon-Taylor, 2021); a phenomenological fact that the Dual View cannot, once again, accommodate.[16]

Let us turn now to option (b), namely that phenomenal differences between typical cases of seeing and imagining are fully explained by differences in content. Under Montague's proposal, and in order for the attitude-component to become redundant, (b) should be read as the thesis that seeing and imagining involve different kinds of phenomenology, which in turn determine different contents.

[14] I am here supposing that the contents of imagination are always conceptual; however, nothing of what follows hinges on this presupposition. In particular, it is not a viable solution for the Dual View to argue that what explains the phenomenal differences between imagination and perception is that the content of the first is conceptual. For (i) we cannot exclude that the contents of perception are at least some time conceptual (see section 3); (ii) a fully conceptual visual episode of a red ball would nonetheless likely feel different from merely imagining a red ball.

[15] See for instance Ryle (1949, p. 250-1) for this argument.

[16] Some might however disagree with what seems to me quite an obvious phenomenal fact. Cf. for example Noordhof: 'An intriguing fact which seems to support this is that the phenomenal difference between what we foveate and what we visually imagine is much more pronounced than the phenomenal difference between what we see at the periphery of our visual field and what we visually imagine' (2002, p. 446).

One argument according to which perception and imagination never have the same kind of content is proposed by Bourget (2017b). His argument is that vivid perceptual experiences in ideal conditions represent *precise colours*, i.e., pairs of perceptible properties that are minimally discriminable for a subject; were the properties a little more similar, and they would be indiscriminable. But imaginative experiences do not represent precise colours, because subjects do not have the ability to memorize and reidentify colours thereby represented. Bourget also addresses the obvious objection that subjects can also fail to memorize and reidentify colours perceived in non-ideal conditions. While this is true, Bourget claims that perceptual experiences in non-ideal conditions are never 'faint' in the same way mental images are; focus, illumination, attention, and other such factors "affect the representational contents of experiences without generating experiences that have contents identical to those of imagery experiences" (p. 678). Thus, for instance, colour perception in peripheral vision is not 'degraded' in the same way imagery is; thus, the two do not match in content (*ibid.*).

I do agree that the phenomenology of colour perception in non-ideal conditions does not match that of merely imagined colours. I defended this position against the Humean view. But as an account of the vividness of perception, I do not think Bourget's theory goes too far. Consider hallucinatory experiences. On the widely shared assumption that hallucinatory experiences are subjectively indistinguishable from veridical experiences, I take it that they are also vivid. Most importantly, they are vivid in a way that is *subjectively the same way* perceptual experiences in ideal conditions are. And so, the reply that the content of perception is not vivid *in the same way* perceptual experiences are does not even take off. Do hallucinations instantiate precise or less-than-precise properties? Given that subjects are presumably unable to re-identify colour shades they hallucinated, they do not. But they certainly do not have the same content of merely imagined colours. It thus seems that Bourget's view cannot offer a plausible explanation of why hallucinatory experiences are vivid.

Our discussion so far suggests us another possible solution for the Dual View. Instead of ascribing the difference between images and percepts to vividness, and explaining vividness in terms of instantiation, one could write this latter fact directly into the content. The view would then have it that, when seeing a red ball, the subject takes the content of the experience to be *instantiated here-and-now*, whereas in merely imagining a red ball, she takes it to be *uninstantiated* or *unreal*. This is a plausible move, yet it is unclear how to add this specification to the content. One hypothesis is to include INSTANTIATION into the scope of (V) and UNINSTANTIATED or UNREAL into the scope of (I):

(V) red-round-INSTANTIATED a

(I) red-round-UNREAL – alternatively: red-round-UNINSTANTIATED a

I identify two problems with this solution. First, as mentioned above, one might doubt that the distinctive phenomenal character of imagination can be explained by its representing only uninstantiated properties. Second, the above analysis makes the content of (V) and the correspondent perceptual belief directed at the red ball (i.e., the belief that *there is a red ball before one*; call it (B)) identical. In fact, according to Montague, when a subject believes something, they accept that things are in a certain way, i.e., that one or more properties or relations are instantiated by one or more items:

> For example, a subject who believes it's now snowing takes it that the property of falling snow is now instantiated. Since beliefs require the possession and deployment of concepts, in having this belief, the subject deploys the concept SNOW, the concept FALLING, the concept NOW, and the concept INSTANTIATION
>
> Substituting into the general form Ca:
>
> [4] SNOW-FALLING-NOW-INSTANTIATION a (p. 281-2)

Apart from the problem of distinguishing between the content of (V) and the correspondent perceptual belief, I believe the view in general to be implausible. The reason is

that the view appears to be committed to the thesis that all beliefs involve the concept of INSTANTIATION. However, this is disputable in two senses. First, it may be objected that in beliefs of the form F is *a*, the copula 'is' does not always obviously denote the property of instantiation but other properties such as identity or composition.[17] Second, some philosophers have argued that some beliefs are not of the form F is a. Candidates for non-propositional beliefs are beliefs-in (see Szabo, 2003) and beliefs with impersonal sentential content, such as the belief that it is snowing now.[18]

Montague acknowledges that her view faces the general problem of how to differentiate between the belief that there is a red round ball before one and the visual experience with the same content (p. 280) but does not offer any explicit solution. One idea is to draw the distinction in terms of the conceptual/nonconceptual dichotomy. Perhaps, in seeing a red ball before me, I *nonconceptually* take the red ball to be here-and-now, instantiated, real, and so on; whereas in believing that there is a red ball before me, I *conceptually* take the red ball to be here-and-now. However, Montague explicitly rejects this possibility (p. 279-80; see also her 2023), for she believes that all perceptual experiences involve some basic concepts. Independently of this last take, I agree that we should avoid committing ourselves to any theory that makes it impossible for perceptual experiences to have conceptual contents. I shall discuss the use of the conceptual/nonconceptual distinction as a criterion for the phenomenal divide between perceptual and cognitive states in the next Chapter.

[17] On the assumption that (i) instantiation is identity (see e.g., Brown (2017) for discussion) and (ii) identity is composition (see Wallace 2011) are open questions.

[18] The thesis that impersonal sentences are objectual beliefs is discussed by Brentano (1883). See also Brentano (1874). See Textor (2013, 2021a) for discussion. On objectual attitudes more in general, see Grzankowski and Montague (2018).

3.7. The Tripartite View, again

I too, like the act-theorist and Montague, am strongly suspicious of *Abstract*. At the same time, I have argued that the Dual View cannot account for all representational and phenomenal differences between states of different psychological kind. Given our discussion of the Dual View, the reader might think that these two stances are incompatible. In this final section, I would like to defend the view, contra the Dual View project, that one can reject *Abstract* without thereby being forced to reject *Separateness*.

Remember that the initial motivation for *Abstract* and *Separateness* was, at least for the analytic tradition, the Fregean view of intentionality. Alternative views about the source of intentionality might then allow us to balance together the need to reject psychologism about mental content (that is, to guarantee the intersubjective character of intentional content) in a way that is alternative to *Abstract*, while at the same time acknowledging the central role of mental entities to the nature and study of intentionality.[19]

One such alternative to the Fregean view is Husserlian anti-psychologism. I shall here only briefly introduce the view, on which I will return in Chapter 6. Like Frege, Husserl embraced an anti-psychologicistic metaphysics in which mental states are not intentional because related to some abstract entities, but because they *instantiate* abstract senses (entities analogous to Fregean senses). The senses that are undetachable part of each act are tokens of abstract types. Mental states have their intentionality 'from within', so to say, because they instantiate the abstract senses, and not because they are extrinsically related to them.[20]

Husserl's theory of the source of intentionality thus rejects *Abstract*. What about *Separateness*? Husserl considered the content-element and the attitude-element' moments', i.e., non-independent parts, of intentional mental states (1900-1901/2001 ch. 3, pgf. 22). The two moments are not independent of one another, because they could not exist without one another;

[19] See Crane (2014) for a similar appeal to a 'good' type of psychologism.
[20] See McIntyre (1982) for a critical discussion of Husserl's phenomenological conception of intentionality.

no attitude could exist if nothing were presented to consciousness, and anything presented to consciousness is always presented in a certain way. Husserl offers the following analogy to illustrate this metaphysical relation of interdependency. Content and attitude play the same role in the structure of an intentional act as direction and acceleration in determining the motion of an object; together, content and attitude determine and modulate the direction of an intentional act towards its object and cannot exist independently of the act (Smith & McIntyre, 1984, p. 116). It is possible to consider the independent contributions of attitude and content when comparing different acts in which either of these components change; however, this is an abstraction from the unified mental reality.[21]

More recently, a similar metaphysical picture is suggested by Davis, who is also one of the proponents of the act-type theory. In line with our discussion so far, Davis also identifies Frege's shortcoming in his overlooking the possibility that thoughts are psychological types. According to Davis, thoughts, being cognitive types, are abstract objects, which however do not exist in the third realm, but are mental events occurring in our natural world, whose tokens are "concrete events in the causal order" (2021, p. 680).

I will not argue for either Husserl's or Davis's view in this Chapter. My intention is solely to prove that there is a region in the logical space where one can coherently reject *Relation* while holding onto *Separateness*.

[21] Notice that the Husserlian view of attitude and content also satisfies a possible phenomenological motivation for the Dual View. This phenomenological motivation is that consciousness 'is itself an integral thing, not made of parts' (James, 1890, p. 177). One way of understanding Montague's radical thesis is thus as the attempt to make sense of James's datum. But the Tripartite-Husserlian View can also unproblematically fit James's datum.

3.8. Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have argued that the answer to the Metaphysical Question regarding perceptual attitudes should be positive: our practice of intentional attitude ascription reflects a tripartite metaphysical structure. The role of the attitude-component is crucial in explaining how a subject can experience the same content as the same and at the same time as different across different sensory modalities (first objection) and different psychological attitudes (second objection). The only viable option for the Dual View, namely abstraction, yields an implausible epistemological model that conflicts with our first-person evidence.

CHAPTER 4 - REPRESENTATIONAL STRATEGIES: KINDS-OF-CONTENT STRATEGIES

4.1. Introduction

Let us now turn to the second group of theories. Kinds-of-content strategies attempt to explain the phenomenal contrast between perceptual and cognitive states in terms of different *representational ways*, that is, in terms of *how* they represent what they represent.

How shall we understand this suggestion? It would not be informative to say that perception represents its content in a 'perceptual way' and cognition in a 'cognitive way'. To make this proposal intelligible, one shall clarify what are the distinctive ways of representing of perception and cognition. This is what I will do in this section. But before starting the discussion, we should have in mind that the upshot is to explain the phenomenal datum: that perceptual and cognitive states are phenomenologically different, and this difference is manifest to the subject. Thus, even though this group of strategy might correctly individuate some representational features that are distinctive of each kind of state, I shall prove that differences at the level of representational content fail to account for the phenomenal contrast between perceptual and cognitive states.

Often, perceptual and cognitive states are distinguished via the contrast between conceptualism and nonconceptualism. Briefly, conceptualism states that the content of perception is of the same kind as the content of thought, whereas nonconceptualism claims that perceptual content can be concept-independent. Nonconceptual content is then understood in contrast with the content of thought: if the content of thought is conceptual, the content of perception will be nonconceptual; and if the content of though is propositional, that is, truth-

evaluable content, the content of perception will be nonpropositional. We can immediately see how the conceptual/nonconceptual distinction intersects with a second popular way to understand the contrast between perceptual and cognitive states, namely in terms of propositional versus nonpropositional content.

We shall notice that there is a preference in matching the pairs conceptual/nonconceptual and propositonal/nonpropositional. Because concepts are considered the building blocks of thought, conceptual content naturally goes with cognitive states. And because cognitive states are often understood on the model of belief or other epistemic states, propositional content is also usually assigned to cognitive states. On the other front, the logical space for the admits of all four combinations; this is clearly displayed by this table that summarises all the admissible contents of perception and their combinations:

	NONCONCEPTUAL	CONCEPTUAL
PROPOSITIONAL	Russell (1907-1913); Stalnaker (1984); Lewis (1986).	McDowell (1994); Byrne (2001, 2021).
NONPROPOSITIONAL	Peacocke (1992); Crane (2006).	Brentano (1874/2009, 1883)

Table 1.

A few remarks on this table.

It is important to notice that the questions about propositionalism and nonpropositionalism, on the one hand, and conceptualism and nonconceptualism, on the other hand, are independent of one another (see Crane 2009). This goes often unnoticed in the debate, with the consequence of pairing conceptualism with propositionalism and nonconceptualism with nonpropositionalism. Perhaps the culprit is a mistaken conception of propositional content, intended as conceptual content. But propositional content just means (or at least it can be taken to just mean) truth-evaluable content; its components, at least in perception, might or might not

be concepts. Therefore, just as it is conceivable to pair conceptual and propositional content, so it is plausible to pair *non*conceptual and propositional content.

What about conceptual and nonpropositional content? This latter option is by far the least popular. The reason is likely that many philosophers believe that to deploy a concept is to *apply* it to something, and this generates a truth-evaluable context:

> It might be held that only in the act of thinking an entire thought can a concept be exercised. To exercise a concept is to apply it, to apply it is to apply it to something, and this can be done correctly or incorrectly, thus generating truth or falsehood (Sainsbury 2018, p. 63).

As intuitive as this idea might sound, it can and should be resisted. Loving someone is a state that at least in some cases clearly requires possessing the concept of the person loved. For instance, poor Oedipus loves Jocasta but not his mother, and yet he is arguably not in a state that can be true or false. The recent surge of interest in objectualism (see e.g., Grzankowski & Montague 2018) has the merit, if any, of calling our attention to a kind of content that can be both conceptual and nonpropositional for mental states such as love and fear, admiration, belief-in, and merely thinking of. I do not see any straightforward reason why we should not consider the possibility that perceptual states, at least in some cases, figure in this list.[1]

This Chapter will discuss the four options displayed in the above table. Section 1 presents a summary of the debate between propositionalism and nonpropositionalism. Section 2 introduces the distinction between experiential conceptualism and nonconceptualism. Nonconceptualism comes in two fashions: state and content nonconceptualism (Heck 2000). Section 3 deals with state nonconceptualism, and section 4 examines different types of nonconceptual content. Notice that I will only briefly discuss the views according to which perception and thought have the same kind of content (i.e., the Lewis-Stalnaker line of argument

[1] There is a however a strong epistemological reason to reject the possibility that perceptual content is nonpropositional/objectual. I will discuss it in the next Chapter.

and McDowell's). First, these theories must explain the difference between perception and thought in terms *other* than their respective ways of representing, and so they do not qualify as kinds-of-content strategies. Second, I shall reserve a more thorough of the reasons to hold the same content thesis in the next Chapter.

4.2. Propositionalism versus nonpropositionalism

Propositionalism is the thesis that all mental states are propositional attitudes: two-place relations between a subject and a proposition. Notice that propositionalism is committed to the claim that *all* mental states are propositional; we will see that this is not the case for nonpropositionalism. Positing propositional content offers a useful means to evaluate the truth or falsity of an intentional state. For instance, if Mary believes that Vienna is in Austria, her belief is true if and only if Vienna is in Austria. An attitude with propositional content is such that if the relevant proposition was true, the evaluability conditions would be met.

In what sense are mental states directed at propositions? This question requires disambiguation. We call the *object* of the state that at which the state is directed. It follows that propositionalism claims that propositions are the objects of mental states. This formulation can be easily misunderstood. If Mary fears that there is a cockroach in the room, it is not the case that she fears *the proposition* 'there is a cockroach in the room'; the proposition may trigger some unpleasant feelings in her, but she knows better than be afraid of propositions. A straightforward way to solve this misunderstanding is to distinguish between object and content (following Prior 1971). Mary's fear is directed at the cockroach, which is the object of her fear; of the cockroach, Mary fears that it is in the room. To use a more pleasant example, if Mary believes that Vienna is in Austria, Vienna is the *object* of Mary's belief; and of Vienna, Mary *believes* that it is in Austria.

Thus, we better say that propositions are the contents of propositional attitudes, not their objects. This distinction is also useful to deal with cases in which a proposition is the genuine object of one's mental state. For instance, if Mary thinks that the proposition "the Weather Watchers the weather watch" sounds amusing, said proposition is the object of her mental state, of which Mary thinks it is amusing.

Propositionalism is attractive for several reasons. Here is a non-exhaustive list. First, if all mental states were propositional, we would have an elegant and unified theory of what it is for a mental state to represent something. This was Searle's view that the intentionality of all attitudes can be reduced to the intentionality of propositional attitudes like beliefs and desires (1983).[2] Second, propositionalism offers a reasonable treatment of the problem of non-existent objects. My belief that Santa Claus brings presents to children is simply my representing that Santa Claus brings presents to children; not a relation to some abstract *entia non grata*, but to a proposition.[3] Lastly, there are psychological reasons to endorse propositionalism. Positing of propositional content eases the task of explaining complex behavior (Lewis 1979; Sinhababu 2015). Consider Kate and Tyler, who both feel an intense desire for Bumper the Goldfish: Kate wants it as a pet, while Tyler wants to eat it. An ascription of propositional content can easily account for their different motivational states.[4]

There are also several reasons to be unhappy with propositions. One is the long-standing objection that intentional entities have no clear identity conditions, and perhaps none at all; this is Quine's old objection that can be summarized by the motto *no entity without identity* (Quine 1960). Other reasons against propositions as objects of the attitudes concern the problem of the unity of proposition. Jubien (2001) formulates what he calls the Benacerraf dilemma for propositions.[5] Consider the proposition that *all canines are dogs*; this is plausibly composed of the

[2] It is worth noticing that Searle does not endorse this position anymore (see his 2018).
[3] But see Ben-Yami 1997 for a rejection of this argument.
[4] The example is by Mendolovici (2018b).
[5] Benacerraf's dilemma raises doubts on the thesis that natural numbers are sets by showing that there are multiple theoretically equivalent ways of performing such reduction.

properties *being canine* and *being a dog*, plus some 'logical glue' that connects the pair together (the choice of this logical glue presents already a problem in itself, but not an insurmountable one; p. 52). How do we 'glue' things together in the right way, so as to preserve the right positional order? Jubien argues that there seems to be no way of bringing about the right positional order that does not look *outside* of our prior conceptions of these Platonic entities, i.e., to the intention of some external intentional agent. If this is correct, then one could well wonder whether Platonic entities have any representational force in themselves (p. 54).

Another family of arguments maintains that propositionalism does not sit well with our psychological evidence about intentional ascriptions. To represent propositionally, a creature would need a quite complex and demanding representational apparatus. Thagard (2006) relies on psychological and neuroscientific evidence to argue that animals and young infants cannot represent propositionally. In short, "animals desire food, not that they should have food. Humans are usually the same" (p. 152). Montague (2007) similarly argues that propositionalism fails to account for some "fundamental pro-attitude", such as liking chocolate. Both Thagard and Montague claim that some conative states should be best analyzed as objectual attitudes.

Finally, the largest group of arguments against propositionalism is based on linguistic evidence about our ordinary attribution of intentional attitudes. Arguments of this sort are deployed, among others, by Ben-Yami (1997), Forbes (2000), Szàbo (2003), Thagard (2006), Montague (2007), Grzankowski (2012, 2018), and Buchanan and Grzankowski (2022). These arguments start from the observation that many of our ordinary statements attributing intentional attitudes do not have a sentential but a nominal structure. Consider the following, non-exhaustive, list:

1. Mary wants a sloop;
2. Mary believes in Santa Claus;
3. Mary loves Jane;
4. Mary believes in socialism.

These examples suggest that states that propositions might not always be the relata of our intentional mental states. The defender of propositionalism usually rejects this conclusion by offering a *paraphrase strategy* (see Quine 1956). This amounts to paraphrasing away the apparently non-propositional content and replacing it with a that-clause. For instance, (1) can be paraphrased as:

(1.a) Mary wants it to be the case that she has a sloop;

Similarly, believe-in sentences like (2) can be reformulated as hidden existential statements:

(2.a) Mary believes that Santa Claus exists.

