Content in Thought and Perception

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Abstract

This thesis addresses a debate within the philosophy of perception between so-called conceptualists and nonconceptualists. Its principal thesis is that the intentional content of a perceptual experience is the content of a thought that a reflective subject is in a position to think if she has the experience. I call this claim, endorsed by conceptualists, the thesis of *content congruence*. Two principal lines of argument are put forward for this thesis. The first, 'simple' argument contends that a perceptual experience is a state in which it perceptually appears to the subject that things are thus and so; that a reflective subject who has an experience is in a position to think that things are thus and so; and that the subject in question, in doing so, thinks a thought with the same content as her experience. The second line of argument appeals to the role of perceptual

experience in intentional explanation of observational beliefs. It makes the case that such explanation presumes that there is a non-trivial, non-vacuous *law* linking perceptual experiences with observational beliefs, and argues that an adherent of content congruence is significantly better placed to formulate such a law (consistently with her view) than her 'content nonconceptualist' opponent.

The thesis of content congruence has often been associated in the literature with the thesis of *state conceptualism*, i.e. the claim that the representational capacities in virtue of the activation of which a perceptual experience has the content it has are conceptual. I reject the latter, and explain why we should not expect the denial of that claim, i.e. state *non*conceptualism, to be incompatible with content congruence. I defend moreover the thesis of content congruence against the objection that it confuses sense and reference, and the objection that it leads to a viciously circular or otherwise inadequate account of observational or demonstrative concepts.

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Notational Conventions

I use **boldface** to denote senses, or modes of presentation, or concepts, if they are considered to be abstract objects on the level of sense. Thus **dog** is a mode of presentation of doghood.

In chapter 3, I use **arial black** to denote a certain type of modes of presentation, viz. ones that by hypothesis are constituents of perceptual contents. Following Peacocke (1986, 1989) I refer to these modes of presentation as 'manners of perception'. Thus **c** is a manner of perception of the colour of a certain object. (This notation is supposed to be neutral on the question whether manners of perception are of the same kind as the modes of presentation that, on Peacocke's view, are constituents of thought content. Thus, the notation is neutral on the question whether **c** is the same as some mode of presentation **c**.)

Introduction

People perceive things around them. They see, hear, feel, smell, etc. things. Moreover, they do not do so unconsciously, without any phenomenology, but are having perceptual *experience* of things. In a perceptual experience, things appear various ways to the perceiver. For example, in my current visual experience, I see something that looks flat, and rectangular, variously grey, and to be situated right in front of me, on top of something brown, flat, wood-like in texture, covered here and there by rectangular things of varying thickness and brightness. Of course, this only begins to describe my current visual state. Still, on the basis of such a description, one might appreciate the motivation for re-describing my visual state as one in which things are represented to me as being a certain way. In light of this re-description, we can talk of the 'content' of my visual experience as *what is represented to me as so* in having that experience.

Reflective subjects also think about things. They believe, judge, and suppose things to be thus and so. They desire them to be thus and so, and intend to bring it about that they are thus and so. A state of believing that things are thus and so, of desiring or intending that they be thus and so, can similarly be re-described as one in which things are represented to the thinker as being a certain way (viz. as being thus and so). Again, we can talk of the 'content' of the thought as *what is believed, or desired, or otherwise thought to be so* in having that thought.

These general remarks about perceptual experiences and thoughts serve to introduce the question of the extent of the continuities between them. In particular, they serve to introduce that question in so far as the continuities in question relate to the status of perceptual experiences and thoughts as *contentful* – as mental states or episodes with content. To what extent are thoughts and perceptual experiences similar or dissimilar in point of their *contentfulness*? This is the overarching question addressed in this thesis. That overarching question may be refined into a range of more specific ones. One group of questions pursues a 'what' question: What kinds of contents do thoughts and perceptual experiences have? In particular, do they have the same kind of content? Can a thought have the very same content as a perceptual experience? Another group of questions pursues a 'how' question: How is it that thoughts and perceptual experiences have the content they have? Do they pull into play fundamentally the same kinds of psychological capacities to represent things as being various ways?

This thesis addresses questions of these two kinds. It particularly concentrates on a question from the first group, viz. the question whether a reflective subject – a rational, self-conscious thinker – who has a certain perceptual experience is in a position to think a thought with the same content as the perceptual experience. I argue that she is in this position, a conclusion I call the thesis of 'content congruence'.

> **Content congruence** The content of a perceptual experience is the content of a thought a reflective subject can think if she has the experience.

Drawing this conclusion puts me in agreement with such 'conceptualist' writers on perception as John McDowell and Bill Brewer in so far as they affirm the possibility of judging true, hence thinking, the very content of one's experience:

> A judgement of experience does not introduce a new kind of content, but simply endorses the conceptual content, or some of it, that is already possessed by the experience on which it is grounded. (McDowell 1994: 48-49)

> My thesis in this essay is:
> (CC) Sense experiential states have conceptual content.
> (…) [A] mental state with *conceptual content* … is one whose content is the content of a possible *judgement by the subject*. (Brewer 2005: 217, Brewer's emphases)

I give two lines of argument for the thesis of content congruence. The first, 'simple' argument makes the case that a perceptual experience is a state in which it perceptually appears to the subject that things are a certain way. A reflective subject who has such an experience can think that things are that way, the argument continues, and in doing so thinks a thought having the same content as her experience. This argument is spelled out in chapter 1. The second line of argument adverts to the role of perceptual experiences in psychological explanation of beliefs. It makes the case that this explanatory role presumes a non-trivial *law* linking perceptual experiences with the beliefs they are invoked to explain. Such a law will generalise over the contents of perceptual experiences and beliefs, respectively. I argue that whereas a plausible candidate for such a law can be found if content congruence is correct, it is hard to see how one can be found if the thesis is not correct, and that the presumption thus must be that the thesis is correct. Chapter 4 sets out this line of argument.

The thesis of content congruence may seem like a truism to some readers, particularly in light of how it emerges from the trivial-seeming 'simple' argument. Yet the thesis is by no means uncontroversial – it may even be a minority view. Such historically influential views of sense experience as the sense-datum theory and the adverbial view afford a ground for radical criticism of the thesis, as do certain forms of naïve realism. Adherents of the these latter views will argue that whereas thoughts have 'contents' in the sense of *intentional* or *representational* contents – i.e. abstract objects, perhaps with some form of quasi-logical or quasi-linguistic structure, that determine truth-conditions – sense experiences do not, constitutively, have intentional or representational content at all.[1] These theorists contend that a fatal error was made in the very first paragraph above, viz. when we moved from describing perceptual experiences in such everyday terms as 'seeing something' or 'something looking a certain way' to re-describing them in such terms as 'something being represented as so to the subject'.[2] In this thesis, I have relatively little to say in response to this radical criticism, beyond offering some rather brief and dogmatic comments in favour of the 'weak intentionalist' claim that perceptual experiences have intentional content, and responding to one particular objection to it.[3] The problems herein addressed in general arise only after this radical criticism is set aside and weak intentionalism accepted.

---

[1] I use 'intentional content' and 'representational content' interchangeably.

[2] A relatively recent defence of sense-datum theory is Jackson 1977, a book which analyses reports of the form 'X looks F to S' in terms of a statement about the kinds of sense-data that S is aware of. Jackson (2003: 434) has later given up sense-datum theory and now seems to endorse the thesis of content congruence. A relatively recent defence of the adverbial account is Tye 1984. As we shall see, Tye has given up this view and now defends 'content nonconceptualism'. A very recent attack on the idea that sense perceptions have intentional content, from the standpoint of (something like) naïve realism, is Travis 2004. Campbell 2002 and Martin 2002a also argue against that idea from such a standpoint.

[3] In section 1.2 I make some relatively brief and dogmatic comments in favour of the claim that perceptual experience has intentional content. Section 6.5 responds to a line of objection to that general claim in Campbell 2002.

A less radical criticism of content congruence comes from theorists who accept that perceptual experience has intentional content, but argue that the conditions of individuation for the content of perception differs from those for the content of thought. This view I call 'content nonconceptualism'. Michael Tye (2000, 2006) has recently defended an important version of it. On his view, the content of experience is individuated at level of reference, in the manner of Russellian propositions, while the content of thought is individuated at the level of sense, or mode of presentation, in the manner of Fregean Thoughts.[4] In chapter 2, I consider reasons Tye presents for such a difference in individuation-conditions, and argue that they fail. Another important version of content nonconceptualism is put forward by Christopher Peacocke (1986, 1989, 2001b). His view has it that the content of perception implicates modes of presentation of another kind – what he calls 'manners of perception' – from those implicated in thought-content. In chapter 3, I consider an argument Peacocke (1986, 1989) advances or this difference. I argue, again, that content congruence emerges unharmed.

A special reason to deny content congruence is the idea that experience cannot play a certain vital explanatory role for us once we assume that it has just the same kind of content as beliefs based on it. The influential *non-circularity argument* trades on such an idea, urging that the role of observational and demonstrative concepts in our thinking can be understood only if we take it that perceptual experiences present the world in a somehow more primitive fashion than thoughts do. In chapters 5 and 6, I respond to objections that all broadly can be seen as variations on the theme of non-circularity. Chapter 5 articulates a response to Peacocke's non-circularity argument in *A Study of*

[4] In this thesis, 'thought' will be used in the psychological sense, on a par with 'belief', except where capitalised as here. Thus the term 'thought-content', which I will use below to denote the contents of thoughts, is not pleonastic.

Concepts (1992) that is alternative to and, I contend, superior to a response that many conceptualists at least seem to have favoured. Chapter 6 deals with a number of arguments in John Campbell's *Reference and Consciousness* (2002) designed to show that anyone who accepts content congruence, or even that perceptual experience has intentional content at all, will fail to give room for a certain explanatory role experience has to play in an account of demonstrative thinking. While I argue that Campbell's concerns can be met, considering his arguments in detail can teach us much about how a believer in content congruence is well advised to develop her view. Among other things, I indicate how some points in Campbell can be exploited for the purposes of a positive argument in favour of a form of conceptualism. Again, the overall lesson is that content congruence emerges unharmed.

Above, we identified a second type of questions one might raise when comparing perceptual experiences and thoughts in point of their contentfulness. These were questions asking, broadly, how it is that perceptual experiences and thoughts have the content they have. A wide range of significantly different questions can certainly be subsumed under this heading. They include questions about what neural mechanisms are involved in perception and in thought, and of what detailed forms of information-processing characterise perceptual and higher-order cognitive systems respectively. Yet there is also a question to be raised here on a higher level of abstraction. To bring it out requires some setting-up.

If a reflective subject, or some other agent, is in a mental state, her being in that state depends on the activation of certain psychological capacities or dispositions of hers. If the mental state in question is contentful, these psychological capacities include

capacities mentally to represent something: they include representational capacities. To use or apply a concept is one way of activating a representational capacity, but there are, perhaps, others. Could it be that to perceive something as being a certain way is such a way of activating a representational capacity – one that is not a case of activating a *conceptual* capacity? This is the gist of the question I am considering in chapter 7. To see its force, however, it is important to consider a feature of thoughts.

To common sense, it seems compelling that states of thinking (believing, supposing, wondering, etc) are closely connected to the use of concepts. This is reflected in our willingness and unwillingness to ascribe thoughts to various subjects. While we are willing to credit a six-year old with the thought that a block, if unsupported, would fall to the ground we are typically not willing to credit her with the thought that the force of gravity is acting on the block, say. If quizzed about this difference, a compelling, commonsensical answer is that our six-year old simply lacks the concept of gravity (*a fortiori* is not using that concept). We seem, then, tacitly to be operating on the principle that a subject can think something only if she has the appropriate concepts, viz. the concepts that we use in spelling out what would be thought in thinking it – in spelling out the content of the thought. If we hold that principle – and that principle certainly seems to bring out a commitment of our common-sense understanding of thoughts and concepts – then we ought similarly to hold the principle that thinking a thought depends on using the appropriate concepts, on activating the appropriate conceptual capacities. (After all, why should merely having, but not using, the psychological capacity to apply a concept be vital to the possibility of thinking something?)

We can now raise the question whether the latter principle generalises to perceptual experience. Does having a perceptual experience in which things appear thus and so to one depend on activating appropriate conceptual capacities, viz. capacities for applying the concepts that would have to be used in spelling out how things appear to one as being – in spelling out the content of the experience? The idea that it does is another ingredient in some influential conceptualists' views. Thus McDowell:

> [W]e need a conception of experiences as states or occurrences that are passive but reflect conceptual capacities, capacities that belong to spontaneity, in operation. (McDowell 1994: 23)

In chapter 7 I first observe that conceptual (and other representational) capacities can be individuated both in a certain abstract way and in a certain concrete way, and point out that it is the concrete notion that must be relevant in the present context. I go on to argue that if representational capacities are *conceptual* only if they conform to a certain 'Availability Constraint' – a close relative of Gareth Evans's (1982) Generality Constraint – then the representational capacities in virtue of the activation of which a perceptual experience has the content it has are *not* conceptual. I thus reject the following thesis of *state conceptualism*:

> **State conceptualism** The (concrete) representational capacities in virtue of the activation of which a perceptual experience has the content it has are conceptual.

This raises the question whether my defence of content congruence is consistent with my rejection of state conceptualism. In chapter 7, I dispel the impression that there is an inconsistency in this combination. I emphasise two points to that end. First, my defence of content congruence is relatively neutral on what kinds of contents thoughts have. It

makes relatively few categorical assumptions about the nature of thought-content. The overall drift of the argument is rather that whatever the conditions of individuation of thought content are, those conditions apply to perceptual content too. The second point is that my rejection of state conceptualism rest on a quite specific functional limitation on the representational capacities activated in perception, viz. on their failure to be 'globally available' in the way conceptual capacities are. I suggest, by appeal to some analogies, that it is far from clear why this sort of functional difference should entail a difference in the individuation-conditions of the contents that conceptual and perceptual-representational capacities are capacities to entertain.

The overall message of the thesis may thus be summed in slogan form as follows: The contentfulness of perceptual experiences does not depend on the activation of conceptual capacities, yet their contents are still thinkable in thought. When it comes to how the content of experience stands to thought, we should affirm content congruence without state conceptualism.

1

The Simple Argument for Content Congruence

To have a perceptual experience is for it to perceptually appear to one that things are thus and so. A reflective subject who enjoys such an experience is in a position to think that things are thus and so. What she thinks here is just what appears to her, perceptually, to be the case. Therefore the content of her perception is of the same kind as the content of her thought. Indeed, more strongly, the content of a perceptual experience of a reflective subject is the same as the content of a thought she is in a position to entertain in having that experience. I will call this 'the simple argument for content congruence' or 'the simple argument' for short. In this chapter, I spell out and defend a version of it.

1.1 The Simple Argument

The simple argument may be spelled out in just a little more detail as follows. Let *e* be an arbitrary perceptual experience, *S* be an arbitrary reflective subject, i.e. a rational, self-conscious thinker, and 'A' a schematic letter. We shall argue for the following claims

(1) *e* is a state of its perceptually seeming to one that A.

(2) If *e* is a state of its perceptually seeming to one that A, the intentional content of *e* is what perceptually seems to one to be so, viz. that A.

(3) If *S* has *e*, i.e. if it perceptually seems to her that A, she has or is in a position to introduce concepts in terms of which she can entertain the thought that A.

(4) The content of the thought that A is what is thought in entertaining it, viz. that A.

∴ (S) If *S* has *e*, she has or is in a position to introduce concepts in terms of which she can entertain a thought with the same content as *e*.

Content congruence is the thesis that the content of a perceptual experience of a reflective subject is the content of a thought the subject can think if she has the experience. The conclusion of the simple argument, (S), amounts to that claim.[1]

Close relatives of the simple argument have been put forward by several writers recently. McDowell writes:

> We should understand what Kant calls 'intuition' – experiential intake – not as a bare getting of an extra-conceptual Given, but as a kind of occurrence that already has conceptual content. In experience one takes in, for instance sees, *that things are thus and so*. That is the sort of thing one can also, for instance, judge. (1994: 9, emphasis in original)

It is natural to read the last two sentences of this quotation as purporting to give a reason for the conceptualist claim stated in the first sentence. McDowell certainly suggests

[1] It might be natural to take content congruence to be a thesis not only about the experiences reflective subject actually have but also about those they (more or less easily) could have had. To keep things simple, I leave such modal niceties on one side.

other lines of argument for that conceptualist claim. Still, the point made in the last two sentences seems to be part of his overall case for the claim. Frank Jackson has recently formulated the following variant of the argument:

> When I believe that things are as my experience represents them to be, what I believe is precisely that things are as my experience says that they are, and not something else. … [W]e can *think* that things are *exactly* as our experience represents them to be. (Jackson 2003: 434, Jackson's emphases)

There are subtle differences between the points made by McDowell and Jackson, and by others who have argued in a similar fashion.[2] Equally clearly, there is a common theme to them. Something *more or less* to the effect of our premise (3) is the basic idea in each of them, unifying them as variations on a theme. For the rest of this chapter, I will concentrate on the version of the argument given at the start of this section. Although the basic idea of the argument is familiar, the way in which I spell it out and defend it will, I hope, add something to the efforts of other writers who have put forward versions of the argument.

It is useful to distinguish two steps in the simple argument. The 'intentionalism step' is taken in premises (1) and (2). This step essentially does two things: it tells us that an experience has an intentional content, and how to identify what content the experience has. The 'conceptualisation step' is taken in premises (3) and (4). It says what a reflective subject is able to think, given that she has a certain experience.

The upshot of the simple argument, i.e. content congruence, is closely related to, yet not strictly the same as, the thesis of content conceptualism. Content conceptualism – to be

[2] These include Crane (1992: 140) and Byrne (2005: 245).

fully explicit, content conceptualism about perception – is the claim that perceptual experiences have content of a certain kind that qualifies as conceptual content. Content congruence entails content conceptualism on the assumption that thoughts, beliefs, judgements etc. indeed have content of that kind.[3] Now, some writers (Brewer 2005, Byrne 2005) take it to be definitional that thoughts have conceptual content; some (Heck 2000, Peacocke 1992) take this to be substantive but true; and at least one (Stalnaker 1998) takes it to be false. I will be taking it that the assumption is true (whether by stipulation or otherwise), and thus that content congruence entails content conceptualism. However, if anyone should not want to talk that way, they can happily reject it and consider what follows simply as a discussion of content congruence. I take it to be uncontroversial, however, that content conceptualism (about perception) entails content congruence on any reasonable characterisation of what it is for contents to be conceptual. For it is very hard to see how content conceptualism could be motivated apart from content congruence. On these presumptions, content congruence and content conceptualism stand or fall with each other.

1.2 The Intentionalism Step

The intentionalism step, as noted, essentially does two things. It puts forward a claim to the effect that any experience has an intentional content – the thesis we call weak intentionalism – and it gives a way of identifying what the content of an experience is, viz. in terms of what perceptually seems to the subject to be so in having it.[4] Both of those things are controversial. Weak intentionalism is inconsistent with traditional

[3] Strictly speaking, the entailment further presumes that an intentional state has at most one intentional content. We will discuss that presumption in section 2.1, but for now I will simply take it for granted.

[4] I will treat the report 'It perceptually appears to S that A' as a member of a group of stylistically equivalent reports, other members of which include 'It perceptually seems to S that A', and 'S has the perceptual impression that A'. What binds these phrases together is their obvious surface analogy with paradigmatic *de dicto* attitude reports such as 'S believes that A', 'S hopes that A', 'S knows that A', and so on. Each of these perceptual reports has determinates for the various modalities.

forms of sense-datum and adverbial accounts of sensory experience, and with at least some forms of naïve realism.[5] However, weak intentionalism is common ground between conceptualism and nonconceptualism, since 'nonconceptualism', as used in this thesis, has it that perception has a nonconceptual yet *intentional* content. For this reason, I will not argue at length for weak intentionalism, but rest content with some brief and rather dogmatic remarks in its favour.

Even if one accepts weak intentionalism, one need not accept that the content of experience is to be identified in terms of reports of the form 'It perceptually seems to S that A'. Michael Tye (2000), for example, argues that the content of conscious, visual experience (as distinct, on his view, from the content of perceptual beliefs based on experience) is to be identified in terms of reports of the form '*X* looks *F* to *S*'. We shall return to his view below (and see that his divergent preference does not in and of itself make a great difference).

What, then, is the case for (1)? The starting point is that perceptual experiences essentially have phenomenal character, and are of the kind that they are because of their phenomenal character – because of what it is like to have them. Any defence of (1) thus has to appeal to the idea that an adequate characterisation of what it is like to have a certain experience needs to mention what perceptually appears to be so to the subject. No full-dress defence of this much-discussed idea will be attempted here. I will content myself with briefly setting out some considerations I take to support it.

[5] See f. nt. 2 of the Introduction and the text attached to it.

The first consideration is the so-called transparency or diaphanousness of perceptual (in particular visual) experience. Diaphanousness is the idea, roughly, that when we reflect on our own experiences, say my experience of an orange, what we find is simply the putative object of the experience – the orange – and the properties it putatively has – its orange colour, its spherical shape, its wax-like texture, and so on.[6] The sense-datum theory and the adverbial theory are hard to reconcile with this apparent phenomenological datum, since they either deny that experience as such, as distinct from beliefs it causes, is of any object (the adverbial theory) or maintain that the objects that experience as such is of are distinct from external objects such as oranges or even their surfaces (the sense-datum view).[7]

A second consideration is a version of the old slogan that all seeing is seeing as, viz. that all experiencing is experiencing something as something. We cannot adequately characterise a visual experience (to concentrate on the visual case, as I will do throughout) simply by characterising the external objective scene that the experience is of.[8] Suppose that two subjects each are having non-hallucinatory, non-illusory experience of one and the same scene, from the same point of view, where their experience non-deviantly depends on the scene it is of. It does not follow that their experiences are phenomenally alike, since the two subjects may be differently

[6] For discussion of this idea of transparency or diaphanousness, see Martin 1998a, 2002a; Tye 2000; Siewert 2004; and Stoljar 2004.

[7] Martin 1998a deploys considerations of transparency against the adverbial view; Martin 2002a deploys them against the sense-datum theory. Martin 2002a argues that a certain analogue of the transparency considerations for sensory imagination creates problems for at least some versions of the view that experience has intentional content. Unfortunately, I do not have the space to discuss whether the weak intentionalism endorsed in this thesis is within the target range of his argument, and, if it is, whether his argument is sound.

[8] I am treating 'S has an experience of the F' as extensional here, allowing for exportation (allowing us to infer 'there is an F such that S has an experience of it') and for substitution of co-extensive terms (to infer that 'S has an experience of the G' given 'the F is the G'). A weak intentionalist need not, of course, deny that 'S has an experience of the F' has an intensional use. His view is, if anything, congenial to the existence of such a use.

perceptually sensitive to various aspects of the scene. For example, differences with respect to hue in the scene are available to a normal perceiver but are not available to a person whose visual system is sensitive only to distinctions of brightness.[9] Thus, even in veridical cases, an adequate characterisation of experience cannot simply describe the objective scene the experience is of; it also needs to say what *properties* of the various particulars in the scene are presented in the experience.

However, it is not enough simply to list the properties the subject is perceptually aware of alongside the particulars she is perceptually aware of. Physical particulars are experienced *as having* a certain shape and colour and so on. The point may also be put conversely: a shape, and a colour, etc are presented *as co-instantiated* in a certain concrete particular.[10] Now, the idiom 'S experiences the orange as round' is analogous to such idioms as 'S conceives of Charlie as brave' and 'S knows Charlie as brave'. It is an interesting and delicate question how the latter pair of reports are to be analysed more precisely. It seems clear, though, that their truth presumes that S somehow predicates or attributes braveness of Charlie. Given the broad analogies between the reports, it would be remarkable if this point did not generalise to 'S experiences the orange as round'. The truth of that report thus seems to presume that S somehow visually attributes roundness to the orange.

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[9] It is natural to say that the latter person has grey-scale vision. One might be misled by this, however, into thinking that the things in the scene look different shades of grey to the subject and *therefore* that she is under an illusion, a conclusion contradicting our claim that her experience is non-illusory. This inference to illusion here trades on the fact that 'grey', in ordinary colour-talk, denotes a colour-type that excludes blue, red, green and other chromatic colours. If we say, instead, that things look so-and-so bright to the subject with 'grey-scale vision', we cannot infer illusion, since 'having such-and-such a brightness' does not exclude any hue.

[10] There may be exceptions for certain bizarre experiences. Drestke (1999) has suggested that the so-called waterfall illusion involves an experience as of movement without having an experience as of something moving. It is part of his description, however, that the waterfall illusion is bizarre in precisely this respect. His view therefore positively supports the point in the text as a remark about non-bizarre experiences.

Wherever someone predicates or attributes something, F, to something, G, they entertain an intentional content, viz. a content to the effect that G is F. It follows that an experience of something as something must be taken to involve the entertaining of intentional content. Experiential states must be taken to be states with intentional content. Now, in the case of other mental states with intentional content, such as thoughts, beliefs, hopes and fears, it is plausible that a *de dicto* report of the state – a report of the form 'S thinks that A', 'S believes that A', etc. – is at least as adequate a report of the state and its intentional content, for the purposes of psychological explanation, finding the subject rational, and so on, as any other type of report. [11] Again, we should expect this to generalise to experiences, given that they are mental states with intentional content. That is to say that we should expect reports of the form 'It perceptually seems to S that A' (or its stylistic equivalents) to reveal the psychological nature of experiences at least as well as any other type of report. To put it in the material mode, to have a perceptual experience is for it to perceptually seem to one that A. [12]

The argument thus briefly and dogmatically outlined is interesting in that it makes a case for weak intentionalism that does not appeal to the need to give a uniform

[11] Burge (1982: 98-100) emphasises this point.

[12] Someone might make the following complaint at this point: 'The line of argument for (1) suggested here begs the question against the content nonconceptualist. At two points, the argument makes the following kind of generalisation: "(i) Perceptual experiences have something in common with certain states of conceiving or thinking or believing; (ii) states of conceiving or thinking or believing have feature F; therefore perceptual experiences also have feature F." Yet if the content nonconceptualist is right that perceptual experiences have contents of a different kind from those of paradigmatic intentional states (beliefs, thoughts, etc), these generalisations are shaky. In relying on them, one tacitly presumes that content nonconceptualism is false, which was just what was to be shown!' I have three replies. First, the current line of argument is not, in the first instance, addressed to an antecedently committed nonconceptualist but rather to a theorist who is initially open-minded about the issues. Second, since the content nonconceptualist agrees that experiences are contentful states, she must be prepared to accept that *some* generalisations hold across them and paradigmatic intentional states. Thus she cannot condemn the conceptualist for making them without specific reason; such specific reasons remain to be given. Third, as we shall see, the content nonconceptualist has good reason to accept that the content of experience can be reported. Thus she cannot fault the conceptualist for making a proposal as to how it is reported. If there is something flawed about the conceptualist's proposal, she has to identify an alternative. (We shall consider Tye's alternative in chapter 2.)

characterisation of normal veridical experiences, on the one hand, and either illusions or hallucinations, on the other. As such, it is neutral on the question of disjunctivism. [13] In this thesis, I aim for neutrality on that question as far as possible.[14] If we permit ourselves to set disjunctivism aside, and assume that there is a need to give a uniform characterisation of 'good' and (at least some) 'bad' cases, the motivation for weak intentionalism can be reinforced in familiar ways.[15]

The argument for (1) just outlined proceeded via an argument for the claim that perceptual experience has intentional content. Yet suppose that someone was attracted to (1) independently of the question of weak intentionalism and asked for a motivation for (2). That request can be answered in terms of either of the two standard ways of introducing the notion of intentional content in connection with perception. The first ways is exemplified by Peacocke when he writes

> A perceptual experience represents the world as being a certain way. What is the nature of the content it represents as holding? (Peacocke 1992: 61)

If to have an experience is for it to perceptually appear to one that A, it seems but a minimal step to say that a perceptual experience represents the world as being a certain

[13] Perhaps some disjunctivists will take exception to (1) on the grounds that it purports to offer a constitutive characterisation of experiences in terms of the non-factive 'It perceptually appears to S that A.' This characterisation applies equally to normal veridical experiences and to illusions and hallucinations; some disjunctivists, by contrast, claim that no constitutive characterisation can be given (Martin 2004). I invite such disjunctivists to reformulate (1) as the claim that a normal, non-accidentially veridical experience is a state of its being perceptually apparent to one that things are a certain way (see McDowell 1982: 386-387 for a characterisation along these lines.) Many (if not all) of the points to be made below are susceptible of corresponding reformulation.

[14] An exception from this practice is made in section 7.4.1, where I criticise a certain disjunctivist development of points Brewer makes in (2005).

[15] See Martin (1998b) on this point. Martin (1998b) sets up the disjunctive view, the sense-datum view, and the intentional view as three mutually exclusive responses to the argument from illusion. He thus treats non-disjunctivism as a defining trait of the intentional view. Accordingly it is a substantive matter whether any view accepting weak intentionalism is an intentional view in Martin's sense.

way, viz. as being such that A. Moreover, it seems plausible to identify the way the world is perceptually represented as being in terms of what perceptually seems to be the case, viz. that A.