The main problem with the paraphrase strategy is that the passage from the nominal to the sentential form works only if the same truth-values are preserved, and this does not always happen. For instance, Forbes (2000) offers the following counterexample to the thesis that belief-in statements are hidden existential statements. Think of Hamlet's famous words that "there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy". This means that Horatio believes that there are things that he does not believe in. If believing that there are Fs is the same as believing in Fs, then Horatio should believe in things he does not believe in. But while *Horatio believes that things Horatio does not believe in* is true, *Horatio believes in things Horatio does not believe in* seems false (p. 591).

A similar point can be raised about ascriptions of love and fear. Arguably, in fact, when we confess our love for someone, we are not confessing our love for *some fact* about that person. For this reason, the following alternative paraphrases of (3):

(3.a) Mary loves that Jane is smart;

(3.b) Mary loves Jane's being smart;

Should be rejected. The reason is simple: Mary can love *that Jane is smart* or *Jane's being smart* without thereby loving *Jane*. The two paraphrases (3.a) and (3.b) are not equivalent to the original statement (3) (example from Montague 2007). A similar observation can be made for (4.a):

(4.a) Mary believes that Socialism exists;

which is usually not what one means by saying that she believes in this or that political doctrine.

One might object that the example works because of some ambiguity of the term belief-in, which can be used to report both ontological commitment as well as professions of faith. Accepting that belief-in ascriptions can be divided into two categories does not undermine the nonpropositionalist point. Mulligan (2003) distinguishes between what he calls non-evaluative and evaluative belief-in statements. Statements of the first type, he claims, are hidden existential statements; believing in God is taking him to be existent. But to evaluative-believe in someone or something is to believe them to be valuable; to believe in science is to believe it to be valuable. Mulligan argues that evaluative belief-in is not belief-that because what a person believes-in need not be the object of any conceptualization by that person. Someone who regularly prefers medicine to homeopathy believes in science even if she has no belief that science has this or that property (p. 29). Hence, following Mulligan, (4) can be analysed as an evaluative belief: for Mary to believe in Socialism is for her to believe Socialism to be valuable. Nonetheless, I disagree with Mulligan that all non-evaluative beliefs-in are hidden existential statements; in Chapter 5, I will argue that there can be objectual attitudes that express ontological commitment.

So far for a presentation of propositionalism and nonpropositionalism. If all mental content is propositional, the difference between perceptual and cognitive states must depend on the constituents of the propositions: on the one hand, nonconceptual, and on the other hand, conceptual. Those who reject propositionalism think that at least some mental content is nonpropositional; this usually includes perceptual content. Nonpropositionalism about perception is usually paired with nonconceptualism. In the remainder of the Chapter, I will

summarize the debate between conceptualism and nonconceptualism and run through their possible combinations with propositionalism and nonpropositionalism, in order to inquite whether either of these combinations can explain our phenomenal datum.

4.3. State nonconceptualism

Experiential conceptualism is the claim that perceptual content is constitutively conceptual, i.e., it features concepts among its constituents. The view has been vigorously defended by John McDowell (1994), who finds motivation for conceptualism in his interpretation of Sellars's Myth of the Given. McDowell famously argued that if perception is to provide reasons for our belief, it must have the same kind of content as thought, i.e., conceptual and propositional. I discuss this argument in detail in the next Chapter.

Nonconceptualism, the thesis that perceptual content can be concept-independent, can be understood in two ways, namely as a thesis about a certain kind of state or a certain kind of content (Heck 2000). According to *state nonconceptualism* a mental state is conceptual if a subject cannot be in that state unless she possesses the relevant concepts that are used in the canonical specification of its content, and nonconceptual otherwise; Crane (1992), Martin (1992), and Peacocke (2001) offer some arguments to maintain that perception is concept-independent in this sense. According to *content nonconceptualism*, a state is conceptual if its content is constituted by concepts, and so nonconceptual content is a different kind of content with nonconceptual constituents. Christopher Peacocke (1992a,b) has probably offered the most detailed account of this proposal; see also Evans (1982), Heck (2000), and Kelly (2001) for further arguments. The difference between the two views is substantial, especially in terms of their implications; in fact, from state view nonconceptualism nothing directly follows about the nature of perceptual

content, whereas content-view nonconceptualism prescribes to perception a specific kind of content.[6]

Let us start our discussion with state nonconceptualism. The state-view criterion for what makes a state M perceptual is that a creature can be in M without possessing the concepts that figure in a canonical description of its content. Here are two reasons why I think this criterion fails.

First, a general point. The plausibility of the thesis rests on the long-debated question of concept possession and its criteria. This is a Big Question that would require a dissertation on its own. Let it suffice to say that, depending on one's criteria for concept ascription, the thesis that there is a kind of nonconceptual content can turn out to be either trivially true (if one's criteria of concept attribution are too demanding) or easily disputable (if one's criteria of concept attribution are too undemanding). Davidson, for instance, maintained that having beliefs and concepts requires having the concept of belief; but since non-linguistic animals do not have the concept of belief, they cannot have any other concepts as well (Davidson 1975). As Margolis and Laurence (2022) notice, not only it is not clear why the concept of belief is required for the possession of other concepts, but there is a growing field of research that tries to establish that animals do in fact have beliefs (see, e.g., Newen & Starzark 2020).

The stronger the concept ascription criterion, the less plausible experiential conceptualism becomes; a weaker criterion may thus advantage the conceptualist. Two criteria of this sort are put forward by Elizabet Spelke (1990) and Jake Quilty-Dunn (2020) respectively. Spelke (1990) argues that young infants (between three- and five-month-old) have inborn conceptual representations of object-like entities ('Spelke objects') that guide them through the process of object apprehension. More recently, Quilty-Dunn claims that the neuropsychological evidence requires that we posit object representation with discrete syntactic parts that can be

[6] And yet, this distinction is not always transparent in the literature. Cf. Speaks (2005) for discussion on how most of the arguments meant to support a content-view fashion of nonconceptualism do actually work as arguments for the state-view (and still fail to do so).

systematically recombined for object tracking. The proposal is interesting because, according to Quilty-Dunn, syntactic representations of this sort satisfy Evan's Generality Constraint (1982), widely regarded as the minimum criterion for concept ascription.

At the same time, however, one should be careful not to set the bar too low. Carruthers's (2004), for instance, claims that systematically recombinable cognitive abilities are conceptual because they underwrite transitions between different states in virtue of their common representational contributions to them. But this criterion is so generous that it ends up ascribing concepts even to bees; not everyone feels this liberal (see Camp 2009, p. 280ff.).

As we can see, the debate is as messy as it gets; and it is unlikely to settle before we can get to a general consensus on the criteria of concept ascriptions, which seems like a very remote goal. Given the difficulty of the debate and the abundance of options, it is hard to tell whether the state-view criterion is correct, that is, whether no concept at all is required in order for a creature to be in a perceptual state.[7] For this reason, I think it is better to suspend the judgement on this general issue.

Independently of this issue, however, I believe state nonconceptualism fails as a phenomenological criterion for the perception/cognition divide. To see this, we shall first discuss the main arguments in support of the view itself – the argument from richness and from animal and infant cognition – and see whether they could support this conclusion. I shall start with the argument from richness.

The argument from richness starts with the intuitive observation that "a thousand words would hardly begin to do the job" of exhaustively describing how the world appears to you at any moment (Heck 2000, p. 487). Nonconceptualists use this point to claim that concepts are, by

[7] While content nonconceptualism would also naturally benefit from universally accepted criteria for concept possession, we should notice that the state view has it worse. This is because the state view's very definition of nonconceptual state is plausible only if it is in fact possible that, for some feature F, F can be represented by the system independently of the system's possession of the concept of F. By contrast, the content view, or at least some versions of the content view, can ignore this issue to a certain extent. Consider, for instance, the Stalnaker-Lewisian view, for which nonconceptual contents are modelled on possible worlds. This form of content view does not have to take a stance on the issue of concept ascription and can deliver a viable notion of nonconceptual content that is relatively independent from the system's conceptual capacities.

their nature, inadequate to capture the informational richness of perceptual experience. This position typically contrasts the fine-grain nature of perceptual information with the allegedly coarse-grain nature of concepts. Evans (1982), one of the pioneers of experiential nonconceptualism, argues that one perceptually discriminates many more colours than has concepts for; for instance, a subject can discriminate between two shades of red, red27 and red29, despite lacking the corresponding concepts. In general, it seems correct to say that one's conceptual capacities are by far overcome by one's perceptual discriminatory capacities. This seemingly uncontroversial fact is taken to show that perceptual content must be concept-independent in the way just specified.[8]

Against this argument, Kriegel (2019a) argues that state nonconceptualism identifies only a contingent feature of perception and that "failure to possess a concept for feature F is not a necessary condition for having a perceptual experience of F" (p. 173). To show this, Kriegel imagines the following thought experiment. Lynceus is a super-sighted creature whose conceptual apparatus matches its perceptual discriminatory capacity; for instance, Lynceus has a concept for every shade of red it can perceptually discriminate. According to the state view, Lynceus would not be capable of perceptual states, for the contents of its perceptual experiences could never outstrip its conceptual capacities. But this conclusion seems intuitively wrong: Lynceus's state of seeing red is a genuine perceptual state, yet the state-view criterion fails to categorize it as such.

The state nonconceptualist can try to salvage her claim by resorting to a new version of the argument from animal and infant cognition. Here is the original argument from as put by Peacocke:

[8] Conceptualists have replied to this argument in various ways. The most notable of these attempts is probably the one conducted by McDowell (1994), who claims that demonstrative concepts such as "*that* colour" or "*that* shape" have exactly the right kind of content to capture the fineness of grain of perceptual experience. Nonconceptualists tend to reject the use of demonstrative concepts in characterizing perceptual content; for instance, Kelly (2001) replies to McDowell that demonstrative concepts are not genuine concepts as they do not allow the re-identification over time of a perceptual item (but see Speaks 2005 and Camp 2009 for objections to this claim).

> While being reluctant to attribute concepts to the lower animals, many of us would also want to insist that the property of (say) representing a flat brown surface as being at a certain distance from one can be common to the perceptions of humans and of lower animals. […] If the lower animals do not have states with conceptual content, but some of their states have contents in common with human perceptions, it follows that some perceptual representational content is nonconceptual. (2001, p. 614)

The state nonconceptualist can adapt this argument to fit Lynceus's case. The new argument would go like this. Human perceptual discriminatory capacities outstrip their conceptual capacities. Some perceptual representational feature F can be common to the perceptions of humans and Lynceus. Thus, some perceptual representational content is common between the perceptions of humans and Lynceus. Thus, some representational content in common between the perceptions of humans and Lynceus is nonconceptual.

We can immediately see that the argument is invalid. The reasoning does not consider the possibility that we, humans, and Lynceus could represent the same feature F in different ways, i.e., us, nonconceptually, and Lynceus, conceptually. Moreover, the argument assumes its conclusion, i.e., the concept-independence of human perception, and is thus question-begging. This last observation can teach us something about the original argument from animal and infant cognition. As we have seen, the argument is regarded to show that human perceptual content must be nonconceptual, for there is a kind of representational content shared between conceptual and non-/pre-conceptual creatures such as animals and infants. But why not say that humans and non-/pre-conceptual creatures represent the same content respectively conceptually and nonconceptually? This seems to be the correct conclusion to draw from the argument. The same conclusion can be drawn from the modified version.

Even though this attempt fails, the nonconceptualist can still have a final comeback. The point of the state nonconceptualism is not that failure to possess a concept for F makes that the experience of F perceptual; but that, if the subject *were* to lack the concept for F and still be capable of representing F, F would be perceptual. If there was a possible world W* in which

Lynceus* could be in the same state as Lynceus, but without possessing the concept for F, then the nonconceptualist could argue that Lynceus and Lynceus* were in the same perceptual state. This would however raise the question as to what makes the two states identical; and whatever the reply, the concept independency of F seems to be irrelevant. In other words the case seems to show that the concept independent nature of representing F does not seem to bear on the perceptual status of the state that represents it:

> […] the assumption that Lynceus can have perceptual experiences of F both in worlds where he possesses the concept of F and in worlds where he does not presupposes that there is some feature, more basic than concept-possession, that accounts for the *perceptuality* of a conscious state. (Kriegel 2019a, p. 174; orig. emph.).

Add to this that the state nonconceptual view cannot explain the *feeling* of perceptuality. It is plausible to believe that a creature like Lynceus, whose conceptual capacities always match its perceptual capacities, would still experience a difference between perceiving F and thinking of F. And this cannot be explained by some counterfactual truth about its conceptual capacities. It should be explained by something actually true about Lynceus.

The case of Lynceus also seems to suggest that a perceptual state does not *feel* so because of the lack nor presence of concepts for what is perceptually presented. Let me clarify this last statement with an example. Let us grant that perception is concept-independent in the sense that S *does not necessarily need* to possess the concept of F to perceive F. Does it follow that in cases S does possess the concept of F and perceives F, S's experience is less perceptual or does *feel* less perceptual to S than in cases S does not have the concept of F? Not only it does not follow, but there are cases when possession of the relevant concept is a necessary precondition to undergo a certain perceptual experience. One example is the duck/rabbit illusion. This is arguably a case where one cannot have the relevant perceptual experience (the 'switch' between the duck-picture and rabbit-picture) *unless* one possesses the concepts 'duck' and 'rabbit'. Yet, one's seeing the picture as a duck or as a rabbit is a *perceptual* state, although one that depends on concept

possession. Proponents of the state-view would likely reply that what is relevant for the truth of their theory is that a subject S who lacks the concepts of 'duck' and 'rabbit' is nonetheless able to see the duck/rabbit figure, although not *as* the figure of a duck/rabbit. It is in accordance with the state-view the possibility that the same perceptual content can be sometimes conceptualized and sometimes not. But this is just another way to say that there is no use for the state-view for the purpose of distinguishing the phenomenology of perception and the phenomenology of cognition.

Another way to put this is to say that the feeling of something being perceptual is a different question from that of something being conceptual or non-conceptual, both in the state- and content-view sense. The distinctive character of perception is its openness to the world, its presenting things in-the-flesh, and similar expressions. It might be that perception is necessarily non-conceptual; it might also be that some sorts of conceptual capacities are required to establish our contact with the world (something I take Alva Noë to argue for in his 2015). Even if we were able to decide between these two sides, we would still be not better off as to the question about the presentational character of perception.

To summarize, the point we shall ask is: does perception's concept independency (in the state view sense) shed any light on the distinctive phenomenology of perception? And how? The mismatch between conceptual apparatus and discriminatory capëacities is not a feature that essentially characterizes perceptual states across subjects; nor conceptualization makes one's perceptual experience less perceptual, phenomenologically speaking. Hence, not only the state-view does not capture an essential feature of perception but moreover fails to account for its distinctive phenomenology.

4.4. Content nonconceptualism

There is an initial problem with content-view nonconceptualism, namely that of specifying what nonconceptual content looks like. Add to this that we wish to find a feature of nonconceptual content that can account for the distinctive phenomenology of perception. Thus, our present problem looks like this: is there a way to cash out the distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual content that moreover captures the distinctive phenomenology of perception?

The core tenet of content nonconceptualism is that perceptual content is of a different kind than thought content. As thought is usually taken to have concepts as its constituents, content nonconceptualism claims that perception must have a kind of content that does not have concepts as its constituents. Moreover, conceptual content is preponderantly understood to be propositional, i.e., truth-evaluable content (Speaks 2005). Nonconceptual content might then differ from conceptual content in two ways: (a) by being propositional with non-conceptual constituents; (b) by being non-propositional with non-conceptual constituents.

Let us start with the possibility that the content of perception is a proposition with non-conceptual constituents. Such propositions are either Russellian propositions (propositions that have worldly objects and their properties as part of their content) or functions from possible worlds to extensions. The problem with both types of contents is that nothing prevents them to figure in the content of thought as well.

4.4.1. Propositional and nonconceptual content

Consider Russellian propositions first. The contents of a Russellian proposition consist of the referents of singular terms and properties. In the perceptual case, the content of an experience of, e.g., looking at a red ball is the structured proposition [O, R], which contains the very object O (the red ball) and its very apparent property R (being red) (Siegel 2021, sect. 3.1). Strong Russellian contents of complex perceptual experiences contain conjunctions of different objects

and their properties, while weak Russellian contents contain only the very properties things appear to have but not the objects that appear to have them; these contents have the form of existentially quantified contents such as '*there is* a red ball' (Chalmers 2004). Weak Russellian contents thus accommodate Twin Earth scenarios in which two subjects plausibly share some contents even when related to numerically different objects as well as cases of hallucination, in which the subject is not related to anything.

It might be objected that existential contents can be accidentally true. Suppose one is looking directly ahead to a mirror that is placed at a 45° angle, behind which there is a yellow cube. The mirror reflects another white cube, which is however so illuminated to appear yellow to the experiencing subject. According to the existential thesis, in these circumstances, the subject's experience that 'there is a yellow cube in front of me' is true because there is such a cube, even though *that* is not the cube the subject sees, but another one, which the subject misrepresents as yellow (Tye 2009, p. 554).

Some further issues that surround Russellian content concern the worry that it is not phenomenally adequate. For instance, if you see a red ball from location L1 and I see the very same ball from a different location L2, the Russellian contents of our respective experiences would be identical (i.e, they would contain the same worldly constituents [O, R]) and yet our experiences would differ. The implementation of egocentric indexical contents within Russellian contents, as suggested by Siegel (2021), might solve this second issue. In the case of the red ball, the contents would then be the structured proposition containing the ball, its non-locational properties it appears to have, and then a 'gappy' component "expressed by "two feet in front of -----' where the gap can be filled in with different subjects in different circumstances" (sect. 3.4; see also Tye 2009).

However, the main problem for the view within the present context is that Russellian propositions can make up thought content as well as perceptual content, e.g., if the relevant

thought is singular or demonstrative. If this is correct, then Russellian content cannot be used to explain the phenomenological contrast between perception and thought (Kriegel 2019a, p. 177).

A similar problem occurs with possible world semantics. The basic idea of possible world semantics is that to represent a situation, in language, thought, or experience, is to distinguish between two ways the world could be (that is, if the situation obtains and if the situation does not). Notice that, according to world-semantics, beliefs and perceptions have the same kind of content; perception and thought must then be distinguished in other, non-representational, ways. According to Crane, "a theory which counted beliefs as having non-conceptual contents would miss the point of the original introduction of non-conceptual content, which was to identify a form of mental representation which is in some ways more primitive, more basic than belief" (2009b, p. 466).

4.4.2. Nonpropositional and nonconceptual content

We move now to the combination of nonpropositional and nonconceptual content. It is largely acknowledged that the best characterization of this kind of content is the one proposed by Peackocke (1992a, b) and known as *scenario content*. Scenarios are non-propositional, non-conceptual "ways of filling out the space around the perceiver"; a scenario is ego-centrical individuated by an origin, the centre of the chest of the perceiver, and three axes, back-front/left-right/up-down with respect to the perceiver. A perceptual experience is correct if the scenario content matches the perceiver's immediate environment.

Despite being a common example of nonconceptual and nonpropositional representational content, scenario contents are a rather poor tool in accounting for the finesse of grain of perceptual experience. Consider, in fact, that there are ways of filling out the space that

are identical with respect to the perceiver yet yield different perceptual experiences. This is for instance the case when a floor tile is seen first as a square, then as a diamond. The structure of the scenarios does not have the resources, by Peacocke's own admission, to account for these cases.

Peacocke's solution is to add a second layer of nonconceptual representational content to the experience that "cannot be identified with positioned scenarios, but [is] nevertheless distinct too from conceptual contents" (1992b, p. 119). This layer is propositional, or, more accurately, *proto*propositional. Protopropositions are propositional because they are "are assessable as true or false" (*ibid.*), insofar as they have a subject-predicate structure within which spatial properties (such as "SQUARE, CURVED, PARALLEL TO, EQUIDISTANT FROM, SAME SHAPE AS, and SYMMETRICAL ABOUT"; p. 120) and relations are represented as holding of the individuals also contained. And they are nonconceptual in two senses. First, protopropositions have nonconceptual constituents, i.e., "individuals, spatial properties, and relations, rather than concepts thereof" (p. 119). Second, the perceiving subject does not need to possess any of the concepts needed to fully specify the protoproposition in order to have the experience the protoproposition represents. Thus, for instance, when a subject perceives a tile as a square or as a diamond, she perceives different orientations of its symmetry; yet she does not need to know what symmetry is. This second layer of nonconceptual content allows Peacocke to account for perceptual cases that cannot be accommodated by the scenario's structure:

> The reader will not be surprised to learn that it is this level of protopropositional content which I propose to employ to avert the threatened failure to give an account of the difference between the concepts square and diamond. When we say that in an experience of something as a square, the symmetry about the bisectors of its sides must be perceived, we are noting a restriction at the level of protopropositional content. An experience in which something is perceived as a square is one whose nonconceptual representational content contains the protoproposition that a certain figure is symmetrical about a line, a line which in fact in the positioned scenario of the experience bisects the figure's sides. (1992b, p. 121)

Notice that Peacocke's scenario content is non-conceptual not in the content-view sense, but in the state-view sense. The experience has the scenario as its content because the scenario can be used in the description of the experience, and thus to assess the experience; but the subject can undergo the experiences described by the scenario without possessing any of the concepts that are needed for its full specification (Crane 2009, p. 468). If this is true, then I can raise against Peacocke's scenario the same objection I have raised against state-view conceptualism, i.e., that it does not have the resources to account for neither for the perceptuality of perceptual mental states nor for their feeling of perceptuality.

To summarise the point of this section, Peacocke's scenario does not seem to be the best way of explaining how some content can be nonpropositional and nonconceptual in the content view sense. As Crane clarifies, the scenario is an "abstract object [that] can be used in the description of the experience" (*ibid.*) and it is in this sense that this object can be said to be the *content* of the experience. This suggests that there might be other senses in which an experience can be said to have some other content *intrinsically*. I will not turn to these.

4.4.3. Prepredicative content

Propositional content is a kind of content that is truth-evaluable. Some philosophers assume that all propositions are conceptual, and thus take propositional content to be conceptually articulated (see Heck 2000). But, as we have seen, some propositional content can have nonconceptual constituents, and even be unstructured (as in possible world semantics). The notion of predication may capture the sense in which nonconceptual content can be propositional. According to this suggestion, 'x is F' is the minimal form of the proposition, where 'is' is the copula of predication, and predications generate truth-evaluable contexts.

Protopropositions are propositional in this sense. In contrast with propositional content, nonpropositional content is then conceived as pre- or non-predicative content.

The idea of prepredicative content is well-discussed in the phenomenological literature, especially by Merleau-Ponty (1945/2007), but seldom debated in the analytical tradition. This is unfortunate, for the notion is not only interesting per se, but it could prove useful in the task of clarifying alternatives to propositional content in perception. In the recent analytic literature, one description of prepredicative content is put by Kriegel in the following terms:

> a perceptual experience and a thought may represent the same state of affairs – say, some rectangle's being red – but represent it differently. In particular, the thought involves a propositionally structured way of representing that state of affairs, whereby the redness is *predicated of* the rectangle, whereas the perception represents the state of affairs in a *pre-predicative* way, as an unstructured whole so to speak. We might write: the thought represents the rectangle's being red, whereas the perceptual experience represents the rectangle's-being-red (where the hyphens signal that 'red' is a not a syntactic, but only a morphological, part of 'rectangle's-being-red'). (Kriegel 2019a, p. 177-8).

The contrast is pictured as one between states that represent their objects propositionally, i.e., within a predicative structure where one or more properties are predicated of the object, and states in which objects and their properties are represented as 'unstructured wholes'. According to the present hypothesis, perceptual states represent in the first way and cognitive states in the second.

I think that Kriegel's presentation of prepredicative content is intuitive but misleading. I contend that it is a mistake to think of prepredicative content as unstructured: prepredicative content lacks the kind of structure that makes truth-evaluation possible, i.e., a kind of linguistic structure;[9] but it is not unstructured.

To see this, we should distinguish between predication as a feature of the content (explicit) and as a feature of the vehicle, i.e., the format (implicit). It might be argued that a picture may express predication even though the predicate-argument structure is not explicit in

[9] In this sense, prepredicative content is the antithesis of possible world semantics, which is unstructured yet offers a semantic analysis of mental content, i.e., an analysis in terms of truth-conditions and values.

its structure. In a sentence of the type 'x is F', the syntactic relation between the parts of the sentence mirrors the metaphysical relation of instantiation (Camp 2007, p. 157): x stands for the individual, F for the property, and the copula 'is' expresses the instantiation of F by x. A picture may express the same content as 'x is F' even though there is no one-to-one correspondence between the structural parts of the picture and the metaphysical parts of the relation of instantiation. As Quilty-Dunn explains, in the case of pictorial or iconic representations,

> the same part of the picture that represents the individual also represents its various properties. In this sense, iconic representations are "holistic" […] A depicted individual is represented by means of parts (primitives or regions) of the icon that encode other information as well, including parts of the individual and/or their values along spatiotemporal and featural dimensions" (2020a, p. 280)[10]

If we apply these considerations to Kriegel's words, I believe we must disagree with his statement that "perception represents the state of affairs in a pre-predicative way, *as an unstructured whole* so to speak" (my emphasis). That a representation is structured in a pre-predicative way does not mean that it is unstructured *tout-court*; the representation can convey the same information as a predicatively structured content albeit not within a truth-evaluable structure. The fact that something is given as a whole does not mean that it has no parts that are given to you.

Can the dichotomy between prepredicative and predicative content account for the distinctive phenomenology of perception vis-à-vis thought? A positive answer is conditional upon proving that prepredicative content is prerogative of perceptual states only, and predicative content of non-perceptual states only. This, however, seems implausible.

First, we cannot exclude from the outset that perception is sometimes predicative, and thus propositional, for creatures that have such ability. Second, consider these three experiences: the full-blown perceptual experience of a red rectangle, the afterimage of a red rectangle and a

[10] see also Quilty-Dunn (2019). See Camp (2007) for a similar point about maps.

visual image of a red rectangle. All these experiences are good candidates to be prepredicatively represented. Yet only one of them presents its objects in the distinctive way of perception. If this is correct, then neither the division between predicative and pre- or non-predicative content can cut the phenomenological divide between perceptual and cognitive states, nor the notion of prepredicative content can account for the distinctive phenomenal character of perception.

Third, it is also plausible, albeit more controversial, that some cognitive states are nonpredicative. I refer to the thesis that some intentional mental states are *objectual* attitudes, that is, relations between a subject and an object, broadly intended. This proposal arises from the observation that some ascriptions of intentional nominal attitudes cannot be translated into sentential ascriptions *salva veritate* (see section 1). Paradigmatic examples of objectual states are desiring, loving, fearing, believing-in, and thinking of. I will discuss this proposal in the next section.

4.4.4. Objectual content

We have come to the last type of nonpropositional content, namely objectual content. This separate treatment of objectual content might be surprising, because in the literature about objectualism philosophers "sometimes use 'non-propositional' and 'objectual' interchangeably. This terminology seems harmless so long as one has a suitably wide conception of 'object' in mind" (Montague & Grzankowski, 2018, p. 2, fn. 2). This is, in my opinion, not entirely accurate, and it would be best to treat objectual content as a kind of nonpropropositional content.

The reason for this concerns a fundamental disagreement about evaluability. This is how Montague and Grzankowski define objectual content:

> Consider a few examples: Harry is thinking of the number seven, Bill loves Sally, and Mary fears Fido. When is Harry's thought *satisfied* or *accurate*? The question seems misplaced. Similarly for Bill and Mary, there is no admissible question of the form 'when is Bill's love satisfied/accurate?', 'when is Mary's fear satisfied/accurate?'. Even if we

> broaden our notions of evaluability to include realization conditions, veridicality conditions, or so on, the question is still misplaced. (2018, p. 139).

As we can see from this quote, objectualists reject just *any* kind of evaluability conditions. Objectual content is simply a content for which the question of its truth, satisfaction, or accuracy "is misplaced".

But not all nonpropositionalists accept this kind of constraint. For instance, Crane argues that nonpropositional (and nonconceptual content) is evaluable for accuracy. He is careful, however, in marking accuracy from truth (differently from other representationalists such as e.g., Siegel 2010, p. 28). Accuracy is not truth, for accuracy is gradable, and truth arguably does not come in degrees. He illustrates his point via analogy to pictures:

> Accuracy is not truth, since accuracy admits of degrees and truth does not. (The same can be said of correctness.) A picture, for example, can be more or less accurate, but a picture is not true or false. So there is no straightforward deductive inference from the claim that experiences can be accurate and inaccurate to the conclusion that they can be true or false, that they have propositional contents (Crane 2009b, p. 454).

If Crane is right, and accuracy is not truth, then the objectualist's rejection of accuracy is unmotivated. If, on the other hand, accuracy is truth, then Crane's proposal fails.

It seems to me that there are two points of contentions between the nonpropositionalist and the objectualist. The first concerns a certain ambiguity in the notion of accuracy. Consider these two different ways in which we can evaluate the accuracy of a picture. In the first case, start from a physical picture. In theory, it should be possible to place all its physical replicas on a continuous scale from the most to the least accurate. Take now a digital picture and its imperfect replicas. Assign to each pixel a value of 1 it matches the corresponding original pixel and 0 if it does not. In this second way, the various replicas can also be placed on a scale of degrees of accuracy, but the difference between contiguous pictures is a discrete unity. My contention is that the nonpropositionalists who take accuracy to be a species of truth have in mind the second

model of accuracy, i.e., as a yes/no property. By contrast, nonpropositionalists like Crane, who take accuracy to be different from truth, have a conception of accuracy in the first sense, i.e., as a genuinely gradable property. It is open to discussion whether perceptual content is gradable in the first or in the second sense.

The second point of contention is the following. Many philosophers push the following point. There are committal and noncommittal types of attitudes. If an attitude is committal, its content must be open to evaluation. Perception is committal: it does not present its content in a neutral way. Therefore, the content of perception is evaluable.

If this argument is correct, then the contents of perception cannot be objectual. Crane's way around this argument is to accept its premises and find a non-propositional alternative to truth. I will defend the objectualist's reply in the next Chapter. If I am right, objectual content is not prerogative of neither perceptual nor cognitive states. The objectual/propositional contrast captures a genuine, I believe, fact about the kinds of content a subject can be related to, but it does not draw a line between perceptual and cognitive states (as it is actually orthogonal to this division) and consequently cannot account for their respective distinctive kinds of phenomenology.

4.5. Conclusions

In this Chapter, I have explored the Kinds-of-content strategy. The phenomenal contrast between perceptual and cognitive states in terms of different *representational ways*. I will now summarise my claims.

If one takes perception and thought to be both propositional, the difference between the two states will be determined by the constituents of the proposition, i.e., nonconceptual in one case, and conceptual in the other. The notion of nonconceptual content can be understood in the

state-view and in the content-view sense. I have argued that the criterion for state nonconceptualism fails to explain both perception's *perceptuality* and the *feeling* of perceptuality.

A further representational strategy is to reject propositionalism about perception, arguing that the contents of perception are both nonpropositional and nonconceptual, and the contents of thought propositional and conceptual. I have discussed three types of nonpropositional and nonconceptual content, namely Peacocke's scenario, prepredicative content and objectual content. We have seen that Peacocke's proposal must ascribe some (proto)propositional content to perception in order to explain how the same worldly feature can be perceived in different ways; Peacocke's proposal then resulted to be a kind of state-view nonpropositionalism, to which my objections above apply.

Other senses in which perceptual content can be intrinsically nonpropositional and nonconceptual are as prepredicative and as objectual content. I do not doubt that perception can have nonpropositional and nonconceptual content in either sense. The problem is (i) that perception may have *other* contents as well and (ii) that some of these contents can appear in thought too. I have argued in fact that some cognitive experiences can be nonpropositional in the objectualist sense as well, and that some sensory experiences can be nonpropositional and nonconceptual in the prepredicative sense. The only feature left to be proprietary of perception is thus the possibility of representing nonconceptually (for perception can have conceptual content), and of thought the necessity of representing conceptually. But I have argued in several places, especially against state-view nonconceptualism, that these two features are irrelevant, at least by themselves, for the explanation of the distinctive phenomenal character of perception vis-à-vis thought.

CHAPTER 5 - IS PERCEPTION AN OBJECTUAL ATTITUDE?

5.1. Introduction

At the end of the last Chapter, I have hinted at the following objection against ascribing objectual content to perceptual attitudes. The argument goes roughly like his. There are committal and noncommittal types of attitudes. If an attitude is committal, its content must be open to evaluation. Perception is committal: it does not present its content in a neutral way. Therefore, the content of perception is evaluable. If this is correct, then the content of perception cannot be objectual.

In this Chapter, I develop this argument more in detail and outline a possible reply from the objectualist front. I will argue that the committal character of perception, usually referred to as perception's *assertive* or *presentive* force, can be accommodated within the objectualist framework. The biggest obstacle for the view is epistemic. The propositionality of perception is still by and large considered a necessary condition for perceptual justification; this is likely because all our models of justification are propositional (Gauker, 2012). This Chapter aims to challenge this standard view.

In the positive part of the Chapter, I take the above conclusion seriously and outline a model of perceptual justification that is fully nonpropositional. First, I argue that objectual perceptual experiences have the right kind of phenomenal character that suffices for immediate and defensible justification despite having nonpropositional, nonevaluable content. Second, I show that we can move from objectual perceptual experiences to objectual beliefs, mimicking the propositionalist 'direct-taking' explanation of perceptual justification (McDowell, 1994). Finally, I will defend the objectual model of justification from three main objections.

5.2. Perceptual objectualism

Objectualism is the thesis that at least some mental states are not relations between subjects and propositions, but between subjects and (representations of) objects, broadly intended as ordinary objects, properties, and kinds (Ben-Yami, 1997; Forbes, 2000; Szábo, 2003; Crane, 2003; Montague, 2007; Grzankowski, 2018; Grzankowski & Montague, 2018; Mendelovici 2018a). According to the proponents of objectualism, the key feature of objectual states is that they are not truth-evaluable. An attitude with propositional content is such that if the relevant proposition were true, its evaluability conditions (truth, accuracy, or satisfaction) would be met; for instance, if Mary believes that Vienna is in Austria, her belief is true iff Vienna is in Austria. But when is the state of loving one's child or thinking of the number seven true/accurate/satisfied? At least in some cases, the question of truth/accuracy "seems misplaced" (Grzankowski & Montague, 2018, p. 139). Here are some definitions of the thesis:

> An objectual attitude ascription is like a propositional attitude ascription, except that when a propositional ascription imputes a relation between a subject and a proposition about an object, as in [Lex Luthor fears that Superman is on his way], the corresponding objectual ascription imputes a relation between a subject and the object itself, as in [Lex Luthor fears Superman] (Forbes 200, p. 141)
>
> It may be said that propositionalism can easily embrace objectual attitudes, because one can have an intentional attitude to an object […] that is not a proposition, and therefore have an objectual attitude, simply in having a propositional attitude. The present claim, however, is that there are *irreducibly* objectual attitudes, attitudes to objects that do not involve propositional attitudes in any way at all. (Montague 2007, p. 504; original emphasis)
>
> Objectualism, is the view that at least some intentional states are objectual states, which are states with objectual contents, such as objects, properties, and kinds. An example of an objectual state might be the state of loving *Eleni*, which has the objectual content *Eleni.* (Mendelovici 2018b, p. 214; original emphases).

In this Chapter, I will defend the view that perceptual attitudes sometimes take objectual content. I call the view *Perceptual Objectualism* (PO). Notice that PO, as formulated here, accepts Representationalism but rejects Propositionalism about perception.

PO receives some intuitive strength from the facts that perceptual verbs can take sentential as well as nominal complements – we say that a subject S sees a *dog*, hears a *bark*, or touches *fur* – and that to see a brown dog does not seem reducible to seeing any *p* about it (Montague, 2007). This remark needs qualification. It can be objected that one can see a brown dog only in virtue of seeing (the state of affairs of) its being brown – the latter being something truth-evaluable. Jennifer Church defends such a view on the ground that "it does not seem possible to perceive objects without at least some of their properties, or to perceive properties without perceiving at least some instantiations of these properties" (Church 2013, p. 11). One point made in this objection is plausible: singling out something requires perceiving at least one property in virtue of which the object stands out against the background (see e.g., Siegel 2006); to perceive the dog in the yard I must perceive at least one property that differentiates it from the background, e.g., its brownness. However, this act is different from and does not imply perceiving *the object's having the property* (Textor 2021b). Perceiving an object *in virtue of* one of its properties is a different act from perceiving (or judging) *that* the dog is brown. Later in the Chapter, I will argue that objectual acts of perception *precede* objectual acts, both onto- and philologically. But for now, it is sufficient that we take as plausible that there is a difference to be observed here, and that seeing a brown dog is not the same as perceiving that the dog is brown, or the dog's brownness.

In the remainder section, I will clarify some further preliminary issues concerning the representational status of objectual perceptual content, in order to give PO some theoretical strength.

The first issue is that representational content is often explained in propositional terms. A common way of understanding representational content is in terms of conditions of truth,

accuracy, or satisfaction of a mental state, and these are always conditions *that* such-and-such is the case (Searle, 1983). Similarly, Susanna Siegel writes that the contents of perception are *conditions under which the experience is accurate* with respect to a given worldly situation (2010, p. 28).

The objectualist must thus reject any straightforward connection between representational status and propositional content.[1] For example, Grzankowski (2018) argues that propositional content represents "the same as" propositions, which "represent things as being some way"; by contrast, non-propositional representations "are mental representations that represent but do not represent things as being some way" (2018, p. 237).

Why would the objectualist take issue with representing things "as being some way"? The reason is that one key feature of representation is often identified as the possibility of misrepresentation. Representation represents things as being some way, and this way can be either correct or incorrect. The kind of content that can be correct or incorrect is propositional content. Hence, objectual content, if different from propositional content, must not represent things as being some way.

This definition is however potentially misleading. We can agree that whenever something is presented to consciousness, it is always presented as being some way.[2] But that an object is presented as being some way does not mean that such way is propositional.[3] As Crane writes "a mental representation always represents something in a particular way, either by representing something to be the case (which can be accurate or inaccurate) or by representing something under some aspect rather than another" (2013, p. 101).[4] When I think of Hesperus, I am thinking of an object (Venus) under a given mode of presentation (Hesperus); but it makes little sense to

[1] Crane's (2009b) proposal is an example of this strategy (see previous Chapter).
[2] Cf. Crane (2013, p. 101): "A mental representation always represents something in a particular way, either by representing something to be the case (which can be accurate or inaccurate) or by representing something under some aspect rather than another".
[3] Unless one believes it impossible to exercise a concept in isolation. For instance, Sainsbury, who claims to be "open-minded" about objectual attitudes writes that "to exercise a concept is to apply it, to apply it is to apply it to something, and this can be done correctly or incorrectly, thus generating truth or falsehood" (2018, p. 63). But, as I argue in the text, Sainsbury's position is unwarranted.
[4] See below for the issue of how objectual content can misrepresent.

say that when I think of Hesperus, my thinking is correct or accurate. Oedipus loves Jocasta, but not his mother; is Oedipus's love false or incorrect? Objectual content can thus represent things as being some way nonpropositionally.