The second way of introducing the notion of intentional content in connection with perception is illustrated by this formulation of Susanna Siegel's:

> One influential version of the idea that the contents of perception are analogous to the contents of a newspaper story holds that the contents of an experience are given by the conditions under which it is accurate. What an experience conveys to the subject, according to this conception, is that those conditions are fulfilled. (Siegel 2005: §2)

If to have an experience is for it to perceptually appear to one that A, we can say that there is a certain condition that has to be satisfied for the experience to be accurate, viz. the condition that A. Thus, (2) is a result of both of the two standard ways of introducing the notion of intentional content in connection with perception.

1.3 The Conceptualisation Step

The conceptualisation step is the heart of the simple argument. It says, schematically, that if a reflective subject has such and such an experience then she is in a position to think such and such a thought, suitably related in content to the experience. I presume everyone can agree that premise (4),

(4) The content of the thought that A is what is thought in entertaining it, viz. that A.

is a truism. Thus the acceptability of the conceptualisation step rests on the acceptability of (3):

(3) If *S* has *e*, i.e. if it perceptually seems to her that A, she has or is in a position to introduce concepts in terms of which she can entertain the thought that A.

I will here present two reasons to endorse that claim. The first has the character of a 'top-down' reason, to the effect that (3) must be correct, if there is any rational basis for affirming weak intentionalism. I will call this the argument from intelligibility. The second has the character of a 'bottom-up' reason, explaining, in effect, how it can be that (3) is correct. I will call this the argument from demonstration.

1.3.1 The argument from intelligibility

Weak intentionalism is the claim that perceptual experiences have intentional content. Two things may be observed about this claim. First, it is the claim that *conscious perceptual experiences* – as distinct from any subconscious information processing states implicated in perception, and from beliefs caused by the experience (or by other perceptual states) – have intentional content. Second, it is an *existential* claim, to the effect that for any arbitrary experience, *there is* an intentional content that it has. Classically, an existential claim can be established by indirect proof, without establishing any of its instances. However, the first feature of the weak intentionalist claim makes it hard to see how this method could be employed here. It is very difficult to see how we could derive a contradiction from the claim that phenomenal experience lacks contents. Perhaps some sort of transcendental argument can be given for the claim that perception somehow *must* provide a presentation of the world as being a certain way, or that perception normally must be a matter of its being disclosed to us that the

world is a certain way. Even so, it remains to be established that this necessary contentfulness of perception is a feature of perceptual *experience*, rather than of some of the non-experiential states more or less tightly bound up with perception. Why could not the experiences themselves be simply raw feels? It is difficult to see how this further step could be bridged without appealing to introspection of – to first-person reflection upon – this, that or the other exemplary experience. Only by reflecting on this, that or the other experience, treated as exemplary, and establishing that it has such-and-such a content, can we gain a rational basis for affirming that experiences indeed have intentional content.

Obviously, reflection on a given experience can let me establish that it has such-and-such a content only if I can *think* that the experience has such-and-such a content. Thus weak intentionalism presupposes that the intentional content of experiences is intelligible, in that it is possible to think what the content of an experience is. I will here take for granted the widespread view that whatever one can think, one can say (and conversely): thought is necessarily expressible.[16] The claim that perceptual content is intelligible is thus tantamount to the claim that it is not ineffable. Relative to an arbitrary experience, it is possible to give a report that correctly specifies what the content of that experience is. It is a non-trivial matter to say just when a report correctly specifies what the content of an experience is. In one good sense the reports

[16] However, I will not take for granted (nor will I deny) that whatever one can say, one can communicate to any agent that fulfils the behavioural or functional criteria for being a competent speaker of the language. If this further assumption is correct, the claims in the text will, on an independently plausible assumption, entail that behaviourally or functionally undetectable phenomenal inversion is impossible. The independently plausible assumption in question is that any difference in phenomenal character between two perceptual experiences requires a difference in intentional content. This claim, convincingly defended in Byrne 2001, we may call 'moderate intentionalism', since it is weaker than the reductive thesis defended in Tye 2000 but stronger than the thesis of weak intentionalism. (For a view consistent with weak intentionalism but inconsistent with moderate intentionalism, see Block 1990.)

> My current visual experience has the same content as Bob Dylan's first visual experience last morning.

and

> My current visual experience has the content of the experience described on page so-and-so of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*.

specify what the content of my current experience is (provided, of course, that they are true). Cleary, they are not the kind of reports we are looking for: they provide somehow too extrinsic descriptions of the content of my experience. More seriously, to appeal to any of these reports at the current juncture, when weak intentionalism is in question, is question-begging, since they presuppose that experiences indeed have content. The reports in terms of which we can justify weak intentionalism must, minimally, lack this question-begging character.[17] When we say that the content of experience is intelligible and (given the expressibility of thought) reportable, we intend that the content can be specified in terms of such reports.

Recent content nonconceptualists, such as Peacocke (1989, 1992, 2001b) and Tye (1995, 2000, 2006) do not deny that the content of experience is intelligible and reportable. They do not deny that it is possible for a *highly* reflective subject – a philosopher, say, or another theorist of content – to form the concepts needed to specify what the content of an arbitrary experience is. In the terms of (1) and (2), they allow, in effect, that a highly reflective subject can form concepts in terms of which she can give a correct report of the form 'it perceptually appears to S that A', where expressions for the concepts in question replace 'A'. What content nonconceptualists characteristically

[17] Perhaps we ought to require that the reports specify what the content of an experience is in terms of its intrinsic features. I will operate on the assumption that the requirement of non-question-begging in the text gives us a fix on the intended range of content-specifying reports, setting aside any further refinements that may be needed to articulate the target distinction.

deny is that an *ordinary* reflective subject who has an experience correctly reportable in these terms – the man or woman on the Clapham omnibus – need possess these concepts. It is not obvious that Peacocke (1992) or Tye (2006) would deny that any ordinary reflective subject having an experience correctly reportable in those terms is *in a position* to introduce concepts in terms of which she could think that A. That is to say that is not obvious that Peacocke or Tye would deny (3) – indeed there is some suggestion that they would accept this claim. But let us suppose that some content nonconceptualist – let us call him Tyecocke – did deny (3).

Tyecocke is in the position that, while denying (3), he accepts

(3h) If an arbitrary *highly* reflective subject *S* has *e*, i.e. if it perceptually seems to her that A, she has or is in a position to introduce concepts in terms of which she can entertain the thought that A.

Since we are now concentrating on the acceptability of (3) in particular, we may suppose that Tyecocke accepts the other steps of the argument. Tyecocke is thus committed to accepting

(Sh) If an arbitrary *highly* reflective subject *S* has *e*, she has or is in a position to introduce concepts in terms of which she can entertain a thought with the same content as *e*.

Still, since Tyecocke rejects content congruence, he denies (S). However, this combination of views is coherent only if there is a difference in kind between the

contents of the experiences of highly reflective subjects and the contents of the experiences of merely ordinarily reflective subjects. But why should the content nonconceptualist – of all people – think that there is such a difference? Why should learning a little philosophy, or psychology, or whatever it takes to be able to specify the contents of perceptual experiences, lead to a drastic change in the kind of experiences one has? Perhaps some pretty radical form of *conceptualist* view would predict that such a change in conceptual repertoire leads to a change in perceptual content. But it is hard to see how the content nonconceptualist reasonably could posit such a change. Thus if Tyecocke is prepared to accept (3h) and (Sh), he might as well accept (3) and (S).

1.3.2 The argument from demonstration

Suppose one agrees on the 'top-down' ground given by the argument from intelligibility that (3) must be true. One might still want an explanation of how (3) *could* be true. For any (non-omniscient) reflective subject, there are many things she is in no position to think of, simply because she has not been to the right places, heard the right stories or gotten the right lessons. (I set omniscient subjects aside.) Indeed, it is arguable that, for all we know, there are things *no* reflective subject can think.[18] Why should it be any different when it comes to the question what the content of one's experience is? What underwrites the possibility of thinking what this is?

One line of answer to this question is that there is a link between a reflective subject's having an experience with a certain content and her being in a position to think a certain *demonstrative thought* suitably matching the content of the experience. There is

[18] See Williamson 2004 for an argument.

currently a debate over whether the content of perception is particular or entirely general. [19] Suppose I am looking at a certain apple. 'Particularists' (Burge 1991, Soteriou 2000, Martin 2002b) hold that an adequate specification of the content of my experience has to mention the particular apple I perceive in front of me, or anyway something having the force of picking out that particular apple given the context in which I am in the relevant perceptual state.[20] 'Generalists' (Davies 1997, Tye 2000) maintain that the content of my experience is to be specified in terms of *there being* such-and-such and object in front. If particularists are right, an experience will involve its seeming to the subject that *that* object is so and so. A reflective subject can match this particularistic aspect by exercising her general capacity to think demonstratively of perceived objects. If generalists are right, an experience will involve its seeming to the subject that there is something that is thus and so. A reflective subject can think existentially quantified thoughts and so can match this aspect. On either view, there is a predicative or attributional aspect of perceptual content, in addition to the particularistic or quantificational aspect. It perceptually seems to us that *that* thing is so-and-so (if particularism is right), or that there is something which is so-and-so (if generalism is right). As has frequently been observed, the attributional aspect of perceptual experience is extremely fine grained. For example, there are around ten million specific shades of colour that are visually distinct for us.[21] This may lead one to think that when something visually seems to have a highly specific shade of colour, the ordinary reflective subject will not have, and may not be able to introduce, a concept of just that specific shade of colour. Yet, as McDowell (1994) pointed out, this reaction overlooks the possibility of thinking demonstratively of the ways things seem to us to be.

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[19] See Soteriou 2000 for a presentation of the debate, and a defence of the particularist view.
[20] Burge (1991) argues that perceptual content includes a singular 'demonstrative element', and so is not existentially quantified. Unlike McDowell (1986), say, he does not take this demonstrative element to be object-dependent.
[21] See Tye 1995.

> In the throes of an experience that putatively transcends one's conceptual powers – an experience that *ex hypothesi* affords a suitable sample – one can give linguistic expression to a concept that is exactly as fine-grained as the experience, by uttering a phrase like 'that shade', in which the demonstrative exploits the presence of the sample. (McDowell 1994: 57)

McDowell puts his finger on something important here. Evans argued that perception of a concrete particular, such as a cat, puts a reflective subject in a position to think an indefinite variety of thoughts about it (limited only by his overall conceptual repertoire), such as the thought that *that* cat is a favourite of the Queen, even if the subject knew no proper name or had no recognitional concept of the cat before seeing it. When something perceptually appears to be a certain way to us – to have a certain shape, say – a reflective subject similarly seems to be in a position to think an indefinite variety of thoughts concerning the shape in question (limited only by his overall conceptual repertoire), such as the thought that I shall try to get a brooch with *that* shape, or (employing a predicative demonstrative) that I shall try to get a brooch that is shaped *thus*. It seems that the shape picked out or attributed here is just the shape that something appears to the subject. Thus it seems that a reflective subject can match in thought the attributional or predicative aspects of the content of experience. But the particularistic/quantificational and attributional aspects of content exhaust the intentional content of experience. Thus it seems that demonstrative thinking puts the subject in a position to fully match the content of experience in thought.

At this point, someone might voice a worry. Even granted the point just made about the powers of demonstrative thinking, (3) is not yet established. Consider (3) again

(3) If *S* has *e*, i.e. if it perceptually seems to her that A, she has or is in a position to introduce concepts in terms of which she can entertain the thought that A.

The schematic letter 'A' occurs at two places here. We may grant that a reflective subject having a certain experience is in a position to think that something is *that* way, and thus that we have a plausible replacement for the last occurrence of 'A' in demonstrative terms. [22] [23] In thinking this, let us suppose, the thinker entertains a demonstrative concept **that way**. Why should we think that we get a strictly correct report of experience when we replace an expression for that concept for 'A' in 'it perceptually seems to her that A'? Perhaps 'A' needs to be replaced by much more recherché terms in order to get a strictly correct report of experience?

This worry can be answered. A context occupied by a term is opaque if the term cannot necessarily be interchanged salva veritate for another term with the same reference. (I consider the reference of a predicate to be a property, not a set, and thus distinguish between co-reference and the weaker relation of co-extensionality.) We need to consider two possibilities. Either 'It perceptually appears to S that A' automatically creates an opaque contexts for the terms embedded in 'A' or it does not. Let us suppose that it does not. (I will take for granted that 'A' contains no terms creating an opaque context within 'A'.) In that case, what we need to show in order to vindicate (3) is merely that an expression for the demonstrative concept **that way** refers to the appropriate property: viz. the property the orange is presented as having. Since these demonstratives are immediately made available by the experience that enables the

[22] I will put the objection and the reply to it in terms of the 'generalist' view. Nothing hangs on this.
[23] The italics here are not intended to form a term referring to a concept or a mode of presentation (I use bold face for that purpose). Rather they are to signal that we operate under the pretence that we are occupying the point of view of the reflective subject in question, and utter the italicized tokens with the sense and reference that they would have in the mouth of that subject.

subject to think that the orange is *that* way, there is every reason to think that it does indeed refer to the right property.

Let us suppose that 'It perceptually appears that A' does automatically create an opaque context. Then in order to vindicate (3) we need to argue not only that the relevant expressions have the right reference but also that they somehow are associated with the right mode of presentation of their referent. The reason to think so is two-fold. First, given that the content of perception is specifiable in thought and language, it is possible to give a correct, content-revealing report of the experience. Thus there have to be some terms that are associated with modes of presentations of their referents that are *suitable enough* to give a correct report when they replace 'A'. Second, it is hard to see what expressions other than demonstratives that could be associated with *more suitable* modes of presentation of the referents. Let us say that a subject, Sally, has an experience of an orange as spherical, and ascribes that spherical shape to the orange in thinking that the orange is *that* way. The shape she thereby ascribes is also describable as being a closed 3-D figure all points on the surface of which are equidistant from the centre.[24] It would be highly implausible to suggest that the report

> It perceptually seems to Sally that something has a 3-D shape all points on the surface of which are equidistant from the centre.

is correct while

> It perceptually seems to Sally that something is *that* way.

(where the relevant token of 'that' expresses the demonstrative concept **that way**, made available by Sally's experience) is incorrect. Sally might be geometrically unsophisticated. She may have no tendency to judge that the orange has a 3-D shape all

[24] To simplify matters, I assume that things are presented as having perfectly determinate shapes here. We shall question that assumption at various points below. In any case, whether it holds is orthogonal to the point discussed in the text.

points on the surface of which are equidistant from the centre. It would be informative to her that *that* (perceptually presented) shape is a 3-D shape all points on the surface of which are equidistant from the centre. Thus, if anything, the mode of presentation of sphericalness associated with the demonstrative is more closely related to her experience than the mode of presentation associated with the fancy geometrical description. It seems that this argument can be repeated for any other candidate co-referential description of sphericalness, or whatever property it is that the demonstrative concept in question refers to. So both on the extensional view and the non-extensional view, the possibility of demonstrative thinking underwrites (3).

Note that the two arguments for (3) given here – from intelligibility, and from demonstration – are independent of each other. Even if the argument from intelligibility is flawed, (3) might be true, and the argument from demonstration adequate to vindicate it as such. Conversely, even if the link between experience and demonstrative thinking is inadequate to establish (3), (3) might be true, and the argument from intelligibility successful in establishing it as such. It is true that, in the latter case, there has to be some alternative or supplementing account of how it can be that perceptual content is intelligible. Such alternatives or supplements are not, however, altogether inconceivable.[25] This is important, in so far as it shows that the simple argument cannot be disarmed simply by showing (if so much can be shown) that demonstrative thinking cannot accomplish all the argument from demonstration says it can.

[25] One alternative line to pursue would be to emphasise the role of causality. For example, one might argue, on the one hand, that something goes into the content of a mental state only if it makes a separable causal impact on the subject, and, on the other, that the subject could in principle think about something, if it makes a separable causal impact on a her.

1.4 Richness and Fineness of Grain

Two influential objections to conceptualism, in its various forms, are those from richness and from fineness of grain.[26] These objections are not always distinguished, yet I think we should see them as adverting to slightly different features of perceptual experience, as we will return to presently. Nor is it always clear whether they are intended, in the first instance, as objections to *state* conceptualism or to *content* conceptualism, i.e. – given our assumption (in section 1.1) that thoughts have conceptual content – to content congruence. In this section, I will only concentrate solely on objections to content congruence.

Very roughly, richness and fineness may be distinguished as follows. 'Richness' I take to denote the wealth of information about different objects, and about different aspects of those objects, that a perceptual (in particular, a visual) experience typically seems to provide, at one and the same time, as it were in parallel. Say that you are looking at a cluttered street scene. Your visual experience is, apparently all at once, of several pedestrians, cars, houses, and dogs. In relation to each of these objects you are, apparently all at once, provided with information as to their colour, shape, speed, direction of motion, and much else. So, anyway, one is liable to conceive of one's visual experience of the street scene when one reflects on it introspectively. As we shall see, some theorist doubt whether one would be right so to conceive of one's experience, but for now we may assume that one would. [27]

[26] An early expression of the idea that the fineness of grain of experience precludes a form of conceptualism is Evans (1982). The idea has later been pressed by Raffman (1995), Kelly (2001a) and Tye (2006). Pitcher (1970) can at various points be seen to be grappling with versions of the richness worry, directed at his doxastic account.

[27] Dennett (1991) and Noë (2000) are two such sceptics.

'Fineness of grain' I take to denote the specificity or determinateness of the ways things perceptually seem to us to be. [28] When I look at a particular spot on the desk in front of me, it does not seem to be any old shade of brown but a highly specific shade of brown. When I look at my pen, it does not seem to be any old cylindrical shape but a highly specific cylindrical shape.[29] A perceptual experience can be fine-grained in this sense without being rich. The experience of lying flat on one's back and looking up at a perfectly clear sky is one putative case. This experience is fine-grained in respect of the shade of colour the expanse above you appears to have, but it is not rich in the way the experience of the cluttered street scene is. Conversely, it makes sense to conceive of a sensory system providing experiences that are relatively rich, in so far as it is capable of providing information about a wide range of objects, on a wide range of their dimensions, at one and the same time, but are relatively coarse-grained, in that they differentiate between only a few values on each of the dimensions in question. The distinction between fineness of grain and richness here is certainly rough-and-ready, but it will do for the purposes here.

While considerations of fineness of grain will be vitally important later in this thesis, particularly in chapter 7, and at least indirectly in section 3.3, I will have little to say about them at the current stage of the argument. I will be exploiting considerations of fineness of grain for the purposes of an argument against *state* conceptualism in chapter 7. However, in that chapter I will also explain why the argument there advanced is far from obviously inconsistent with content congruence. As I can see no plausible way of

[28] I will not distinguish between the relation of the more generic to the more specific and the relation of the more determinable to the more determinate.

[29] Below, in section 4.3, I will argue that we ought perhaps to qualify these formulations slightly. We ought perhaps to say that the spot on the desk does not *merely* seem to be brown but also a highly specific shade of brown, and that the pen does not *merely* seem to have a cylindrical shape but also a highly specific cylindrical shape. This does not bear on the current point.

arguing from fineness of grain directly against content congruence, I will set these considerations aside for now, and turn rather to two objections to content congruence trading on considerations of richness.

1.4.1 The objection from richness as overloading memory

Above, we emphasised the apparent richness of a visual experience of a cluttered street scene, providing information about several different objects, and about several different aspects of these objects, seemingly all at once. Now, the entertaining of thoughts is subject to constraints of memory. One might therefore doubt whether any reflective human thinker is capable of framing a thought about each these different pedestrians, dogs, cars and so on, to the effect that they have each of the various aspects they appear to have. Would not any attempt to frame such a thought overload memory long before it succeeded? If it did, (3) would not be true after all.

The possibility of memory overload posited here reflects a performance limitation on our thinking. However, this performance limitation does not provide a good reason to distinguish between the content of perception and of thought. Indeed, states or items that uncontroversially have content of the same kind as thoughts are subject to the same limitations. Consider the sentence that results from taking all the world's telephone directories, for each name and telephone number constructing the sentence 'the telephone no of … is ---', and joining them all by conjunction. This 'Directory Sentence' expresses a propositional content, yet no human is able to have a thought (occurrent or otherwise) with the same content, thanks to essentially the same performance limitation. We would not infer that the Directory Sentence expresses a content of a different kind from the content of the thoughts we are capable of

entertaining. So we should not infer that perception has a content different in kind from the content of thoughts.

I take this essentially to lay to rest the current objection. However, if a content nonconceptualist should persist in pressing the case that the sheer richness of perceptual experience poses problems for content congruence, it is worth noting that a minor modification of the view is sufficient to deal with it. Consider the case of the Directory Sentence. If its content is a structured proposition, there are parts in its content that themselves are (complete) contents. Indeed, it is partitionable into parts each of which we can entertain in thought.[30] Even if the content is not a structured proposition, the Sentence is paritionable into parts each of which express a content. Indeed, it is partionable into parts each of which expresses a content we can entertain in thought. In one or the other of these ways then, there is a partitioning of the overall content of the Directory Sentence into parts each of which is entertainable in thoughts. Any 'richness' worry over the content of the Directory Sentence is thus answered by a 'divide and conquer' strategy.

We may deploy essentially the same 'divide and conquer' strategy to the case of perception. What we need is the supposition that the experience either has a content that has parts that themselves are (complete) contents, or consists of part-experiences that have contents. This supposition does not beg the question against the content nonconceptualist. Indeed, in so far as the content nonconceptualist agrees that the content of experience is specifiable in thought and language (as the argument from intelligibility shows that she must), she is no less committed to this supposition than the

[30] A structured proposition (content) is one that has a quasi-linguistic or quasi-logical structure. Russellian propositions and Fregean contents are the paradigm examples of structured propositions. For further discussion of the notion, see King (2005).

content conceptualist. We can then define a *partial (intentional) characterisation* of a perceptual experience as one that either characterises a part of its content, or characterises a part-experience of the experience and the content of that part-experience. Since there are non-proper parts, any characterisation of a perceptual experience is a partial characterisation. We can then reformulate the simple argument along the following lines, replacing (1) and (3) by:

(1p) *e* is a state of its partially perceptually seeming to one that A.

(3p) If *S* has *e*, there is a partitioning of *e* into parts e_1, …, e_n such that, if S has e_1, i.e if it perceptually appears to S that A_1, then S is in a position to think that A_1, and … and, if S has e_n, i.e. if it perceptually appears to S that A_n, then S is in a position to think A_n.

Corresponding revisions would be needed in the conclusion (S) (I trust it is fairly clear what these revisions would be). For our purposes here it makes little difference whether we run the simple argument in the original form or in the modified 'partitioned' from. To keep things simple, I will talk in terms of the simpler original version.

1.4.2 The objection from attention as modulating content

The second objection from richness appeals to a putative connection between selective perceptual attention and the possibility of demonstrative thinking. The connection is this: It seems compelling that, in order to think demonstratively about an object perceptually presented to you, you have to attend to the relevant object. Similarly, it seems compelling that, in order to think that something is *that* (perceptually presented) way, you have to attend to the relevant way the object appears as being. Yet at any one time you are able to attend at most to a subset of the objects presented to you, and at

most to a subset of the various ways these things appear to you as being. So the defence of (3) in terms of the possibility of demonstrative thinking does not go far enough: it fails to extend to the *extra-attentional* aspects of the content of perceptual experience.

So far, this objection seems to present essentially the same problem as the objection from richness as overloading memory, and to allow for essentially the same style of response. However, the current objection adds an extra twist: a shift in attention does not leave unchanged how things perceptually seem to one – it does not leave unchanged the content of the experience. Compare two consecutive visual experiences of the desk before me. At the first stage, I am attending to the computer mouse and its shape. At the same time as I am doing so, I have experience of the top of my desk and a nearby stack of papers. The latter are aspects of my experience that are outside what goes into perceptual attention. They are part of the *extra-attentional background* of the content of my experience. At the second stage, everything remains the same except that I shift my attention to the stack of papers. This shift does not leave the phenomenal character of my visual consciousness unchanged. What it is visually like for me now differs from what it is was visually like for me before. After the shift, the stack of papers is somehow 'foregrounded' in my experience. Before the shift, it was 'backgrounded'. This difference, whatever it amounts to precisely, involves a difference in how things seem to me, and thus in the content of my experience. Or so the current objection maintains. This means that the 'divide and conquer' response runs into an obstacle. We cannot argue that I can match in thought the background part of the content of my first experience – the parts of the content concerning the desk and the stack of papers in the first condition above – because I can shift my attention and thereby be in a position to form a demonstrative thought with that content. For in the very shifting of my attention,

the content changes – it is not backgrounded any more! The fact that experience makes demonstrative thinking possible, traded upon by the argument from demonstration, does not, *pace* that argument, suffice to establish (3) or even (3p).

I will now consider three, progressively more concessive responses to this objection. The most radical and least concessive response simply denies that there is such a thing as contentful extra-attentional perceptual experience. When I attend to the computer mouse and its shape and colour, it *just is not the case* that my visual experience at the very same time represents the what's and the where's of miscellaneous other things on top of my desk. This denial may seem to fly in the face of the obvious. Is it not just obvious, when we reflect on our experiences, that a distinction between attentional foreground and extra-attentional background is one that *runs within* our experience of things? It is not just obvious that much more than just the mouse is visually presented to me, albeit in a backgrounded way, when I attend to the mouse? Nevertheless, the existence of contentful extra-attentional perceptual experience, or perhaps of extra-attentional perceptual experience *tout court*, has recently been doubted on empirical grounds. (Dennett 1991, Noe 2000) In short, the phenomena of inattentional blindness, and change-blindness, have been taken to suggest that the conception of experience as involving a richly detailed and extensive panorama, gloriously presented all at once, is a philosopher's delusion – perhaps a misguided projection from all the a*ctual detail* in one's surroundings, and from the standing possibility of turning one's attention towards this, that or the other of these details, to a (supposed) correlative level of detail in one's *visual representation* of these surroundings.[31] If there is no such thing as contentful experience apart from the contentful experience that is implicated in, or constituted by,

[31] See Noë (2000) for discussion of the empirical findings and defence of the idea that they undermine the 'panorama' conception of experience (what Noë calls the 'snapshot' conception). The diagnosis of the alleged philosopher's delusion given in the text is Noë's.

one's perceptually attending to things, there is of course no extra-attentional content to match in thought. The objection from attention as modulating content thus does not even get off the ground.

A second, somewhat more concessive response allows that there may be such a thing as extra-attentional perceptual content. It also allows that shifts of attention may change the phenomenal character of the experience. Indeed, the response allows that *typical* shifts of attention go together with shifts in the representational content of one's experience. However, it maintains that this is so just because typical shifts of attention go together with shifts in what part of the scene around the perceiver falls on the fovea. The fovea has a much greater resolution and sensitivity than other parts of the retina. It is thus unsurprising that changes in whether something is foveated cause changes in how acutely that thing is represented in regard of shape, location, colour, and so on. Yet, the response continues, when shifts of attention go together with shifts in intentional content, it is not the attention-shift as such that accounts for the change in content. Moreover, it is possible to shift attention covertly, without any shift of direction or focus of the eyes (and so without any shift in foveation), as Helmholtz emphasised. Therefore the necessity of attention for demonstrative reference does not mean that the 'divide and conquer' strategy cannot be deployed with success.[32]

[32] Chalmers has recently written: 'Shifts in attention clearly make a phenomenal difference. In typical cases, they also make a representational difference: for example, shifting attention to a word may lead one to represent the shapes of its letters with greater specificity. But there are other cases that are less clear. For example, one might look at two red pinpoint lights against a black background, and shift attention from one to the other. Here it is not obvious that there is a representational difference between the cases.' (Chalmers 2004: 161) The second response agrees with a positive point Chalmers makes here, namely that *typical* cases of shifts of attention make a representational difference. It agrees with this since typical shifts of attention go together with shifts of what falls on the fovea. The response also affirms what Chalmers notes as not obviously false, namely that attention-shifts can exemplify cases where we have a phenomenal difference without a difference in representational content.