Incidentally, notice that PO does not take a stand as to whether perceptual objectual content is conceptual or not. In other words, to say that the content of perception is objectual is not yet to say that it is conceptual or nonconceptual. Objectual content *can* be conceptual content, admissible both in perception and in thought, but it need not be. For instance, my thinking of the number seven is arguably both conceptual and objectual. Similarly, I can see the waiter at the restaurant while entertaining a conceptual or a nonconceptual kind of content (in the first case, I see the waiter *as* a waiter, in the second I 'merely' see the waiter).

The second issue concerns the evaluability conditions of objectual content. Representation not only allows us to compare introspectively indistinguishable experiences with different veridical statuses, but also the different degrees of accuracy of veridical experiences. How can all this be accommodated within an objectualist framework? For a start, the objectualist should interpret veridicality conditions more liberally. For instance, Textor (2021a) suggests construing veridicality conditions for perceptual experience on the model of the conditions of the correct application of singular and general terms. To develop this idea further, imagine modelling the content of perception not on a whole proposition but on a single term, e.g., when seeing a dog, "Dog![5]". There are conditions (i.e., ways the world is) in which yelling "Dog!" is correct and conditions in which is not; that is, respectively, when there really is or there is not a dog in the environment around the subject. Analogously, there are conditions (i.e., ways the world is) in which undergoing a dog-experience is correct, that is, when there really is a dog in the environment, and vice versa. Something along these lines is suggested by Montague (2007):

[5] The exclamation mark is here used to denote the assertoric character of perception. On the notion of assertoric force, see the next sections.

> […] why shouldn't one say that the condition of satisfaction of a visual experience of an object X (i.e. what makes it the case that a visual experience is indeed a visual experience of X) is just that one did in fact see X, and that its conditions of satisfaction consist simply of the object X plus a certain sort of causal-connection condition? (p. 514)

However, this is not enough; for even when there is a dog in the environment, and so my representing "dog!" is correct, other things can still go wrong. For instance, I might misperceive the colour of the dog's fur, or representing the dog as being closer than it really is. The objectualist should add a second condition that accommodates this fact. Duncan (2020) proposes the following account of veridicality for objectual knowledge – of which perception and introspection are paradigmatic examples:

> One's perceptual or introspective representation of property Q is veridical if and only if Q is instantiated as it's represented; one's perceptual or introspective representation of an object O is veridical if and only if O exists and is present as it's represented. Otherwise it's non-veridical. (p. 35) [6]

We can thus follow Duncan in claiming that an experience as of perceiving an object O (broadly intended) is veridical if and only if O exists here-and-now and it is as represented; and it is non-veridical otherwise.

5.3. The master argument for Experiential Propositionalism

I call *Experiential Propositionalism* (EP) the thesis that the content of perceptual experience is always propositional, i.e., truth-evaluable. EP usually goes hand-in-hand with *Intentionalism* or *Representationalism* about perception, namely the thesis that perceptual states are intentional (they are *about* or *directed to* something) because representational. In fact, the standard version of *Intentionalism* is the thesis that perception is a propositional attitude: "such as believing or

[6] Cf. Szabo's assessment conditions for belief-in (2003, p. 600ff.).

intending [...] when one has a perceptual experience, one bears the perception relation to a certain proposition *p*" (Byrne, 2001). But EP can also be defended on non-representationalist grounds, for instance as a necessary constraint to explain the justificatory power of perception (McDowell, 1994). This is the master argument for Experiential Propositionalism.

The idea that perception can provide *immediate* justification for one's beliefs, that is, a kind of justification that does not come from justification to believe other propositions (Pryor, 2005, p. 204), is, in its modern version, recent yet of intuitive strength. Your visual experience of a brown dog seems to give you good reasons to believe that there is a brown dog, whether you actually hold the belief or not.[7] In addition, perception seems to be a "justificational 'regress stopper'" (Smithies, 2019, p. 95), as it does not invite further questions about its justification.

Not everyone agrees that perception has the power to justify belief. Davidson (1986), for instance, claimed that only belief can justify belief; but many commentators argue that his view was motivated by his belief that perception is non-intentional (see e.g., Huemer, 2001, p. 72). Most philosophers today take perception to be more than mere 'raw feels', and its contentfulness as a necessary condition for perceptual justification. This raises the question as to what kind of content perception must have to justify a belief that *p*. The master argument states that such content must be propositional. Here is the outline:[8]

> (P1) If perception immediately justifies belief, the relation between a perceptual episode and the belief that it underwrites must be more than causal; it must be rational.
>
> (P2) The relation between these states can be rational only if logical relations (such as implication or probabilification; McDowell, 1994, p. 7) can hold between their respective content.

[7] Following Firth (1978), it is customary to distinguish two senses in which experiences can epistemically justify belief: propositional and doxastic justification. A belief is propositionally justified when subjects have justification to hold the belief, whether or not the subject actually holds it; a belief is doxastically justified when a subject holds a belief in a justified way.

[8] Similar reconstructions can be found in Gauker (2012), Echeverri (2013), and Almang (2014).

(P3) Logical relations can hold only between propositional contents, for only propositions can be affirmed, negated, disjoined, and conjoined (Huemer, 2001, p. 74).

(C) If perception immediately justifies belief, the content of perception must be propositional.

(P1) expresses the rationality constraint. The idea is that perception should provide more than mere, as John McDowell famously put it, "exculpations" for one's beliefs; in other words, it is not only because but *for the reason* that I see a brown dog that I form the belief that there is a brown dog. (P2) establishes a structural requirement on rationality: the content of perception must be of the kind that can enter into logical relations with the content of belief. The content of belief is propositional. (P3) claims that only propositions have the right structure to relate to other propositions.[9] This establishes the conclusion that if perception immediately justifies belief, the content of perception must be propositional.

The argument is most famously deployed by McDowell (1994; but see also Brewer, 1999; Pryor, 2000; Siegel, 2010) to support the 'sameness of content' thesis, i.e., the thesis that the content of perception must be *of the same kind* as the content of belief (i.e., according to McDowell, both propositional *and* conceptual). This simple model is quite attractive because it allows the content of perception to be taken up by belief directly; in McDowell's words, the content of experience is "the sort of thing one can also [...] judge" (*ibid.*, p. 36). This 'direct-taking' strategy straightforwardly accounts for the justificatory role of perception, in that "what the subject says counts as giving a reason for her belief because the way the object looks is the way she believes it to be" (*ibid.*, p.165).

Does the argument successfully prove that the propositionality of perception is a necessary condition for immediate perceptual justification? If it did, the objectualist would be in

[9] "Only things with sentential structure can be premises of inference" (Brandom, 1997, p. 128). These propositions can also be unstructured, as in Stalnaker's account (1984); but this view has had historically less fortune in the philosophy of perception compared to the view of propositions as structured entities.

quite a difficult spot. They could bite the bullet and accept that objectual propositional attitudes are real but without any justificatory power; but this would make the view unpalatable to those who believe that immediate perceptual justification is at least plausible, and these are many. Luckily, we have reasons to reject the master argument.

For a start, we shall notice that a state's having propositional content is not sufficient for justification. States like desires and imaginations have propositional content as well, but my desire that there are one million euros in my bank account does not justify my belief with the same content, no matter how hard I desire it. There must then be a different reason as to why some propositional attitudes can justify belief, and some others, like desires and imaginations, cannot. A popular response to this problem appeals to the idea that states that justify have *assertoric force.* As belief is the paradigmatic example of state that can justify, perception's assertoric force is then modelled on belief's (see Pryor, 2000; Huemer, 2001; Martin, 2002; Matthen, 2005; Siegel, 2010). The idea is that perception does not merely *tell* subjects that things are so-and-so, like other states with propositional contents such as desires. Like belief, perception *asserts* its content, i.e., it is committal to the truth of what is represented. For this reason, subjects ought to believe perception as they ought to believe belief: both are states that purport to represent the world truthfully.

We should notice that the notion of assertoric force need not be construed in phenomenal terms. Beliefs have assertoric force too, but they may or may not be occurrent, and, according to some, might not be phenomenal even when occurrent. Assertoric force can be understood in functional terms, for instance as the disposition to take *p* for granted when used as a starting point for reasoning (Echeverri, 2013, p. 33). On the other hand, it does seem plausible to use the notion of assertoric force to explain perception's distinctive phenomenal character, but this calls for an explanation of the difference between assertoric states of different kinds, like

perception and belief.[10] I shall formulate a suggestion about this later in the paper in terms of presentational force, but for now, let us just take a neutral stance regarding the phenomenal nature of perception's assertoric force.

We can now return to the master argument. Does the argument prove the necessity of the propositionality condition for perceptual justification? This is doubtful. Consider pain: my feeling pain is good evidence, if any, to form my belief that I am in pain; but it is dubious that pains have propositional content.[11] Thus, we need additional evidence to believe that in order to justify a state with propositional content, the *content* of the grounding state must be propositional as well.

This additional evidence might come from considerations about the nature of *reasons*. If a perception is to justify a belief that *p*, then it must provide reasons to support *p*; and it is hard to see, the objection goes, how can something be a reason for *p* if it does not provide *inferential* support to *p* (Glüer, 2009, p. 323, fn. 48). Following a long Sellarsian tradition, a proposition is located in the "space of reasons", and thereby it is justified, if it can enter into inferential relations with other propositions. Timothy Williamson (2000, p. 195) uses his famous knife example to clarify this point. Suppose that in a court trial someone brings a bloody knife as a piece of evidence. The presentation of the bloody knife, Williamson argues, would be too unspecific to be a reason to convict the defendant, making it necessary to formulate propositions *about* it.

[10] This objection can be also formulated in phenomenological terms: What is so special about perceptual phenomenology that it can immediately justify beliefs, when no other kinds of phenomenology can? (Siegel & Silins, 2015; see Kriegel, 2021 for discussion).

[11] The propositionalist has three possible replies. (i) They can commit to a thesis for which all mental states, including pain, have propositional content; but they must give an independent argument for it (see Echeverri, 2013 for this objection). (ii) They can bite the bullet and argue that, if there are nonpropositional mental states, these cannot play any justificatory role; this move narrows the scope of the propositionalist thesis and, most problematically, leaves out states that can plausibly justify, such as pain (*ibid.*). (iii) They can argue that it is the fact of my being in pain that justifies my belief of being in pain. (iii) is in my opinion the strongest reply, but it does not work either. It seems wrong to say that what we perceive are facts; we judge that something is a fact; but what is the fact we judge or 'take in' when undergoing an illusion or when hallucinating? (Crane, 2006, p. 464).

One way to reply to this objection is the following. Pryor (2005, p. 215) points out that there are two senses in which we call something 'evidence' or 'reason'. Sometimes we use evidence to refer to the *propositions* that are evident to one, and sometimes to the *states* that make them evident - the 'justification-makers'. Justification-makers *make* a belief just or reasonable, akin to how lights *make* a room beautiful. This is to be contrasted with the idea that something justifies a belief that P in so far as it *shows* the belief to be reasonable (the 'justification showers'). The latter sense deploys a dialectical notion of reason in terms of something a person can *give* in support of her belief. But in a different sense, things like headaches or pains, though not something one can give, can be the sort of things that *make* it epistemically appropriate for one to believe some propositions rather than others.

In this section, I have collected various objections against the master argument for EP, in order to show that the propositionality of perception is a neither sufficient nor necessary condition for perceptual justification. This paves the way for the objectualist model of justification I will now move to defend.

5.4. Objectual justification

Let us take stock. If the propositionality of perception is neither sufficient nor necessary for perceptual justification, then something else must. In the previous section, I hinted at the idea that the assertoric character of perception, together with the requirement that perception is contentful, are necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for immediate *prima facie* perceptual justification. Following Pryor's suggestion, one way to argue that objectual perceptual experiences can be justifiers despite their non-propositionality is to think of them as justification-makers rather than justification-showers. An objectual experience can *make* it reasonable for you to believe that P, without being the sort of stuff that can function as premises in an argument. In

this sense, a visual presentation as of a brown dog will make it epistemically appropriate for you to believe some facts about the dog.

This suggestion is in line with recent attempts to explain the justificatory role of experience based on its phenomenal character – that is, Phenomenal Conservatism:

> *Propositional Phenomenal Conservatism*: If it seems to S that p, then S thereby has at least prima facie justification for believing that p (Huemer, 2001, p. 99; see also Pryor, 2005 and Matthen, 2005).

Notice that, even though Phenomenal Conservatism is standardly formulated in propositional terms, it need not be. An important implication of the idea that perception justifies in virtue of its phenomenal character is that perception can justify independently of the kind of content it has.[12] Thus, one might think of the view I am proposing as a modification of Phenomenal Conservatism with a non-propositional twist:

> *Objectual Phenomenal Conservatism*: If it seems to S that they have a perceptual experience as of O, S thereby has at least prima facie justification for believing in O

where belief-in, such as believing in God or in Martians, is the objectual analog of belief-that.[13]

But despite phenomenal conservatism being increasingly popular, there are several well-known problems with seemings, i.e., experiences with a distinctive phenomenal character such that a seeming that *p* makes it seem to you as if *p*. One is that the principle is too general; the character of seeming can be problematically extended to non-perceptual experiences that are appropriate to call seeming but that nonetheless do not present the special kind of phenomenal character that allows experience to justify beliefs without needing justification itself (Smithies,

[12] Kriegel (2021) agrees on this point.
[13] I will soon expose at length the characteristics of this model. But to give some initial plausibility to the claim, consider that objectual beliefs are not a novelty in the philosophical debate. Szabò (2003) is a classical place to start to find arguments against the reductive propositionalist analysis of belief-in statements.

2019, p. 387-389). A second concern is that the view implies that experiences are justifiers because they are seemings, but it does not explain *why* seemings themselves are justifiers (Berghofer, 2020, p. 3).

To answer these problems, some philosophers such as Chudnoff (2013) and Berghofer (2020) have suggested restricting phenomenal conservatism to perceptual justification only, and thus focusing solely on the special character of perceptual experience. The result is the internalist principle for which perceptual experiences are justifiers in that they have "a distinctive, justification-conferring phenomenology, and if a perceptual experience E has such a justification-conferring phenomenology with respect to proposition p, E, by virtue of its phenomenology, provides immediate prima facie justification for believing that p" (Berghofer 2020, p. 4). This distinctive, justification-conferring phenomenal character is then usually spelled out, following some Husserlian suggestions, in terms of the experience's *presentive* or *presentational* character: the idea that perceptual experience presents its objects as *bodily present, here-and-now*, *in propria persona*.[14]

I subscribe to this principle. But, for the reasons discussed in the previous section, we have no reason to formulate it exclusively in propositional terms. If what ultimately explains perception's special epistemic power is its kind of representational force, then we should not put any restrictions on the kind of content perception can have. However, I still have to show that objectual perceptual experiences manifest the "distinctive, justification-conferring phenomenology" that gives *prima facie* justification to objectual beliefs.

This is the task ahead. In order to explain the special epistemic status of perception, our theory must accommodate two facts. The first is the similarity between perception and belief, i.e., the fact that both are states that do not merely represent something but *assert* it; this is the assertoric force. The second is the dissimilarity between perception and belief, i.e., the fact that perception seems to assert its content *in a certain way*, a way that explains why perception is an

[14] Cf. Husserl: "In perception the object seemed to achieve full-bodied presence, to be there *in propria persona*." (1900-1/2001) p. 137; orig. emph.). See also Berghofer (2018).

immediate justifier; this is the *presentational* character of perception. Can PO accommodate these two characters? This is the question for the rest of this section.

One initial worry is that the assertoric character of perception commits one to Experiential Propositionalism. After all, the notion of assertoric force is one borrowed from the philosophy of language, where asserting "is the act of claiming that something is the case—for instance, *that oranges are citruses*, or *that there is a traffic congestion on Brooklyn Bridge* (at some time)" (Pagin & Marsili, 2021). One asserts propositions, not *objects*.

This conclusion can be challenged. There might be states that assert – in the sense of being committal to – a content that is not sentential. This view is defended for instance by Franz Brentano (1874/2009; 1883), who held that "a single feature which is the object of a presentation can be affirmed or denied too" (1874, p. 207ff.).[15] For instance, when we state that A exists, we are not combining the individual A with the predicate of existence; we simply affirm A. Conversely, when we deny that A exists, the object denied is A, not a combination of A and the property of existence: "The affirmation of A constitutes the true and complete sense of this proposition, and that A alone is the object of the judgment" (*ibid.*).[16]

Thus, according to Brentano, we can have committal mental acts (i.e., acts with assertoric force) towards objects. In an unorthodox sense, he refers to acts of this kind as judgments; *all committal mental acts* in which a content[17] is *acknowledged* are judgments (Stumpf, 1919, p. 36; trans. by Textor 2021). Perception too falls into this category, precisely for its committal character, as the act of "simple acknowledgment" of a presentation. An etymological note will illuminate this thesis. The German word for acknowledging (*anerkennen*) has a sense that expresses ontological commitment:[18] to acknowledge something is to accept it as existing. In other words, perception is

[15] See Textor (2013, 2021a) for discussion. See also Owen (2003) for a discussion about a similar view in Hume.
[16] In his 1883, Brentano offers the following linguistic argument (see again Textor, 2021a). Consider impersonal sentences like "it is raining"; what is the complex of subject and predicate that is being judged? His answer is that no property is predicated: the subject simply acknowledges the rain.
[17] To be more precise, Brentano talks of "presentation" (*Vorstellung*), "the fundamental way of being conscious of an object" (Crane, 2006, p. 45). The term has various translations, such as 'representation', 'idea', 'presentation', or 'content'.
[18] A sense that is customary also among other philosophers such as Frege and Quine (see Textor, 2010, p. 475ff).

a kind of judgment because it expresses ontological commitment toward what it presents. Meinong, one of Brentano's pupils, expresses this idea strikingly: "Something is only allowed to count as perceived if its existence is immediately recognized [*erkannt*], that is, recognized without reference to other cognitions [*Erkenntnisse*] that serves in some sense as premises" (1899, p. 212; trans. by Textor 2021).

With the help of Brentano, we can accommodate the similarities and differences between perception and belief in our objectualist theory. Perception is like belief in that it has assertoric force toward some content; it does not matter that what is presented is a simple object or complex of a subject and a predicate. And *unlike* belief, in that what is presented is immediately 'acknowledged', i.e., presented as existent here-and-now; this is perception's presentational character. A perception and a belief might share the same content, but do not present it in the same way.

I shall conclude this section by summarizing the structure of the objectual model of justification proposed here. The picture is simple. A subject is perceptually presented with a content. Following the Brentanian view, the best way to characterize this experience is as an act of "simple acknowledgment". In having a perceptual experience as of O, the subject takes O as something that she should accept in her ontology; as a result, she forms the belief in O. This belief thus expresses her ontological commitment regarding O. In the following section, I will discuss some problems for this thesis.

5.5. Objections

In this last section, I will defend the objectual model of justification from three main objections: (i) the reduction of nominal existential claims to sentential existential claims; (ii) the problem of moving from objectual to propositional content; (iii) classic objections against doxastic accounts of perception.

Let us start with the first objection. Quine (1956) argued that all nominal existential propositions are hidden existential judgments; a belief in Santa Claus is a belief *that* Santa Claus exists.[19] What reasons do we have to claim, with Brentano, that perception objectually represents-as-existing[20] F and not that it represents *that* F exists?

Textor (2021) discusses two reasons. The first is provided by Brentano himself: the concept of existence cannot be acquired *prior* to inner and outer experience and so it cannot be a predicative component of experience itself (1874, p. 210ff). Rather, we acquire it *after* realizing that some of our acts of acknowledging are fortuitous and some are not, and use the concept of existence to refer to the first group of experiences. The second reason is that it is plausible to take nonhuman animals and infants to manifest a kind of ontologically committal behavior towards objects of perception not unlike the one discussed here. But it is also plausible to believe that they lack the conceptual capacities needed for predication and to entertain propositional attitudes; if perceiving required propositional existential judgments, they would not be able to perceive, at least not in these terms.[21] The objectual model can serve a liberal attitude towards animal and infant justification: an act of "simple acknowledgment" of a presentation can immediately give rise to an act of 'simple belief' *in* that presentation, *before* one can come to know any facts about that presentation, or before they develop the right kind of abilities, or in the complete absence thereof.

However, this liberal attitude can be resisted, as our second objection points out. One might insist that animals can have perceptual experiences but cannot form judgments about them. Justifying means trading reasons, and animals cannot do that. In fact, it is on the topic of reasons that the objectualist view faces the toughest problems. It can be objected that human reasoning is by and large propositional; that we can accept objectual attitudes, but they must

[19] See again Szabo (2003) against collapsing belief-in statements into existential belief-that statements.
[20] I borrow this notation for objectual attitudes from Kriegel (2015a).
[21] See also Mulligan (2003, p. 28) for additional arguments that some beliefs-in can express ontological commitment (e.g., believing-in God), without being reducible to propositional existential sentences.

somehow fit within a propositional network of reasons. This echoes the objection we discussed in section II in defense of EP, i.e., the problem of how non-propositional contents can be input to our reasoning. But the present objection is slightly different: it does not concern only the problem of how to reason from one type of content to another, but how one content can be translated into a different type, for instance, from a non-conceptual to a conceptual format (*conceptualization*) or from an objectual to a propositional format (*propositionalization*). I call this the *problem of translation*.

One way to defuse the problem is to notice that we can and do reason from non-propositional to propositional content in several ways. Duncan (2020), for instance, discusses both so to say classical (such as logical reasoning) and less classical conceptions of reasoning (such as association, instrumental reasoning, and problem-solving). He uses the work of Shin (1994) on diagrams and Camp (2007, 2018) on maps to argue that objectual content features in reasoning "not just as inputs, but as the very things that we deliberate with and draw conclusions on the basis of".

Duncan's response is an excellent starting point to address the problem of translation. To this, I want to add one virtue of the objectual model. This is that it makes McDowell's direct-taking strategy available to the non-propositionalist: the content of the experience is the sort of thing one can also judge, even though now 'judge' takes a new meaning that does not imply propositionalism. In this way, the objectual model avoids the problem of translation regarding propositionalization.

This solution does not however address the problem of conceptualization, because, unlike McDowell, I do not take the contents of perception to be necessarily conceptual. Some critics of non-conceptualism and non-propositionalism take the problem of conceptualization quite seriously (see e.g., Gauker, 2012, 2018). But this problem can be addressed too if we are willing to accept a looser conception of conceptualism. I will be brief because this problem affects any non-conceptualist view of perception, and this goes beyond the scope of this Chapter.

According to the kind of undemanding conceptualism I have in mind, to say that a creature has a demonstrative concept of a given item is just to say that it is capable of having thoughts involving the item in question (Speaks, 2005).[22] Given the direct-taking structure of the model, the content of a perceptual objectual experience would be automatically conceptualized (through a demonstrative concept) in the passage from the perceptual to the belief state. Alternatively, we can think of the content of the objectual belief as at least *conceptualizable*, given that it is suitable to be immediately taken up by the correspondent objectual belief (see McDowell, 2008, p. 264).

The third and final problem concerns the objectual model of justification as a doxastic model of perception. According to our Brentanian-inspired model, perception and belief are doxastic states, i.e., states that commit one to the truth of their representation, but differ regarding the sense of their commitment. When something is presented to one in perception, it is immediately 'acknowledged', i.e., presented as existent here-and-now. By contrast, something presented in judgment is merely presented as true. How does the present account fare against classic objections against doxastic accounts of perception?[23]

I think the most serious challenge comes from realized illusions and hallucinations. In these scenarios, the subject realizes she is undergoing a falsidical experience, and thus stops believing what the senses present to her; the subject is still undergoing a perceptual experience, but plausibly deprived of its doxastic character. An even more challenging case is presented by Pelser (2010): A veteran desert traveler sees an oasis in the desert and, given the unlikelihood of the existence of an oasis in that location takes it as a mirage; in fact, there really is an oasis. Pelser's case is even more challenging because it seemingly presents a veridical perception deprived of any doxastic character. I think all cases of this sort should be given the same reply.

[22] "When I am in direct perceptual contact with a color property, I am able to have thoughts about that property, notwithstanding whatever happens when I am presented with the property for re-identification at a later time" (Speaks, 2005, p. 381) This version of conceptualism is far less demanding than the classic conceptualism endorsed by most conceptualists and targeted by most nonconceptualists. Let me just say that this cheap conceptualism has the potential to address some issues abouts conceptualization by shifting the focus from the conditions of concept possession to a creature's thought abilities (Speaks, 2005, p. 388). For other ways of loosening up our criteria of concept ascription, see also Camp (2009).

[23] For a discussion of such cases see e.g., Armstrong (1964), Craig (1976), Byrne (2021).

After the subject realizes that her perception is falsidical, the assertoric and presentive characters of the perception do not disappear. The realization does not eliminate but only, so to say, 'silences' or 'overwrites' the disposition to believe the content of the perception. However, one could argue that the assertoric and presentive character still gets manifested in the feeling that one would not be surprised if things turned out to be that way, that, e.g., "that it would not be surprising if one line did turn out to be longer than the other after all" (Craig, 1976, p. 17).[24] This phenomenological analysis suggests that perception, even when disbelieved, retains its assertoric and presentive force.

As a final note, let me stress once again that the doxastic account I am here defending does not exactly equate perception with belief. On the contrary, it tries to specify how perception is *like* belief, in the sense that it possesses assertoric force, and yet *unlike* it, in that it is (a) presentational and (b) seems to be epistemically more fundamental. We can put this point by saying that it is a *sui generis* doxastic attitude. Thus, the fact that perception does not in some cases behave "exactly" (e.g., in its being impenetrable or recalcitrant) like belief does not constitute an issue for my account, as it does for some of the classical doxastic accounts.

5.6. Conclusions

This Chapter aimed to defend the thesis that perception may sometimes take objectual content and still retain its justificatory power. To ensure this, I argued that the objectual perceptual attitude should be understood as a *sui generis* kind of doxastic state, both like and unlike belief. I

[24] This strategy is already discussed by Brentano: "Similarly, an acceptance of an object given in sensation, which is disapproved of by a higher judgement, could persist. Indeed, it is not at all clear, how the lower activity should be changed in its intrinsic character because of the occurrence of the higher activity; if the lower activity had a relation of acceptance to the outer object before, it will have it later". (Brentano 1987, p. 26. Trans. By Textor in Textor, 2013).

have used Brentano's theory of judgment to elucidate the similarities and dissimilarities between perception and belief, and pictured perception as a kind of "simple acknowledgment" of a content. Finally, I have outlined a fully objectual model of justification that proceeds from objectual perceptual attitudes to objectual belief and suggested how it can interact with propositional justification.

CHAPTER 6 - PHENOMENOLOGY OF ATTITUDES

6.1. Introduction

The metaphysical structure of intentional mental attitudes is usually taken to be tripartite, containing the subject-component, the content-component, and the attitude-component. The first part of the dissertation was devoted to the content-component; I have explored the different strategies that might try to accommodate the phenomenal contrast between perceptual and cognitive states within their content-component, and I have shown that they all fail to explain the phenomenal datum. In this and the following Chapter, I shall finally turn to the attitude-component.

We can initially characterize the attitude-component of a mental state as the mental relation between a subject and an intentional object. This fits the relational view of the source of intentionality that is at the core of standard representationalism. The relational view states that mental states gain their intentional character through being related to abstract, intrinsically representational entities (usually propositions). But the attitude-component can be also understood in non-relational terms, that is, as what makes an intentional mental state the kind of state it is; for instance, they are what makes a belief a belief as opposed to a desire. In this fashion, attitudes play a crucial role in shaping the subject's psychology.

Rejecting the relational view might motivate the elimination of the attitude component from our metaphysics of intentional mental states. Even though I agree with this rejection, I argued in the third Chapter that the attitude-component should be defended as a feature of the metaphysics of intentional mental states that is fundamental to fully explain their phenomenal and intentional character.

This Chapter further clarifies and defends this latter claim. Recall our *phenomenal datum*: there is a phenomenal difference between conscious perceptual and cognitive states, of which the subject is aware. Representational strategies try to accommodate this datum either as a difference between what object perceptual and cognitive states relate the subject to; or in terms of the kind of representational content they have. Both strategies fail. The attitudinal component is thus the last man standing. My main aim in this Chapter is to show that attitudes make their own phenomenological contribution to the overall state of the subject. I shall refer to this thesis as the *attitude strategy*.

This thesis is not new. It is part of a long phenomenological tradition that starts at least with Brentano and Husserl, to name some. In the analytical tradition, however, the attitude strategy has been long overlooked. In section 2, I will put the attitude strategy in its historical context, discussing old arguments for it as put forward by Brentano and Husserl, as well as more recent arguments by Horgan and Tienson (2002), Pitt (2004), Kriegel (2015a, 2017), and Jorba (2016, 2020). Section 3offers a model of the phenomenal interaction between attitude and content. Finally, section 3 elaborates on how the attitude strategy explains the phenomenal datum.

6.2. Is there a phenomenology of intentional attitudes?

Let us start by examining the negative answer to the above question: intentional attitudes do *not* make any distinctive phenomenological contribution to the overall phenomenology of a mental state.

As a first point, we should notice that this resistance is particularly strong in the case of cognitive attitudes and their alleged distinctive phenomenology. Opponents of the cognitive phenomenological claim either maintain that there is no phenomenology of cognitive states

whatsoever, or that, if there is any, it derives from the phenomenology of the associated linguistic and auditory imagery (see Tye & Wright, 2011; Prinz, 2011; Robinson, 2011; Pautz, 2013; Carruthers & Veillet, 2017).

But perceptual attitudes are not spared either. A classical argument that is taken to support strong representationalism is Transparency. In a nutshell, the claim is that all introspectable properties of an experience are properties of the objects represented by the experience. Perceptual experiences are transparent to their objects, in the sense that, when we try to describe our experiences, we just end up describing the objects that make them up.[1] There are no properties one is aware of that are properties of the experience itself. Stoneham (2008) raises an even more radical challenge. He observes that philosophers of perception have long relied on the tacit assumption that seeing is a relation between a subject and an object "which only comes to hold between them if there is some change in just one of them, namely the person" (2008, p. 307). But this assumption is not unquestionable: one might claim that seeing might well occur without any change thereby occurring *in* or *to* the subject.

A positive answer to the question in the section title can be found in the Phenomenological tradition. The idea that psychological kinds affect the phenomenology of mental states is an idea central to the philosophy of Franz Brentano. Let us briefly examine it.

Brentano's taxonomy of mental phenomena is organized around mental *genera* and *species* (Brentano 1874; see Kriegel 2017b, Textor 2017). On top of this hierarchy, he places *mental state* or *mentality* as such, the overarching genus that is species of no other genus. Presentation, judgment, and interest or emotion are the three species of this highest genus. Each of these species divides into further species. For instance, perception, which according to Brentano is a kind of judgment (see Chapter 5), specifies into visual experience (and the other modality-specific

[1] The argument should be attributed to Moore (1903) but bearing in mind that he did not endorse it. In fact, he stresses the importance of distinguishing between *consciousness*, which is the element common to all sensations, and the *object* of consciousness, for which they differ. The mistake, he argues, is to identify *what is experienced* with *the experience of it*; transparency is the reason why many philosophers make this mistake. See instead the discussion of Harman (1990) and Tye (1992) in the last Chapter for a contemporary defense of Transparency.

species), and visual experience into colour experience. Similar genealogical trees can be traced for the rest of the mental domain.

According to Brentano, what differentiates different kinds of mental acts is not what they present, but rather *how* they present it (Kriegel 2017b, p. 194). This should sound familiar. The reason for this is that Brentano places *presentation* as the central notion of his taxonomy. The three higher classes of mental states – mere presentation,[2] judgment, and interest or emotion – are in fact all dependent on presentation:

> [W]henever something appears in consciousness, whether it is hated, loved, or regarded indifferently, whether it is affirmed or denied or there is a complete withholding of judgment and—I cannot express myself in any other way than to say—it is presented (1874, p. 62).

Presentation thus constitutes the "foundation" (p. 61) of any intentional state; the first and necessary moment of intentionality. The mind cannot direct itself towards something that is not first presented to it. But the same act of presentation can be shared by acts of different kinds. It follows that the difference between different kinds of mental cannot lie in differences between their presentation (which can be common to different acts, like the seeing and visualizing of a blossoming tree). The difference is in how they present what they present to the subject. This is how we should read the end of the following famous paragraph:[3]

[2] Mere presentation as a basic notion is simply the *Vorstellung*, i.e., something becoming manifest in the subject's consciousness. According to Brentano, presentation just "means the same as 'to appear'" (1874/2009, p. 62). Presentation, on the other hand, is a full-fledged mental state composed of attitude and content (the *Vorstellung*), but in which the attitude is neutral. On the complex issue of how to understand presentation and mere presentation, see also Husserl (1900-1901/2001, vol. II, book 5, sect. 10ff.).

[3] Stout confirms this reading: "Brentano himself proposes that no distinction [concerning the mental] shall be regarded as ultimate which is not founded on an irreducible difference in the mode in which consciousness refers to an object. Differences in the nature of the object are from this point of view irrelevant. Only the attitude or posture of consciousness towards objects is to be taken into account" (Stout 1896 I, 40; cit. in Textor, 2021b). Notice that the point is not that there are no differences between the objects (or better to say, contents) of the states – this would be implausible. But that these differences are unimportant in determining the nature of different mental states. This is the position I have been trying to defend in the past Chapters.

> Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. (Brentano 1874, p. 68)

Brentano's doctrine of the fundamentality of presentation is later adopted by Husserl (see e.g., 1900-1901/2001, p. 136), who further elaborates on the role and phenomenological nature of attitudes. Like Brentano, Husserl also holds that presentation constitutes the precondition for any other intentional act of the mind. Different intentional states then differ in how the content is presented within the act. In the *Logical Investigations*, the contrast between act and content evolves into the distinction between an intentional act's *quality* and its *matter*. The *quality* is what determines the act as being an act of a given kind. It is what is common to all judgments, all desires, all perceptions, and so on. The *matter* is that which determines the what and the how of the act: towards *what* object it is directed and *how* this object is intended (analogous to Frege's notion of *Sinn*).

For reasons that will become clear later, it is important to notice the kind of metaphysical status that quality and matter enjoy with respect to the totality of the act. Quality and matter are what Husserl calls 'moments', i.e., parts of a whole that cannot exist independently of it. Using a Husserlian analogy, we can say that the quality and matter of an act play the same role in the structure of an intentional act as direction and acceleration in determining the motion of an object. *Together*, quality and matter *determine* and *modulate* the direction of an intentional act towards its object, and cannot exist independently of the act (Smith & McIntyre 1984, p. 116).

Some contemporary analytic philosophers offer additional arguments in favour of the attitude strategy. We can divide them into two groups: phenomenological and epistemological arguments.

Phenomenological arguments are usually phenomenal contrast arguments. This is, for instance, how Horgan and Tienson (2002) introduce the thesis that there is a phenomenology of attitude-types. As there is a difference between thinking that *q* and thinking that *p*, they argue, so

there is a difference between entertaining different attitudes towards the same content that *q* or *p*.

Epistemological arguments typically move from the subject's immediate self-knowledge of their conscious states to the existence of a phenomenology of intentional attitudes as the best explanation for this kind of knowledge. This is for instance how Pitt (2004) argues for the existence of a *proprietary* (different from what it is like to be in any other sort of conscious mental state), *distinctive* (different from what it is like consciously to think any other thought), and (content-) *individuative* phenomenology of conscious thought. Pitt's argument is meant to support the strong claim that the phenomenology of thought constitutes its intentional content. For my present purpose, this is far too strong. A weaker version of this argument is offered by Jorba (2016). This is weaker in the sense that it is meant to support only the claim that there is no difference in cognitive attitudes that is not also a difference in phenomenal character.[4] This is a weak supervenience claim that can receive a large consensus. This is Jorba's argument (2016, p.81):

1. A subject S at a given time *t* can *immediately* distinguish whether she is entertaining the thought that p, wondering whether p, doubting that p, or hoping that p, etc., on the basis of introspective knowledge.
2. One would not be able to do (1) unless each (type of) cognitive attitude had a phenomenal character that is specific.
3. Each type of cognitive attitude – entertaining, wondering, doubting, hoping, etc. – has a specific phenomenal character.

Notice that the kind of knowledge pointed out in (1) is immediate in the sense of being private, first-person accessible, and direct. It does not have to be infallible (and likely, it is not),

[4] Horgan's and Tienson's phenomenological argument above supports only the weak claim.

but it must be reliable. This seems to be a reasonably weak claim that does not need further defending.

Premise (2), however, can objected in several ways. One might claim that knowledge of the nature of one's mental state is obtained through knowledge of the state's inferential role; or that it is mediated by some reliable subpersonal tracking mechanism that becomes conscious via something like a tagging state.[5] For these strategies to succeed, their alternative to attitudinal phenomenal properties must be suited to account for the kind of knowledge depicted in (1). But notice that phenomenal properties just seem *the right kind of properties* that can explain one's immediate and first-person access to something. Thus, if one such candidate could be found, this would not yet exclude phenomenal properties as a viable alternative. Despite some difficulties, I believe Jorba's argument to be convincing and successful, so I will defer the reader to the author's paper for the details of the discussion.

Now that we have presented some reasons in favour of the existence of a phenomenology of attitudes, the remainder of the Chapter will deal with the issue of how exactly the attitude strategy explains the phenomenal datum. In the next section, I shall present two general models of how attitudes can participate to the phenomenal character of the overall state of the subject, while section 4 will specifically discuss the case of perceptual vis-à-vis cognitive states.

6.3. A model of the interaction

In the previous section, I have presented Husserl's doctrine of quality and matter. The thesis tries to capture the psychological unity of attitude and content within consciousness; quality and matter are different "moments" of a single, concrete experience, which can only be artificially

[5] See models of source montoring (e.g., Crombag et al. 1996).

severed. This raises the question of how the subject experiences this unity. In other words, what is the best phenomenological model of the interaction between attitude and content?

In the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl offers one model of this interaction. The matter determines *what* object is intended and *how* it is intended (i.e., under what aspect); the quality, which individuates each intentional act as the kind of act it is, determines *the way* the object is presented in consciousness. The difference between intentional acts exactly in this latter element, that is, in or "ways of givenness" (*Gegebenheitsweise*) of their objects.

According to Husserl, there are two main modes of givenness: empty and fulfilled. Briefly, in empty intentions, objects are presented in a very general way (Moran 2018), yet pregnant with possibilities. Most thinking involves empty intentions, but empty intentions can be also met in perception, as we are soon going to see. In fulfilled intentions, something is presented as being m*ind-independent*, *in the flesh*, *with full-bodied presence*, *as being how one takes it to be* (Varga 2018), and so on. Veridical perception is naturally the paradigm of fulfilled intentions.

Notice that the main task to which I deploy the Husserlian empty/fulfilled distinction is to account for the phenomenal contrast between conscious *perceptual* and conscious *cognitive* states. The phenomenology of fulfillness and the phenomenology of emptiness, *qua* phenomenal characters of these mental *genera*, is then passed along to the different types of perceptual states and different types of cognitive states *qua* mental *species*. For example, visual perception participates of the phenomenology of fulfillness qua mental species of the broader perceptual genus. But what differentiates mental species that belong to the same *genus*?