A third, still more concessive response allows that change in attention *as such* (with or without a change in foveation) may make a difference to the intentional content of the experience. It insists, however, that a reflective subject can match these differences in the content of his thought in a way that secures content congruence. Chalmers writes

> One might argue that the position or colour of the light to which one is attending is represented with greater specificity than that of the light to which one is not attending. Or one might argue that the light to which one is attending is represented as being more salient than the other light. Here is it is not completely clear what sort of property 'salience' is… (Chalmers 2004: 161)

Chalmers here suggests two possible ways in which a change in attention can change the representational content of experience. Firstly, that it can increase the specificity with which the attended objects are represented. In that case, this third response contends, a reflective thinker can match that change in thought simply by representing the attended objects in a more specific way than the unattended object. Say that an attended billiard ball is visually represented as having a highly determinate spherical shape S_1, while a non-attended billiard ball is visually represented as having a somewhat less determinate roughly spherical shape S_2. S_1 need not be absolutely determinate. The shape need not to be equivalent to, say, the shape of being exactly spherical. Perhaps S_1 is equivalent only to a disjunction of shapes that approximate very closely to exact sphericalness, while S_2 is equivalent to the disjunction of S_1 and a band of other shapes that approximate somewhat less closely to exact sphericalness. Note that this is not to assume that the shapes S_1 and S_2 are presented as disjunctions. Indeed, if necessarily equivalent properties can be distinct, neither S_1 nor S_2 may be a disjunctive property. Even if S_1 and S_2 are disjunctive they need not be presented as such. Now, if this is how the shape of the attended and the unattended ball is represented, a reflective

subject can match the difference in thought by thinking that the one ball has S_1 and the other S_2. Reflective subjects have the general capacity to form concepts of more determinable properties, given that they can form concepts of some of their determinates. The more determinate properties are ex hypothesi visually presented by the attended objects, and the current objection does not challenge that we can form concepts demonstratively of these properties. Thus there does not seem to be any obstacle in principle for a reflective subject to form concepts of the less determinate properties that the un-attended objects are represented as having.

The second possibility suggested by Chalmers is that attended objects are presented as having some property of salience or foregroundness. It may not be clear just what property this is – presumably, it is a relational one. However, if the representation of this property accounts, at least in part, for the difference in representational content between attentional experience and extra-attentional experience, and if this difference in content in turn accounts for the difference in phenomenal character between attentional experience and extra-attentional experience (in what it is like to have such experience), then presumably this property is one we can become aware of through having those experiences.[33] The point here is really simple, completely analogous to the following: if the representation of a certain colour property, say Yves Klein Blue, accounts for the phenomenal character of the experience of a certain Yves Klein painting, then this property of Yves Klein Blueness is presumably one we can become aware of through that experience. Becoming aware of the property suffices for (or perhaps amounts to)

[33] Why am I assuming at this point that a difference in *content* between attentional and extra-attentional experience accounts for the difference in *phenomenal character* between them? The reason is that, if this assumption is false, there is little motivation for the claim that a difference in attention as such makes for a difference in content, and thus *either* the objection from attention as modulating content does not get going at all, *or* it can adequately be answered in terms of the second, intermediate reply recently mentioned.

being able to think demonstratively of it. So again, if the difference in content between an attended object (say the mouse, in the first condition above) and a simultaneously experienced yet unattended object (say the stack of papers, in the first condition above) involves the former but not the latter being represented as having a property of foregroundedness, this difference is again one we can match in thought by forming a demonstrative concept of the property in question. This third response contends that the two ways suggested by Chalmers exhaust the plausible ways in which a change in attention as such can make a difference to content. None of these two possible changes in content refute (3). Nor do they show that the argument from demonstration does not vindicate it (3).[34]

The first, least concessive response above rests on empirical issues that I will not go into here. Suffice to say that I find the empirical evidence too ambiguous to underwrite the strongly counterintuitive claim that there is no contentful perceptual experience apart from what is implicated in or constituted by conscious perceptual attention. The second, intermediate reply is more promising. Yet it too rests on a strong claim about the nature of attention – that shifts of attention cannot as such affect the representational content of one's perceptual experience – one that one might find it difficult to convince oneself of. The reply predicts, moreover, that there are counterexamples to the claim that no two perceptual experiences can differ in phenomenal character without differing in intentional content , a thesis we may call 'moderate intentionalism'. The independent plausibility of moderate intentionalism (Byrne 2001) thus gives reason for hesitation

[34] The current response grants that we may need *something* more than the mere appeal to demonstrative thinking of presented objects and properties to vindicate (3), since it grants that we may need a conceptual skill to form more generic concepts (predicable of the unattended objects) answering to the more specific demonstrative concepts (predicable of the attended objects). But this is nothing beyond what reflective thinkers can be relied upon to have.

over the second response.[35] I do not want to write off the first two responses entirely, but neither do I want to rest the case for the simple argument upon them.

The third, most concessive reply seems more plausible. And I will principally rest my case on it. Perhaps it will be objected that *both* of Chalmers's suggestions for how attention-shifts can induce content-shifts fail to fit the phenomenological facts. In particular, perhaps it will be objected that unattended objects are represented as having a certain property of *backgroundedness*, which the attended object is *neither* represented as having *nor* represented as lacking? In that case, we have no demonstrative access to the relevant property of backgroundedness (demonstration ex hypothesi requiring attention). However, it is very difficult to see any good grounds to prefer this description of the phenomenology over the description suggested by Chalmers, viz. that the attended objects are presented as having a certain property of foregroundedness. I take it, therefore, that Chalmers's suggestions give us a way of handling the objection from attention as modulating content.

[35] See ft.n. 16 above for further observations on moderate intentionalism.

2

Sense and Reference I: The Tye-Type View

The objections discussed in the last chapter only target one notable reason to endorse premise (3) of the simple argument, viz. the reason given by the argument from demonstration. Even if successful, their potential to block the simple argument is therefore limited. Moreover, two leading content nonconceptualists – Christopher Peacocke and Michael Tye – come at least very close to accepting premise (3). They agree that it is possible for a reflective subject to think a thought that at least very closely matches the content of her experience. Thus one may wonder just what move in the simple argument they take exception to. Since neither of them discusses the argument at length, a modicum of reconstruction is needed here. However, we can be fairly confident in ascribing to them the objection that the argument fallaciously conflates two distinct notions of content, correlated with non-equivalent conditions of individuation of content. The fallacy reflects the supposition that the notion of content that makes the intentionalism step (claims (1) and (2) of the simple argument) correct is the same as the notion that makes the conceptualisation step (claims (3) and (4) of the argument) correct. Content nonconceptualists argue that this supposition is false.[1]

[1] The distinctions between types of contents made here and indeed elsewhere in the thesis should be kept separate from the many questions debated under the heading of narrow versus broad content. Any connections between the points made here and these latter questions require independent argument. On any view, Russellian contents have their truth-conditions essentially. I will also take it (with Peacocke

I will now consider two variants of the content nonconceptualist view. The first, to be considered in the present chapter, is Tye's (2000, 2006) view that the notion of content that applies to perceptual experience is a Russellian one, on which contents are individuated solely at the level of reference, while the notion of content that applies to thought is a more fine-grained Fregean one, on which contents are individuated in terms of modes of presentation of objects and properties. The second variant, considered in the next chapter, is Peacocke's (1986, 1989, 2001b) view that the notion of content that applies to experience differs from the notion of content that applies to thought, in that perceptual contents are individuated in terms of modes of presentation *of a different kind* from the modes of presentation that go into thought contents. Now, for any two non-equivalent ways of individuating content, there is a content nonconceptualist view that assigns the one type of content to experience and the other to thought. The possible permutations outrun by far what could be dealt with directly in this thesis. The two views I discuss are probably the most influential and plausible combinations, and are representative of the wider field.[2]

The debate here raises a dialectical question. Is the onus of proof on the supporter of content congruence to show that a single notion of content applies to experience and thinking? Or is the burden on the content nonconceptualist to show that distinct notions apply? There are general grounds for saying that the burden is on the nonconceptualist – the general grounds being that the person who insists on making a further distinction

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and Tye) that Fregean contents have their truth-conditions essentially. According to many (thought not all) theorists, this entails, on independently plausible assumptions, that the contents in question are broad contents. I will generally aim to be neutral on this issue, except for on the one or two occasions where I explicitly invoke content externalist considerations.

[2] The most serious omission is probably Peacocke's view in (1992) where he develops a notion of 'scenario content' to be applied to perceptual experience. While what I would say about this view would overlap broadly with what I say about the views I discuss, the notion of scenario content has special features what would call for special discussion. I will have to defer these for a later occasion.

has to show that it marks a genuine difference. This dialectical stance will inform the present chapter and the next. In chapter 4, I consider a positive argument the supporter of content congruence can put forward to help lift what burden of proof might remain on her.

2.1 Perceptual Content as Russellian, Thought Content as Fregean

In a recent book (2000), and a recent paper (2006), Tye develops a content nonconceptualist view according to which the content of perception and the content of thought are alike in so far as both are structured contents (i.e. have some sort of quasi-logical structure, see King 2005), but are unlike in that perceptual content has a more coarse-grained Russellian individuation while thought content has a more fine-grained Fregean individuation. I will call any view of this description a 'Tye-Type View'.

The Tye-Type view has no *special* difficulty about meeting the argument from intelligibility. Russellian propositions may be regarded as complex, structured states of affairs, some of which obtain (are true), some of which fail to obtain (are false), and all of which either obtain or fail to obtain but not both. The question how, or even if, we are able to specify such states of affairs no doubt raises many difficult metaphysical and semantical issues. However, these issues are wholly general, and arise completely independently of whether Russellian contents are the contents of perception. They do not have anything in particular to do with the reportability of perception. In that sense, the Tye-Type theorist faces no special problem here. The Tye-Type theorist is also free to admit that any reflective subject enjoying a certain experience is put in a position to think a demonstrative thought concerning just the particulars her experience presents (if any) to the effect that they severally are the ways they are presented as being. The theorist may thus grant the core point of the argument from demonstration.

Before turning to discuss Tye's reasons for his view, I will take stock of a somewhat deflationary reaction that the discussion between content congruence and the Tye-Type View may provoke in a mildly sceptical third party. It runs as follows. 'Let us say that a notion of content is *adequate* iff (i) it is a notion of something that we can specify in thought and language (is not a notion of 'something I know not what'), and (ii) it is a notion in terms of which we can classify mental states, for the purposes of psychological explanation and prediction. Let us take for granted that either the Russellian or the Fregean notion is an adequate notion. Let us make the simplifying assumption, moreover, that these are the only candidate adequate notions in the running. Then if not *both* of these notions are adequate, content congruence wins, but does so on general grounds that have little to do with perception in particular. If both of the notions are adequate, then why should the one notion exclude the other in the characterisation of any type of mental state? The Fregean notion allows us to make more fine-grained discriminations while the Russellian notion allows us make broader generalisations (across subjects that all think about a certain object but under different modes of presentation). Why should these different ways of classifying mental states be any more in competition than the classification of lengths in terms of real numbers is in competition with the classification of lengths in terms of closest whole number?[3] Thus if both notions are adequate, then neither for perception nor for thought is there any interesting debate to be had over whether their content is Fregean or Russellian. In any case, then, there is no interesting debate to be had here that has anything in particular to do with perception.'

[3] The analogy between the classification of mental states in terms of content and the classification of lengths (say) in terms of numbers has been particularly emphasised by Stalnaker (1984).

I agree with much in this reaction. In particular, I agree that the Russellian and the Fregean notion do not exclude each other. To ascribe to a belief a Fregean content is to treat it as involving a belief-relation to a structure of modes of presentation. Each of these modes of presentation determines an object or property, standing to it as referent to sense. If the belief involves a relation to a Fregean content, there is thus a good sense in which it thereby involves a relation to Russellian proposition in which these referents are the constituents.[4] One pertinent consequence of this point is that it is potentially misleading to speak of 'the content' of a state of mind, since there may be reason to assign more than one content to it. However, we may take 'the content' of a state of mind.to be the individuatively most fine-grained or determinate content it has.[5] Another pertinent consequence of the point is that a certain thesis of weak content congruence is extremely plausible:

> **Weak Content Congruence** Any perceptual experience of a reflective subject shares *a* content with a thought thinkable by the subject.

Suppose that the content of perception is Russellian. Then what we need in order to establish weak content congruence is only that a reflective subject enjoying the experience can think a thought about the same objects as those presented in perception, to the effect that they severally have the properties they are presented as having. The arguments from intelligibility and demonstration make this highly plausible. Suppose

[4] Perhaps it will be objected as follows: 'The content of an intentional state is essential to it. If a belief (say) has Fregean content, there will be no Russellian content that is essential to it, as this will vary with contingent facts about the world in which the belief is held. So the belief does not also have Russellian content.' However, this presumes that a mode of presentation cannot rigidly determine an entity standing to it as referent to sense. Demonstrative modes of presentation of objects and properties are however strong candidates for rigidly determining their reference. If there are modes of presentation involved in perceptual content itself, they are plausibly rigid in the same sense.

[5] Similarly, we take the most determinate length of a stick to be 'the length' of a stick, even though the stick also has a range of more determinable lengths.

that the content of perception is Fregean. If so, perception also has a Russellian content determined by its Fregean content. In relation to this Russellian content, we can run the argument just rehearsed. In any case, weak content congruence holds.[6] Paradigm content nonconceptualists, such as Tye and Peacocke, would surely not deny this. If weak content congruence was all that really was a stake here, there would indeed be little room for interesting debate, and the deflationary reaction justified.

However, we should not accept the deflationary reaction in its entirety. While the Fregean has no reason not to allow that states of mind having (as she sees it) Fregean content also have Russellian content, the Russellian has reason, or at least takes herself to have reason, to deny that states of mind having (as she sees it) Russellian content also have Fregean content. There is thus an asymmetry between the theorists, of the kind that generally obtains between two theorists where the ontological commitments of the one is a proper subset of the ontological commitments of the other. The Fregean needs to make the case that the further distinctions implicated in Fregean contents (i.e. differences of mode of presentation that outrun differences of reference) are needed for some serious explanatory purpose. In making this case, the Fregean will face an opposition including such views as that of Fodor (1990, 1994), according to which serious psychological explanation can safely ignore the further distinctions that Fregean content posits, and such views as that of Salmon (1986), according to which 'serious' semantics of attitude contexts can ignore these distinctions.[7] The general dialectical situation the Tye-type theorist finds herself in, then, is this. On the one hand, she needs to insist on the need to assign Fregean content to thoughts; on the other she needs to

[6] The extension of the argument to the supposition that the content of perception is a set of possible worlds, or a set of possible individuals (Lewis 1983), should be fairly clear.

[7] Salmon (1986) does not use the epithets 'serious' or 'unserious'. They figure here to reflect the conceptions of many members of the philosophical community.

deny that the needs in question extend to perceptual experiences. If she can establish these twin points, she will have refuted content congruence.

2.2 Perceptual Reports, Intensionality and Hyperintensionality

Tye gives two arguments that usefully can be understood in the light of the dialectical situation just described. The first (2000: 54-60) is that canonical reports of beliefs, thoughts, judgments etc., are 'hyperintensional', whereas canonical reports of experience are not. The second (2006) is that there is no phenomenological need to assume that perceptual contents are more fine-grained than Russellian propositions.[8] In this section, I consider the first; in the next, I briefly respond to the second.

2.2.1 Tye on looks reports

Premise (1) of the simple argument, as formulated in the last chapter, is that a perceptual experience is a state of its perceptually appearing to one that A. On the gloss given, this means that that perceptual experiences constitutively are to be characterised in terms of a report of the form 'It perceptually appears to S that A'. Tye denies this. On his view, reports of the latter form are to be analysed broadly speaking in terms of the beliefs that perceptual experiences give rise to. Instead, according to Tye, the canonical phenomenal reports (for the visual case) take the form 'X looks F to S', where 'F' holds the place for a predicate expressing a 'sensory property', i.e. a property 'of which one is directly aware via introspection as one undergoes a sensory experience' (Tye 2000:54). Acceptable replacements of 'F' in a phenomenal report are thus supposed to include 'red' and 'round', say, but exclude 'American' and 'sad', say. Jackson (1977) called

[8] Tye (2006) also gives a third type of reason for his view, appealing to the claim that perceptual experience does not involve the activation of conceptual capacities. In chapter 7, I shall endorse that claim. However, in section 7.5 I shall make the case that this *state* nonconceptualist view is compatible with content congruence.

reports of this kind 'phenomenal looks reports'. I will call them simply 'looks reports' (since other types of looks reports will not be in question here).

Tye's preference for looks reports over reports of the form 'It perceptually seems to S that A' does not, in and of itself, and in the presence of his other views, matter greatly to the simple argument.[9] The argument (restricted to the visual case) could be reformulated in terms of his favoured report, as follows. As before *e* is an arbitrary visual experience and *S* an arbitrary reflective subject:

(1´) *e* is a state in which something looks F to one.

(2´) If *e* is a state in which something looks F to one, the intentional content of *e* is that something is F.

(3´) If *S* has *e*, i.e. if something looks F to her, she has or is in a position to introduce concepts in terms of which she can entertain the thought that something is F.

(4´) The content of the thought that something is F is what is thought in entertaining it, viz. that something is F.

∴ (S) If *S* has *e*, she has or is in a position to introduce concepts in terms of which she can entertain a thought with the same content as *e*.

[9] Three ingredients in Tye's other views are important here. First, Tye limits the content-specifying job in the report 'X looks F to S' to what takes the place of 'F'. Second and connectedly, Tye is a 'generalist' in the sense of section 1.3.2 above. He holds, that is, that the content of experience is existentially quantified. The problem how any particulars figuring in content are to be specified does not arise for him. For this reason, I will disregard the role of 'X' in the report 'X looks F to S' and generally talk simply in terms of something looking F to S. Third, Tye holds that 'The dagger looks pointy to Sam' can be true even if there is no dagger that Sam sees. Tye admits that 'The dagger looks pointy to Sam' entails that Sam *in some sense* sees the dagger. He argues, however, that the sense in question is the intensional one, on which one can truly say of the hallucinating Macbeth that he sees a dagger before him. In selecting 'X looks F to S' as the canonical report of visual experience, Tye thus does not intend to make a disjunctivist suggestion to the effect that that the statements in terms of which we canonically report normal, veridical experiences cannot be used to report hallucinations.

On this reformulation, Tye seems to be prepared to accept each of the premises. However, while Tye's preference for looks reports over explicitly propositional reports of the form 'It perceptually appears to S that A' does not by itself matter greatly to the simply argument, something that does matter is the semantic contrast he posits between beliefs (/thought/judgement/…) reports and looks reports. He maintains (2000: 55-56) that whereas 'F' in

(5) S thinks that something is F

occupies a 'hyperintensional' context, it does not occupy such a context in

(6) X looks F to S

To say that 'F' occupies a hyperintensional context is, in Tye's sense, to say that it cannot necessarily be substituted salva veritate for a predicate 'G' that *refers to the same property*. [10] Thus suppose, with Tye, that the type-physicalist view of colours as types of surface spectral reflectances (SSRs) is correct, and that yellow, in particular, is SSR_y.[11] Let Matt be an optically naïve subject who has never heard of surface spectral reflectances. Then according to Tye

(7) Matt thinks that something is yellow.

is true, while

(8) Matt thinks that something is SSR_y.

is false.[12] However, according to Tye

(9) Something looks yellow to Matt.

is true if and only if

(10) Something looks SSR_y to Matt.

[10] Thus hyperintensionality is just the property we called opacity in section 1.3.2 above.
[11] This view is defended in Byrne and Hilbert 1997. Tye argues in favour of the view in Tye 2000: ch.7.
[12] I am assuming here that 'SSR_y' lacks internal semantic structure; in particular, it does not abbreviate a description along the lines 'disposed to reflect light of such-and-such wavelengths (etc.)'. If we do not make this assumption, we cannot argue from non-inter-inferability between (7) and (8) to *hyper*intensionality in 'believes', since a Russellian could reasonably deny that 'yellow' and 'disposed to reflect light of such-and-such wavelength (etc.)' have the same reference. For example, the latter but not the former refers to the property of having a certain wavelength.

is true. On the other hand, Tye allows that 'F' occupies an intensional context in the looks report: it cannot necessarily be substituted salva veritate for a *co-extensive* predicate 'G'. Thus suppose that we are in a possible world where all and only trapezoids are magenta, and in which our subject Matt looks at a magenta object through a shape-distorting pair of lenses. Then

(11) Something looks magenta to Matt

is true but

(12) Something looks trapezoidal to Matt

is false (the magenta thing looks rectangular to him, let's say). I will take it for granted that Tye is right about the intensionality of 'looks'.

If Tye is right about this difference in point of hyperintensionality, he is in a position to offer the following diagnosis of what (by his lights) goes wrong in the simple argument: '(2´) is correct on the Russellian notion of content, on which the content that something is yellow *just is* the content that something is SSR_y. (4´) is correct on the Fregean notion of content, on which the content that something is yellow is not the content that something is SSR_y. The inference to (S) falsely assumes that a single notion of content makes (2´) and (4) correct.'

However, why should we think that there is this contrast in point of hyperintensionality? Indeed, is not (10) as strange to (8)? Tye (2000: 55) admits that (10) 'sounds strange'. He argues that the result nonetheless is acceptable:

> [T]he case [of something's looking SSR_y to a naïve subject S] is parallel to that of seeing John Smith, a policeman, without seeing him to be a policeman; one simply fails to recognize *that* he is a policeman. If asked whether one saw a policeman, one will deny it. For one did not know, one had no

> idea that John Smith was a policeman. Likewise, I suggest, in the case of phenomenal reports. (Tye 2000: 55-56)

It is perhaps not altogether clear just what line of argument Tye is suggesting here. As I understand it, however, it gives an implicature-based or pragmatic account, running as follows:

The Pragmatic Account

There are circumstances in which the report 'Al saw a policeman' is literally true but 'strange' – or rather misleading. Suppose that you are a surveillance officer overlooking the scene as Al, a suspected would-be robber, approaches a bank. You realise that your colleague John Smith, in plain clothes, happens to be outside the bank, but you know that Al has no reason to suspect that John Smith is a policeman. Before reaching the bank but after having seen John Smith, Al turns round and moves away. Later your boss is keen on information that might throw light on this move. To remark

> Al saw a policeman outside the bank.

is strictly speaking true but misleading in this context. The 'strange' or misleading character of your remark here is due to its falsely conversationally implicating that Al *recognised* that the man outside the bank was a policeman, or perhaps that Al would *believe* that there was a policeman outside the bank if he took his visual experience at face value. Analogously, the 'strange' character (10) reflects not that the report is false but that it falsely conversationally implicates that Matt would believe that something is SSR_y if he took experience at face value.

However, in the light of the wider dialectical situation remarked on in the last section, if Tye means to invoke the Pragmatic Account, an over-generation worry suggest itself. The Pragmatic Account is broadly analogous to the pragmatic, implicature-based accounts of apparent failures of substitution of co-referential terms in *belief* contexts.[13] On the latter account, (8) is strictly speaking true (given that (7) is), the appearance to the contrary reflecting not actual falsity but what (8) falsely conversationally implicates. Now, it is hard to see how a Fregean view of the content of beliefs could be motivated on such a pragmatic, implicature-based account of belief contexts. As a Fregean at the level of belief, then, Tye is committed to reject the latter account. Perhaps Tye, as a Fregean, can give a good reason why we should expect belief reports to be hyperintensional. The question this would raise, however, is if not this reason applies to looks reports too, thus predicting hyperintensionality even for them.

Before turning to this underlying question, another over-generation worry raised by the Pragmatic Account may be noted. By Tye's own lights, (10) is not strictly parallel to 'Al sees a policeman', since the former is intensional while the latter is extensional.[14] Thus the question arises as to what prevents the pragmatic account from over-generating in the following way. Consider the world described above where all and only trapezoids are magenta, and where our subject, Matt, is looking at a magenta thing through shape-distorting lenses. We may elaborate on this scenario so as to make it analogous to the scenario involving Al, the suspected would-be robber. Let's say that Matt desperately needs to grab hold of something trapezoidal, and that he urgently

[13] The theory has been advanced by Salmon (1986). For discussion, see Recanati 1993: ch. 17.
[14] Tye holds that 'see' also has an intensional sense (cf. n. 9). However, in the present passage, where Tye suggests that seeing John Smith, who is a policeman, entails seeing a policeman, he must be appealing to the extensional sense, since the entailment fails on the intensional sense.

reaches out for the magenta thing upon seeing it. We imagine that we are in a context in which we try to throw light on Matt's move. To remark

Matt saw something trapezoidal.

in this context is strictly true but misleading. Now, at this point, we may imagine that a theorist, Tye+, proposes that (12) similarly strictly speaking is true (given that (11) is) but misleading. Its misleading character, according to Tye+, is down to its falsely conversationally implicating that Matt would believe that the thing was trapezoidal if he took his experience at face value. Tye is committed to reject Tye+'s suggestion. The question is on what grounds he can do so.

In the next section I will suggest that the Tye-Type theorist will not be able to offer an account that satisfactorily lays to rest both of these over-generation worries.

2.2.2 Intentional reports and rational explanation

Theorists holding a Fregean view of the content of belief standardly, and quite plausibly, connect the hyperintensionality they find in belief reports with the role these reports have in *rational explanation*.[15] A rational explanation is an account of a subject's attitude or action that shows it to be a rational attitude or action for the subject to take, given his point of view. Such explanations make it intelligible why the subject takes that attitude or action, on the presupposition that the subject attains the requisite standard of rationality in connection with the attitudes and actions mentioned in the explanation. Believers may on occasion fall below the requisite standard, and in consequence rational explanation may on occasion be inapplicable to the attitude or action they thereby take. The idea, however, is that belief attribution has to be

[15] See, e.g., Schiffer 1978: 180, Evans 1982: ch. 1, Recanati 1993: ch. 4, and McDowell 1994: 180. Tye endorses this standard Fregean story at Tye 2000: 18.

understood by reference to its role on the occasions where rational explanation is applicable.

Now, if substitution of co-referential terms is allowed within the scope of 'believes', apparently coherent subjects turn out, it seems, to commit gross and obvious irrationalities. For example, if Lois Lane believes that Superman is vastly stronger than Clark Kent, Lois Lane turns out to believe that Superman is vastly stronger than Superman. If George Bush, on the strength of independent reports, believes that Mahmood Abbas is honest, and believes that Abu Mazen is not honest, George Bush turns out to believe that Mahmood Abbas is honest and believe that Mahmood Abbas is not honest (since Mahmood Abbas is Abu Mazen). If Lois Lane or George Bush committed such gross irrationalities, then surely they would fall foul of even a minimal standard of rationality in connection with these attitudes. Consequently, rational explanation would be inapplicable to them in connection with the relevant attitudes. Yet this implication is false. Lois Lane and George Bush *do* seem to be rationally intelligible in terms of these attitudes. For example, Bush's turning down an offer to meet someone referred to as Abu Mazen can be rationally explained in terms of his belief that Abu Mazen is not honest; Lois Lane's belief that Superman could lift an aeroplane but Clark Kent could not is rationally explainable in terms of her belief that Superman is vastly stronger than Clark Kent. Since these explanations seem to make perfect sense, we have to deny that co-referential terms are freely substitutable within the scope of 'beliefs'. Something broadly along these lines seems to be the standard account of hyperintensionality in belief reports among Fregean theorists. In the following, I will simply presume that a Fregean will offer an account along these lines.

The question this raises is whether the account extends to looks reports so as to predict hyperintensionality even here. Do not these also have a role in rational explanation that supports the attribution of hyperintensionality? I will now consider three ways in which a Tye-Type theorist might seek to avoid this conclusion, and argue that they fail. The first and crudest option is simply to deny that looks reports have a role in rational explanation. This is highly implausible, however. We clearly say such things as 'Maria bought the jumper because she wanted a red one, and it looked red to her inside the shop (though when she got home, she saw that it was pink).' Such an account clearly in some sense makes Maria's purchase rationally intelligible, given her point of view.

The second and somewhat more refined option for the Tye-Type theorist allows that looks reports are accorded a role in rational explanation, but insists that they contribute to the explanatory character of such explanations solely by virtue of what they implicate. Thus in the last example, 'it looked red to her inside the shop' contributes to the explanatory character of the account only by virtue of its implicating that Maria *believed*, on the strengths of vision, that the jumper was red. If we spell out the explanation so as to make this implicature explicit, we find that the looks report is redundant.

This second suggestion is also unsatisfactory. In particular, it fails to deal satisfactorily with the role of looks reports in explaining visually based beliefs themselves.[16] Thus, when I become appraised of the Mueller-Lyer illusion for the first time, I may say 'I believed that the lines were unequally long because they looked unequally long to me – as they indeed still do!' If we spell out my account here as suggested, it becomes 'I

[16] See Martin 1993.

believed that the lines were unequally long because I believed, on the strengths of vision, that they were.' If the 'because' here is causal (as it plausibly is), the latter is just false; if it is not causal, it seems simply trivial. Now a Tye-Type theorist might suggest a minor revision in response. What 'X looks F to S' implicates, either in this context in particular or generally, is that S is in a visual state *disposing him to believe* that X is F. Given this revision, my explanation may not be false, but becomes a *virtus dormitiva* explanation. As such, it would certainly seem to be much more trivial than the explanation is purports to make explicit. More seriously, even the visual disposition to believe something may be explained in terms of a looks report. Someone might say 'I find myself inclined to believe that the lines are unequally long, and this is of course because they so compellingly look unequally long to me.'[17]

Another problem about this second suggestion is that it makes it hard to motivate the distinction between looks reports and object seeing reports (reports of the form 'S sees an F') in point of their intensionality. We certainly treat the latter as having a role in psychological explanation. Let's change our description of the case of Al, the suspected would-be robber, slightly. We are now to imagine that your colleague John Smith outside the bank is plainly and visibly is in uniform, while all else remains the same. In this scenario, the remark 'Al saw a policeman outside the bank' is perfectly in place in the context where we want to throw light on Al's move away from the bank. Here, however, it is quite plausible that the contribution of the remark to the explanation depends on its implicating that Al recognised, or believed, on the strengths of vision, that there was a policeman outside the bank. Thus, if the second suggestion were correct, looks reports and object seeing reports would seem to have a relevantly

[17] As Evans (1982) noted, it is not as if the subject just finds herself 'with a yen' to apply the notion of un-equality of length. That yen – that disposition – is itself rationally grounded by the experience.

analogous role in rational explanation. That would prima facie support Tye+'s view that both types of report are strictly non-intensional.

The third option for the Tye-Type theorist appeals to a feature of perception that Crane (1988) has emphasised and found to favour a nonconceptualist view, viz. its apparent tolerance of obvious contradictions. This third option concedes that looks reports have a role in rational explanation and do so not simply by virtue of implicating something about the subject's beliefs or dispositions to believe. It maintains, however, that there is a *relevant difference* between looks reports and belief reports over their role here, one that shows up in how such reports impacts on our assessments of the rationality of the subject. Let's reflect on our brief account of hyperintensionality in belief reports, connecting this feature with their role in rational explanation. We noted that if substitution of co-referential terms were allowed, then it would turn out that Lois Lane believes that Superman is vastly stronger than Superman, and that George Bush (in the described scenario) believes that Mahmood Abbas is honest and that Mahmood Abbas is not honest. Now, if Lois Lane or George Bush actually had those beliefs, it would have dire implications for their rationality. We argued that, since rational explanation clearly is applicable to them, even in connection with their beliefs about Superman and Mahmood Abbas, respectively, they do not have that combination of belief.

Yet, as the third option points out, whereas ascription of obviously contradictory beliefs reflects poorly on the rationality of the ascribee, the ascription of obviously contradictory appearances does not. A dramatic case of conflicting appearances is, arguably, the so-called waterfall illusion. The illusion is caused by prolonged staring at uniform movement, such as that characterised by the falling waters of a waterfall. The

illusion occurs when one turns one's gaze away from that movement, and looks at something stationary. Descriptions of the illusion vary somewhat, but on at least one view – that favoured by Crane (1988) – it involves an experience as of one and the same thing moving (in the opposite direction of the previous movement) and staying still at one and the same time.[18] Thus, on this description, the content of experience includes an obvious contradiction. Yet it would of course be unjust to censure the subject of the illusion for irrationality on this ground. This contrasts markedly with the case of belief. Now, in our account of belief reports, it was precisely the need to avoid the consequence that Lois Lane or George Bush were grossly irrational that was put forward as the reason to reject the belief ascription arrived at by substitution of co-referring terms. This is just the reason we have now seen that we lack for looks (or, more generally, appears) reports. So we have identified a relevant difference, making it reasonable to distinguish between looks reports and belief reports in point of their hyperintensionality. The broader lesson is that the Tye-Type theorist can agree with Crane when he writes that 'the Waterfall Illusion is, surprisingly, a counterexample to the thesis that concepts are involved in the content of experience.' (1998: 234)

However, the line of argument put forward by this third option proves too much. We can see this when we consider the analogy between looks reports and reports of the testimony someone is receiving.

[18] As noted in ft.n. 10, ch. 1, Fred Dretske (1999) has suggested another description of the illusion, as involving an experience of movement without an experience as of anything moving. I will here assume that Crane's description is correct.

2.2.3 Testimony reports and looks reports: an analogy

I take a testimony report to be a statement of the form 'S is told (by N) that A'.[19] I will take it to be uncontroversial that such reports are hyperintensional if belief reports are. However, just as attribution of conflicting appearances does not reflect poorly on the rationality of the attributee, attribution of the reception of conflicting testimony does not either. If Lars tells me that the disk is moving and Sam tells me that the same disk is at rest, I cannot therefore justly be censured as irrational. The situation does not change, of course, if a single testimony exchange has contradictory content. If Lars tells me that the disk is both moving and not moving, I am still not justly criticisable for irrationality. I take it to be uncontroversial that the content of testimony states – the states reported by testimony reports – is conceptual if the content of belief is. Thus Crane's argument proves too much.

Not only does the analogy with testimony show that the line of argument put forward by the third option proves too much: the analogy can also be used to argue that looks reports are hyperintensional if testimony reports are, or so I will now suggest. In particular, I will suggest that there is a simple explanation for why we should expect testimony reports to be hyperintensional, if belief reports are, and that this explanation generalises to looks reports. The explanation is that there is a straightforward way in which the obvious contradiction in the testimony can be transferred to an obvious contradiction in belief, viz. by the subject who receives the testimony *taking it at face value*. If I took what Lars tells me above at face value, I would clearly be as irrational as he is. Similarly, if the subject of the waterfall illusion takes her visual experience at face

[19] Can S be told, by N, that A even thought S does not understand the content that A, e.g. can 'The kids were told, by their teacher, that there are transfinite ordinals greater that aleph-null.' be true (I take it, of course, that the kids are not wizkids)? I presume some will say that it can. I intend testimony reports to disallow this possibility. Thus a better candidate might be 'N conveyed, affirmatively, to S the idea that A'. To avoid unnecessary prolixity, I stick with 'S is told, by N, that A'.

value (assuming that the description above is correct), she would be as irrational as George Bush would be if he held the contradictory beliefs about Mahmood Abbas.

This means that, for testimony just as much as for belief, there is a notable difference in rationality between the subject for which attributions (A) and (B) hold good:

(A) i) Bush is told, by Cheney, that Abu Mazen is not honest.
ii) Bush is told, by Rice, that Mahmood Abbas is honest.
iii) Bush takes both pieces of testimony at face value.

(B) i) Bush is told, by Cheney, that Mahmood Abbas is not honest.
ii) Bush is told, by Rice, that Mahmood Abbas is honest.
iii) Bush takes both pieces of testimony at face value.

To uphold this difference, we must deny that (A.i) is inter-inferable with (B.i), i.e. we must maintain that 'S is told that A' is hyperintensional. The same point can be made in terms of attributions that combine belief reports, testimony reports, and the claim that the subject takes testimony at face value. Thus, just as (B) makes Bush out to be irrational, so does the following:

(C) i) Bush is told, by Cheney, that Mahmood Abbas is not honest.
ii) Bush antecedently believes, and continues to believe, that Mahmood Abbas is honest.
iii) Bush takes Cheney's testimony at face value.

Again, just as Bush would be irrational if (C) is true of him, I would intuitively be irrational if the following were true of me:

(D) i) The oar looks bent to me.

ii) I antecedently believe, and continue to believe, that the oar is not bent.

iii) I take my visual experience at face value.

Now, let's suppose that 'looks' is not hyperintensional. Imagine moreover that Matt, our naïve subject above, is not completely innocent of SSRs. He has heard of them, but does not suspect that they have anything to do with colours. Indeed, he thinks that the things he is familiar with do not have such SSRs. In particular, the following holds

(E) i) The lemon looks yellow to Matt.

ii) Matt antecedently believes, and continues to believe, that the lemon is not SSR_y.

iii) Matt takes his visual experience at face value.

If (D) makes me out to be irrational, (E) should make Matt out to be irrational. For, given non-hyperintensionality, (E) is equivalent to

(F) i) The lemon looks SSR_y to Matt.

ii) Matt antecedently believes, and continue to believes, that the lemon is not SSR_y.

iii) Matt takes his visual experience at face value.

and (F) is entirely parallel with (D). Yet, (E) does intuitively *not* make Matt out to be irrational; not, at least, in anything like the way in which (D) makes me out to be irrational. We can easily make sense of how Matt coherently could come to satisfy (E); we can not so easily make sense of how I coherently could come to satisfy (D). I conclude that the supposition of non-hyperintensionality should be rejected (at least conditionally on the hyperintensionality of testimony and belief reports). We should conclude, I suggest, that looks reports are hyperintensional if testimony reports are. Since testimony reports are hyperintensional if belief reports are, we should conclude that looks reports are hyperintensional if belief reports are.

This theme of the role of perceptual experiences in rational-cum-intentional explanation will be pursued further in chapter 4. We shall there consider an independent line of argument that can be used to buttress the suggestions made in this subsection.

2.3 Phenomenology and Russellian Content

A second point Tye (2006) makes in favour of his view is a phenomenological one. He maintains that we can account for the phenomenal character of perceptual states simply in terms of (i) the state being 'poised' (roughly, being access-conscious, in the sense of Block 1995), and (ii) a (non-singular) Russellian proposition giving the intentional content of the state.[20] Thus there is no *phenomenological need* to make the kinds of distinctions in content that a Fregean conception of content allows us to make.

Tye argues for the latter claim chiefly by considering various cases that philosophers have found to call for the characteristically Fregean distinctions between modes of

[20] Actually, Tye makes a somewhat stronger claim, in so far as he maintains that the restriction to 'perceptual' states in (i) is unnecessary. The weaker claim in the text suffices for our purposes.

presentation having the same sense, and arguing that they can be handled in terms of the resources of Russellian propositions. One important type of case, which we will return to at several point below, may be termed 'Mach cases', after Ernst Mach who introduced the following example. There is a phenomenological difference between seeing a square figure as an regular diamond, as it were standing upright on its corner, and seeing that figure as a square, as it were tilted over on its side on a sloping plane. Yet the property of being a regular diamond arguably just is the property of being a square. Thus Peacocke (1986, 1989) infers that the phenomenological difference between these experiences cannot be captured in terms of the Russellian propositions giving the correctness conditions for the experiences, since these are individuated only up to the properties attributed.[21] Tye (2006) replies that, in these cases, there is always *a further property* that is represented in one but not the other of the phenomenologically distinct experiences. In both 'regular diamond' and the 'tilted square' experience, the property of being square (=being regular diamond) is represented. However, in the 'tilted square' experience the figure is, in addition, visually assigned the property of resting on its side, or of being symmetrical about the bi-sectors of the sides. By contrast, in the 'regular diamond' experience, the figure is visually assigned the (distinct) property of standing on its corner, or of being symmetrical about the diagonals. Thus when we get a sufficiently detailed view of the Russellian contents of the experiences, the phenomenological need to draw the kinds of distinctions that Fregean contents characteristically allow for evaporates.

This point can be mobilised against the simple argument as follows.[22] One might argue that phenomenology is constitutive or anyway constraining for what goes into the

[21] We shall consider his argument briefly in the next chapter.
[22] I should note that Tye does not explicitly make this argument. What follow thus involves a dollop of rational reconstruction.

content of experience. If some distinctions in content are not mandated by phenomenology, they have no legitimacy in an account of perceptual content. Other constraints apply to the intentional content of beliefs, thoughts, plans, and so on. These make it necessary to draw the kinds of distinctions in content that only a Fregean notion allows for. Therefore the notion of content that applies to experience is different from that which applies to thinking, pace the simple argument.

From the last section, it is obvious how I would respond to this argument. What are the constraints applying to the intentional content of beliefs, thoughts, plans, and so on that makes it necessary to draw the characteristically Fregean distinctions? The standard answer here adverts to the role of these states in rational or intentional explanation.[23] Yet, as we have argued, perceptual experience also has a rational-explanatory role. In particular, the fact that a subject judges things to be a certain way may be susceptible of rational explanation in terms of things looking (or sounding, or feeling, etc) that way to her, as suggested in the previous section.[24] Perhaps experiences explain such judgements as this only in the presence of other attitudes, including, perhaps, belief about the conditions of perception. Yet that would make the explanations in question no different from how desires, say, explain actions. So the rational-explanatory constraint on content individuation, allowing us to assign Fregean content to thoughts, generalises to perceptual experience. Perhaps a Tye-Type theorist would protest that considerations of phenomenology trump considerations of rational explanatory role when it comes to individuating the content of experience. However, in the absence of a further reason, this boils down to the bare claim that perception is exceptional from the point of view of

[23] The argument of the last section is couched in terms of rational explanation. In chapter 4, the argument will be couched in terms of intentional explanation. We shall there briefly remark on the difference between these notions. It does not matter to the present case.
[24] Again, see Martin 1993 for an interesting defence.

content individuation. Even if it is correct that considerations of phenomenology do not require us to conceive of perceptual content in Fregean terms, considerations of the rational-explanatory role of experience may do so, at least if they do so for the case of beliefs.

3

Sense and Reference II: Peacocke's Two-Mode View

On a *coarse-grained* view, the contents of experience are individuated in terms of Russellian propositions or sets of (metaphysical) possibilities. Not all content nonconceptualists take this view. Some prefer a *fine-grained* or *Fregean* view of the content of experience. They hold, that is, that perceptual contents are to be individuated in terms of certain modes of presentation, where these modes enable us to go beyond the distinctions that one can draw in terms of the structures of objects and properties that constitute the correctness conditions of experiences. As content nonconceptualists, they maintain that the content of experience nonetheless differs in kind from the content of thoughts based on experience.

Peacocke defends a view of this description in several of his papers. He argues that an adequate characterisation of perceptual content has to appeal to 'manners of perception' (his term in 1986 and 1989) or 'perceptual ways' (his term in 2001a and 2001b) of objects and properties. These manners or ways, he contends, are distinct on the one hand from the objects and properties they are *of* (the things that stand to them as reference to sense), and on the other hand from the modes of presentation that go into the content of thoughts and judgements.

In this chapter, I first briefly discuss how his view might meet the argument from intelligibility we put forward in section 1.3 above. A brief presentation of Peacocke's

reason for taking the perceptual content to require the positing of manners of perception follows. The greater part of the chapter, however, is given over to discussing what I take to be Peacocke's chief argument for distinguishing between thought content and perceptual content, what I will call 'the Deceptive Matching Argument'.

A warning should be made about the term 'mode of presentation'. Like the term 'Fregean' (as applied to contents), this term can be used in broad or a narrow sense, depending on how many characteristically Fregean or neo-Fregean theses one takes modes of presentation by definition to be subject to. Peacocke uses the term in a fairly strict sense, on which modes of presentation by definition are eligible to figure in thought content, and indeed are individuated in accordance with Frege's Principle of Cognitive Significance. Other current writers on the philosophy of consciousness seem to use the term without taking its denotata to be subject to either of these requirements. The term was used in such a looser sense in the first paragraph above, since it was suggested that some content nonconceptualists hold that perceptual contents are both structures of modes of presentation and different in kind from thought contents. When directly discussing Peacocke's Deceptive Matching Argument below, I will follow his terminology, on which the term 'mode of presentation eligible to figure in thought content' is pleonastic. However, at other places I will use the term in a looser sense. I will, however, take it that modes of presentation (both in the narrower and broader sense) determine reference.

3.1 The Two-Mode View

Someone who holds a Fregean view of the content of experience can be a content nonconceptualist for one of two reasons. First, she might hold that the content of thinking is not Fregean at all, but is to be individuated in more coarse-grained terms. As

far as I know, no philosophers take this line, and for good reason.[1] Second, she might maintain, as does Peacocke, that the modes of presentation implicated in the content of thought are of a different kind from those implicated in perception, subject to a non-equivalent condition of individuation. I will call any view of the latter kind a 'Two-Mode View'. Peacocke gives expression to such a view in the following terms:

> Whenever someone perceives something – an object, a property, a magnitude – he perceives it in a particular *manner*. These manners comprise part of the content of perceptual experience, and it is of them that we have to give some account in saying what that content is. (Peacocke 1989: 303)

> The distinctness of the constituents of the contents of perception from constituents of the contents of thought flows ultimately from the difference between the considerations which respectively individuate the two types of content. Individuation of the content of perception is answerable to considerations of phenomenology in the first instance, while the content of the attitudes is answerable to considerations of epistemic possibility. (Peacocke 1986: 12)

The Two-Mode View may accept the central idea underlying the argument from demonstration (section 1.3.2), viz. that having a perceptual experience puts one in a position to think a demonstrative thought about just the objects presented by the experience, to the effect that they have just the properties they are presented as having. However, it is committed to insisting that, even if this demonstrative thought agrees

[1] Perhaps it is obvious that the view has few attractions. The following in any case tries to bring out one reason against it. If one takes the Fregean view of perceptual content, one will allow that two experiences can differ in (Fregean) content even though they have the same (Russellian) correctness conditions. It is common ground among theorist accepting weak intentionalism that an experience presents a 'face value' at which the subject may take it, or declined to take it. Plausibly, face values are one-one to contents. It follows that the Fregean theorist is committed to the possibility of two perceptual experiences presenting different 'face values' even though they have the same Russellian correctness conditions. It ought, then, to be possible for a thinker to take one experience at face value but not the other. In consequence, the thinker believes *P* but does not believe *Q*, for a suitable belief-contents *P* and *Q*. It is not plausible to distinguish between *P* and *Q* simply in terms of the properties they attribute, or in terms of the objects picked out or quantified over. For these contents correspond to experiences that assign the same properties to the scene etc. So it seems that we have to distinguish between *P* and *Q* in terms of a category of mode of presentation of these properties or objects. Thus these contents of belief are Fregean too.

with the perceptual experience at the level of reference, the two states of mind are associated with different modes of presentation of these referents and consequently with different contents. This raises an obvious question how the Two-Mode View is to meet the argument from intelligibility (section 1.3.1). Peacocke certainly does not want to suggest that it is ineffable what the content of an experience is. As we saw, any weak intensionalist who asserts that perceptual content is ineffable or unintelligible leaves her weak intentionalism wholly unmotivated. Yet how are manners of perception – the modes of presentation of perceptual content, distinct from those of thought content – to be reportable? In section 1.3.2, we argued (i) that if perceptual reports create an opaque (hyperintensional) context for their embedded terms, then some terms are associated with modes of presentation of their referents that are *suitable enough* to give a correct report, and (ii) that it is hard to see that any terms other than demonstrative terms – expressing demonstrative concepts – are associated with any *more suitable* modes of presentation than demonstratives are. If demonstrative terms express modes of presentation distinct from the manners of perception, one may wonder how even they could be suitable enough to give a true report.

Now, the reportability of mental content is a *general* problem for Fregean views. The Two-Mode View, however, is subject to further *special* problems. On Frege's (1892) own account of attitude contexts, terms within the scope of the propositional attitude verb express an indirect sense, distinct from their ordinary sense, standing to the ordinary sense as sense to referent. That account is notoriously problematic.[2] Yet even if it works, it would not work for the Two-Mode View, as the ordinary sense of a term is a possible element in a thought content, not a manner of perception. Some neo-Fregeans

[2] Davidson (1965) for example argues that the view makes language unlearnable, since learning any term requires learning the potentially indefinite number of multiply indirect senses associated with it.

maintain that terms in content-specifying sentences, in intentional reports, have their ordinary reference but that the report still succeeds in stating the content of the intentional act reported, since the terms in question somehow show or exhibit their sense.[3] The details of these proposals are not critical for present purposes. The key point is that the sense thus shown or exhibited is a possible element in a thought content, not a manner of perception. This sort of approach thus does not seem to fit the Two-Mode View. The Two-Mode view is thus facing an *especially* difficult question over how perceptual reports get at the content of perception. To identify this special challenge is of course not to show that the Two-Mode theorist cannot meet it; in this thesis I will however have to rest content with doing the former. The challenge may, however, dissuade an antecedently neutral theorist from going down the Two-Mode path.

3.2 The anti-Russellian argument

Peacocke's argument for the Two-Mode View comes in two stages. First, there is an argument that the content of perception cannot be captured simply by items on the level of reference, even if the level of reference includes properties and magnitudes attributable to particulars. Second, there is an argument that the individuation of manners of perception (the constituents of perceptual content) are not in accordance with Frege's Principle of Cognitive Significance, and therefore differ in kind from the modes of presentation involved in thought content. In this section, I briefly discuss the first, 'anti-Russellian' stage.

[3] Neo-Fregean versions of Davidson's paratactic theory, such as that suggested in McDowell (1980), are a case in point.

The argument chiefly rests on Mach cases. Beside the famous 'tilted square' vs. 'upright regular diamond' case discussed in relation to Tye, Peacocke discusses the following case:

> Suppose you see two straight lines at oblique angles, one to your right and one to your left. In some such cases, you neither see one line as longer than the other, and nor do you see the lines as of the same length, as matching in length. It follows that the distance between the ends of the one line and the distance between the ends of the other are not presented in the same manner – by the first requirement on manners. Since the lines may in fact be the same length, manners of perception are in a many-one relation to the distances perceived. (1989:306)

'[T]he first requirement on manners' here is the following constraint. (I use **arial black** to refer to manners of perception. Note that this notation is meant to be neutral as to whether manners of perception are a subclass of modes of presentation, i.e. of the constituents of thought content, as the conceptualist holds, or of a different kind, as Peacocke argues):

> What properties must these manners have? Suppose we are concerned with the manners in which things of a given kind may be perceived, say distances. We should require that if **m** is the manner in which one distance is perceived and **m´** is the manner in which a second distance is perceived by the same subject at the same time, and **m** = **m´** [note that the identity sign is used and not mentioned here, AN], then the distances are experienced as the same by that subject. (They match in Goodman's sense.) (1989: 303, I have changed the notation slightly.)

The notion of matching at play is, as Peacocke points out (1989: n. 18), not equivalent to the epistemic notion of indiscriminability.[4] The notion is rather a phenomenal one, to be explicated in terms of two things being 'experienced as the same' by a certain subject at a given time.[5] We will return to this notion of matching in section 3.3.2 below.

In the first of these quotations, Peacocke is concerned to distinguish the manners in which distances (or shapes, or other magnitudes) are perceived from the 'distances perceived'. Now 'the distance perceived' is naturally identified with the actual distance of a certain perceived concrete particular (or between two perceived particulars). If one makes this natural identification, it may seem that Peacocke is concerned to establish a two-fold distinction between the actual distance of a certain perceived particular and a 'manner of perception' of that distance. However, such a two-fold distinction is not something that a Russellian like Tye would deny. The Russellian allows of course that misperception is possible, including misperception of the lengths (shapes, colours, etc.) of things. In cases of misperception, the actual length of an object is different from the length it is perceived as having. The Russellian is free to label the length perceptually attributed of an object as the 'manner of perception' of its length. Yet Peacocke is here, fairly clearly, intending to be arguing for a position in opposition to the Russellian view.[6] I will thus take Peacocke to be arguing for a *three-fold* distinction between (i) the shape (to use shape as an illustration) a perceived concrete particular actually has, (ii) the shape that is visually attributed to the perceived concrete particular, and (iii) a

[4] On the epistemic notion of indiscriminability, x and y are indiscriminable just in case one cannot tell that they differ. See Williamson 1990 for a discussion of this epistemic notion of indiscriminability.

[5] At the beginning of the first quote above, Peacocke writes: '…nor do you see the lines as of the same length, as matching in length.' I take this to be a potentially misleading way of saying the following: '…nor do you see the lines as of the same length, i.e. nor do they match in length.' For something to match is for them to be experienced as the same, not for them to be experienced as matching.

[6] If Peacocke merely wanted to uphold the two-fold distinction noted, the appeal to the possibility of misperception (which Peacocke recognises, in so far as he is not committed to disjunctivism at this point) would suffice to support it. It is thus notable that Peacocke does not make this appeal at all.

certain mode of presentation ('manner of perception') of the shape mentioned in (ii). If there is no misperception and if shape perception is perfectly determinate, (i) is (ii).[7] The Russellian, by contrast, takes levels (i) and (ii) to be all that we need.[8]

Why does Peacocke think that we need level (iii) in addition to (i) and (ii)? As I understand his argument, it can be put as follows. Consider first a 'jumbled' case where you perceive two lines on a page, perhaps ordered in this fashion:



'**Jumbled'**

We suppose that the lines are in fact the same length, and that there is no misperception of their length involved, so that we do not need to distinguish between (i) and (ii). Now compare this with a 'crystallised' case where you perceive, with no misperception, two equally long lines organised like this:



'**Crystallised'**

[7] If there is no misperception, but perception attributed less than perfectly to determinate shapes, then (i) metaphysically entails (ii).

[8] In (2001b) Peacocke's commitment to this three-fold distinction is explicit: 'We shall not do justice to the fine-grained phenomenology of experience if we restrict ourselves to those contents which can be built up by referring to the properties and relations that the perceived objects are represented by the experience as possessing. We must, in describing the fine-grained phenomenology, make use of the notion of the *way* in which some property of relation is given in the experience.' (2001b: 240)The strong parallels between the (2001b) paper and the (1986) and (1989) papers suggest that the view here expressed is one held in the earlier papers too.

There is of course a phenomenological difference between these cases. In particular, there is a phenomenological difference with respect to how the lengths of the two lines are perceived. We would not be too far off the mark if we were to characterise this in terms of the two lines being experienced as the same in length, in the 'crystallised' case, and the lines neither being experienced as the same in length nor being experienced as differing in length, in the 'jumbled' case. We cannot capture this difference in how the lengths of the lines are presented in experience in terms of level (ii), since the lines have the same length in the two cases, and there is no misperception involved in either case.[9] Thus to do justice to the difference in phenomenology *with regard to the perception of length* between the two cases we have to go beyond the distinctions available on level (ii) to distinguish between different ways or modes in which length can be presented.

One thing to note about the argument so far is how congenial it is to a theorist who shares Peacocke's Fregean view of the content of thinking but endorses content congruence – let's just call such a theorist 'a conceptualist' for present purposes. An intuitive way of putting the Fregean view of the content of thinking is as follows: if an object or property is presented in the same mode, twice over, in thought, the sameness of the object or property thus presented has to be apparent to the subject. Contrapositively, if an object or property is presented twice over in thought in such a way that the sameness of the object or property is not necessarily apparent to the subject, the mode in which the object or property is presented is not the same. Thus since the sameness of Hesperus and Phosphorus need not be apparent to the thinker who

[9] Someone might object that there could be a difference in the acuity with which the lengths of the lines are perceived in each case. This is consistent with the supposed veridicality of the experience, since a less than perfectly acute perception of the length of some object is not ipso facto a misperception of it. (Similarly, a less than perfectly precise description of someone's place of residence, say as 'in Oslo', is not ipso facto a misdescription.) However, it is not clear, on the face of it, why there should be any such difference of acuity between the perception of the lengths in the 'jumbled' and the 'crystallised' case. Even if there is, it is not clear why we could not give an alternative 'jumbled' vs. 'crystallised' pair where there is no difference in acuity.

thinks that Hesperus is Phosphorus, the latter thought involves two modes of presentation of Venus. The situation for modes of presentation in perception seems, on Peacocke's account, precisely analogous. The 'jumbled' cases seem precisely to be cases where a given property (a given length, or a given shape, or whatever) is presented twice over in perception, and there the sameness of the property thus presented is *not apparent* to the subject. Peacocke's conclusion that there is a difference in the mode of presentation here is wholly in tune with the Fregean view, as intuitively formulated above. Indeed, Peacocke at one point explicitly acknowledges the extensive analogy, on his account, between the individuation of the thought content and perceptual content:

> It would be a fair observation that the Fregean criterion as I have formulated it is an instance of a more general criterion, under which we can rightly say that there are distinct ways W_1 and W_2 in which a shape, or an interval, is given in perception simply because it is not obvious (even at the level of perception) that something given in way W_1 is the same shape, or interval, as something given in way W_2. (2001b. 244)

Nevertheless, as a content nonconceptualist, Peacocke argues that the manners of perception or perceptual ways that figure in perceptual content are only analogous to, not strictly of the same kind as, the modes of presentation that figure in thought content. I will now turn to his chief argument for this view in (1986) and (1989).

3.3 The Deceptive Matching Argument

In 'Perceptual Content' (1989), Peacocke gives the following argument. For reasons that will become clear, I will refer to it as the 'Deceptive Matching Argument'.

> Suppose you see both a line and a bar on a wallpaper pattern. Suppose too that they look as if they are the same length: they match in respect of apparent length. Now suppose that in fact not merely do they match in this way, but that they are in fact exactly the same length; and that they are presented in exactly the same manner. We will also assume that once the subject's context is fixed, there is for each distance *presented in a given manner* a unique demonstrative mode of presentation of it of the form 'that distance'. Under the suppositions of our example, this implies that the modes of presentation ('m.p.'s') **that distance** used in connection with the line and the bar are identical. Nevertheless, it is consistent with everything in this example so far that you, the perceiver, suspect that the line and the bar are not precisely the same length (and not because your perceptual systems are malfunctioning). You suspect that there could, as things actually are, be objects matching the bar in length which do not match the line in length. For all you believe, a few moments later you may notice something in the wallpaper which matches the bar but not the line in length. So you are not willing to judge, concerning the apparent length of the line and the bar, that the former is identical with the latter. But this is incompatible with the identity of the demonstrative modes of presentation in question, in the presence only of Frege's Principle [of Cognitive Significance]… (1989: 307-8)

The argument is intended to show that manners of perception are not individuated in accordance with Frege's Principle (unlike the demonstrative modes of presentation, which by assumption are) and therefore differ in kind from the constituents of thought contents. On grounds of its complexity, its importance in being one of the relatively few arguments that directly and explicitly challenge content congruence, and (it ought to be admitted) its real force, the argument merits extended discussion. Even more importantly, no response to the argument from the point of view of a defender of content congruence has, to my knowledge, been so much as attempted.