In Husserl's *Ideas*, the notion of quality becomes more complex as to include not only psychological kinds but in general all the subjective ways in which one is conscious of something. Consider the experience that 'I now clearly see this blossoming pear tree'; the content is determined as having certain properties (blossoming, pear, tree) that are part of the matter/content of the experience. Such content is moreover presented-as *perceptual*, *clear*, *ego-bounded*, and *current* (Smith & McIntyre 1984, p. 133). These plethora of ways of givenness

compose the *thetic* character of intentional mental acts, "something inseparable and necessarily belonging to them" (ibid.). Thetic characters might help answer the previous question, so long as they identify genuine attitudes, and not just any phenomenal modification of one's consciousness (such as seeing red). As a rule of thumb, we can say that anything that is presented to perceptual consciousness *not* as a way the world could be belongs to the perceptual attitude; and anything that is presented to cognitive consciousness *not* as a way in which some thought object or state of affairs could be belongs to the cognitive attitude.

The recent literature about the attitude strategy accepts Husserl's lesson that the phenomenological contribution of the attitude component is best understood in terms of ways of givenness, i.e., ways of presenting some content. To mark the difference between any content strategy versus the attitude strategy more apparent, it is common to use the following alternative notations: *representing as-F* for the content strategy and *representing-as* F for the attitude strategy (see Kriegel 2015a). This last typographic solution helpfully conveys the key idea of the attitude strategy, i.e., that mental states have a certain phenomenal character partly in virtue of the kind of state they are and not solely in virtue of the content they represent.

But suppose that the dispute is not merely verbal.

This model has the additional virtue of being compatible with the weak view about the so-called Transparency of experience, of which I will talk mode in depth in the next Chapter. To put it briefly, the idea is that the model captures the way subjects can introspect the phenomenological contribution of the attitude component, and this is by introspecting *the content* of the attitude. In other words, subjects can become aware of the phenomenological contribution of attitudes only *indirectly*, that is, through the light casted by attitudes on their objects, and not by introspecting the experiencing itself 'in isolation', so to say.

This is thus how I understand the claim that the phenomenal character of different psychological kinds determines how something is presented to the subject. For instance, that something is presented to me as real or as in-the-flesh, is so determined by the object being

intended by an act of perception; and that something is presented to me as obtaining is so determined by an act of judgment; and so on for other such psychological types. The way I become aware of this contribution is via inspecting the content, and precisely how this content is given to me.

At this point, one might think that the Husserlian model of the attitude strategy here proposed reduces to another nearby model in which attitudes play a fundamental role in explaining the phenomenal character of perception, namely intramodal representationalism. As seen in Chapter 3, intramodal representationalism states that two perceptual experiences can differ not only in content but also in mode – where perceptual modes are "analogous (or identical)" to sensory modalities (Bourget 2017b, p. 251).

It could be argued that as long as the intramodal representationalist genuinely ascribes the phenomenal differences between conscious mental states to *attitudinal* properties, the intramodal strategy and the attitude strategy are compatible and united against the content strategy. Whether this is true depends on whether one counts attitudinal properties as representational or not. The literature is surprisingly unclear on this point. For instance, Bourget writes that intentional modes or manners of representation are "nonrepresentational features analogous (or identical) to the sensory modalities" (Bourget 2017b, p. 251). By contrast, Kriegel (2017a, p. 47) argues that conative and affective states have attitudinal-*representational* properties: properties the state instantiates in virtue of being the kind of state it is, not in virtue of its representational content, but which are nonetheless representational, because essentially directed at a content.

There are nonetheless some non-neglectable differences between intramodal representationalism and the attitude-strategy beyond terminology. One obvious difference is that intramodal representationalism is conceived as a thesis about perceptual experience, while the attitude strategy applies indiscriminately to the perceptual and the cognitive domain. This is not a decisive difference, naturally; for the core idea behind intermodal representationalism can be

extended to cognitive states. The claim would thus be that any phenomenal difference between different types of cognitive mental states supervenes on differences either in content or mode.

But here we encounter our first problem. Remember that manners of representation are supposed to be analogous or identical to sensory modalities; that this is so, is important for the identification of manners of representation (or else, any phenomenal difference could count as a manner of representation; see Bourget 2017b, p. 261). Thus, the claim that there are different manners of representation is underpinned by the claim that there are different sensory modalities determined by different sensory organs (on the assumption, which is not unmproblematic, that the senses are only five). Despite the intramodal representationalist's good intention to extend their claim to non-perceptual states (e.g., see Chalmers 2004), it is not clear how we can identify different genuine non-perceptual modalities, each for every cognitive attitude.

But suppose one could make sense of the claim that each cognitive modality has its own manner of representation. There is still a second main difference between intramodal representationalism and the attitude strategy. According to Kriegel (2017), intramodal representationalism, being a kind of representationalism, "would insist that a reductive philosophical explanation of phenomenal consciousness [in terms of non-phenomenal facts] would also require a reductive account of attitudinal-representational properties" (see Kriegel 2017, p. 49, fn. 12). However, not all intramodal representationalists are committed to the second type of reduction (see e.g., Crane 2003). And perhaps, in this latter case, the difference between intramodal representationalism and the attitude strategy would reduce to a mere verbal dispute. But it is nonetheless important to notice that the attitude strategy (the claim that attitudes contribute to the overall phenomenology of conscious intentional states) is not by default committed to any reductive claim about phenomenal consciousness, and it is in fact compatible with alternatives to representationalism such as the phenomenal intentionality thesis.

6.4. Return to the phenomenal datum

In the previous section, we have seen that the attitude strategy accepts Husserl's lesson that the phenomenological contribution of the attitude component is best understood in terms of ways of givenness, i.e., ways of presenting some content. In this section, I elaborate on how the Husserlian strategy can address the phenomenal datum. In other words, what are the distinctive ways of givenness of perception vis-à-vis thought?

As quickly mentioned in the introduction, one prominent proposal in the literature characterizes perceptual phenomenology in terms of presence or *fulfilment* and cognitive phenomenology in terms of *emptiness*. The proposal has its roots in Husserl's philosophy:

> Here [in perception] as in all acts we distinguish between quality and matter. Comparison with a corresponding mere presentation, one, e.g., of mere imagination, shows how the same object can be present *as* the same (with the same 'interpretative sense'), and yet present in an entirely different 'manner'. In perception the object seemed to achieve full-bodied presence, to be there *in propria persona*. In the imaginative presentation it merely 'floats' before us, it is 'represented' without achieving full-bodied presence. (Husserl 1900-1901/2001, p. 137; original emphases)

And here is how Hopp develops Husserl's suggestion in order to apply it to thought:

> Suppose, in one case, that I enjoy a perceptual experience of my blue house. In another case, I am conscious of my house while perceiving something completely unrelated to it, such as the snow falling outside my office window or a shelf full of books. This could happen, for instance, if I merely think about my house. The two experiences differ massively in their phenomenological character. What it is like to perceive the house is very different from what it is like to merely think about it. In the one case, I am aware of the house *intuitively*, and, more specifically, perceptually. In the other, I am aware of it *emptily*. (Hopp 2015, p. 45; orig. emph.)

There is an intuitive difference between the experiences of seeing and thinking of a tree. Consider the experience of perceiving a tree in a garden on a summer day. As the sun is high on the garden, the hard sunlight reflects on every leaf and blade of grass before you; you are flooded with colours and every shape is sharp in the light. Most importantly, everything looks as being *here-and-now*, bodily present before your eyes. In a sense, you know you could walk towards the

tree, around it, and touch the rough trunk and velvety leaves. Compare this experience with merely thinking of a tree in a garden. Your thinking activity is likely accompanied by a mental reproduction of the scene just described. Depending on your imagistic abilities, the scene before your mind's eyes might be more or less vivid and realistic. Or it might be accompanied by a different image, perhaps that of a bright light or a green leaf. Or you might just say to yourself the words 'a tree in a garden during a summer day'; perhaps you also 'hear' them with your inner voice. But the imagined tree is nothing like the perceived tree: one does not 'feel' an imagined tree as being here-and-now, one cannot walk around it and touch its parts; the imagined tree is not manifest with a 'full-bodied' presence. The mere thought of a tree, whether accompanied with some imagery or not, is nonetheless present before one's mind, but in a totally different manner – emptily, as it were – compared to the presence of perceived objects.

Objects of perception are presented to the mind "intuitively" or *leibhaftig* (in person) while objects of thought are present *emptily*. I believe that this proposal has intuitive appeal but faces at least two initial problems. The first is a more general problem concerning the intelligibility of the proposal, while the second is a more scholastic problem of interpretation of the Husserlian view. I shall advance my personal interpretation of the issue even though I am not a Husserlian scholar, because I believe it can shed some light on the nature of cognitive phenomenology, independently of it being the right interpretation of Husserl's texts.

Here are the two problems. First, describing the phenomenology of thought in terms of emptiness might be no more informative than describing it in negative terms. Put in another way, is experiencing something emptily really *experiencing* it? Second, according to the Husserlian picture, emptiness is a constitutive phenomenological element of both perception *and* thought. Husserl writes explicitly that every percept is a "mixture of fulfilled and unfulfilled intentions" (1900-1901/2001, p. 690). The worry is thus that emptiness cannot be used as the phenomenal hallmark of thought because it is not proprietary of it.

Some might reply to this last objection all that it proves is that emptiness (that is, the phenomenal character of thinking) is a necessary constituent of perceptual intentionality as well as cognitive intentionality, and thus that we should allow for non-sensory phenomenology to be part of perceptual experience (Hopp 2015). In order to judge this claim as well as the first objection, we should first get a better picture of the Husserlian account of perception.

It is customary to introduce the Husserlian account via the following example. Suppose you are looking at a house from the front street. The façade of the house is clearly visible to you. It is visible in, so to say, 'strictly speaking': the light that hits the bits of the façade is reflected towards and captured by your retina. But the house is not presented to you as a mere façade. It is presented as by three-dimensional, here-and-now, existing physical object. But how is this further fact, the house's having a backside, *given* to you? You do not seem to be aware of it in the same way in which you are aware of the façade. There is no light bouncing off the backside of the house to hit your retina. So here we seem to have a problem or at least a puzzle: how does the backside of the house feature in your conscious perceptual experience?[6]

This is where the talk of fulfilled and unfulfilled/empty intentions come into play to help make sense of this phenomenological puzzle. First, we should clarify that the term 'intention' is just Husserl's word for the 'sense' or 'meaning' of a mental act. According to Husserl, every intentional act is 'normative', in that it *prescribes* an object – *what* object the act directed to and *how* it is presented by the act. We call fulfilled intention those acts that 'hit' their mark: there is something that 'fulfils' the prescription and fulfils it in the way it was prescribed. The result is the phenomenal character of *leibhaftig*: the object appears to the subject as present, existing, here-and-now. Empty intentions are acts that 'miss' their mark. Nothing fulfils the prescription. There is no resulting phenomenal character of *leibhaftig*; the object appears as 'empty' or 'merely

[6] Notice that this is a phenomenological question. I am not interested in the representational or otherwise subpersonal explanation of *why* the empty parts of perception are phenomenally present, but rather *how* it is that they feel so (cf. Nanay, 2016 for a non-phenomenal take on the issue).

represented'.[7] These are "acts in which what is given to us is not the object in its actual presence but the object as something that is meant only" (Berghofer 2018, p. 147).

So far so good. Every intentional act prescribes an object in some way; if this object does not exist or it is not as it was meant, the act presents its object 'emptily'. Since thought does not 'meet' its objects, thought is the paradigm of empty intention. In addition, the parts of the object that are not strictly speaking seen but of which you are nonetheless aware, like the house's rear, are given in this empty way. But we have also said that perceptual intentionality results from the interplay of empty and fulfilled intentions. So, how are they related?

This is a bit tricky. Here is how I reconstruct the theory. The strictly speaking perceived parts (i.e., the fulfilled intentions) relate to the hidden parts in that the first *refer* or *point to* the second. This 'reference' is a *pointing beyond* what is given to one at a single moment. In other words, in every percept we are aware or more than what strictly speaking perceived; we are aware that the object can offer us more than what is given at a moment, i.e., that it can be further explored through other acts and presentations.

This is how, according to Husserl, the interplay of empty and fulfilled intentions achieve to present to us a world of three-dimensional objects in the distinctive way it does. In this sense, I agree with Hopp's point above that a genuine Husserl-inspired view of perception must acknowledge a constitutive role for empty intentions in bringing about perceptual intentionality. But we have also said that emptiness is the character of thought. Should we then conclude that thought is needed to bring about perceptual intentionality? Or, from a phenomenological point of view, that perceptual phenomenology results from the interplay of sensory and cognitive phenomenology?

I am not unsympathetic to these positions, but I think that the Husserlian view of perception described so far is too weak to support the above statements. It seems to me that we

[7] The empty/fulfilled distinction has nothing to do with the veridical or non-veridical status of perception. According to Husserl, the act is always 'blind' with respect to the ontological status of its object.

should need far stronger, non-phenomenological arguments to compel us to acknowledge a role for thought in bringing about perceptual intentionality. Fortunately, however, I do not think the Husserlian picture compels us to these conclusions. I want now to suggest that there is a sense in which the emptiness that is present in perception is the emptiness of thought and a sense in which it is *not*.

To see this, we need to further explore this obscure idea of the phenomenology of emptiness. I have written that the way in which fulfilled and empty intentions relate to each other in perception is that the first point to the latter; and that this interplay explains perceptual intentionality. In fact, it can be argued that this interplay *explains* intentionality *in general*:

> Intentional analysis is guided by the fundamental recognition that, as a consciousness, every *cogito* is indeed (in the broadest sense) a meaning of its meant, but that, at any moment, this something meant is more (what is meant is more) than what is meant at that moment *explicitly*. In our example, each phase of perception was a mere side of the object, as what was perceptually meant. This *meaning-beyond-itself*, which lies in any consciousness, must be considered an essential moment of it. (1960/1982, p. 84; orig. emph.)

As Smith observes "*Intentionality resides precisely in the presence of empty, unfilled components in experience* […] Intentionality essentially involves absence" (2006, p. 71-2; orig. emph.). This is true of "every cogito", i.e., every conscious act (Smith 2006, p. 65). And this is why perceptual experience harbours some emptiness; because it is intentional, it points-beyond-itself.

Because thought is also intentional, it must too harbour some emptiness. However, intuitions do not only prescribe an object; they also prescribe it *in a certain way*. Here is how the pointing beyond of perception differs from that of thought.

"The reference to the hidden sides takes the form of an anticipation" (Smith 2006, p. 71). This anticipation is not exhausted by a sense of surprise when things do not turn out to be as we expected them (as one would feel when, turning the corner, one discovers that the house was only a façade). It is also a feeling that there are ways in which the experience *can* be sensory

fulfilled. As I noted earlier, this character is common to veridical and non-veridical experiences, and so one might never get to experience the fulfillment of their perceptual anticipations (you might never get to see the rear of the house). For this reason, we should clarify that for an experience to 'feel objective', it is sufficient that *it appears to have conditions of fulfilment;* it is not necessary that one *actually* experiences the fulfillment of such anticipations (Textor 2019).

In thought, however, we have neither (sensory) fulfilment[8] nor the appearance of fulfilment. It is a pointing-beyond without the felt possibility of fulfilment. In other words, I want to suggest that the emptiness of thought simply is the phenomenality of intentionality. This seems to me in accord with Husserl's letter, but, even if it were not, I believe it still gestures at something true about our conscious life. Thought is phenomenal in that it is intentional, and since all thought is (plausibly) intentional, all thought is phenomenal.

To conclude, let me reply to a quick question. Is this a representationalist account? Again, representationalism is a reductionist theory. It explains the phenomenal in non-phenomenal terms. I do *not* want to explain nor reduce the phenomenal to the intentional; in fact, this whole dissertation is meant to show the inadequacy of the notion of representation in an explanation of the phenomenal. The intentional is phenomenal because it seems to 'point-beyond' itself, and this is, as it were, a phenomenal 'pull'; at the same time, the phenomenal is intentional because it seems to present something beyond itself.[9] Neither have the upper ground, both are fundamental.

[8] In fact, things are a bit more complex than this. Developing a certain Kantian theme, Husserl believed that perception provides knowledge through fulfillment (Berghofer 2018, 2020). Because we can have knowledge that is not only perceptual, there must be forms of fulfilment that are non-perceptual. It would be interesting to see what consequences this would have for the phenomenology of certain (fulfilled) thoughts (like mathematical thoughts; see Tieszen 2011).

[9] What I am trying to cash out pertains the phenomenology of thought and not phenomenology in general. Not all phenomenology is phenomenal because it points beyond. Pains, moods, orgasms, and the like, might not point at anything beyond themselves; I like to think of them as modifications of one's consciousness. But thought, it seems to me, requires a different explanation that cannot be independent of its intentional character. In other words, thought is essentially intentional *and* phenomenal.

6.5. Conclusions

In this Chapter, I have discussed the attitude strategy in relation to the phenomenal datum. I have started by discussing the historical roots of the view in the philosophy of Brentano and Husserl, as well as presented some recent epistemological and phenomenological arguments. I have then elaborated on the Husserlian view of attitudes to offer a model of the phenomenal interaction between attitudes and contents. Finally, I have defended the Husserlian way of cashing out the phenomenology of perception and the phenomenology of thought, respectively, in terms of fulfilled and empty intentions from two important objections. The first was that the phenomenology of emptiness is obscure and uninformative; the second is that, given its constitutive role in both perception and thought, emptiness could not be used as the phenomenal hallmark of thought. The explanation of this latter interplay led us to the answer to the first question. The emptiness of perception and thought are similar in their pointing-beyond felt character, but only the emptiness of perception points at the possibility of its completion, through the interaction with fulfilled sensory intentions. This is my preferred understanding of the phenomenal datum.

CHAPTER 7 - TWO PROBLEMS FOR THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF ATTITUDES

7.1. Introduction

The previous Chapter discussed the details of the attitude strategy. We have seen that there is more than one way to endorse the claim that there is a phenomenology of mental attitudes, but I have argued that the standard way, and my preferred way, is the Husserlian model. According to this model, the phenomenological contribution of the attitude component is best understood in terms of *ways of givenness*, i.e., ways of presenting some content. I shall now argue that there are two obstacles, and potential threats, to accepting this view.

The first is Anti-psychologism. Anti-psychologism is a quite abused philosophical term that has had, throughout the history of philosophy, several meanings (see Kusch 1995 for a comprehensive discussion). I use this term to refer to a certain Fregean view of intentionality as bestowed from abstract entities (see Chapter 3). According to this view, the content is an element that exists independent of the act that is directed at it, and it is therefore unaffected by it. This view is straightforwardly in contrast with our model, in which intentional content is, in fact, affected by the attitude component.

The second problem is Transparency. As mentioned in passing in the previous Chapter, Transparency is the thesis according to which there are no introspectable properties of one's experience that are not properties of the objects of the experience. In other words, there are no introspectable properties of the experience itself. Again, the thrust with the attitude strategy is straightforward.

I shall discuss the two views in turn.

7.2. Two Problems for the Phenomenology of Attitudes. First problem: Anti-psychologism

Since Frege (see, e.g., Frege 1879, 1979), it is customary to draw a sharp distinction between the attitude and the content of a mental state. According to the Fregean view, the attitude is *not* part of the content; they are two distinct metaphysical entities. In Chapter 3, we called the metaphysical picture suggested by this standard view the Tripartite view:

> *Tripartite view:* for any intentional mental state M, the logical form of M is R*ab*, where R is the attitude, *a* is the subject, and *b* is the content.

We have seen that the Tripartite view is motivated by two claims: (i) that in being in a given intentional mental state, the subject is related to some content that exists independently of this relation (*Abstract*); (ii) that the attitude and the content of a mental state are two separable components that are metaphysically independent of one another (*Separateness*). These two theses are in tension with the claim that intentional attitudes contribute to the overall phenomenology of an intentional state. To see why, we should briefly discuss the view of the source of intentionality suggested by *Abstract* and that also motivates *Separateness*.