In the next sub-section, I give a detailed statement of the argument, as I understand it. I then set out a conceptualist response, to the effect that the putative violations of Frege's Principle that the argument posits for perceptual content are correlated with putative

violations of that principle for *thought* contents, and thus do not demonstrate the intended perception/thought contrast. I go on to suggest a way in which an enthusiast for the argument may try to revive it, involving a significant revision of Frege's Principle.[10] Finally, I assess the revived argument from the point of view of the conceptualist.

3.3.1 Setting up the Deceptive Matching Argument

To understand the Deceptive Matching Argument, it is useful to consider the analogy of linguistic testimony. Consider two length reports:

(Recurrent) The line is one foot long and the bar is one foot long.

(Mixed) The line is one foot long and the bar is 0.3 metres long.[11]

The Recurrent and the Mixed report are true under just the same circumstances (I capitalise 'Recurrent' and 'Mixed' to remind us that we are dealing with a semi-technical use of these terms). If we pretend that the phrases 'one foot' and '0.3 metres' lack semantic structure, as I will throughout, the two reports also express the same Russellian proposition.[12] They assign the same properties to the same objects. Now Frege's Principle of Cognitive Significance ('Frege's Principle' for short) states or entails that a certain broadly epistemic condition is sufficient for the distinctness of modes of presentation. Usually, Frege's Principe is also taken to state or entail that this

[10] I am neutral on whether this revived argument should be attractive to Peacocke, given his background views on thought and perception.

[11] I am pretending that one foot is exactly 0.3 metres (in order not to have to write out the full exact correspondence).

[12] A parallel, but more elaborate, example could be given that does not require this pretence – or, in any case, it ought to be possible to give such an example, if a Fregean view of thought content is to be motivated. The following might be an example. Suppose that someone has set up two systems for measuring length, schmeters and schmuters. 'Schmeter' is governed by the reference-fixing convention that one schmeter is the length of the standard schmeter bar. 'Schmuter' is governed by the reference-fixing convention that one schmuter is the length of the standard schmuter bar. As it happens (though no one has checked this) the standard schmeter bar is exactly as long as the standard schmuter bar. We have, then, the Recurrent report that the line is one schmeter and the bar one schmeter, and the Mixed report that the line is one schemter and the bar one schmuter. These reports express the same Russellian propositions.

epistemic condition is also *necessary* for distinctness of modes of presentation.[13] However, only the sufficiency of the condition for distinctness matters to the Deceptive Matching Argument. To keep things simple, I will therefore identify the principle with this statement of sufficiency for distinctness. On a first reading, it goes:

Frege's Principle v.0[14]

If it is possible for a thinker to rationally doubt the thought **a = b**,

then **a** is not the same mode of presentation as **b**.

Thus, since it is possible for someone to rationally doubt that one foot is 0.3 metres – i.e. to doubt the thought **one foot = 0.3 metres** – it follows from Frege's Principle (v.0) that the modes of presentations **one foot** and **0.3 metres** are distinct.[15] The Mixed report thus involves two distinct modes of presentation of length. Surely, it is not possible for someone rationally to doubt that one foot is one foot. Frege's Principle (treated only as giving a sufficient condition for distinctness) thus allows us to posit a single mode of presentation **one foot** applied twice over in the Recurrent report. Since we have good reason to think that it is possible for the content of the report to have a Recurrent form, we may stipulate that the content indeed has this form.[16]

Let's call the subject looking at the bar and the line, in Peacocke's formulation of the argument, Claire. The linguistic analogy gives us two models for the form of the content of Clair's experience:

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[13] For an obstacle to this necessity claim, see ft. n. 23 below.

[14] This formulation of the principle is restricted to the singular case. I hope the generalisation to predicative modes of presentation, quantificational modes of presentation, and so on, will be clear.

[15] Until further notice is given (in section 3.3.4), 'Frege's Principle' will henceforth mean 'Frege's Principle v.0'.

[16] See Campbell (1987) for an interesting discussion of reasons to think that senses can recur across statements and arguments.

(Recurrent) **l is w; b is w**.[17]

(Mixed) **l is w_l; b is w_b**.

Here **l** and **b** are manners of perception of the line and the bar, respectively. [18] **w** is a manner or perception of a certain length. By contrast, $\mathbf{w_l}$ and $\mathbf{w_b}$ are distinct manners of perception (one or the other may or may not be the same manner of perception as **w**). I will assume, as I take it that Peacocke does, that manners of perception determine reference.[19] I will leave open, however, whether $\mathbf{w_l}$ and $\mathbf{w_b}$ determine the same length. I will be assuming that there is a manner of perception of the identity relation, **=**, having the same logical properties (Leibniz Law and reflexivity) as the mode of presentation of identity, =. If manners of perception are a subclass of modes of presentation, then **=** is simply =. Using this notation, we can say that $\mathbf{w_l = w_b}$ may or may not be true, as an alternative way of saying that $\mathbf{w_l}$ and $\mathbf{w_b}$ may or may not determine the same length.[20]

The Deceptive Matching Argument takes the form of a reductio, to the effect that the following assumptions are incompatible:

'Recurrence' It is possible that the content of Clair's experience has the Recurrent form.

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[17] I use the semicolon rather than conjunction to leave open exactly how perceptual contents accomplish what thought contents accomplish with conjunction.

[18] Here I adopt the 'particularist' view (see section 1.3.2 above) that there are elements in perceptual content purporting to pick out the line and the bar, respectively, in particular. This is inessential to the argument.

[19] Peacocke certainly endorses the classical Fregean thesis that the modes of presentation that figure in thought content determine reference. Since what is in question in the Deceptive Matching Argument is whether manners of perception are a subclass of the modes of presentation that figure in thought content, we cannot at the outset assume that they lack a characteristic feature of the latter.

[20] The assumption that there is a manner of perception of the identity relation is thus not essential, but allows us to make some points more briefly and, perhaps, more lucidly.

'F-Conceptualism'	The content of experience is individuated in accordance with Frege's Principle.
'Non-trans'	Matching is non-transitive.

The argument runs as follows. If Recurrence holds, we may stipulate that Claire's experience has the Recurrent form. Given F-Conceptualism, it follows that it is not possible for Claire to rationally doubt **w = w**. A more intuitive way of putting this, perhaps, is that it is not possible for her to rationally doubt that the length vision ascribes to the bar – the apparent length of the bar – is the same as the length that vision ascribes to the line – the apparent length of the line.[21] Yet, Peacocke argues, it is possible for Claire to do so.

The argument turns on Non-trans. Peacocke's 'first requirement on manners' has it that if the length of one thing is given by the same manner of perception as the length of another thing, then these lengths 'match', their lengths are 'experienced as the same'. Thus the line and the bar match in length for Claire. It is not altogether clear how Peacocke understands this notion of matching (though it is clearly not supposed to be the epistemic notion of indiscriminability). The intuitive idea, I take it, can be put in terms of our restatement of Peacocke's 'anti-Russellian argument' above: in effect, Claire is in a 'crystallised' condition and not in a 'jumbled' condition, with respect to her experience of the length of the line and bar. In brief, the line and bar look the same in length. It will be helpful, at this point, to set out, in a little more detail, some possible conceptions of what matching involves.

[21] The claim is *not* that Claire could not rationally have the (de dicto) doubt that the length of the bar is the length of the line. Such a doubt is perfectly compatible with the length of the bar and the length of the line being given by the same mode of presentation (by Frege's Principle). Consider the analogy of linguistic testimony. Someone told that the line is one metre and that the bar is one metre (a report having the Recurrent form), may rationally have the doubt that the length of the bar is the length of the line, since she may doubt the accuracy of her informant.

3.3.2 Three ways to construe matching

The simplest idea here is that two particulars *a* and *b* match in length (say), for a subject at a time, just in case the same manner of perception, for that subject at that time, attributes a length to *a* and attributes a length to *b*. If we identify the manner of perception of a thing, in regards to its length, with the look of the thing, in regards to length, this is to say that two things look the same in length just in case the look of the one, in regards to length, is the same as the look of the other, in regards to length.[22] Since identity takes wide scope on this analysans, and identity is transitive, the analysis entails that matching, for a subject at a time, is transitive. As such, it is in conflict with Non-trans on the intended reading.

Another proposal takes seriously the occurrence of the identity expression within the scope of the perceptual verb in such descriptions as 'look the same' and 'are experienced as the same'. It proposes that a manner of perception of identity figures in the content of the experiences thus described. Let's suppose that $\mathbf{c_j}$ and $\mathbf{c_k}$ are manners of perception of the colour of x_j and the colour of x_k, respectively. ($\mathbf{c_j}$ and $\mathbf{c_k}$ may or may not be the same manner of perception.) The suggestion is that x_j and x_k match in colour for a subject *S* at a time *t* just in case *S*'s experience at *t* includes the content $\mathbf{c_j = c_k}$. On this conception, to say that matching in colour, for *S* at *t*, is non-transitive is to say that there can be a series of patches, $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, experienced by *S* at *t* such that, for each $i \in [1, n\text{-}1]$, $\mathbf{c_i = c_{i+1}}$ is part of the content of *S*'s experience at *t* but the content $\mathbf{c_1 = c_n}$ is not.

[22] Disregarding the relativization to length, this is Graff's (2001: 910) 'Simple Criterion of Identity for Qualia'. Graff defends this criterion against the arguments for non-transitivity.

At this point, a subtle distinction may be made. Standard purported illustrations of the non-transitivity of matching involve apparently smooth changes in colour (or length, or some other perceptible property). Thus a typical purported illustration of the series above will be one where x_1 looks yellow, say, while x_n looks orange, with the intervening patches making for an apparently smooth change. In such a case $\mathbf{c_1 = c_n}$ will be false, since $\mathbf{c_1}$ presents a yellow shade while $\mathbf{c_n}$ presents an orange shade. The subtle point is that the possibility of such cases does not follow from the non-transitivity of matching as defined above. Non-transitivity only says that there can be cases where (i) the content $\mathbf{c_1 = c_n}$ is *not part of the content* of one's experience, even if (ii) for each $i \in [1, n-1]$, the content $\mathbf{c_i = c_{i+1}}$ is part of the content of one's experience. Non-transitivity does not say that there can be cases (i) and (ii) which hold *and* $\mathbf{c_1 = c_n}$ is *false*. We may say that matching is *anti*-transitive iff the stronger claim that there can be such cases is true.[23] Since the paradigm illustrations of non-transitivity are also illustrations of anti-transitivity, it is not very important to distinguish between these properties for most purposes.

It is important to the Deceptive Matching Argument, however, that matching be anti-transitive. In a case of anti-transitivity, it follows from the falsity of $\mathbf{c_1 = c_n}$, and the transitivity of $=$, that it is not the case that each content $i \in [1, n-1]$ $\mathbf{c_i = c_{i+1}}$ is true.

[23] An example of a relation that is neither transitive nor anti-transitive is that of *x*'s manifestly being equivalent with *y*. The relation is not transitive, since there are concepts **A**, **B**, and **C** where **A** manifestly is equivalent with **B**, **B** manifestly is equivalent with **C** but **A** only un-obviously, and so not manifestly, is equivalent with **C**. However, since *x* manifestly is F only if *x* is F, and equivalence is transitive, it is not possible for there to be concepts **A**, **B**, and **C**, where **A** manifestly is equivalent with **B**, **B** manifestly is equivalent with **C**, yet where **A** is not equivalent with **B**. Thus the relation is not anti-transitive. A parallel example is the relation, over singular modes of presentation, of its being apparent that $x = y$. The non-transitivity of these and kindred relations is an obstacle to treating the antecedent of Frege's Principle as giving not only a sufficient but a necessary condition for distinctness of modes of presentation. A manoeuvre à la Goodman's (1951) identity conditions for qualia, or the like, is needed to obtain a necessary condition for distinctness.

Indeed, considering the smoothness of the shift – the apparent lack of any sufficient reason to single out any one content i ∈ [1, n-1] $\mathbf{c_i = c_{i+1}}$ as the false one – one may be inclined to think that most or all of these contents are false. If one takes that view, there is an obvious sense in which matching is deceptive: it tends to posit identity even though there is difference. Indeed, if one takes this view, one may ipso facto worry about our current construal of two things, x_j and x_k , matching (in colour) in terms of experience including a content $\mathbf{c_j = c_k}$. If matching is a pervasive trait of one's experience, and such contents are very often false, our experience is very often non-veridical. Indeed, even what we tend to consider paradigm cases of normal experiences, under humanly optimal conditions, will likely turn out to be non-veridical. For reasons of charity, one may thus shy away from the current construal.

I will thus consider a third, 'non-reductive' construal of matching. Unlike the second construal, this third does not take matching to involve an identity content as strictly a part of the content of experience. Rather, for x_j and x_k, to match in colour for *S* at *t* is for the manners of perception $\mathbf{c_j}$ and $\mathbf{c_k}$ to stand in some primitive relation, *M*. (*M* is, of course, not itself represented in the content of experience.) *M* is simply the relation that makes it the case that *S* at *t* experiences x_j and x_k as the same in colour. To say that matching in colour, for *S* at *t*, is non-transitive, on this third proposal, is to say that there can be a series of patches, x_1, …, x_n, experienced by *S* at *t* such that, for each i ∈ [1, n-1], $M(\mathbf{c_i}, \mathbf{c_{i+1}})$ even though it is not the case that $M(\mathbf{c_1}, \mathbf{c_n})$. To say that matching is *anti*-transitive is to say that there can be such cases where, in addition, $\mathbf{c_1 = c_n}$ is false, i.e. where $\mathbf{c_1}$ and $\mathbf{c_n}$ do not determine the same colour. As above, this means that at least one of the contents $\mathbf{c_i = c_{i+1}}$ (i ∈ [1, n-1]) are false. And again, considerations of

smoothness, and the apparent lack of reason to single out any one content $\mathbf{c_i = c_{i+1}}$, i ∈ [1, n-1], as the culprit, may incline one to think that most or all of these contents are false. This third proposal can, and should, agree with the second proposal that, if $\mathbf{c_j}$ and $\mathbf{c_k}$ stand in *M*, then *in some sense* the content $\mathbf{c_j = c_k}$ is perceptually suggested to the subject. Supposing (as we currently do) that manners of perception can figure as thought contents, the content $\mathbf{c_j = c_k}$ is perceptually suggested at least in the sense that, if the subject judges $\mathbf{c_j = c_k}$, it is rationally explicable in the light of her experience why this judgement should seem compelling to her. Thus, this third proposal can, and should, agree that if matching is anti-transitive, there is something deceptive about matching.

In the following, I will assume that the second or the third proposal appropriate construes matching, as this notion is understood in the Deceptive Matching Argument. Moreover, I will use 'non-transitivitity' interchangeably with 'anti-transitivity' (except where otherwise noted).

3.3.3 The Argument resumed

Our question was why it should be possible for Claire to rationally doubt $\mathbf{w = w}$. As I understand the argument, Peacocke's answer can be put as follows. Let us suppose that $\mathbf{w}$ is a mode of presentation expressible by demonstratives of the form '*that* length'. Claire might reason as follows: 'The question is whether *that* [line] length is *that* [bar] length. I certainly experience them as the same. But (for all I know) matching is non-transitive. And if matching is non-transitive, matching is deceptive. So, to be on the safe side, better suspend judgement about whether *that* [line] length is *that* [bar] length.' In

doing so, Claire rationally doubts whether **w = w**. Thus Recurrence, Non-trans, and F-conceptualism lead to contradiction. Since Recurrence and Non-trans are true, Peacocke argues, F-conceptualism has to be given up.

How should the conceptualist respond to this argument? Non-trans has widely been considered obvious from reflection on our experiences (Goodman 1951, Armstrong 1968, Dummett 1975). At the same time, there is a dissenting tradition dedicated to defending the transitivity of phenomenal matching – a tradition that has recently received some notable contributions (Jackson & Pinkerton 1973; Raffman 2000; Graff 2001). However, on careful inspection of the Deceptive Matching Argument, it turns out that the ultimate truth or otherwise of Non-trans is beside the point. What Peacocke's argument strictly needs is only that it is possible for Claire *to rationally presume* that matching is non-transitive. And this is highly plausible. Even if matching is in fact transitive, it is hard to believe that all the considerable philosophers who have thought otherwise have been guilty of some fairly gross irrationality. So we may set the correctness or otherwise of Non-trans aside for now.

Recurrence may seem less compelling straight off. Why couldn't the conceptualist insist that the content of experience is non-recurrent? Why couldn't she say that what the Deceptive Matching Argument demonstrates, if anything, is that it is not possible for the line and the bar, in Claire's experience, to be presented by just the same mode of presentation, in regards to length?[24] I cannot see that Peacocke gives an answer to this question. However, the conceptualist would be ill advised to take this line. For one

[24] Brewer expressed sympathy with this response to the Deceptive Matching Argument, in conversation Hilary Term, 2004. However, I do not want to suggest that he seriously endorsed it then, much less that he does so now.

thing, Recurrence surely holds for thought content (assuming, of course, that thought contents are indeed structures of modes of presentation). We cannot make sense of the rationality of inferences, among other things, if modes of presentation cannot recur across or within thought contents.[25] Thus if perceptual content is non-recurrent, this is certainly out of spirit with the basic conceptualist idea that perception and thought have the same kind of content. For another thing, if perceptual content is non-recurrent, it seems difficult to account for how perception could be a source of knowledge of the lengths, shapes, colours, or other properties of things as *repeatable features* of these things, shareable and often shared with other things.[26]

3.3.4 Does thought content accord with Frege's Principe?

A more promising response for the conceptualist is to argue as follows. 'Perhaps F-Conceptualism is indeed false, at least on the version of Frege's Principle invoked above. But this is no big worry for the conceptualist, for, on that version, the content of *thought* does not accord with the principle either.' I will now present some putative counterexamples to the principle for thought content.

The first is an ad hominem case. Peacocke (1992: 69), following Campbell (1987), holds that a tactually based demonstrative could be associated with the same mode of presentation as a visually based demonstrative. Their view is roughly this. If one feels and sees a certain surface, one can validly reason as follows

(1) That [felt] surface is warm.

(2) That [seen] surface is red.

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[25] Again, see Campbell (1987) for a fine discussion of this point. This paper by Campbell is relevant to several issues raised by the Deceptive Matching Argument.

[26] I gave an argument to this effect in my presentation to the 2004 Joint Session Conference (Open Sessions), 'Generality in Perception'.

∴ There is some surface that is both red and warm.

This inference has the form (A), not the form (B):

(A) (1) Hesperus is a heavenly body visible in the evening.

(2) Hesperus is a planet.

∴ Some heavenly body is both a planet and visible in the evening.

(B) (1) Hesperus is a heavenly body visible in the evening.

(2) Phosphorus is a planet.

∴ Some heavenly body is both a planet and visible in the evening.

(B), unlike (A), is not valid as it stands. We may bring out the difference by considering two expansions

(A´) (1) Hesperus is a heavenly body visible in the evening.

(2) Hesperus is a planet.

(3) Hesperus is Hesperus.

∴ Some heavenly body is both a planet and visible in the evening.

(B´) (1) Hesperus is a heavenly body visible in the evening.

(2) Phosphorus is a planet.

(3) Hesperus is Phosphorus.

∴ Some heavenly body is both a planet and visible in the evening.

Here the third premise is redundant to the validity of (A´) but non-redundant to the validity of (B´). Similarly, the identity premise:

(3) That [felt] surface is that [seen] surface.

is redundant to the validity of the demonstrative inference. This redundancy is the inferential expression of the sameness of mode of presentation. This is Campbell's (1987) view, and Peacocke (1992) seems to endorse it.

However, reasoning analogous to that which led Claire to suspend judgement whether *that* [line] length is *that* [bar] length, may lead a subject to suspend judgement over (3). In effect, Claire worried that, for all she knows, her experience of the lengths as equal is deceptive. Analogously, a subject entertaining (3) may worry that, for all she knows, her tactual system has been cleverly manipulated by some remote computer system, wirelessly interacting with her tactile centres. For that reason she might suspend judgement over (3). That would contradict the claim that (3) expresses a content of a Recurrent form, given Frege's Principle.

Second, suppose that many of my peers have a tendency to confuse a US (liquid) gallon (= 3.785 411 784 litres) with an Imperial gallon (= 4.546 09 litres). This leads them to reason fallaciously, for example as follows:

(1) A [US] gallon is less than four litres.

(2) John's car can drive from here to Slough on an [Imperial] gallon.

∴ John's car can drive from here to Slough on less than four litres.

We may suppose that (1) and (2) represent knowledge acquired from testimony. In drawing this inference, the subject trades on the (falsely presumed) equivalence of [US] gallons and [Imperial] gallons.[27] Now suppose that I come to suspect that many of my peers are in the grip of some confusion over gallons. I then realise that I have no reason to think that I am any less muddled about gallons than my peers. As it happens, however, I only have one notion of gallons (the US one, say). When I entertain the thought **gallons are gallons**, where this thought in fact is of the Recurrent form, I shy away from judging it true, worrying that I might, in doing so, be wrongly conflating two categories. If Frege's Principle held for the content of my thought, this means, contrary to assumption, that my thought does not have a Recurrent form.

Third, take a paradigm case of externalist determination of thought content.[28] Let's say that one of my peers has, unbeknownst to herself, been moved from Earth to Twin Earth. At some stage after the move, the element in my peer's cognitive economy that picked out water no longer picks out water but XYZ. Thus there is a last point in time, *t*, after the move, at which that cognitive element picks out water. Now suppose that just around that critical time *t*, my peer essays to judge true a certain content, **P**. In this purported judgement, she does just what, prior to her move from Earth, would have constituted her judging true **water is water**. If this attempt overlaps with or coincides with *t* it seems possible that she thereby fails to make a true judgement, either because she judges a falsehood or because she fails to grasp any coherent content. Now suppose that I hold myself to high cognitive standards, and would rather suspend judgement than

[27] Campbell (1987) argues that sameness of sense goes together with the entitlement to 'trade on the identity' of the object thought about under one and the same sense. Trading on identity is something one is entitled to do in inference (A), in the last example, but not inference (B). In the case of the present fallacies, we have something that is functionally and phenomenally like trading on identity, without the entitlement.

[28] The case to follow is based on Putnam's (1975) famous scenario. A scenario involving social externalist determination of content, á la Burge (1979), could be invoked instead.

be embroiled in un-truth (false or incoherent content). I also worry that I cannot distinguish my situation from my peer's case – although in fact I have not been moved. Thus when I entertain the content **water is water**, I suspend judgment, and do so minimally rationally. Again, if Frege's Principle held for the content of my thought, this should be impossible.

I can anticipate three types of response a nonconceptualist may make at this point. The first response insists that at least two of our cases above involve thinkers who have less than full mastery or grasp of certain key modes of presentation (**[US] gallon**, **[Imperial] gallon**, or **water**), perhaps because of a less than complete understanding of certain correlated terms (i.e. '[US] gallon', '[Imperial] gallon', 'water'). The defender of Peacocke may point out that, when use is made of Frege's Principle, there has to be a tacit presumption that the subject has full grasp of the modes of presentation involved. This was not made explicit in the statement of the principle above. Thus a corrected version should go:

Frege's Principle v.1

If it is possible for a thinker to be such that

(i) she rationally doubts the thought **a = b**,

(ii) she has full grasp of the modes of presentations **a** and **b**

then **a** is not the same mode of presentation as **b**.

The suggestion is that when this correction is kept in mind, the cases above would be seen to be in accord with Frege's Principe (v.1). However, if having full grasp of modes of presentation entails that one has the power to discriminate one's actual situation from

the situation of someone who confuses [US] gallons with [Imperial] gallons, or from the situation of our Twin-Earth transportee, it is highly doubtful whether any ordinary thinkers have full grasp of modes of presentation. Perhaps the appeal is made that certain *extra-ordinary* thinkers have a full grasp, complete with this power. But then perhaps such an extra-ordinary thinker, if she were in the position of our Claire, looking at the line and the bar, would be able to distinguish her condition from that in which two objects x_j and x_k match in length even though the content $\mathbf{w_j = w_k}$ is false. In that case, the distinction between thought content and perceptual content would still be lost.

A second possible response is that our examples of thought content violating Frege's Principle trade on externalist determination of thought content, either explicitly or implicitly. By contrast to this, the Deceptive Matching Argument does not trade on such content externalist considerations. Thus, if we can neutralise the content externalist considerations, by distinguishing a level of narrow content immune to them, the argument still establishes a difference between perceptual content and thought content at this level of *narrow* content.

There are at least three problems with this response. First, it is not available to Peacocke or anyone else not attracted to narrow content.[29] Second, it is not clear that content externalist considerations are any more important for our first, cross-modal case, than it is for Claire's scenario. Third, examples of apparent violation of Frege's Principle for thought content can be given that do not turn on content externalist considerations. Consider the possibility of 'a priori gas'. [30] On exposure to a priori gas, propositions not

[29] For Peacocke on broad and narrow content, see Peacocke 1997.
[30] I owe the notion of a priori gas to John Hawthorne, who used it in his lectures at Oxford, Trinity Term 2005.

ordinarily considered obvious, or even true, acquire the same phenomenology of obviousness as propositions considered paradigm examples of obvious truths. Under the influence of a priori gas, the thought that Hesperus is Mars, say, has as compelling a phenomenology of obviousness as the thought that Hesperus is Hesperus. (It is not detectable to the affected thinker that she is under the influence of a priori gas.) Suppose that I am worrying that I am, for all I know, under the influence of a priori gas. Then, when entertaining the thought **Hesperus is Hesperus** I may apparently coherently suspend judgement on its truth, worrying that, even if the thought seems obviously true to me, false thoughts would seem as obviously true to me if I were under the influence of a priori gas.[31]

3.3.5 Frege's Principle revised, the Deceptive Matching Argument revived

The third and most powerful nonconceptualist response I can see in effect concedes that thought content does not meet traditional versions of Frege's Principle. However, it proposes a revision of that principle, and puts forward a revived version of the Deceptive Matching Argument in terms of that revised principle.

The key idea underlying this revision is the notion of the *remoteness*, from the actual world, of the deceptive possibility in our various examples. In Claire's case, the deceptive possibility is that the content of her experience includes a manner of perception $\mathbf{w_l}$ of the length of the line, and a manner of perception $\mathbf{w_b}$ of the length of the bar, on which $\mathbf{w_l = w_b}$ is false, even though the line and the bar match in length

[31] In section 3.2 we gave the following intuitive formulation of the Fregean view of thought content: if an object or property is presented in the same mode, twice over, in thought, the sameness of the object or property thus presented has to be apparent to the subject. All four examples discussed above are consistent with this intuitive formulation, since it can be apparent to a thinker that A even thought the thinker suspends judgement that A. For example, if I am in the grip of some fallacious sceptical argument, I may suspend judgement that I have hands even though it is apparent to me that I have hands.

(are experienced as the same in length. This deceptive possibility could very easily be actual. In the cross-modal case, the deceptive possibility is that one's tactile (or alternatively one's visual) system has been cleverly manipulated in some undetectable way. In the **gallons** case, the possibility is that one confuses the notion in question with a distinct notion. In the **water** case, that one currently and undetectably undergoes an externalistically induced shifting in the contents of the thoughts one essays to entertain. In the apriori gas case, that one is under the influence of a priori gas. The key idea is that this deceptive possibility may be less or more remote from the actual circumstances the thinker is in when she entertains the target thoughts.

This difference of remoteness in modal space correlates with a difference in the reliability of the method one would use in judging true a content **F=F**, if one did judge it true upon entertaining it in thought. As so often, the proper specification of this method raises delicate issues.[32] But the following may do for present purposes. There is a relatively generic mental condition that is shared in two dimensions. On the one hand, it is shared across the thinkers we have described (Claire, and the four cases above) in their actual circumstances. On the other hand, it is shared across each of these thinkers, in their actual circumstances, and a modal counterpart thinker that occupies the correlated deceptive possibility. Thus it is common to me, entertaining the thought **water is water**; to my transported peer, essaying to entertain and judge true the content **water is water**; to Claire, entertaining the perceptual content **l is w; b is w**; to Claire's modal counterpart, 'Misled-Claire', entertaining the perceptual content $\mathbf{l\ is\ w_l; b\ is\ w_b}$ on which the line and the bar 'match in length' even though $\mathbf{w_l = w_b}$ is

[32] For a general discussion of the problem of correctly specifying methods, see Pollock and Cruz (1999: 116-119).

false; and to the other described thinkers. One characterisation of this shared, generic mental condition is that it is one that is subjectively indiscriminable from a condition in which a content **a is a** is presented as evident to the subject. There may or may not be a more fundamental characterisation of this shared condition. In any event, we may call the condition one of 'apparently trivial identity'. We can then specify a method whereupon one moves from being in a condition of apparently trivial identity to endorsing that identity in judgement. Call this the BAT ('by what appears trivial') method. What is in question is not whether BAT is reliable or unreliable *tout court*, but whether it is reliable relative to a content **P** and an actual context in which it is exercised. [33]

The nonconceptualist proposes that we make Frege's Principle sensitive to the reliability of BAT. She suggests the following revision:

Revised Frege Principle

If it is possible for a thinker to be such that

(i) she rationally doubts the thought **a = b**

(ii) she has full grasp of modes of presentation **a** and **b**,

(iii) in doubting the thought **a = b** she does not fail to exercise a BAT method that is available to her relative to **a = b**, and that is reliable relative to **a = b** and the context in which she doubts **a = b**.[34]

then **a** is not the same mode of presentation as **b**.

[33] I am assuming that un-truth – the failure of a purported judgement that A to be a judgement of any coherent content – is as bad for reliability as falsity. If we do not make this assumption, it will be too easy for methods in which certain object-dependent contents are judged true to count as reliable. (I am indebted to John Hawthorne for stressing this assumption.)

[34] Condition (iii) introduces an *epistemically* externalist element into the individuation of Fregean thought content. If the individuation of Fregean content can be sensitive to *content* externalist factors, like object-dependency and Twin Earth-style contrasts, as most neo-Fregeans have argued, it is perhaps not a huge step to make the individuation sensitive to epistemically externalist factors.

To say that a BAT method is available to a subject, relative to a content, is to say that she is in a condition of apparently trivial identity, relative to that content. We may say that, if the negation of (iii) holds for a thinker, i.e. if she doubts **a=b** and in doing so fails to exercise a BAT method that is both available and reliable, she *sceptically* doubts **a = b**. (I take sceptical doubts to be rational doubts, and so that the falsity of (iii) presupposes the truth of (i), since only minimal rationality can be in question in (i).)

The Revived Deceptive Matching Argument (the Revived Argument, for short) seeks to show that thought content accords with the Revised Frege Principle whereas perceptual content violates it; in particular, that perceptual content violates it thanks to the unreliable or deceptive nature of matching. Let us briefly consider how our counterexamples to the non-revised Frege's Principle fit with the principle. In each example, the target content **a = b**, on which the thinker suspends judgement, by supposition is of the form **a = a**, i.e. **a** is the same mode of presentation as **b**. For this to be consistent with the Revised Frege Principle, either the thinker must sceptically doubt **a = b** or she must lack full grasp of the modes of presentation. In the a priori gas case, it is justified to treat the doubt as sceptical. Although BAT would be unreliable if we were in a priori gas country, we are in fact far in modal space from that land. The cross-modal case also involves a paradigmatic sceptical doubt, insofar as it is a rather remote possibility that our sensory systems have been undetectably manipulated in the relevant ways. Externalistically induced shifts in thought content may be more common. Still, it arguably remains a remote possibility that such a shift should be so unfortunately timed as that suffered by my peer transported to Twin Earth.

What about the case where I doubt whether to endorse the thought that [US] gallons are [US] gallons, worrying that I cannot distinguish my condition from that of my confused peers? Someone might argue that this is *not* a sceptical doubt. If the noted confusion is common in my speech community, and I am in many relevant respects like the confused speakers, then is it not a *real* or *serious* possibility that I am likewise confused? I am not convinced that the quite serious confusions that are in question here – including that one would falsely judge that [US] gallons are [Imperial] gallons, when one purports to judge a triviality – are at all close possibilities.[35] Even if they are, however, one could argue that they are close possibilities only for someone who has a less than full grasp on the target notion of **gallon**. Suppose that I consulted a dictionary, say, and got a clear idea about the different notions of gallons out there. Surely it would then be a much more remote possibility that I got embroiled in the noted serious confusions. So a case can be made that, even in the **gallons** case, the thinker either sceptically doubts the target content, or lacks full understanding of the key

Claire's case does not fit this pattern, or so the Revived Argument contends. If matching is non-transitive, her doubt is not sceptical, as the BAT method available to her leads to falsity in the close possibility occupied by Misled-Claire. Nor is it justified to appeal to the claim that Claire lacks a full grasp of the manner of perception **w**. For this claim is plausible only if Claire (who we may take to be a normal or even a skilled perceiver) could relevantly *improve* her grasp of the manners of perception. Yet is hard to see how Claire could do so. In any case, even if Claire could somehow improve her grasp of the manner of perception, it is hard to see how this should make the deceptive possibility

[35] Indeed, I am not committed to the claim that they are so much as metaphysical possibilities. If we take the term 'remote possibilities' to include *im*possibilities, we can still maintain that they are remote possibilities. Even if it is an impossibility, it need not be obvious to a thinker that it is, and that is all that is needed for the case to be a counterexample to the non-revised Frege's Principle. Similar remarks apply to our three other cases.

occupied by Misled-Claire more remote. This, it seems, is a disanalogy between her and the subject who easily could have been confused about gallons, but makes this possibility more remote by consulting a dictionary. So all three sub-clauses of the sufficient condition for distinctness of modes of presentation are fulfilled. Claire's perceptual content, then, does not have the Recurrent form, contrary to assumption. The Revived Argument concludes that contrast between the individuation conditions of thought content and of perceptual content remains.

3.3.6 A final assessment

A conceptualist needs to consider three questions at this point. First, is the Revised Frege Principle really a substantive and correct principle of individuation of thought content? Second, if so, does perceptual content really violate it? Third, if the answer to both questions is affirmative, does this amount to complete defeat for the conceptualist?

On the first question, there is a worry of circularity. The Revised Frege Principle crucially relies on the notion of the BAT method, which in turn relies on the notion of a condition of apparently trivial identity. One question is whether this condition can be adequately specified without mentioning that the content, relative to which one is in the condition, has the form **a = a**. In that case, in order to decide whether condition (iii) of the principle is satisfied, one must decide whether **a** is the same mode of presentation as **b**, and the principle becomes circular. The 'disjunctivist' specification of the condition given above, in terms of subjective indiscriminability, is not quite so trivial: one may decide whether someone is in a condition so specified without deciding whether the target content in fact has the form **a = a**. However, the specification still appeals to a prior idea of a content having that form, since it specifies the condition as one that is subjectively indiscriminable from one in which a content **a = a** is presented as obvious.

So, on this specification, it remains that identity and distinctness for at least some modes of presentation have to be taken to be settled prior to the application of the Principle. The principle would not, then, be a complete principle of individuation for modes of presentation.[36] Perhaps there is an alternative or more fundamental specification of the condition of apparently trivial identity that avoids these problems of circularity? I leave this as an interesting question for future consideration. Even if circularity could be avoided, there is still a lurking suspicion that the move from Frege's Principle to the Revised Frege Principle is like the many Gettier-motivated revisions to the Justified True Belief analysis of knowledge, offering epicycles that prove inadequate and failing to cast light on the notion they purport to illuminate. Assessing this suspicion I also leave for later. I thus take the claim, then, that the Revised Frege Principle is a substantive and correct principle of individuation of thought content to have the status of a bold research hypothesis, subject to important challenges but not obviously a dead end.

On the second question, we should underscore a difference between the original Deceptive Matching Argument and the Revived version. Whereas the actual correctness of Non-trans was seen to be immaterial to the former, it is crucial to the latter. If matching is in fact transitive, no reason has been given to say that BAT is unreliable in Claire's case. Indeed, if matching is not *anti*-transitive, no reason has been given to say that BAT is unreliable in her case, as the assumption of anti-transitivity was essential to the arguments for the deceptive character of matching in section 3.3.2 above. This opens up room for the conceptualist to argue that perceptual content does accord with

[36] One might point out that, even disregarding the problems noted in this paragraph, none of the versions of Frege's Principle discussed here are so much as candidates for being complete principles of individuation for thought content, since they only give a sufficient, not a necessary, condition for distinctness. This point is fair, however it does not make the putative circularity of the sufficient condition for distinctness, on the current way of specifying the condition of apparent triviality, any less problematic.

the Revised Frege Principle by arguing that matching is not in fact anti-transitive. It should be acknowledged straight away that this is an option that should not be taken lightly. To do so pits one against some intuitions that must be quite powerful, as a great many theorists have been persuaded by them. Furthermore, if this is the only way of squaring perceptual content with the Revised Frege Principle (and supposing that thought is indeed in accord with that Principle), the conceptualist suffers a prima facie dialectical drawback against the nonconceptualist. Where the nonconceptualist is allowed the luxury of neutrality on the issue of non-transitivity, the conceptualist has to take sides. Still, I am not convinced that the conceptualist could not cope with this challenge and this drawback. As noted, there have recently been some noteworthy contributions to the (minority) tradition upholding the transitivity of phenomenal matching (Raffman 2000, Graff 2001). There is no space in this thesis to go into the many delicate questions raised by the transitivity or otherwise of such relations as looking the same, matching, being perceptually indiscriminable from, and so on. Indeed, even explaining in outline how the claim of transitivity might not fly in the face of the obvious would take us too far a field here. I will rest content with identifying it as an option that the conceptualist might want to pursue further, if indeed thought is in accordance with the Revised Frege Principle.

I will end with some very brief remarks on the third question: what would it signify for the conceptualist if thought content indeed did, and perceptual content indeed did not, accord with the Revised Frege Principle? It would certainly require a measure of concession to the nonconceptualist. Yet someone might still feel that the contrast between thought and perception thus drawn rests on a number of contingencies. Such a theorist might be tempted to react as follows: 'It is merely contingent that there is not

more a priori gas around, or that externalist shifts in thought content are not more common, or that there are not more conceptually confused speakers in one's community. Thus it is merely contingent that thought content accords with the Revised Frege Principle. Conversely, it would seem that there is a biologically possible creature, otherwise pretty much like us, for whom phenomenal matching is transitive. Thus it would seem that it is medically possible for us to change our perceptual system so as to make it like the one of that creature. Thus it is merely contingent that perceptual content fails to accord with the Revised Frege Principle.' Again, this reaction raises important questions worthy of further consideration, which, however, I have to leave for another occasion. For now, I will simply point out that, even if the remark is right, it does not obviously favour either side in the debate between conceptualists and nonconceptualists. Both sides in that debate have tended to put forward their view as a necessary truth about perception (at least relative to the possibility of thought). If the current reaction is right, perhaps both sides have overreached in this respect; perhaps content congruence is merely contingently true or contingently false.

The overall conclusion is this. The original Deceptive Matching Argument does not refute content congruence, since the exceptions to Frege's Principle it posits for perceptual content are matched by analogous exceptions to that Principle for thought content. The Revived Deceptive Matching Argument interestingly revives the objection to content congruence. However, as it stands, the case is clearly incomplete, pending, among other things, an adequate specification on the condition of apparently trivial identity. Moreover, the conceptualist may have a way out in arguing for the transitivity of matching.

4

Experience in Intentional Explanation

Sarah believes that there is a pink square note on the desk before her. Sarah has this belief because that is how things look to her: she has the belief because she has a visual experience as of a pink square note on the desk before her. In saying this, we purport to give some sort of psychological explanation of Sarah's belief in terms of her visual experience. Specifically, we purport to offer an *intentional* explanation of her belief in terms of her experience. In this chapter, I shall argue that this role of perceptual experience in intentional explanation gives reason to affirm content congruence – the claim that the content of a perceptual experience is the content of a thought that a reflective subject can think if she has the experience.

4.1 Experience and Intentional Explanation

An intentional explanation explains an act or state with intentional content – Sarah's belief that there is a pink note on the desk, say – in terms of another act or state with intentional content – her experience as of there being a pink note on the desk before her. Moreover, it is not accidental that the explanation mentions states with content. The status of the explanation as explanatory – as making something intelligible, as explanations are supposed to do – depends on there being a suitable relation between the contents of the explaining states or acts and the content of the explained state or act. Intentional explanation is thus *essentially content-sensitive* explanation.

Examples like the case of Sarah above are of course legion. We apply them to ourselves as much as to others. Thus when I become appraised of the misleading character of the Mueller-Lyer illusion, I may say 'I believed that the lines were unequally long because they looked unequally long – as they indeed still do!' Moreover, there is good reason to think that we rightfully assign such an explanatory role to experience – at least if we rightfully affirm weak intentionalism (the claim that experiences have intentional content). Everyone can agree that the justification for recognising other types of intentional states, such as beliefs and desires, hopes and fears, at least in part depends on the role these have in intentional explanation. If perceptual experiences cannot figure in such explanation, it calls into question the justification for recognising them as contentful states in the first place. In particular, we should allow experiences a role in the intentional explanation of observational beliefs, since, if experiences cannot play such a role, it is hard to see how one could motivate the claim that they figure in the intentional explanation of any other states or acts.[1]

4.1.1 Intentional explanation and rational explanation

A paradigm example of an intentional explanation is the explanation of John's opening the fridge in terms of his wanting some beer and believing that there is beer in the fridge. This account is at the same time a *rational* explanation: it exhibits John's act as a rational thing to do, given the wider mental condition that constitutes his point of view. The intentional explanation of Sarah's belief in terms of her experience shares this feature. It is also justly regarded as a rational explanation. Indeed, it seems that all paradigm cases of intentional explanation are cases of rational explanation and vice

[1] I owe this observation to Martin (1993).

versa. It is an interesting question how the categories of intentional and rational explanation relate more precisely, but we do not need to settle this question here. [2]

I note this connection between intentional and rational explanation, and the apparent role of experience in the latter, since the appeal to the rational role of experience has loomed large in influential arguments for conceptualism – including, but not limited to, arguments for content congruence. Thus McDowell (1994) and Brewer (1999) argue that experiences figure in a certain type of 'full-blown' rational explanation of belief, in the sense that they provide reasons, from the subject's point of view, for observational beliefs. They argue moreover that experience can do so only if it has conceptual content. I will not here evaluate McDowell's or Brewer's arguments, nor consider the nonconceptualist replies that have been offered to them (Heck 2000, Peacocke 2001b) or the most recent conceptualist rejoinders (Brewer 2005). Rather, I will put forward a line of argument that concurs with McDowell's and Brewer's in so far as it appeals to the broadly rational-cum-intentional explanatory role of experience as favouring content congruence. It differs from their arguments, however, both in the underlying constraint it appeals to and in several points of detail.[3]

4.2 The Argument from Covering Law

The argument I will consider is the following (I will refer to it as the 'argument from covering law'):

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[2] Unless 'rational' is very strongly diluted, it is dubious that all intentional explanations are rational explanations. Explanations of belief as manifestations of wishful thinking and paradigmatic Freudian explanation seem to be counterexamples. It is perhaps more plausible that all rational explanations are intentional explanation, although a defence of this claim would have to deal somehow with explanation of actions or attitudes in terms of 'external reasons'.

[3] In section 2.2 we argued that the rational explanatory role of reports of the form 'X looks F to S' supports the claim that these reports are hyperintensional, if belief reports are. The argument of the present chapter can be used to bolster that argument, which is not surprising since the type of explanation discussed here is both intentional and rational.

> Perceptual experiences are rightfully mentioned in intentional explanations of empirical beliefs. Thus Sarah's belief that there is a pink square note on the desk in front of her can be explained in terms of her having a visual experience as of a pink square note on the desk in front of her. The correctness of such an intentional explanation presumes that there is a non-trivial, non-vacuous law linking the enjoyment of a perceptual experience, having a certain content, with the acquisition of an empirical belief, having a correlated content. From the point of view of content congruence, we can see how a plausible candidate for such a law could be formulated. From the point of view of content nonconceptualism, it is hard to see how a plausible candidate for such a law could be formulated. This gives at least a prima facie reason to prefer content congruence.

In this rest of this section, I explain and motivate the claims and moves of this argument.

4.2.1 Explanation and laws

The basic claim of the argument is that perceptual experiences are mentioned as such in correct intentional explanations of empirical beliefs, viz. of beliefs about the mind-independent world based on perception. We defended this basic claim in the previous section.

The next step of the argument has it that a correct intentional explanation of empirical beliefs in terms (in part) of experience depends on there being a non-trivial law linking the belief with the experience. This point generalises to the relation between experiences and beliefs, a claim Fodor has stressed about the relation between beliefs,

desires and intentional actions. Fodor discusses a case from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, viz. Hermina's (as it turns out false) prediction that Demetrius has attempted to do away with Lysander. Although Fodor talks about prediction in this context, he clearly takes the point to extend to explanation. He writes:

> I suggested that [Hermina] must be relying crucially on some such causal generalisation as: 'If x wants that P, and believes that $\neg P$ unless Q, and x believes that it is in his power to bring it about that Q, then ceteris paribus x tries to bring it about that Q.' Common sense seems pretty clearly to hold that something like that is true and counterfactual-supporting; hence that one has explained x's attempt to bring it about that Q if one shows that x had beliefs and desires of the sort that the generalisation specifies. (Fodor 1987: 13)

This requirement that correct intentional explanations be underwritten by lawful intentional generalisations can be motivated in slightly different ways. An idea that will underlie most or all of these motivations is that the intentional explanation of empirical belief in terms of experience is an explanation of why something happens (why Sarah comes to believe that there's a pink note before her) or why something is the case (why Sarah believes that there is a pink note before her).[4] Now, to explain why something happens, Hempel (1965) argued, is to show why it, rather than something else, was to be expected.[5] This presumes giving a (deductively or inductively) sound *argument* for the claim that the event to be explained happened. The soundness of the argument in turn requires some generalisation linking the particular factors mentioned in the explanation (the particular experiences mentioned in our case) with the event to be explained. For the explanation to be a causal explanation, the generalisation in question

[4] I will ignore the distinction between explaining why something happens and why something is the case henceforth (if indeed there is a distinction here at all).

[5] This formulation notoriously encounters problems about statistical explanations (Woodward 2003), but since the explanations under discussion here are not statistical, we can set these aside.

must be lawful and non-trivial. A closely related line of argument for the requirement similarly emphasises that intentional explanation is a case of causal explanation, and makes the case that the F-ness of x caused the G-ness of y only if the F-ness of x is nomologically sufficient, at least ceteris paribus, for the G-ness of y.[6]

Obviously the precise role of laws in explanation of why something happens is a large and controversial question. Some objections to their place in intentional explanation in particular will be considered below. For now, I will hope many can agree, for one reason or another, that lawful generalisations *do* have a role in causal explanation. I will, however, stress three points. First, I am not committed to the idea that subsumption under laws is sufficient for explanation, nor that the notion of laws can be elucidated in non-modal terms; thus I am not endorsing the classical D-N model of explanation. Second, I do not presume that the law underwriting intentional explanation must be strict or exceptionless. If (as I will assume) ceteris paribus laws are bona fide laws, having a rightful and indispensable role in explanations in the special sciences or other serious contexts, nothing prevents the law linking experience with belief from being a ceteris paribus law.[7] Indeed, the law in question plausibly has such a ceteris paribus character. Third, it might be pointed out that ordinary reflective subjects, competent in giving intentional explanations of actions and beliefs, are not capable of formulating the laws allegedly underwriting the correctness of the explanations in question. If this is so – a matter on which I am neutral – it is no *special* problem for the role of laws in intentional explanation. Even for many everyday non-intentional explanations of why things happen, ordinary reflective subjects may not be able to spell out the laws that

[6] Fodor 1990: ch. 5 gives this argument.
[7] For a defence of the substantiveness of ceteris paribus laws, see Pietrowski & Rey (1995).

underwrite the explanations they give. Perhaps this is a *general* problem for the place of laws in explanation; I will suppose, however, that this general issue can be dealt with.

4.2.2 Formulating a law

The believer in content congruence – let's just call her the 'conceptualist' for present purposes – holds that the content of a perceptual experience is the content of a thought that a reflective subject is in a position to think if she has the experience. The content nonconceptualist denies this claim, positing a difference in kind between the content of experience and the content of thought.[8] Now, what we are looking for is a law underwriting intentional explanation of empirical beliefs in terms of perceptual experience, a law of observational belief acquisition. The conceptualist may propose the following as at least a rough approximation to such a law:

The Conceptualist Law

For any reflective subject *S*, for any content *p*, *if*

(i) *S* has an experience with the content *p*,

(ii) *S* is interested in whether *p*,

(iii) *S* does not believe that there is anything abnormal about the conditions of perception, and

(iv) other things are equal

then S believes *p*.

[8] In section 1.4.1 above, we recognised a possible need for a minor and superficial revision of this way of putting the contrast, viz. the revision involving the idea that a perceptual experience either is partitionable into parts each of which has content, or has a content partitionable into parts each of which is a content. We observed that content nonconceptualist is no less committed to this idea than the conceptualist, since the former is no less committed to the claim the content of experience is intelligible and reportable than the latter. For present purposes the details of the superficial revisions that the 'partitioning idea' introduces does not matter. What should be kept in mind is that, when I say that a perceptual experience *e* has a content *p*, I am neutral on whether *p* is the total content of *e* or a part-content of *e* (a part of *p* or a content of a part-experience of *e*).

The Conceptualist Law could be combined with statements of initial conditions to yield an explicit intentional explanation of, say, Sarah's belief that there is a pink square note in front of her. Of course, the formulation given is likely to need various refinements. For example, we might need to introduce a qualification about *S*'s background beliefs (say to the effect that *S* is not antecedently inclined to disbelieve *p*), or about what occupies *S*'s attention (say to the effect that *S* is not distracted in certain ways). However, what is important for present purposes is the difference between the law the conceptualist can propose and the law the *non*conceptualist can propose. The further refinements just noted (and many like them) are orthogonal to this difference.

The nonconceptualist cannot appeal to the Conceptualist Law as what underwrites intentional explanation of belief. From her point of view, a content believed true, or in the truth of which one takes an interest, is ipso facto not a content of experience.[9] There is no content *p* for which conditions (i) and (ii) of the Conceptualist Law are jointly true, and so the law is vacuous. If one removes condition (ii) from the antecedent, the problem becomes falsity rather than vacuity, since there will be many contents *p* (viz. nonconceptual perceptual contents) for which the antecedent is true but the consequent false, since one cannot believe those contents.

It is pretty clear what form of revision the nonconceptualist needs to make to the Conceptualist Law: the distinction between perceptual contents (P-contents) and thought contents (T-contents) somehow has to be built into the law. A zeroth pass at how to do so might be as follows:

[9] As Frege (1918) emphasised, the move from wondering whether something is so to judging that it is so does not introduce a new content.

Zeroth Nonconceptualist Law

For any reflective subject *S*, for any P-content *p*, *if*

(i) *sS* has an experience with the content *p*,

(ii) *S* does not believe that there is anything abnormal about the conditions of perception, and

(iii) other things are equal

then there is a T-content *q* such that, if S is interested in whether *q*, *S* believes *q*.

The problem with this law is that it cannot be used to explain why a subject believes one proposition – that there is a red cube before her, say – on the basis of experience rather than any other. Yet this is surely one thing we require of an explanation of belief. The nonconceptualist needs something better. The best form of proposal a nonconceptualist can make, it seems to me, is the following

The Nonconceptualist Law

For any reflective subject *S*, for any P-content *p*, for any T-content *q*, *if*

(i) *S* has an experience with the content *p*,

(ii) *q* is a conceptualisation of *p*,

(iii) *S* is interested in whether *q*,

(iv) *S* does not believe that there is anything abnormal about the conditions of perception, and

(v) other things are equal

then S believes *q*.

This Law raises the question, of course, just what it is for a thought content *q* to be a conceptualisation of a perceptual content *p*. I will now consider some answers the nonconceptualist may return to this question. I will argue that these answers make the Nonconceptualist Law either false or trivial.

4.2.3 Characterising the relation of conceptualisation

One simple answer to the question of when an arbitrary thought content *q* is a conceptualisation of an arbitrary perceptual content *p* is the following:

> **A.1** *q* is a conceptualisation of *p* iff *q* is true in exactly the same possible worlds as *p*.

Note that a nonconceptualist who gives A.1 must take it that *q* and *p* can be distinct even if true in exactly the same possible worlds. Otherwise either the Nonconceptualist Law would be vacuous (since no T-content is a conceptualisation of a P-content) or the nonconceptualist thesis that the content of experience is distinct from the content of a belief based on it is false. Answer A.1 implies myriad counter-instances to the Nonconceptualist Law. For example, let *p* be the content of an experience as of a patch as being round, and let *q* be the content of the thought that the patch is round and arithmetic is incomplete. These contents are true in exactly the same possible worlds. Suppose that Goedel has an experience with content *p* in the time before he has figured out his famous proof. Suppose, moreover, that Goedel at that time is acutely interested in whether arithmetic is incomplete. He is also happens to be interested in whether the patch in front of him is round; we can thus stipulate that he is interested in whether *q*. He does not believe that the conditions of perception are abnormal, and there seems to

be no good reason for invoking the ceteris paribus clause.[10] Yet Goedel does not yet believe *q*. He does not take his experience of the patch to make it reasonable for him to infer that arithmetic is incomplete.

A second answer defines conceptualisation in terms of a slightly stronger relation

A.2 *q* is a conceptualisation of *p* iff *q* determines the same Russellian proposition as *p*.

Again, a nonconceptualist who gives A.2 is committed to thinking that *q* and *p* can be distinct even if they determine the same Russellian proposition. Otherwise either the Nonconceptualist Law is vacuous (since no T-content is a conceptualisation of a P-content) or the nonconceptualist thesis that the content of experience is distinct from the content of a belief based on it is false. Thus, if *p* is a conceptualisation of *q*, it cannot be that both *q* and *p* are Russellian propositions. Either *q* or *p* has to be a structured proposition in which modes of presentations of objects, properties or functions make up the constituents. These modes of presentation *determine* the object, or property, or function that they are modes of presentation *of*. (A Russellian content trivially determines itself.) On the Tye-Type View, if *q* is a conceptualisation of *p*, *p* is a Russellian proposition while *q* is a Fregean content that determines it. On the Two-Mode View, if *q* is a conceptualisation of *p*, both *p* and *q* are structures of modes of

[10] Pietrowski and Rey (1995) argue that appeal to ceteris paribus clauses to rescue a law that would otherwise be subject to a counter-instance is justified when the apparent counter-instance results from independent interference on the system described by the law in question: thus meteor impacts are independent interferences on the systems described by evolutionary or economical laws. Nothing like this seems to be involved.

presentation (on Peacocke's narrower use of the term 'modes of presentation', only *q* is composed of modes of presentation: *p* is composed of 'manners of perception').[11]

Answer A.2 again implies that the Nonconceptualist Law is subject to various counter-instances. Let us suppose, with Tye, that the type-physicalist account of colour is correct, on which colours are types of surface spectral reflectances.[12] In particular, yellow is SSR_y. Let *p* be the content of an experience of a certain patch as being yellow, and let *q* be the content of a thought that the patch is SSR_y. I am supposing that 'SSR_y' is a unitary theoretical term, like 'gravity', lacking internal semantic structure. Unlike 'yellow', 'SSR_y' is paradigmatically introduced in terms of the optical theory of light reflectance, yet it does not have the same sense as a complex structured description couched in terms of that theory.[13] Thus *p* determines the same Russellian proposition as *q*. Still there could be a subject, Sue, who has been introduced to surface reflectance profiles in general and SSR_y in particular, but does not yet have any suspicion that these have anything to do with colours. Sue at a certain moment has an experience with *p* and happens to be interested in whether the patch in front of her has SSR_y. She is not doubting the reliability of her perception, and there are no interfering factors that would justify invoking the ceteris paribus condition. But she does not believe that the patch is SSR_y. Another counter-instance can be given in terms of modes of presentation of shapes introduced in terms of fancy geometrical descriptions. Suppose Sue has been introduced to the notion **geospherical** in terms of the definition of it as a closed 3-D

[11] The Tye-Type and the Two-Mode views do not exhaust all conceivable content nonconceptualist views, as noted in chapter 2. However, they are prominent among the nonconceptualist views defended in the literature, and can be treated as representative.

[12] Tye defends this view in Tye 2000: ch. 7. For another defence, see Byrne and Hilbert 1997.