One of the views behind *Abstract* is Frege's anti-psychologism. The primary aim of Frege's philosophy was to correct the persistent tendency of many philosophers towards idealism and psychologism.[1] To this aim, he distinguishes three worlds or 'realms': the outer world, the

[1] It is worth noticing that Frege's anti-psychologism was originally meant as confined to logic. However, Crane (2014) argues that there is a predominant tendency in contemporary philosophy to (improperly) extend Frege's anti-psychologism beyond the borders of logic, to encompass the study of meaning, knowledge, and mind in general. This broader anti-pscyhologism takes the form of a rejection of the use of 'psychologistic entities' as foundational to philosophical theories, not only about the nature of logic, but also about meaning, knowledge, and mind in general. On psychologism more in general, see again Kusch (1995).

inner world, and the ideal world or "third realm". The picture is famous: the outer world is the reference of our thoughts; the third realm is inhabited by timeless Senses that guide such reference; and it is through the inner world that the outer world becomes the object of consciousness (Frege 1956). According to the Fregean picture, the content of one's present experience can be abstracted away from the psychological context in which it is embedded to be put into logical and inferential relations with other contents of other experiences (both inter- and intra-subjectively).

Notice that it was crucial for Frege that the intentional plan and the psychological plan were kept rigidly distinct (see McIntyre 1987, p. 531). The intentional plan is that of the Platonic, intrinsically representational entities, abstract bearers of truth-values. The psychological plan is the plan of subjective entities like ideas and acts/attitudes. These realms are ruled by different principles.

This dichotomy is also reflected by the difference between the content and the force of an assertion targeted by act-theorist philosophers, also discussed in Chapter 3. For instance, one of Frege's arguments for the content-force distinction is the fact that a sentence in the indicative form can be uttered without being judged or asserted, as the antecedent or consequent of a conditional (see Frege 1979, p. 251). This division is also central to the current bifurcation of semantics, namely that between proper semantics (which deals with the contents of sentences) and pragmatics (which deals with the forces with which those sentences are used in speech acts; Hanks 2007, p. 142; see also Dummett 1973 and Searle 1983). To summarise the point in Frege's words,

> When something is judged to be the case we can always cull out the thought that is recognized as true; the act of judgment forms no part of this (1979, p. 251).

It should be now clear why Fregean anti-psychologism about intentionality is incompatible with the attitude strategy. On the Fregean model, to be in an intentional state is a

matter of being in a sort of mysterious relation to abstract entities. This is what I call a top-down model of intentionality, according to which intentionality "trickles down" from abstract entities that intrinsically represent to subjects (Grzankowski 2018, p. 236). The mental relation that relates the subject to the content is not part of the content itself and should not be part of a rigorous, anti-psychologistic, analysis of intentionality.

Against this broad anti-psychologism about intentionality, Crane (2014) urges that we return to (an unproblematic version of) psychologism. According to his interpretation, psychologism about consciousness means developing a non-reductionist account of mental entities – no reduction of intentionality to semantics, that is. Crane proposes to use Frege's own philosophy as an example of this new psychologism, one in which psychological entities can themselves be intentional without being reduced to semantic entities. These psychological entities are Frege's ideas.

I agree with Crane that we can and should reject psychologism in logic, while at the same time engage in a psychologistic inquiry of our conscious life. However, I disagree with him regarding the way out of this problem. Though I fully approve of the overall project of embracing 'good' psychologism, I doubt that Frege's theory of ideas offers a viable model. In what follows, I argue that Frege's ideas are no escape from anti-psychologism because they are an organic part of his anti-psychologistic theory of the source of intentionality. I shall then suggest that Husserl's model of the source of intentionality offers a genuine psychologistic alternative, one where psychological entities play a genuine foundational role in explaining mental intentionality.

First things first: what are Frege's ideas? We have seen that, according to Frege, the realm of psychology is ruled by privacy, subjectivity, and incommunicability, and thus poses a serious threat to the possibility of logic. The psychological world is "a world of sense-impressions, of creations of his imagination, of sensations, of feelings and moods, a world of inclinations, wishes and decisions" (1956, p. 209). This world is inhabited by *ideas*. These are private entities that

cannot be sensed yet are the contents[2] of one's consciousness, and, needing a bearer, they are subject-dependent. It is impossible to compare one's ideas with someone else's, for no two individuals have the same idea. If thoughts were ideas, then truth would be restricted to the content of one's consciousness: this would determine the impossibility of intercommunication, knowledge, and science. But when we think or utter a sentence, the sentence *expresses* a thought, which belongs neither to the outer, nor the inner world, but to the third realm of timelessly true propositions.

Why does Crane believe that Fregean ideas are intentional? He seems to put forward two arguments for this. First, Frege's word for idea is *Vortstellung*, which can be translated as *representation* and *presentation*, both of which Crane takes to be synonyms for intentionality. Second, the kind of items listed by Frege as belonging to the inner realm of consciousness are items that we would usually consider intentional: "Sense-impressions, imaginings, inclinations [and] wishes are all unproblematically intentional states: they are all states or episodes with intentional content" (Crane 2014, p. 14). Fregean ideas are thus "ordinary psychological states with intentional content" (*ibid.*). This should illustrate the fact that even the champion of anti-psychologism could accept that "some mental acts have semantically evaluable, propositional, publicly available, 'objective' contents" and "some do not, and that these can be as fully intentional as the others" (p. 14) without being related to truth-bearing abstract entities.

I want now to argue, contra Crane, that Fregean ideas are non-intentional or at least not "fully" intentional. The psychological items on Frege's list– sense impressions, imaginings, inclinations, perhaps moods and feelings – are likely intentional to our contemporary eyes. But did *Frege* think they were intentional? I doubt so. There are two ways in which Frege could have intended them to be intentional: as representational entities (which in Fregean terms means being truth/evaluable) or as being intentional in the general sense of pointing to something beyond

[2] By this, I just mean that they are manifest to the subject's consciousness. I take Fregean ideas to be non-intentional entities, as I am going to argue.

themselves. Neither sense applies to Frege's ideas. Frege did not think that ideas were truth-evaluable, for only the entities that belong to the third realm are. Nor he thought they were intentional in the second sense.

In *The Thought* (1956), Frege discusses the role of sense impressions in disclosing the outer world to us.[3] Frege argues that sense-impressions are necessary but not sufficient to this achievement, for he could conceive of "a being that has only sense-impressions without seeing or touching things. To have visual impressions is not to see things" (p. 308). Something else must be added to sense-impressions to become full-blown perception of things in the outer world. This something, Frege writes, is "non-sensible":

> How does it happen that I see the tree just there where I do see it? Obviously it depends on the visual impressions I have and on the particular type which occur because I see with two eyes. A particular image arises, physically speaking, on each of the two retinas. Another person sees the tree in the same place. He also has two retinal images but they differ from mine. We must assume that these retinal images correspond to our impressions. Consequently we have visual impressions, not only not the same, but markedly different from each other. And yet we move about in the same outer world. Having visual impressions is certainly necessary for seeing things but not sufficient. What must still be added is non-sensible. And yet this is just what opens up the outer world for us; for without this non-sensible something everyone would remain shut up in his inner world. (Frege 1956, p. 308-309)

Let us unpack this. Suppose that two subjects, S1 and S2 see the same item (a tree) from two different locations. Two different images are impressed on S1's and S2's retina – two different sense impressions. Yet, it is the *same* tree that S1 and S2 see; after all, we all move about in the same outer world. Now, the retinal images do present something indeed – a tree. But this is not enough to make them about the world. Why? It is not easy to make sense of what Frege has in mind here. Thinking of sense data might help. There is an object S1 and S2 is aware of,

[3] I shall focus on this example because to demonstrate its intentionality is crucial to Crane's argument that mental states can be intentional without being propositional. What about the other items? The intentionality of sensations, feelings, and moods is contended even today. Imaginations are sufficiently similar to sense impressions to be treated together within the context of our discussion. Lots should be said about inclinations, wishes and decisions, that is, conative states. Frege offered a content-force treatment of conative states as indicative sentences + force. Moreover,

namely a tree; but this is not the outer tree. For you and I can have *different* retinal images of the same outer tree. If in our quest to the intentional object of S1's and S2's awareness we stopped, as it were, at their respective retinal images, we would not find the outer tree. We would find their 'private' trees. This is why something must be "added" to the world of sense-impressions which "opens the outer world for us". In other words, I argue that Fregean sense impressions might present something only in the sense sense data present something: they are properties of a *mental*, private, subjective, object. This is far removed from our contemporary sense of intentionality, *contra* what Crane maintains.[4] Sense-impressions are thus necessary but not sufficient for full-blown perception, i.e., for the world to 'open up' to us.

A non-sensible element is thus necessary to connect the inner world to the outer world, in the same way the inner world opens up to the third realm via apprehension. Without this element, sense-impressions would just convey information about the inner world, i.e., about themselves. It follows that sense-impressions are not intrinsically about the world. They become intentional (opening up the outer world) and truth-evaluable (opening up the third realm) through the addition of a non-sensible element.

What is this non-sensible element? This is easy to find. Frege writes that what distinguishes perception from cognition "is something which is attributable, not to both realms, but to the inner world" (p. 309). This something are sense-impressions, for they "belong entirely to the inner world" (*ibid.*). The non-sensible, on the other hand, is necessary "for the recognition of both realms" (*ibid.*). In other words, the sensible is that for which perception and cognition differ; the non-sensible is that for which they are alike. This is the sense that is apprehended by both kinds of act.

To conclude this discussion, I have argued that the alternative to Fregean antipsychologism cannot be found, unsurprisingly, within the Fregean framework itself. This is

[4] To be fair, Crane does acknowledge that for Frege "genuine perception might involve a propositional content ('thought')" (p. 14), but he does not seem to take this as hindering his claim that Fregean sense impressions are intentional. I hope I convincingly showed that it in fact does.

because Frege conceives of the source of intentionality in relational terms, as something extrinsic that is "added" to the act. The friends of attitude-type phenomenology should thus reject *Abstract* and embrace an alternative, non-Fregean, view of the source of intentionality. I want now to turn to one such model that is found in Husserl. This model brings together a *bottom-up view* of the source of intentionality with Husserlian anti-psychologism, where psychological entities are related to abstract representational entities but are nonetheless intrinsically intentional.

Frege's and Husserl's forms of anti-psychologism bear some important similarities. We know in fact that Frege reviewed and harshly criticized Husserl's first works on the philosophy of mathematics, labelling his philosophy as a form of psychologism about logical laws and entities (McIntyre 1987, p. 529-530; Kusch 1995, p. 36ff.). But Husserl will also take on himself the task of refuting psychologism. Already in the *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901/2001) he corrects his philosophy towards a more balanced position that makes use of Frege's distinction of sense and reference. Not only so. Like Frege, Husserl distinguishes between mental *acts* (the psychological, thus subjective and private, act of intending something) and *senses* (that which is intended by the act).

The crucial difference between the two views lies in the way they conceive of the relation between acts and senses. We have seen that Frege modelled this relation on perception, in which the sense is external to the act of apprehension, "as a physical object does to an act of perceiving it" (McIntyre 1987, p. 531). This is compatible with *Abstract* and *Separateness*: the act, the subject, and the content are three metaphysically independent entities.

By contrast, Husserl conceived of the relation between acts and senses in terms of *instantiation* (where the sense is not grasped or apprehended but *instantiated* by the act). Through instantiation, the mental act is brought to existence *already* endowed with its sense. The sense is that *within the act* that gives the act its directedness.[5] There is no fall into psychologism. The sense

[5] Senses have a double role in Frege too: as object of the act of consciousness and as that within the act that gives the act its directedness. Many interpreters find this view puzzling: if the sense is extrinsic to the act of intending

that gives the act its directedness is the token of a sense type that could be re-instantiated by other acts of the same subject at different times or by other subjects.[6] On the one hand, there is the private and subjective psychological dimension of the sense as content of the act; and, on the other hand, its atemporal, abstract counterpart.[7]

In contrast with Frege, Husserl thinks of the attitude, subject, and content as three different elements of a mental act which nonetheless are not metaphysically independent from the whole they together make up (the Husserlian 'moments'). Attitude and content form a psychological unity because they are brought about together by the subject's instantiating the sense. Attitude and content can only be artificially severed, because the content gives the attitude its direction by being instantiated within the act, and not by directing it 'from the outside'.

One could object to the Husserlian model that it fails to be a genuine rejection of *Abstract*; the Husserlian act is still related to an abstract entity, and thus it receives its directedness as least partly in virtue of this extrinsic relation.

This objection raises a difficult metaphysical point. In defense of the Husserlian model, I would like to point out that being related to an abstract entity is different from instantiating a relation with such entity. While the first seems to be an abstract fact in so far as it involves the abstract entity itself, the second is not obviously so.[8] The existing here-and-now subject instantiating an abstract property (the relation with an abstract entity) is a *concrete* fact that occurs in space and time. The act (a concrete occurrence in the subject's consciousness) instantiating the

it, how can it also confer to the same act its directedness? In other words, the sense would be existing at the same time as an extrinsic and an intrinsic element of the act, which seems a contradiction (see Rowlands, 2015). However, as McIntyre (1982) notices, Frege was not particularly interested in addressing this problem, for his main goal was to avoid psychologism; the relation of apprehension was probably good enough for him. Husserl's instantiation, as we are going to see, offers a more straightforward view of how senses can play this double role.

[6] Husserl later changes his mind and conceived of sense not as universals anymore but as ideal particulars (*Ideen*; see McIntyre 1982, 1987). This second option seems to fall back to a kind of harmful psychologism of the kind targeted by Frege.

[7] This is another way to phrase the noesis/noema distinction, or the distinction between real and ideal content of the act. As Rowland writes: "What, in *Ideas* I, Husserl calls the *noema* is the intentional act individuated by its ideal content. The *noesis* would be the same act individuated according to its real content." (2015, sect.5)

[8] See French (2022) for this point about a similar topic.

sense is a fact of this type. The source of intentionality is thus not a relation to an abstract fact, but a concrete episode.

To strengthen this point, it is once again worth stressing the metaphysical dependence between attitude and content within the Husserlian framework. Recall Brentano's doctrine of presentation, which Husserl adopts. The doctrine says that the mind cannot direct itself to something that is not first presented, and anything that is presented is always presented as being some way. Thus, attitude and content are brought about together by the act instantiating the content. This, I have argued, is a concrete fact.

This last objection reaffirms the main point of my resorting to the Husserlian model. This is to show how bottom-up view of the source of intentionality naturally pairs with a view of the attitude and content as forming a metaphysical and phenomenal unity within the subject's consciousness.

7.3. Second problem for the phenomenology of attitudes: Transparency

Against the phenomenology of attitudes, one might raise considerations about the transparency or diaphanousness of experience. The idea is roughly as follows. When looking inward toward the experience of a blue sky, the blue we see is the blue of the sky. We are not aware of any other properties – we see 'through' the experience as through a pane of glass. We are aware only of the properties of the objects of the experience, not of the experience itself.

We should be careful in distinguishing the claims that the Transparency argument aims to establish. Perceptual Transparency as discussed by Harman was meant to support representationalism (specifically in its strong version, according to which there is no phenomenal

difference without representational difference). We normally "see right through" perceptual states to external objects; the properties we are aware of in perception are attributed *to the objects perceived* (1990, p. 39). Similarly, Tye notices that "I experience blue as a property of the ocean, not the property of my visual experience. My experience is not blue, but represents the ocean as blue" (Tye, 1992, p. 160).

As an argument in support of (strong) representationalism, Perceptual Transparency can be used to support two related but different claims. The first claim is that transparency establishes the representationalist thesis that experience represents worldly properties. The second claim is that all the introspectable properties of one's experience are properties of the objects of one's experience, not of the experience itself.

That these are two different, though related claims, is proven by the fact that they are falsified by different counterclaims. The first thesis that experience represents worldly properties is falsified by the claim that experiences do not intrinsically represent or do not represent at all. The negation of the first claim is thus the negation of representationalism tout court. The second thesis that all one is aware of are properties of the objects of the experience is falsified by all the claims that falsify the first claim; but, in addition, it is also falsified by the thesis that one is aware of non-representational properties *in addition to* representational properties. Thus, the negation of the second claim can be made compatible with representationalism albeit only in its weak form. I take it that Kind's (2003) distinction between strong and weak transparency applies to this second claim:

- *Strong transparency*: it is *impossible* to attend to the properties of the experience; when one introspects one's experience, one only finds the properties of the object of the experience. (Tye 1995, 2003; Crane 2003)
- *Weak transparency*: we can *most easily* attend to our experience by attending to the objects of the experience (Peacocke 1983; Block 1995).

In other words, negating the first claim implies negating the second claim, but not vice versa.

In addition to this distinction, we should also notice that Transparency is widely endorsed as a claim about the introspectable properties of one's experience in general, independent of representationalism. For instance, a notable advocate for (strong) Transparency is Martin (2002), who claims that naïve realism is in fact better equipped to explain Transparency than representationalism. Someone who opposes the idea that all that one can introspect to one's experience are properties of the objects of the experience can thus have a bigger target than representationalism only.

During this dissertation, I have assumed the representationalist stance. I shall continue doing so, and thus target strong representationalism in my discussion of Transparency. The reason why Transparency is in tension with the attitude strategy should be quite straightforward: if there is a phenomenology of attitudes, then a subject can introspect more than the properties of the objects of her experience. They can also introspect properties that belong to the experience itself. This claim has been long present in the literature about perceptual experience. In this section, I shall extend it to cognitive experiences.

My claim is thus that in introspecting one's cognitive experience, one can find properties that belong to the experience itself. This is perfectly compatible with Weak Transparency above, i.e., the thesis that we can *most easily* attend to the properties of one's experience by attending to the objects of the experience. In order to prove this point, I shall go through the most important arguments for the existence of properties of perceptual experience (following Lycan 2019) and look for cognitive analogues.

7.3.1. Same intentional contents, different sensory qualities

Perceptual case:

The first group of arguments for the existence of properties of perceptual experience itself contains counterexamples to the claim that perceptual experiences that are alike with respect to their representational contents cannot differ phenomenally. If these properties exist, then there are phenomenal properties of a state one can introspect in addition to the state's representational content. Here are two famous examples.

> *Peacocke's trees*: imagine you are seeing two trees one closer, the other further away from you. Your experience represents the two trees at different distances from you but as being of the same size, yet, claims Peacocke, "there is also some sense in which the nearest tree occupies more of your visual field than the more distant tree" (1983, p. 12). Peacocke argues that this sense is qualitative and that no representational difference corresponds to it (but see Tye 2003 for a representationalist treatment of this case).
>
> *Aspects and attention:* examples in this class include for instance bistable figures such as the Necker cube and the duck-rabbit figure, or arrays of dots and geometric figures which can be grouped by vision in alternate ways. In each case, a single and unchanging figure that seems to be unambiguously represented by vision nonetheless gives rise to different visual experiences. (On the role of attention in visual experience and representationalism, see Block 2010).

Cognitive analogue:

In order to apply this first group of objections against representationalism to the cognitive domain, we must find two cognitive states that share the same sensory and cognitive content and yet give rise to different qualitative experiences. This is not too difficult. The literature on cognitive phenomenology is replete with examples that contrast two experiences E1 and E2 that

have matching sensory content and sensory phenomenology but whose overall nonetheless phenomenology differ.

> *Philosophical news:* This is the famous case discussed by Strawson (1994). A monoglot Frenchman and a monoglot Englishman listen to the news in French. While the sensory stream is arguably the same for the two men, their respective experiences are phenomenally different. The best explanation for this phenomenal difference is that the Frenchman understands the TV message, while the Englishman does not. (Objections to this case contend that the sensory stream is the same in the two cases; see Chapter 1)
>
> *Ambiguous sentences:* A second type of examples deploys sentences that have multiple interpretations such as "visiting relatives can be boring" (Horgan and Tienson 2002) or "Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo" (Pitt 2004). The idea behind this group of cases is similar to that behind *Philosophical news*: the same sensory "material" can be experienced in different (cognitive) ways.

Here is one objection. Let us grant that in all the above cases the sensory 'material', i.e., sensory representational content does not change between E1 and E2. It can however be objected that the phenomenal difference between the overall phenomenal character of E1 and E2 occurs because of a change in their cognitive representational content. For example, the phenomenal difference between the first reading of 'visiting relatives can be boring' and the second reading is attributable to the shift between different objects of thought – in one case, the act of visiting parents and, in the other case, the eventuality of visiting parents.

This might be correct. However, it is more reasonable to construct the phenomenology of understanding as pertaining to the experience itself, rather than the content. The reason is simple: there is a qualitative component that remains constant across experiences of understanding different contents.

7.3.2. Same intentional contents, different sensory qualities – the case of blurriness

Perceptual case:

> *Blurriness:* The case of blurriness was first introduced by Boghossian and Velleman (1989). Move your hand close and away from your face; there is an introspectable phenomenal difference between the experience of your hand in and out of focus. This difference, it is argued, is not in the way the world is represented to be, i.e., as in or out of focus. One experiences the blurriness *as of the experience* and not *as of the objects* of the experience.

In order to defend a representationalist account of blurriness, there is no point arguing that visual experience represents the relevant part of the world *as* being blurry. Not only this reply does not do justice to our phenomenology, but we also want to recognize the difference between *seeing a blurry object* and *blurrily seeing a nonblurry object*. Tye (2003, p. 20) suggests characterising this difference in informational terms. When looking at a blurry object, vision accurately represents blurry edges where they are; when blurrily looking at a non-blurry object, vision is "silent" on the precise locus of the edges. Blurry vision in this second sense is characterised by a loss of information.

Against this strategy, it can be objected that the loss of information does not account for the phenomenology of blurriness. Loss of information is a ubiquitous feature of our well-functioning visual system, without thereby giving rise to a phenomenology of blurriness. For instance, non-foveate areas of the visual field provide less information but are not accompanied by a phenomenology of blurriness (Pace 2007).

Cognitive analogue:

> *Blurry thinking*: Many of us have had the experience of having one's thoughts obfuscated by an excess of alcohol. The phenomenology of drunkenness has many points in common with that of blurry vision – we could call it blurry thinking. When you are drunk, it is difficult to keep the focus on your train of thought; your thoughts become fuzzy, and you experience difficulty articulating what you want to say. But you do not experience this fuzziness as belonging to your concepts, but as belonging to your thinking; your concepts are straight, but your thinking is not.

There is certainly a phenomenal difference between drunk thinking and sober thinking, but does this suggest the existence of cognitive qualia? One can resist this conclusion. As drunkenness results from a bodily modification, one can argue that the phenomenology of drunkenness is a kind of sensory, especially bodily, phenomenology, not cognitive phenomenology.

The sensory and bodily aspects of the phenomenology of drunkenness are undeniable. Migraine, lack of coordination, dehydration, slurred speech, and so on are clearly bodily alterations. But other changes look more cognitive in nature: lack of inhibition, memory impairment and loss, cognitive impairment in general, and so on. To this extent, the phenomenon bears resemblance to that of thinking hard:

> *Thinking hard*: Imagine you are struggling to understand a philosophical paper – racking your brains and all the usual. Thinking hard about something is not making a physical but a *cognitive* effort. This is similar to the cognitive struggle one makes when drunk and trying to collect one's thoughts.

The case of thinking hard, however, might be more similar to the case of non-blurrily seeing a blurry object.

As in the case of perceptual blurriness, there is no denying that there is a what-it's-likeness to being drunk and thinking hard. But the strong representationalist can argue that these

experiences too can be characterised informationally, i.e., as involving a loss of information caused by one's temporary cognitive impairment. Again, we can reply as before that informational loss is a pervasive characteristic of much thinking. Some information *must* be lost to avoid cognitive slowdown and overload; in fact, some reasoning works through the loss of information, as per instance reasoning via abstraction. But as the loss of perceptual information is not always accompanied by blurry sensory phenomenology, so the loss of cognitive information is not always accompanied by blurry cognitive phenomenology.

7.3.3. Higher-order qualia

Perceptual case:

Qualia are often defined as sensory qualities (Block 1995; Dretske 1995; Tye 1995). Against this definition, Lycan (1996, 2019) argues that a state's phenomenal character and sensory qualities may come apart, in that a quality can occur in the absence of the subject's awareness of it. The possibility of disassociation between phenomenal character and sensory qualities motivates Lycan to distinguish two readings of what-it-is-like:

- *What-it-is-likeness as a first-order quality*: this is what the world is or seems like. It can be described in one's public language (via terms for basic qualities like red, green, cold, hot, and so on).

- *What-it-is-likeness as a higher-order property of that quality*: What it's like for the subject to be in a particular mental state, or to experience a particular qualitative property – something over and above the quality itself - "the property of what it's like to experience that quality" (Lycan 2019). Unlike the first sense of what-it-is-likeness, this sense is ineffable and requires the subject's awareness.

As noted in Chapter 1, this distinction might not be completely genuine. First, the higher-order awareness of a quality is not necessary itself qualitative; one might become aware of a quality Q in non-phenomenal terms, for example by directing a non-phenomenal higher-order state towards Q (as in HOT theories). Second, one might resist the claim that a quality that occurs outside the subject's awareness is a genuine phenomenal property. According to some, being phenomenal is a matter of being presented to the subject (e.g., self-representational and HOT theories). Thus, a qualitative property that does not feel like anything to the subject is a contradiction in terms (but see Pitt, 2004).

Cognitive analogue:

The debate about cognitive phenomenology does not distinguish clearly between the above two senses of what-it's-likeness, partly because this difference is not totally transparent. Carruthers (2000) elaborates on the distinction as follows. First-order what-it's-likeness is awareness of a property P *as part of the world*; for instance, the redness presented in your experience of a tomato is the redness of the tomato (following Transparency). High-order what-it's-likeness, by contrast, is what-it's-like *to experience* P, and this is a property of your experience. Thus, if there is a higher-order property of what-it's-like to experience a cognitive phenomenal property P, this is a property of the cognitive experience itself. But what is this like?

> If one were to ask, "Well, what is it like to think that the weather is changing?", I could only answer in the way I would if asked what it is like to see orange by someone who had never seen it. I might say that seeing orange is like seeing red, and like seeing yellow, but definitely different from each. (Pitt 2004, p. 31)

In a first-order sense, what-it's-like to think that the weather is changing is just to think that the weather is changing, i.e., a certain state of affairs in the world. But in a higher-order sense, what-it's-like to think that the weather is changing is an ineffable property that one can only experience

for oneself, by actually *thinking* it. Because of this ineffable character, it is hard to clarify what this higher-order sense might involve.

The recent discussion on the subjective component of phenomenal consciousness might help shed some intuitive light. Some philosophers (e.g., Kriegel 2003, 2009; Zahavi 2005; Gertler 2011) argue that the phenomenal character of a mental state is not exhausted by its qualitative component, i.e., its what-it-is-likeness, but has an additional *subjective* component, i.e., what-it's-like *for the subject* to experience it.

The subjective component of a conscious mental state is similar to Lycan's higher-order what-it's-likeness, in that it is something given only to the subject that requires the subject's awareness; but it differs from it because it cannot come apart from a quality's first-order what-it's-likeness. According to proponents of this thesis, in fact, it is in virtue of the subject's awareness of a mental state M that M becomes conscious; thus, there can be no disassociation between the two orders of awareness.

7.3.4. Sensory and cognitive modalities

Perceptual case:

It seems possible to be aware of the same representational feature in different sensory modalities – as when one, for instance, hears and sees an aeroplane flying overhead, or smells and tastes freshly grounded coffee. If this is the case, then there is something we can introspect in addition to the content of perceptual experience, namely whether the content is represented visually, aurally, olfactorily, and so on (see Block 1996).

One way of accommodating this datum is to reject the pure or intermodal representationalist thesis that a state's phenomenal content is individuated by its content alone. According to impure or intramodal representationalists, there is a second representational feature

that should be considered, namely the state's *way of representing* its content – which corresponds to the state's sensory modality (i.e., Crane's intentional modes (2003), or Chalmers's manners of representation (2004). The content *and* the mode, together, determine the experience's phenomenal character.

It is usually held that intramodal representationalism is better equipped to deal with cases that compare experiences in different sensory modalities that have the same content. However, many intermodal representationalists push back, arguing for modality-specific contents that represent special properties that can only be seen or heard, etc. (Dretske 1995; Tye 1996, 2003).

Cognitive analogues:

I have been arguing in this and the previous Chapter that in being in a conscious cognitive state, one can be aware of something more than the object of the state – namely *the way* one is conscious of it. Objections to the cognitive case overlap with objections to the perceptual case.

First, the cognitive analogues of the intramodal representationalist can accept the thesis that there is a difference in the way different cognitive modalities present their contents to the subject, while not giving up on the claim that what determines the difference between attitudes are ultimately representational differences. I shall detail this solution below.

Second, one might insist that all the differences between attitudes can be written into the representational content, such that one could "read" the attitudinal type "off" the full specification of the content of the state. This is Montague's view discussed in Chapter 3.

I shall start with the second objection. One strategy that we have only partly discussed Chapter 3 is to individuate each attitude in terms of some representational property that is *attitude-specific*. The idea is that for any attitude M, there is some special representational property F such that only M represents F. In this way, if a state represents F, then the subject is *ipso facto* in

M. All differences between attitudes can be thus accounted for in terms of differences between their representational contents.

The problem with this strategy is that it seems impossible to individuate attitude-specific properties for all cases. For instance, what is the special property F such that only desire states can represent it? Is it the property of being desirable? But this seems too generic: what is it for something to be desirable? The answer seems to depend on what each person finds desirable. Or consider: what is the attitude-specific property of the experience of understanding? As we plausibly do not represent things as being perceived by us, so we do not represent concepts or sentences as being understood; we simply understand *them*.

Similarly, Kriegel (2017a, p. 46) argues that it is implausible to suppose that the relevant attitude-specific property shows up in the content. One fears *a dog*, not its dangerousness; to fear a dog certainly involves being committed to the dog's dangerousness, but that commitment seems best built into the attitude – it is what fear amounts to, i.e., experiencing objects *as* dangerous.

It might be objected that it is because the object (or state of affairs) instantiates the relevant property F (e.g., dangerousness or desirability) that we fear or desire that object (or state of affairs). But we have seen that it is difficult to individuate a single attitude-specific property F, or a finite set thereof, in virtue of which the relevant attitude occurs. Plus, the fact that it *because* of F that one desires or fear an object (or state of affairs) does not imply that what *causes* one's state of desiring or fearing is O's being (or state of affairs' instantiating) F nor that the content of my desire or fear *represents* F. Consider: I might fear venom spiders because they are dangerous, but what causes my fear and what features in its content is not the spiders' dangerousness– it is spiders themselves.

Additional problems come from attitudes directed to other attitudes and their alleged attitude-specific properties. Suppose that dangerousness is the property uniquely represented by fear. What do we make of the case when one desires something dangerous for herself? As I

argued in Chapter 3, a tripartite model can more easily accommodate the complexity of our mental representational life.

Finally, some attitudes are arguably gradable, in that they occur with difference degrees of intensity. For instance, one may have a more or less strong desire, fear, or credence, and so on, towards P. An attitude's intensity can hardly be accommodated by features of the content. Consider for instance vividness or detail.[9] An intense desire is not necessarily a desire whose content is more detailed or vivid. I can intensely long for my childhood home or a missing friend long after the memory has faded.

Let us conclude with the first objection above, that from the cognitive intramodal representationalist. As I have argued in the previous Chapter, as long as the intramodal representationalist genuinely ascribes the phenomenal differences between conscious mental states to *attitudinal* properties, the intramodal-strategy and the attitude-strategy are compatible and united against the content-strategy. Whether they do so might partly be a terminological dispute, depending on whether one counts attitudinal properties as representational or not. It remains the fact that intramodal representationalism, being a kind of representationalism, is committed to a reductive explanation of phenomenal properties to non-phenomenal properties. The attitude-strategy (the claim that attitudes contribute to the overall phenomenology of conscious intentional states), on the other hand, is not by default committed to any reductive claim.

I have already stated that, between these two options, my preference goes to a genuine non-representational treatment of attitudinal properties. Let me add to this that I also doubt that the intramodal representationalist can accommodate the above objection from degrees of intensity. In fact, it is difficult to see how it can be accommodated by *any* representational feature, whether content or mode (if not in terms of vividness; but see the above reply). By contrast,

[9] Moreover, the appeal to vividness and detail to explain psychological differences suffer from well-known problems (see Chapter 3).

attitudes conceived of as non-representational features of intentional mental states (i.e., modifications of one's consciousness) seem to naturally accommodate degrees of intensity.

7.4. Conclusions

In this Chapter, I have defended the claim that there is a phenomenology of attitudes from two obstacles. First, a certain view of the nature of intentionality as bestowed on mental states from abstract entities, i.e., anti-psychologism. Second, the thesis that all there is to the phenomenology of mental states of any kind are properties of the represented object of the experience, an no properties of the experience itself, i.e., Transparency.

I have argued against the first problem that the attitude strategy should rather endorse an alternative model of intentionality, in which the intentional character does not "trickle down" from abstract entities to mental states, but it is intrinsic to the latter.

By contrast, there is no need for a complete rejection of Transparency. The attitude strategy is perfectly compatible with Weak Transparency. I then proceeded to examines several cases in which one can introspect properties of cognitive experiences themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

I formulated the central question of this dissertation as a challenge for strong representationalism. This was whether the phenomenological difference, if any, between conscious states of perceiving and conscious cognitive states could be fully explained in representational terms.

Chapters 2 to 5 argued for a negative answer to this question. The phenomenal character of our conscious mental experiences cannot be fully exhausted by their representational content. Chapters 2 and 3 dealt with what I called Object theories, which claim that perceptual and cognitive states differ in terms of *what* they represent, i.e., in terms of the kinds of objects (broadly intended) that they relate the subject to. I have discussed three versions of these theories and argued that none of them picks out a representational content feature that either all and only perceptual states on the one hand, and all and only cognitive states on the other hand, have and which explains their respective distinctive phenomenology. I have discussed three examples of this strategy. The first was Russell's; I have shown that Russell's theory hardly deals with unsuccessful cases of perception and judgment. I have then moved to the contrast between the Thin and the Rich Content View. I argued that even though the Rich Content View treats cases of phenomenal contrast like the pine tree spotter more successfully than the Thin Content View, it does not rule out the cognitive phenomenal strategy as a possible competitor. The cognitive phenomenal treatment of cases of phenomenal contrasts like the pine tree spotter might lead to the third and final Object-strategy. Against this third theory, I have argued that the phenomenal character of perceptual intentionality is underdetermined by any mixture of sensory and cognitive qualities. Moreover, there is no phenomenal match between the representation of low-level properties in perception vis-à-vis in cognition (as suggested by Kriegel 2019a), nor between the

representation of high-level properties in perception vis-à-vis in cognition (thus suggesting that the mere representation of high-level properties does not exhaust the cognitive phenomenal character).

In Chapter 3 I have discussed the new version of Montague's Object-strategy alongside other similar dual theories according to which the differences between mental states are exhausted by differences in types of representational contents. In other words, these groups of theories argue that for each type of mental state M, there is a corresponding type of representational content C, such if the experience instantiates C, the subject is *ipso facto* in M. Against these views, I have defended the irreducibility of the attitudinal component by showing that some differences between types of mental states cannot be accommodated into the content alone.

Chapters 4 and 5 explored what I called Kinds-of content theories, which state the crucial difference between perceptual and cognitive states in terms of *how* they represent what they represent. If one takes the contents of perception and thought to be both propositional, the difference between the two states must be determined by their respective constituents; usually, this means that perception is propositional and nonconceptual, and thought propositional and conceptual. Typical examples of propositional and nonconceptual contents that can figure in perception are Russellian propositions and possible worlds; but they can occur in thought as well. A different route is that of rejecting propositionalism about perception. The contents of perception will then be nonpropositional and nonconceptual, and the contents of thought propositional and conceptual. I have argued that thought can be nonpropositional (in the objectualist sense) as well and that we cannot exclude that no cases of perception are propositional. The only feature that seems to be proprietary of perception is thus the *possibility* of representing nonconceptually (for perception can have conceptual content), and of thought the necessity of representing conceptually. But I have argued in several places that these two features

seem, at least by themselves, irrelevant to an explanation of the distinctive phenomenal character of perception vis-à-vis thought.

In the second part of the thesis, I have sketched my positive proposal to address the phenomenal datum. Chapters 6 and 7 explored the possibility that there is a phenomenology of intentional attitudes, and this only can fully explain the *phenomenal datum*. I called this the attitude strategy. I stated in the introduction that a second and more general aim of the thesis is that of inquiring into the phenomenal nature of perceptual states vis-à-vis cognitive states. My discussion of the attitude strategy naturally led to an initial answer to the questions about a possible phenomenal mark of the perceptual and a phenomenal mark of the cognitive. I suggested that the answer can be found in Husserl's modes of givenness of emptiness and fulfillness.

In Chapter 7, I defended the claim that there is a phenomenology of attitudes from two obstacles. The first obstacle was a certain view of the nature of intentionality as bestowed on mental states from abstract entities. I have argued against this first problem that the attitude strategy should rather endorse an alternative model of intentionality, in which the intentional character does not "trickle down" from abstract entities to mental states, but it is intrinsic to the latter. The second obstacle was Transparency, i.e., the thesis that all there is to the phenomenology of mental states of any kind are properties of the represented object of the experience, and no properties of the experience itself. I did not fully reject Transparency, for the attitude strategy is perfectly compatible with its weak version. I then proceeded to examine several cases in which one can introspect properties of cognitive experiences themselves.

The idea that the phenomenology of perception and thought are explained by the characters of, respectively, fulfillness and emptiness can only be an initial answer. The proposal itself has many obscure points, on which I have tried to shed some light in Chapters 6 and 7. But I believe the idea to be extremely fertile, not only as a phenomenological inquiry for its own sake,

but also in its connection to other topics, primarily epistemological. It would be interesting to explore whether the phenomenal features of perception and thought here identified might bear any relevance for the contemporary epistemological debate. For instance, some contemporary Husserlian scholars correctly highlight the connection between empty and fulfilled intentions with the Kantian theme that only fulfilled intuition can amount to knowledge. Since we have non-perceptual knowledge, do we also have non-perceptual phenomenal experience of fulfilled intuition, i.e., what is known as eidetic intuition? And if so, what does this justify us to believe?

Another epistemological point is what I certainly regard as one of the highlights of my dissertation. I am referring to Chapter 5, where I defended the possibility of perception having objectual content. This new thesis raises many exciting questions. The very notion of objectual perceptual content undoubtedly needs more clarification than I could do in this dissertation: what does objectual perceptual content exactly look like? What kinds of inferences does it allow? How does it exactly interact with other states of the system? I have defined the account as a kind of *sui generis* doxastic state; it would be interesting to see whether old worries about propositional doxastic views of perception can be given new answers within this new framework. Propositional objectualism raises also interesting and difficult questions about the very ideas of belief and knowledge, such as the old question of whether all knowledge is propositional. I have tried to give a foundation to the answers to these questions in this dissertation, but far more must be done.

A second important research branch that I would like to see grow from this dissertation is the one about the phenomenal features of thought. Being a relatively recent topic, there is so much to explore. In the last Chapter, I defended the claim that there are properties of *experiencing* cognitive content. This possibility raises important questions about the nature of cognitive phenomenal properties and their relation to representational content. For instance, are there non-representational cognitive qualitative properties on top of a state's intentional content, i.e, cognitive qualia? And, even if there are no pure cognitive qualitative properties in the actual

world, could there have been? In other words, is cognitive phenomenal consciousness essentially representational or only contingently so? Finally, I have suggested that the correct way of understanding phenomenal consciousness is as the complex of qualitative and subjective character; how do these two components interact to bring about phenomenal thought? These questions have long been discussed in relation to perceptual phenomenology, but not yet in relation to cognitive phenomenology.

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