[13] If someone refuses to accept that 'SSR_y' both lacks semantic structure and differs in sense from 'yellow', I ask her to pretend that it does. As noted in the previous paragraph, the nonconceptualist who endorses A.2 is committed to thinking that it is possible for two states of mind to have *distinct* contents *p* and *q* even though *p* determines the same Russellian proposition as *q*. Such a theorist need not accept that the thought that something is SSR_y and the thought that something is yellow exemplify this possibility. However, he is committed to accepting that there can be some other example with the same structure.

figure all points on the surface of which are equidistant from the centre. Even though the notion is paradigmatically introduced in terms of such a fancy geometrical description, or an equivalent one, it does not have the same sense as this structured description; **geospherical** is a unitary notion, lacking internal semantic structure.[14] Still, Sue has not yet figured out that geosphericality is just sphericality, or (as she might put it when she figures this out) that geophericality is just the shape of the surface of normal billiard ball. Now let *p* be the content of an experience of a ball as spherical and *q* be the content of the thought that the ball is geospherical. Sue has the experience, is interested in the question of whether the ball is geopherical, does not doubt her senses, and other things are equal. But she does not believe that the ball is geospherical.[15]

Clearly, if the Nonconceptualist Law is to come out correct, the relation of conceptualisation needs to be understood yet more narrowly. The problem with A.2, which essentially defines the relation in terms of co-reference, is that it allows a conceptualisation of a given perceptual content to be structured in terms of modes of presentation that are at best highly indirectly related to observation, such as $\mathbf{SSR_y}$ and **geospherical**. If a definition of the relation is to make the Law come out correct, it seems that it has to restrict what modes of presentations are allowed to go into a conceptualisation of a perceptual content. It seems, in other words, that the nonconceptualist has to adopt a proposal of the following kind:

[14] If someone refuses to accept that **geospherical** both lacks semantic structure and differs from the co-referential notion **spherical**, I ask her to pretend that it does. See ft. n. 13.

[15] This example involves a 'Frege case'. Fodor (1994) suggests that such cases be treated as ones where other things are not equal. I am in sympathy with Perry's (1998) criticism of this idea. In any case, Fodor's view goes together with the notion that characteristically Fregean distinctions in content have no serious role in psychological explanation. Since the content nonconceptualist we are currently criticising is committed to such distinctions – on the level of thought content, anyway – Fodor's view is in any case not attractive to her.

A.3 *q* is a conceptualisation of *p* iff

(a) *q* determines the same Russellian proposition as *p*, and

(b) the modes of presentation in *q* are all (except, perhaps, for modes of presentations expressed by connectives, quantifiers or other logical terms) observational.

A.3 still implies that the Nonconceptualist Law is subject to counter-instances, however. Consider the Mach-case discussed in section 2.3. Suppose that **square** is a shape concept introduced in terms of the visual presentation of the figures below



Fig. 1

while **r-diamond** is a (semantically unitary) shape concept introduced in terms of the visual presentation of the figures below

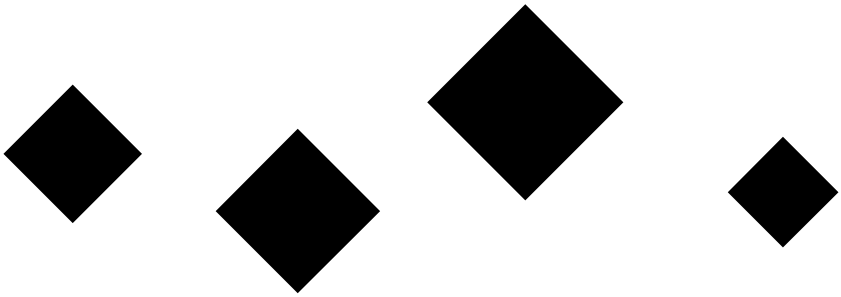

Fig. 2

If **square** is an observational concept, **r-diamond** is. These concepts refer to the same property, but it takes cognitive work to figure out that square is just r-diamond.[16] Suppose that Joe has been introduced to the concepts but has not yet figured this out. Let *p* be the content of his experience when he looks at one of the figures in Figure 1 above, and *q* be the content of the thought that it is r-diamond. We then have the counter-instance that Joe has the experience, is interested in whether the figure in question is r-diamond, does not believe that anything is abnormal, and other things are equal, but does not believe that the figure is r-diamond.[17]

If the Nonconceptualist Law is to come out correct, then, the relation of conceptualisation has to be understood yet more narrowly. What the nonconceptualist needs, it seems, is something like this:

A.4 *q* is a conceptualisation of *p* iff

(a) *q* determines the same Russellian proposition as *p*,

(b) the modes of presentation in *q* are all (except, perhaps, for modes of presentation expressed by connectives, quantifiers or other logical terms) observational, and

(c) *p* is the content of an experience somehow privileged to *q*.

This raises the question, of course, what it is for an experience to be 'somehow privileged' to a thought content, as it indeed raises the question what it is for a concept

[16] If someone does not accept that **r-diamond** is semantically unitary, I ask her to pretend that it is. The present point could instead be made in terms of two distinct demonstrative concepts, made available by the experience of the figures in Figure 1 and in Figure 2, respectively. See also ft. n. 13 above.

[17] Perhaps if Joe is smart enough to have the two concepts in question, he has to be smart enough to figure out that square is r-diamond *very quickly*. This does not refute the point of principle, though.

to be observational (a question also raised by A.3). I will now argue that the natural answers to these questions make the Nonconceptualist Law either trivial or false.

4.2.4 Observational concepts and privileged experienced

One influential answer to the question of how observational concepts differ from non-observational concepts appeals to the idea that the former are subject to a distinctive type of possession condition, viz. the condition that one grasps such a concept only if one is disposed to apply it non-inferentially on the basis of a certain type of experience if the question of its application arises. Peacocke (1983) gives broadly this style of answer in explaining why **square** is an observational concept but **X-ray tube** is not:

> Though there are indeed experiences as of an X-ray tube viewed from the cathode … the capacity to have such experiences is not essential for possession of the concept of an X-ray …. But in the case of the observational (visual) concept of a square, the corresponding capacity is essential; one cannot possess that concept unless in normal circumstances visual experiences as of something square cause, if the question arises, the judgement of a thought, containing that concept, to the effect that the presented object is square. (1983: 90) [18]

Thus a concept is observational only if one is disposed to apply it on the basis of an experience of type E if one is interested in whether it applies. Two points are important here. First, how is the relevant type of experience, E, to be picked out? One might be inclined to pick it out in terms of presenting something as having the property that the

[18] Three things may be noted here. First, Peacocke treats this condition as only necessary and not sufficient for being an observational concept. Second, Peacocke is writing as a content conceptualist here, and is not trying to answer the question under what conditions the relation of conceptualisation obtains between thought-contents and (supposedly distinct) perceptual contents. I thus cite him, in this context, only as giving clear expression to a natural way of characterising observational concepts, one that our nonconceptualist may be inclined to avail himself of. Third, the Mach case described above suggests that, if Peacocke's phrase 'visual experiences as of something square' is treated as non-hyperintensional, it is false that such experiences cause one to think (if the question arises) that the thing is square. Thus if the causal claim is true, the phrase has to be treated as hyperintensional. This point reinforces the argument for hyperintensionality in section 2.2.

target concept is a concept of. The Mach case shows that this answer is too generous. A narrower answer is that it is experience that presents something as falling under the target concept, but this is unavailable to the nonconceptualist. To say that E is the type of experience that is essential to grasp of the target concept is of course circular. Let's assume, therefore, that the best answer the nonconceptualist can give is that E is somehow privileged to grasp of the target concept (leaving open what exactly this is). The second point to bear in mind is that the disposition mentioned in the present characterisation of observationality itself constitutes or presumes a lawful regularity. Thus when the present characterisation of observationality is put into A.4, and the Nonconceptualist Law is spelled out in terms of A.4, we get the following:

For any reflective subject *S*, for any P-content *p*, for any T-content *q*, *if*

(i) *S* has an experience with the content *p*,

(ii)

a. *q* determines the same Russellian proposition as *p*,

b. *q* is such that *S* grasps *q* only if, for any P-content *r*, *if*

i. *S* has an experience with the content *r*,

ii. *r* determines the same Russellian proposition as *q*,

iii. *r* is the content of an experience somehow privileged to grasp of *q*,

iv. *S* is interested in whether *q*,

v. *S* does not believe that there is anything abnormal about the conditions of perception,

vi. other things are equal,

then S believes *q*,[19]

c. *p* is the content of an experience somehow privileged to grasp of *q*,

(iii) *S* is interested whether *q*,

(iv) *S* does not believe that there is anything abnormal about the conditions of perception, and

(v) other things are equal

then S believes *q*.

This 'law' is a logical truth.[20] Hence the 'law' is no substantive psychological law apt to underwrite intentional explanation. The problem, in a word, is that the notion of an

[19] Condition (ii.b) here is derived from a statement of the possession conditions of each of the constituent modes of presentation in *q*.
[20] I am assuming that *S* is interested whether *q* only if *S* grasps *q*.

observational concept is characterised in terms of a functional role that itself presumes the very psychological law that the notion was invoked to characterise.

Is there any other and more fruitful way for the nonconceptualist to characterise observational concepts, and somehow privileged experiences? Straight off, it is not easy to see what this should be. The functional role described by Peacocke above seems as plausible a candidate as any for a way of excluding such concepts as **geospherical** and $\mathbf{SSR_y}$ while including such concepts as **spherical** and **yellow**. If the nonconceptualist cannot appeal to this way of drawing the distinction, it is hard to see what better alternative could be available.

I will briefly note and set aside one alternative, relying on the traditional empiricist idea that observational concepts are somehow basic to our whole scheme of concepts. The idea is that theoretical concepts, such as **energy**, as a concept of mechanics, depends on a core body of observational and demonstrative concepts, such as those used in thinking that *that* block is round, but not the other way around. Someone might want to exploit this idea in order to get an independent way of identifying the observational concepts: they are identified as the basic ones. [21]

Now, even if this worked to single out observational concepts, the problem of saying when an experience is 'somehow privileged' to a concept would remain. Moreover it does not work to single out observational concepts – not, at least, in a way that deals satisfactorily with problems of the **yellow** vs. $\mathbf{SSR_y}$ and **spherical** vs. **geospherical**

[21] Peacocke (1992: 61) makes a suggestion along the lines of the traditional empiricist idea, writing that 'perceptual, relatively observational concepts are elements of one such set of concepts that does not depend asymmetrically on any others.' However, the idea that 'perceptual, relatively observational concepts' can be identified in terms of this feature should not be attributed to him.

type. There are two problems. First, why is not **energy**, say, *itself* an observational concept? If the answer is simply that one can possess it without being disposed to apply it non-inferentially on the basis of experience we are back with our first characterisation of observational concepts. Second, the most plausible argument for the claim that **energy** and other theoretical concepts depend on observational concepts is one according to which grasp of a concept presumes an ability to use it in reasoning, exploiting the theory in which it belongs, and to apply that theory to the things one perceives. [22] This argument invokes a general requirement on concept possession, which thus applies even to observational concepts. Now, as Sellars (1963) and Evans (1980) argue, just as sophisticated concepts figure in sophisticated theories, simple concepts such as **yellow** and **straight** figure in simple theories. By parity of reasoning, then, grasp of **straight** presumes grasp of a bunch of other, more or less simple concepts figuring in this simple theory. When we have got this far, it seems hard to rule out that this bunch of concepts will make possible an informative identity, such as, for example, that between **straight** and **taking the shortest distance between two points**. We can then run a counter-instance to the Nonconceptualist Law, spelled out in terms of A.3, in terms of that pair. The identification of observational concepts as basic concepts thus does not do the job it is supposed to do.

The nonconceptualist thus still faces the challenge of formulating, in outline, a plausible, non-vacuous, non-trivial law of observational belief acquisition. The points made in this section do not prove that she will not be able to meet this challenge. I take them to suggest, however, that the conceptualist (that is, the believer in content

[22] See Block 1986 who develops an argument along these lines, using the concepts of classical mechanics as one of his examples.

congruence) is significantly better placed to formulate such a law than the nonconceptualist. This provides prima facie reason to favour the conceptualist view.

4.3 Objections and Replies

I now turn to some objections. Some of these target basic assumptions of the argument from covering law, others more detailed moves.

4.3.1 Laws not quantifying over contents

The Conceptualist Law and Nonconceptualist Law considered above quantify over contents. Perhaps some nonconceptualist will concede that she cannot give a plausible, non-vacuous, non-trivial law of perceptual belief acquisition *of that kind*. But this does not matter, since she can give *content-specific* intentional laws, stating how an experience with a certain specific perceptual content ceteris paribus will cause a belief with a certain specific thought content. A measure of generality remains here, the nonconceptualist contends, since the law may quantify over subjects and times. The following may be an example (in a slightly abbreviated version)

Specific Law

For any reflective subject *S*, if *S* has an experience as of a round thing being in front or her, and S is interested in whether there is a round thing that is in front of her, and …, then S believes that there is a round thing that is in front of her.

The nonconceptualist takes it that the phrase ‘as of a round thing being in front of her’ within the scope of ‘experience’ specifies a perceptual content, while the phrase ‘there is a round thing in front of her’ within the scope of ‘interested in whether’ and ‘believes that’ specifies a thought content of a somehow distinct kind. In terms of the Specific

Law we can explain why Sarah, say, believes that there is a round thing in front of her on a given occasion.

However, anyone should agree that paradigm intentional explanations, such as the explanation of someone's intentional action in terms of her beliefs and desires, do not proceed exclusively in terms of such an armoury of content-specific laws. Let's say that we did not know generalisations across contents of the same kind as the example suggested by Fodor (1987: 13) above – 'If *x* wants that *P*, and believes that $\neg P$ unless *Q*, and *x* believes that it is in his power to bring it about that *Q*, then ceteris paribus *x* tries to bring it about that *Q*.' Suppose moreover that intentional explanation does indeed presume an armoury of content-specific laws. It is then to be predicted that we sometimes know what intentional action someone is doing, what beliefs and desires she has, and yet are unable to give an intentional explanation of her action simply because we do not know the intentional law for the specific contents involved (and not because there is anything inherently bizarre about her action or attitudes). These predictions are not borne out. Thus if intentional explanation of perceptual belief in terms of experience was limited to content-specific laws, it would ipso facto be deeply unlike paradigm types of intentional explanation. Indeed, the consideration just noted against conceiving of paradigm intentional explanations as relying only on content-specific laws generalises to intentional explanations of belief in terms of experience. The content-specific conception is not justified even there.

Perhaps it will be granted that the predicted failure to find an explanation, in certain non-bizarre cases, is not borne out. It might be objected, however, that this is so because we are, in any specific case, able to make an abductive inference to the requisite

content-specific law. However, correct abductive inferences often depend on an element of skill and luck. We should thus except that ordinary thinkers in some cases fail to make the right abductive inference. The prediction of explanation-failure in some non-bizarre cases thus remains.

Perhaps it will be objected that we can give a cognitive account that explains why ordinary thinkers are so good at finding the content-specific laws, without being committed to their knowing a law generalising over content. The account in question has it that we know a *schema* for a content-specific law. What we know is something like (in a slightly abbreviated version):

Law Schema

Schema template For any reflective subject *S*, if *S* has an experience as of a Ψ being Φ, and …, then *S* believes that there is a Ψ that is Φ.

Side condition The two occurrences of 'Ψ' are to be filled in with the same predicate, and the two occurrences of 'Φ' are to be filled in with the same predicate.[23]

This Law Schema has the Specific Law above as an instance. If we know, or somehow knowledgeably grasp, the Law Schema, it is no mystery how we are able to find the appropriate content-specific law in any arbitrary case.[24] However, we can be considered to knowledgeably grasp the Law Schema only if it is valid – only if its instances are all true. At this point the conceptualist can formulate a dilemma. Let's call the first

[23] I borrow the terms 'schema template' and 'side condition' from Corcoran 2004.

[24] Since a schema is not a proposition, knowing a schema cannot strictly be a matter of propositional knowledge. We might thus take 'knowledgeable grasp' to be what stands to a schema as propositional knowledge stands to a proposition.

occurrences of 'Ψ' and 'Φ', respectively, the 'perceptual pair' and the second occurrences of 'Ψ' and 'Φ', respectively, the 'belief pair'. *Either* both the perceptual pair and the belief pair occupy a hyperintensional context or both pairs occupy a non-hyperintensional context, *or* one pair occupies a hyperintensional context but the other does not. In the first case, then, in an instance of the schema, the perceptual pair plausibly determines the same content as the belief pair, and content congruence reigns. The second case splits into two possibilities: either the belief pair has a hyperintensional context and the perceptual pair does not, or conversely. The latter possibility need not be taken seriously.[25] The former possibility is also untenable: The counter-instances to the Nonconceptualist Law, as spelled out in terms of either A.2 or A.3, are counter-instances to the Law Schema, if the belief pair but not the perceptual pair occupies an hyperintensional context. Thus the Law Schema either supports content congruence or is invalid. Appealing to the knowledgeable grasp of the Law Schema does not help the content nonconceptualist.

4.3.2 Intentional explanation as involving simulation, not laws

According to one influential intellectual tradition, there is a sharp contrast to be drawn between the law-invoking explanations of the natural sciences, and the empathetic understanding afforded by the human sciences. [26] To make an action, belief, or other event laden with meaning intelligible to us, and thus to explain it (in a generic sense of 'explanation', not to be contrasted with *verstehen*), involves a form of mental simulation of the mental or meaningful events to be understood, not a subsumption of them under a law. Thus the argument from covering law is wrong-headed from the very beginning. Or so an adherent of this tradition of thought might complain.

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[25] See ft. n. 1 chapter 3 for an argument.

[26] The tradition goes back at least to Vico. Contemporary versions of simulation theory, in the theory of theory of mind, as articulated by Gordon (1986), Heal (1986) and Goldman (1989), can be seen as heirs to the tradition.

However, the argument from covering law is consistent with mental simulation having a large and significant role in the explanation and prediction of mental events. It is committed to rejecting only a radical version of the simulation account, which denies any need for laws in the intentional explanation of beliefs in terms of experience.[27] A detailed criticism of the radical simulationist account would take us too far afield here; I will only gesture at the general direction in which I would seek to rebut it. One critical issue is how the simulation theory is to account for the simulator's knowledge of her own mind. If the simulator cannot tell what she (imaginatively) believes, given that she has such-and-such an (imagined) experience, her explanation or prediction of someone else in terms of the simulation exercise will not so much as get started. Another critical issue is how the simulation theory is to account for how the simulator makes the inference from the known (imagined) states of her own mind to the states of someone else's mind. A case can be made for thinking that in addressing these critical issues the simulation theory has to invoke a modicum of folk-psychological theory on the part of the simulating subject.[28] This minimal amount of folk-psychological theory will plausibly include some simple generalisations about the relation between experiences and beliefs. It is hard to see what these simple generalisations could be other than variants of the lawful generalisation posited by the argument from covering law.

4.3.3 The Conceptualist Law also vacuous

Another objection attacks the claim that the conceptualist is better placed to produce a plausible, non-vacuous law of perceptual belief acquisition. Specifically, the objection

[27] Gordon (1986) and Goldman (1989) are radical simulationists. My view here is entirely consistent with the moderate or combined simulationist view of Heal (1986, 1996).
[28] See Carruthers 1996.

inveighs that the proposed Conceptualist Law is vacuous, or anyway virtually vacuous. To remind ourselves, the proposal was:

The Conceptualist Law

For any reflective subject *S*, for any content *p*, *if*

(i) *S* has an experience with the content *p*,

(ii) *S* is interested in whether *p*,

(iii) *S* does not believe that there is anything abnormal about the conditions of perception, and

(iv) other things are equal

then S believes *p*.

The objection is that the contents in which subjects are interested, and which they believe on the basis of perception, are not contents of the experiences on which these beliefs are based. The reason is that the contents of experience are much more fine-grained than the propositions we are interested in. If the rental agency tells me to find the red Fiat on the parking lot, I am interested in whether a vehicle in front of me is red. When the Fiat comes into view, it is presented as having a highly specific shade of red, red_{108} say. But whether it has this shade is not something I am interested in, or something I believe on the basis of my perception. This shows two related things. First, that the Conceptualist Law is virtually vacuous, since there virtually never will be a content *p* jointly satisfying conditions (i) and (ii) of the antecedent. Second, that the beliefs we actually hold on the basis of experience cannot be explained in terms of the Conceptualist Law, since it does not apply to them.

However, even though the conceptualist is committed to recognising that perception has an extremely fine-grained content, her conceptualism does not commit her to holding that the content of perception is exclusively highly fine-grained. Indeed, it fits in quite naturally with the conceptualist view that perception represents things at varying levels of grain. For example, she does not need to deny, and it fits in quite naturally with her view, that the Fiat on the parking lot is seen both as having a quite determinate shade and is seen as red. Phenomenologically, it is highly plausible that we experience things as members of sortal kinds. We see things as cups or as tables, as cats or as dogs. This aspect of perceptual content is not extremely fine-grained; thus the very idea of less than extremely fine-grained perceptual content is not phenomenologically repugnant. Moreover, it is phenomenologically plausible that I can experience someone at once as a woman and as a human being. Thus the very idea of perceptual classification of something at both more fine-grained and more coarse-grained levels on the same dimension is not phenomenologically repugnant. There is no evident phenomenological reason why it should not be the same way for visual representation of colours, shapes, etc.[29]

Secondly, even if perceptual content is much more fine-grained than most of the contents whose truth we are interested in, we can take account of this matter by slightly revising the Conceptualist Law:

[29] I do not want to deny that there is an interesting phenomenological debate to be had here. Richard Price has argued (in various talks, and in conversation) that if perception represents determinate properties, it does not at the same time represent determinable properties. The remarks in the text are not intended to settle the debate, only to suggest that the view expressed is not obviously phenomenologically unsound.

The Slightly Revised Conceptualist Law

For any reflective subject *S*, for any content *p*, for any content *q if*

(i) *S* has an experience with the content *p*,

(ii) *S* is interested in whether *q*,

(iii) *S* knows $p \rightarrow q$,[30, 31]

(iv) *S* does not believe that there is anything abnormal about the conditions of perception, and

(v) other things are equal

then S believes *q*.

Thus, to take the car park case: I am interested in whether the car is red. My experience represent the car as having *that* shade (= red_{108}). I know that something is red if it is *that* shade.[32, 33]Trusting my senses, and other things being equal, I believe that the car is red.

Perhaps someone will object as follows: to have a fully explicit explanation of my belief, on the basis of perception, that the car is red, it needs to be added that I believe that the car is *that* shade. Thus, if the Slightly Revised Conceptualist Law is to be useable in explaining perceptual belief acquisition, there is still a commitment to perceptual beliefs with extremely fine-grained contents. Yet it is not clear why the subject has to have the fine-grained belief. Consider the following analogy. We may

[30] '$\rightarrow$' is a propositional connective, expressed by 'if…, then…' An alternative way of putting (iii) is '*S* knows that if *p* is true, *q* is true'. However, this formulation is liable to mislead, since it suggests that the content of the knowledge makes use of semantic ascent. If (iii) is to be put that way, the use of semantic ascent should be seen simply as an artefact of grammar, viz. of the fact that 'if…, then…' is a sentential connective while '*p*' and '*q*' are singular terms.

[31] For the purposes of my argument here, it does not matter if one replaces 'believes' for 'knows'.

[32] I specify the content of the experience and the 'linking' knowledge in demonstrative terms here. I should note, however, that I am neutral on how the content of thought can be specified, and what kind of content thought has (whether it is Russellian, Fregean, or something else). If a Russellian theory of thought content and attitude reports is correct, the point could equally be put as follows: My experience represents the car as being red_{108}, and I know that something is red if it is red_{108}.

[33] See Brewer 1999: ch. 7 for an interesting discussion of this sort of knowledge.

explain Sue's belief that C in terms of her believing that A; that if A, then B; and that if B, then C. Is it a presupposition of this explanation that Sue believes that B? If Sue is not at all interested in whether B, and the inference is wholly obvious to her, why can she not move directly to the belief that C? Perhaps it is a presupposition that Sue does not disbelieve that B; similarly, perhaps it is a presupposition that I do not disbelieve that the car has *that* shade. Yet this presupposed absence of disbelief is aptly covered by the ceteris paribus clause. In any case, if the objector is right that there has to be a belief *p* that matches the content of perception in order for the Slightly Revised Conceptualist Law to be applicable, she is not saying anything that the conceptualist needs to deny. The conceptualist need not deny that we do have such fine-grained beliefs, and there is no evident reason why he should.

A more interesting objection in this context is this. Let us call the knowledge mentioned in condition (iii) 'linking' knowledge (since it serves to link up the content of experience with the content of our interests and the beliefs we tend to form on the basis of experience). If the conceptualist can appeal to such knowledge, why can the nonconceptualist not do so too, and thereby side-step the entire problem of specifying the relation of 'conceptualisation'? The first answer to this is that knowledge, like belief, has conceptual content. If *p* is the content of experience, *q* the content of thought, and content congruence is denied, one cannot allow for such a thing as knowing $p \rightarrow q$. The nonconceptualist may respond by invoking semantic ascent. After all, she wants to allow that it is possible to specify the content of experience in thought. Thus, if *p* is the content of experience, she wants to allow that it is possible to think that *p* is true. If this

is possible, then it is surely possible to think and perhaps even to know that if *p* is true, *q* is true.[34]

We may allow, at least for the sake of argument, that the nonconceptualist can make sense of the specifiability of perceptual content in thought (although, on a Two-Mode View, it is not obvious how she is to account for this possibility). There remains a commitment, on behalf on this nonconceptualist, to the idea that thinking a thought about the content of experience is explanatorily prior to forming beliefs about the objective world on the basis of experience supposedly presenting that world. If the nonconceptualist takes this line, she thereby validates an accusation Brewer (1999: ch. 5) levels at her, viz. the accusation that the nonconceptualist is committed to following the classical foundationalist and classical coherentist in treating self-reflective beliefs as explanatorily prior to beliefs about the objective, empirical world. Brewer (1999: ch. 4) argues effectively that this order gets things the wrong way around. The appeal to linking knowledge thus takes on a very different, and much less attractive, character for the nonconceptualist than it does for the conceptualist.

4.4 Conclusion

I conclude that the role of experience in intentional explanation of belief gives at least prima facie reason to affirm content congruence. This puts me in at least partial agreement with McDowell and Brewer, in particular, with regard to their conclusion (in McDowell's phrase) that 'a judgement of experience does not introduce a new kind of content but simply endorses the content, or some of it, that is already possessed by the experience on which it is based' (1994: 48-49), and with regard to to their basic

[34] Only the semantic ascent in relation to *p* is indispensable here. The semantic ascent in relation to *q* can be seen as an artefact of grammar, as described in ft. n. 30.

suggestion that the rational-cum-intentional explanatory role of experience supports content congruence.

5

Peacocke on Perception and Concept Individuation

An influential line of objection to conceptualism is the so-called *non-circularity argument*. The argument rests, very broadly speaking, on three ideas. The first and most basic is that we have to give a certain style of account of concepts, viz. an account that characterises concepts in terms of their role in the mental life of thinkers. The second and more specific idea has it that, for the special case of observational or demonstrative concepts, an account of this kind has to mention the close relation these concepts bear to *perceptual experience* of the things they are concepts of. The final and most specific idea is that the conceptualist's account will be viciously circular at just this point, since, on her view, the perceptual experiences in question involve the very observational or demonstrative concept she purports to account for.

The non-circularity argument, thus broadly outlined, is a theme on which there are several variations. In this chapter, I discuss a variant of the non-circularity argument put forward by Peacocke in *A Study of Concepts* (*SC*) (1992), a variant proceeding from the idea that concepts are to be individuated in terms of their possession conditions.[1] In the next chapter, I turn to John Campbell's arguments in *Reference and Consciousness* (*RC*), arguments seeking to show that a conceptualist or even any weak intentionalist is

[1] All unattributed references in this chapter are to this work.

unable to allow room for the explanatory role experience has to play. I shall argue that the conceptualist is in a position to meet these arguments. Moreover, I will argue that she is able to do so without dismissing any of the deep constraints Peacocke or Campbell are appealing to in their arguments.

In the Introduction, we distinguished two theses found together in several well-known conceptualist views, including that of McDowell (1994) and Brewer (1999), viz. the theses of *content congruence* and *state conceptualism*. I am only committed to the former; indeed, I shall argue that the latter is false in chapter 7. However, this distinction will be kept in the background in this chapter and the next. Where an objection bears specifically on content congruence, I will at times talk specifically in terms of that thesis. In general, however, I will talk in terms of 'conceptualism', as a view including both the theses noted. My stance in this chapter and the next is that of offering advice to conceptualists, so understood.[2]

This chapter unfolds as follows. I first, in 5.1, set out the basic view of concepts and thought content that underlies Peacocke's argument. [3] I then, in 5.2, give his argument that the conceptualist is unable to meet a principle that, on his view, is a central constraint on thought-content, viz. the constraint that there be a non-circular, individuating possession condition for each concept. The conceptualists who have responded to Peacocke's argument, including McDowell (1994), Sedivy (1996) and

[2] I will add one or two footnotes detailing how a theorist who endoreses content congruence but not state conceptualism may offer a different sort of response to an objection from that offered in the text, on behalf of the conceptualist.

[3] In particular Peacocke 1994, 1996, 1998b. I also invoke a passage from a later paper, (2005), which seems pertinent. However, it is not wholly clear whether Peacocke would still want to endorse all the claims on which the non-circularity argument in *SC* rests (see, in particular, (1998a) for some critical discussion of the view in *SC*). For the purpose of this chapter, then, 'Peacocke' could be identified with the Peacocke of *SC* and of the later papers which more or less clearly support the relevant argument therein.

Brewer (1999), have tended to be dismissive of the non-circularity requirement Peacocke appeals to. I give reasons to be hesitant about this response. In 5.3, I therefore suggest an alternative strategy for the conceptualist, relying on much less controversial assumptions. Some objections to the strategy are answered in 5.4.

5.1 Peacocke on Concepts and Thought Content

As we have seen, Peacocke holds that the content of judgements, beliefs, and other higher-order cognitive attitudes (such as wishes, suppositions, intentions, mere entertainings of thoughts, and so on) is Fregean. Minimally, this is to say that a thought-content is an abstract object with a broadly quasi-logical or quasi-linguistic structure, where the constituents making up the structure are not on the level of referents (of the things thought about), but are abstract objects on the level of sense or mode of presentation. Peacocke takes *concepts* to be precisely these abstract constituents (p. 2). Peacocke's concepts are thus distinct from what we will call 'concrete conceptual capacities' in section 7.1, in a sense closely related to that in which Evans (1982: 104) uses 'Ideas'. In this chapter, I will follow Peacocke's terminology.

In *SC*, Peacocke takes it to be stipulative that concepts are subject to the following criterion of identity:

> **Distinctness of Concepts** Concepts **C** and **D** are distinct if and only if there are two complete propositional contents that differ at most in that one contains **C** substituted in one or more places for **D** and one of which is potentially informative while the other is not. (p. 2. Here and elsewhere I change Peacocke's notation to accord with my convention here.)

This 'Distinctness Principle' is clearly a close relative of the versions of Frege's Principle of Cognitive Significance discussed in chapter 3. In that chapter, we argued that some fairly traditional formulations of that principle (what we referred to as Frege's Principle 'v.0' and 'v.1') failed to fit thought content. Thus one might think that, given the affinity between the Distinctness Principle and these formulations, and given that concepts by definition are subject to the former, it follows that our thoughts simply do not involve the entertaining of contents in which concepts figure. What Peacocke says about concepts would thus be academic even by academic standards. Fortunately for him, things need not be that bad. The reason is that the property of being not 'potentially informative' need not be taken to entail the (un-instantiated) property of being indubitable by anyone who understands the content (including the most sophisticated sceptic); it could be taken to entail rather the property we characterised more loosely as being apparent as true to anyone who understands the content. At any rate, I will presume that some such interpretation can be found, allowing Peacocke's argument at least to get going.

What Peacocke puts forward as the 'overarching claim' (1994: 314) of *SC* is the claim that concepts are individuated by their possession conditions. To understand this claim, it is important to grasp just what a possession condition is. In particular, it is important to note that there are many kinds of conditions that in some reasonable sense could be called 'possession conditions'. I will emphasise two axes of variation among such conditions. Before turning to these axes of variation, however, we should make clear what it is to possess a concept, in the current sense. I will be operating on the assumption that this is to bear mental relations to contents in which that concept figures:

to bear mental relations of believing, desiring, supposing or the like to such contents.[4] (I will use **(…F…)** as a way of symbolising a content in which **F** figures.) Peacocke (pp. 5-16) determines conditions for possessing a concept, in this sense, in terms of the following schema:

Possession condition schema

Schema template being a concept **C** to possess which a thinker must meet condition $\mathcal{A}$(**C**)[5]

Side condition $\mathcal{A}$ is to be replaced by a specification, *of the appropriate kind*, of a condition relating a thinker to a content **(…C…)** and perhaps to other things.[6]

Any instance of this schema is a possession condition. Now, one axis of variation among possession conditions is the following. A possession condition may be met by all concepts, some concepts, or a unique concept, or no concepts. I will call a condition met by just one concept an *individuating* possession condition. Peacocke's 'overarching claim' is, then, that each concept has an individuating possession condition. Another useful term is that of a *differentiating* possession condition, relative to two concepts **F** and **G**, viz. a condition met by the one but not by the other.

[4] I skate over a difficulty here. Peacocke (pp. 27-33) allows that someone, say Frank, can believe that he has arthritis in his thigh, even though he has an incomplete understanding of the word 'Arthritis' (the example is of course Burge's (1979)). Peacocke takes it that the concept **arthritis** figures in the propositional content Frank believes. However, he also takes it that, since Frank's understanding of the term is incomplete, he does not possess the concept **arthritis**. Peacocke's description of this case thus contradicts the interpretation in the text. However, Peacocke seems prepared to accept the claim in the text in so far as the thinker's mental relations to the contents are not underwritten by Burge-style deference-dependence. Since the latter do not matter to the argument under discussion, we can set this complication aside.

[5] Note that '**C**' is a variable ranging over concepts. By contrast, '**F**', '**G**', '**H**' are individual constants.

[6] I borrow the terms 'schema template' and 'side condition' (which Peacocke does not use) from Corcoran 2004.

The second axis of variation emerges when we consider what it is for the specification replacing $\mathcal{A}$ to be 'of the appropriate kind': the narrowness of our conceptions of possession conditions vary with the strength of the requirements imposed on acceptable replacements for $\mathcal{A}$. Suppose that the restrictions here are extremely weak – only to the effect, say, that the specification be well-formed. Then the thesis that each concept has an individuating possession condition is trivial. For an arbitrary concept **F** we can trivially formulate, say, the following individuating condition

(T) being a concept **C** to possess which a thinker must have the property of being such that **C=F**.

Thus the real meat in Peacocke's overarching claim lies in his further restrictions on what specifications are appropriate replacements of $\mathcal{A}$. Unfortunately, it is not entirely clear exactly what further restrictions Peacocke imposes here. Some restrictions are pretty clear. One is that the claim that a concept **F** uniquely satisfies a possession condition should not be a trivial logical consequence of the claim something meets the possession condition. This excludes (T). Another is Peacocke's non-circularity requirement, i.e. his requirement that the target concept **F** should not be mentioned as such within the specifications of the contents to which the thinker takes various attitudes. To see the rationale for this 'non-circularity' requirement, as well as for some of the other requirements Peacocke seems to impose, we need to reflect on Peacocke's basic approach. Very roughly the idea is that what makes a concept the concept it is is its role in the psychological life of the thinker. He puts this basic idea as follows

Principle of Dependence [PoD] There can be nothing more to the nature of a concept than is determined by a correct account of the capacity of a thinker who has mastered the concept to have

> propositional attitudes to contents containing that concept (a correct account of 'grasping the concept'). (p. 5)

Why should we accept the Principle of Dependence? Peacocke defends it by reductio. Suppose that it is false. Then there could be two distinct concepts **F** and **G** possessed by a certain thinker, even though she has the same dispositions toward entertaining any content **(…F…)** as she has towards so entertaining a content **(…G…)** (where the one content is gotten from the other by replacing **G** for **F** at one or more places), and vice versa. These concepts play the same role in her mental life. As Peacocke says, 'the extra properties of these alleged concepts [**F** and **G**] play no role in propositional attitude psychology.' (p. 5) But this is absurd, he suggests, and hence the Principle of Dependence is correct.[7]

Against this background, we can see the point of the non-circularity restriction; it can be brought out in terms of an example to which we shall return below. Let's say that Jill possesses a colour concept **ruby** and a distinct colour concept **scarlet** but that Jill has no standing beliefs about what things are ruby, nor about what things are scarlet. The only salient difference between her use of these concepts is that she attributes **ruby** on the strength of vision to ruby things without attributing **scarlet** to them and vice versa (she quickly forgets these perceptual attributions, let's say, and so they do not count as standing beliefs). Now suppose someone raises the question whether we can give a differentiating possession condition here without appealing to the role these concepts

[7] Is Peacocke thus committed to the idea that the concept I entertain when I think of water is just the concept my Twin Earth *doppelganger*, who is internally functionally organised just like me, entertains when he thinks of XYZ (the notorious stuff found in lakes and rivers on Twin Earth). If he is, it would follow that concepts do not determine reference except perhaps relative to the particular context in which a thinker entertains them. Peacocke clearly does not intend PoD to have this consequence (pp. 16-27). Thus he must take the 'capacity … to have propositional attitudes…' to include broadly individuated capacities or dispositions. The difference between **water** and **XYZ** emerges only when we consider dispositions such as being disposed to apply a certain concept upon encountering water.

play in visually based judgement.[8] At this point, a theorist might say that this can be done very easily, in terms of the following conditions:

(Q_1) being a concept **C** to possess which **C is ruby** must be apparent as true to the thinker.

(Q_2) being a concept **C** to possess which **C is scarlet** must be apparent as true to the thinker.

The suggestion, plausibly enough, is that **ruby** satisfies (Q_1) and **scarlet** (Q_2) but not conversely. However, these conditions succeed in differentiating between **ruby** and **scarlet** only by presupposing that **ruby** and **scarlet** are distinct. For suppose that **ruby** is the same concept as **scarlet**. Then (Q_1) is equivalent with (Q_2), and so these conditions cannot differentiate between anything. To put them forward as differentiating possession conditions thus begs the question. Peacocke's non-circularity restriction is, in effect, a requirement that possession conditions not be question-begging in this way.

Against the background of PoD, and the broadly functionalist rationale Peacocke gives for it (see also pp. 18-19), we can infer some further restrictions on what takes the place of $\mathcal{A}$ (these restrictions are independently suggested by the examples Peacocke gives). Broadly, what takes the place of $\mathcal{A}$ must be a specification of conditions under which the thinker is disposed to enter into a certain target mental relation to **(…C…)**, or of what further conditions entering into a certain target mental relation to **(…C…)** disposes her to realise. In brief, it must be a specification of the role the concept plays in the mental

[8] We shall see why someone might want to raise such a question in the next section. In effect, Peacocke's non-circularity argument presumes that the answer to it is 'no'.

life of the thinker. So much is clear. What is less clear is how much freedom we have in fleshing out this abstract formulation. Two questions that arise are these:

> **The attitude question** Are we (i) free to chose any old mental relation to **(…C…)** as the target mental relation to **(…C…)**, or (ii) must the relation be a judgement, or one of some restricted type?

> **The transition question** Are we (i) free to let the transition that takes the thinker into or out of the target mental relation to **(…C…)** be any old (non-accidental) psychological transition, or (ii) must this be one that makes the thinker's transition into or out of the target mental relation susceptible of *rational explanation*, i.e. one where the transition can be seen as one she makes for reasons?

It is noteworthy that all the examples of possession conditions Peacocke puts forward (pp. 6-7) are consistent with giving the second, more restrictive answer to these two questions.[9] It is unclear, however, whether this feature of complying with the more restrictive answer is supposed only to characterise *paradigm* possession conditions or to characterise *any* possession condition, and, if the latter, what the justification for this is. We shall return to this question below. For now, I will assume only that possession conditions are characterised only by the weaker restriction given by the first answer to the two questions.

[9] Some of Peacocke's examples involve inferences the thinker must be disposed to find compelling, not judgements she must be willing to make (on the basis of certain reasons). However, the inferences in question may be treated as transitions between judgements; thus the distance between his practice and the point in the text is very slight.

5.2 Peacocke's Non-Circularity Argument

Peacocke's principal argument against conceptualism in *SC* is that the conceptualist is unable to give an individuating possession conditions for observational concepts (and, thereby, unable to give such conditions for the concepts whose possession depends on the observational concepts). He uses the first-person concept **I** (as entertained by a particular thinker) as an example. Peacocke first argues that

> It is partially constitutive of a subject's employing a first person way of thinking [viz. **I**] that he is prepared to make noninferential, suitable first-person spatial judgements on the basis of his perceptions when these are taken at face value. These will include 'I am on a bridge' when he has an experience as of being on a bridge, 'I am in front of a building', 'There is a dog on my right', and so forth. (p. 71)

Peacocke calls the above claim 'Evans's Thesis'. He goes on to argue that Evans's Thesis and the Principle of Dependence jointly rule out conceptualism.

> If we accept the Principle of Dependence, an account of grasp of the first-person concept must distinguish it from all other concepts. Certainly the pure propositionalist does not have something individuating if he says that the first person (for a given subject) is that concept **m** such that his judgements about whether **Fm** display a certain sensitivity to experiences that represent **Fm** as being the case. This condition will be met by much else, including demonstrative ways of thinking of places in his immediate surroundings. (p. 72)[10]

In our terms, the objection is that the conceptualist will be unable to give a differentiating possession condition for **I** in relation to, say, **this place**. This objection can be put as an argument against content congruence as follows:

[10] The term 'pure propositionalist' here denotes a slightly wider category than 'conceptualist'; the difference is immaterial however.

Peacocke's Non-Circularity Argument

(1) The only candidate for being a differentiating possession condition met by **I** but not by **this place** is a condition of the following perceptual type.

(P) being a concept **C** to possess which a thinker must be disposed to judge **C is F**, say, when she has an experience as of being (herself) F.

(2) If content congruence is correct, i.e. if perception has content of the same kind as thinking, then a (P)-type condition will either be circular or be met by both concepts between which it is supposed to distinguish; in either case, it will not be a non-question-begging differentiating condition.

(3) Each concept has a non-circular individuating possession condition.

∴ Content congruence is not correct.

The argument is valid. (3) entails that there is a non-circular, i.e. non-question-begging, differentiating condition between any concept **F** and any other concept **G**. Premises (1) and (2) jointly entail that there is no such differentiating conditions for *at least some* pairs of concepts, if content congruence is correct. It follows that content congruence is not correct.

The conceptualists who, to my knowledge, have considered Peacocke's argument have at least seemed to respond by rejecting (3), the overarching claim in *SC*.[11] McDowell writes:

> As Peacocke remarks [p. 72], it does not individuate a concept of the first person to say that it 'is that concept **m** such that his judgements about whether **Fm** display a certain sensitivity to experiences that represent **Fm** as being the case.' But we do not have *that* problem if we identify the relevant judgements, for a given subject, as judgements that display a certain sensitivity to experiences that represent **F(herself)** as the case. Of course, this violates the non-circularity requirement. But we can leave that violation standing and have plenty of room for substantive inquiry into the character of the 'certain sensitivity'. … I think Evans is much better read as primarily concerned with the 'certain sensitivity', and not particularly interested in avoiding circularity. (McDowell 1994: 170; again, I have changed the notation to accord with our convention).

Without saying it in so many words, McDowell here certainly suggests that it would be no big problem if there were no non-circular individuating possession condition for **I**. He seems to suggest that we ought not expect that there is such a condition. Other conceptualists such as Sedivy (1996) and Brewer (1999: 179-183) follow McDowell in this respect, suggesting that Peacocke's argument is unsound precisely because it relies on a questionable and perhaps misconceived non-circularity restriction.

However, to give this response, it seems to me, is to take on a costlier commitment than these conceptualists seem to make it out to be. The non-circularity restriction is, as we in effect have seen, motivated by the idea that concepts supervene on their (perhaps widely individuated) role in the psychological life of thinkers possessing them. If this

[11] I put it in this somewhat cagey way since conceptualist have also made remarks that can be exploited for the purposes of the alternative strategy I outline in the next section – I note one such remark in McDowell below. It remains, however, that in directly considering Peacocke's argument, their critical attention has been directed principally at the non-circularity restriction.

supervenience claim holds, then for any distinct concepts it must be difference in their role in the mental life of thinkers possessing them.[12] A specification of this difference must not presuppose, question-beggingly, that these concepts are distinct. Given that a possession condition simply specifies the functional, cognitive role of the concept, this supervenience claim suffices to establish

(3´) There is a non-question-begging differentiating possession condition between any distinct concepts.

which is equivalent to (3). Perhaps the noted supervenience claim is false. A commitment to its falsity should not, however, be taken on board lightly.

Fortunately, an alternative response is open to the conceptualist, involving the rejection of (1). In the next section I set out this strategy.

5.3 A New Conceptualist Strategy

A (P)-type condition describes, roughly, the role of a concept in judgements based on perceptual experience. This may certainly be a vital aspect of the cognitive role of the concept, particularly for observational or demonstrative concepts. Yet it does not exhaust its cognitive role. Other aspects of its role in mental life include (i) how beliefs involving that concept motivate further beliefs, perhaps in conjunction with various background beliefs; (ii) how the environment disposes the thinker to have perceptual

[12] The supervenience claim only says that there must be such a difference: it says nothing of what form that difference must take. For example, it is consistent with the supervenience claim that the difference in role between the two concepts differs from one thinker to the next, so that a specification of the psychological role of the concepts would have to be highly disjunctive. (Of course, in that case it might be more plausible to say that the concept is possessed only by one thinker.) Peacocke certainly does not want possession conditions to take that form. However, that restriction rests on issues beyond the non-circularity requirement that we do not need to consider for our purposes.

experiences in which something is experienced as falling under the concept; and (iii) how attitudes involving that concept dispose the thinker to action. I will refer to possession-conditions specifying a cognitive role of one of these kinds as, respectively, a (B)-type, an (E)-type and an (A)-type conditions.

For the particular example discussed by Peacocke, it seems pretty easy to find a differentiating condition of type (B), thereby refuting (1). For example, the condition

(B_1) being a concept **C** to possess which a thinker must be disposed to infer **someone is hot** from **C is hot**.

plausibly applies to **I** but does not apply to **this place**. Other cases may not be so simple. Take our example of Jill above, who was said to have no standing beliefs about what things are ruby, nor about what things are scarlet, and to be such that the only salient difference between her use of the concepts **ruby** and **scarlet** is that she attributes **ruby** on the strength of vision to ruby things without attributing **scarlet** to them, and vice versa (the supposition is that she quickly forgets these perceptual attributions so they do not count as standing beliefs). If the salient difference is taken to be the *only* difference in Jill's use of the concepts, it is not evident that this description of her is really a description of a possible subject. But let's suppose that it does for the sake of argument. The conceptualist still has the option of differentiating between her concepts in terms of a condition like

(E_1) being a concept **C** to possess which a thinker must be disposed to experience a ruby object, with which she is presented under normal conditions of perception, as falling under **C**. [13]

(E_1) arguably applies to **ruby,** but clearly does not apply to **scarlet**.[14] Note that the use of the expression 'ruby' in (E_1) is legitimate, as it is used outside the specification of the conceptual content of any attitude.[15] [16]

It might be suggested that there are cases of observational concepts where neither (B)-type or (E)-type conditions give us something differentiating. Mach cases, discussed in sections 2.3, 3.2 and 4.2 above, afford, Peacocke might argue, such examples. Thus there is a difference between perceiving a shape as a tilted square and as an upright regular diamond. Let's say that the former makes available an observational shape concept **tilted-square** while the latter makes available a observational shape concept **upright-diamond**. Suppose that Frank is in a perceptual state providing him with both **tilted-square** and **upright-diamond** even though Frank in his standing beliefs is just as

[13] This formulation of the condition is slightly misleading. The following is intended to correct any impression that the concept figures 'as such' in the content of the perceptual experience. Let's suppose that 'ruby' expresses the concept **ruby**. Then I take 'experiencing something as falling under **ruby**' to be equivalent to 'experiencing something as ruby'. The phrase 'experiencing something as falling under **ruby**' may, then, be considered to be parallel to 'believing, of something, to the effect that it falls under **ruby**' *given* that the latter is interpreted as equivalent with the *de dicto* report 'believing that σ is ruby' and *not* as equivalent with the *de dicto* report 'believing that σ falls under the concept **ruby**' (σ is replaced by a term the ordinary referent of which is the object of belief, and which refers to it in the right way). The latter but not the former of these *de dicto* belief reports presupposes that the subject has the concept *of the concept* **ruby**.

[14] I am operating on the assumption here that colours are properties objectively had by physical things. If colours are in the first instance properties of qualia, say, we could introduce a fourth type of possession conditions, (Q)-type, conditions, specifying how a concept is entertained in response to the instantiation of certain qualia. Such conditions would be as consistent with conceptualism as they are with nonconceptualism.

[15] We have seen that Peacocke is committed to highly analogous possession conditions, if he is to avoid the consequence that I share all concepts with a Twin-Earth *doppelgänger* who is internally functionally organised like me. See n. 7 above.

[16] After writing this chapter, I have become aware that Brewer (2005: 222) makes essentially this move in response to Heck's (2000: 493) variant of the non-circularity argument.

indifferent between **tilted-square** and **upright-diamond** as Jill was said to be between **ruby** and **scarlet**. Again, it is not evident that this description describes a possible subject, but let's assume that it does, at least for the sake of argument. Interestingly, we cannot distinguish between **tilted-square** and **upright-diamond** in terms of (E)-type conditions like (E_1), such as:

(E_2) being a concept **C** to possess which a thinker must be disposed to experience a tilted square object perceived in normal conditions as **C**.

(E_3) being a concept **C** to possess which a thinker must be disposed to experience an upright regular diamond perceived in normal conditions as **C**.

Since any tilted square necessarily is an upright regular diamond, and vice versa, (E_2) is equivalent with (E_3). Anything that meets the one meets the other.

However, the conceptualist might suggest that we can distinguish between the concept in terms of an (A)-type condition. Indeed, McDowell, when discussing the tilted-square/regular diamond contrast in his (1998b) response to Peacocke (1998b), makes a suggestion along these lines:

> We might gloss the difference between experiences that are actualizations of these conceptual capacities in terms of the difference between a pair of conditional expectations. Each of these shape concepts corresponds to a propensity to expect that, if, say a tile so shaped were flipped *like that*, it would make no difference to how the tile looks in respect of shape – with 'like that' pointing to two different potential flippings, about two different sets of axes kept stationary during the flipping. (McDowell 1998b: 416)

Drawing on McDowell's suggestion here, one might propose the following condition

(A_1) being a concept **C** to possess which a thinker must be such that the experience of something as **C**, combined with the intention to flip that thing around so at to preserve its looking **C**, shapewise, disposes her to flip that thing around one of the axes defined by the bisectors of the sides.

(A_1) arguably applies to **tilted-square** but not to **upright-diamond**. The gist of the current strategy is that the conceptualist can get all the differentiating conditions she needs by appealing to conditions of types (B), (E), and (A), possibly among others, in addition to conditions of type (P).

5.4 Objections and Replies

We might distinguish two kinds of objections to the strategy just outlined. The first says that it is *simply false* that the target concept meets the relevant possession condition of either (B)-, (E)- or (A)-type. For example, it might be objected that it is simply false that **ruby** meets (E_1). The second kind of objection is that a condition of either (B)-, (E)- or (A)-type is not a possession condition in the strict and philosophical sense, since it violates one of the restrictions that ought to be imposed on acceptable replacements of $\mathcal{A}$. I discuss them in turn.

5.4.1 Are the (B)-, (E)- and (A)-type conditions met?

A highly general argument in favour of the first kind of objection relies on an atomist view of concepts Thus it might be said that possessing a given concept does not imply that there are particular inferences involving the concept which one must be willing to

make, or that there are particular beliefs one must be willing to hold. The only thing that matters to having a concept of something is that one can think of that thing as the thing it is.[17] If atomism is correct, then the claim that any of the concepts above meets the possession condition it is said to meet is highly doubtful. But so is premise (3). If atomism is correct, the non-circularity argument against conceptualism would not so much as get started.

If an objection of this first kind is not to undermine the whole non-circularity argument, it must appeal to highly specific features of the condition and concept which allegedly do not match each other. I cannot see an even remotely plausible reason of this type for thinking that **I** does not meet (B_1). What about the question whether **ruby** meets (E_1)? Here I can think of two sorts of objections someone might have. First, it might be said that, for some thinkers who possess **ruby**, the thought that *that* (visually presented) colour is ruby is informative. Such a thinker of course never has perceptual experience of ruby things as falling under **ruby**, i.e. never perceptually experiences them as ruby.[18] Therefore, someone can possess the concept **ruby** without perceiving anything as ruby. Secondly, in a similar vein it might be argued that someone previously sighted but now blind may possess **ruby**. Such a subject is not disposed to experience any object as ruby. *A fortiori*, she is not disposed to experience a ruby object presented under normal conditions as ruby. My reply to the first objection is this. Suppose we change our description of Jill so that she exemplifies what the objection suggests to be possible. If Jill is ignorant of the truth that *that* (visually presented) colour is ruby, she does not visually recognise ruby things as ruby. If we revise our description of Jill above (on which the only difference was her use of these concepts in visually based judgement) so

[17] See Fodor 1998 for a defence of atomism.
[18] See ft. n. 13 above.

as to take this into account, we are then left with a description on which there is no difference between the roles **scarlet** and **ruby** play in her psychological life. But this is inconsistent with PoD, the principle underlying (3). This reply bears on the second objection too. With regard to that objection, an additional point may also be made. In (E_1), 'normal conditions' includes conditions of perception both external and internal to the subject. Arguably, what count as normal internal conditions of visual perception for a previously sighted subject are the conditions that normally obtained when he was sighted. A ruby object presented in those conditions does dispose her to experience it as ruby.

Essentially the same style of reply offered to the first objection here – that it is inconsistent with PoD – may be offered to the objection that **tilted-square** simply does not satisfy (A_1). The conceptualist may agree, of course, that the *particular* disposition to action mentioned in (A_1) may be unnecessary to possess the concept. However, she can formulate a dilemma at this point. Is there some other disposition to action with which possession of **titled-square** is characteristically associated, but with which **upright-diamond** is not characteristically associated, or is there none? If there is some, then even if (A_1) is false, another (A)-type condition of essentially the same kind can be given. If there is none, and this fact about the situation is incorporated into the description of Frank above, it turns out that **upright-diamond** and **tilted-square** play just the same role in his mental life, which is inconsistent with PoD.

Before turning to the second type of objection, in the next sub-section, I will consider a certain 'hard-line' reponse to the dilemma just stated. The 'hard-line' response affirms its second horn, but argues that it does *not* lead into conflict with PoD. According to the

hard-line response, *even if* a difference in role between **tilted-square** and **upright-diamond** does not show up in action or in standing beliefs (beliefs outside of transient visually grounded judgements), there *remains* a difference between the roles these concepts play. This is a difference that consists *only* in the fact that seeing a thing as tilted square disposes him to judge **(…tilted-square…)**, while seeing it as an upright regular diamond disposes him to judge **(…upright-diamond…)**.

This suggestion is not very plausible. First, the suggested role of the concepts for Frank involves a violation of 'harmony', in the sense of Dummett (1978: 220-2). Let's introduce a concept **W** equivalent to the disjunction of **upright-diamond** and **tilted-square**. The hard-line suggestion takes it to be essential to grasp of **upright-diamond** that one operates with a stronger evidential standard for making an **upright-diamond**-predication than one operates with for making a **W**-predication. Yet while it essentially takes stronger evidence to make an **upright-diamond**-predication than a **W**-predication, there is no requirement that one be disposed to draw any stronger (non-question-begging) conclusions from **(…upright-diamond…)** than from **(…W…)**.

Second, no external interpreter could ever have any reason to assume that Frank has two distinct concepts of squareness. Indeed, Frank could not even himself think thoughts of the relevant non-question-begging kind that would give him a reason to ascribe two different shape concepts of squareness to himself. The hard-line suggestion is thus committed to facts about what concepts someone possesses that go well beyond anything available to our normal practices of intentional ascription.[19] If one is prepared to go that far in the direction of realism about concept identity, one has very little

[19] If one is attracted to a broadly 'interpretivist' view of intentional states, this is a sufficient reason to reject the hard-line view. See Child 1994 for a discussion of various forms of interpretivism.

logical room left to give a compelling motivation for the broadly functionalist view underlying PoD. The hard-line suggestion is thus not an attractive defence of the non-circularity argument.

5.4.2 Are the (B)-, (E)- and (A)-type conditions possession conditions in the strict sense?

The second type of objection to the conceptualist strategy alleges that at least some of the (B)-, (E)- or (A)-type conditions put forward are not possession conditions in the strict sense, since they do not meet the restrictions on the appropriate substitutions of $\mathcal{A}$. This objection can clearly not be justly directed against (B_1), which seems entirely parallel to the paradigm possession conditions Peacocke puts forward.[20] It is similarly very hard to see any good objection to counting the (A)-type conditions as bona fide possession conditions. I will, however, consider two types of reasons one might have for doubting the claim of the (E)-type conditions to count as bona fide possession conditions.

As we saw in section 5.1 above, it is notable that all the possession conditions Peacocke gives specify what will lead someone to *judge* contents involving the target concept, or what *judging* them will lead her to. The (E)-type conditions do not invoke judgement at all, speaking only of what will lead one to have *perceptual experiences* with the target contents. Perhaps they thereby violate a tacit restriction on bona fide possession conditions – viz. that imposed by answer (ii) to the 'attitude question' formulated at the end of 5.1? A reason someone might have for suspecting so is that Peacocke at one point connects up the feature of possession conditions that they specify judgements of

[20] Most (but not all, see *SC* ch. 4) of the conditions Peacocke puts forward purport to be individuating conditions, not merely differentiating conditions. But this is orthogonal to the present point.

target content with a key theoretical role he wants possession conditions to play, namely that of being such that the reference of the concept can be determined from them (perhaps along with the world):

> Concepts are individuated by their possession conditions; the possession conditions mention judgments of certain contents containing the concepts; judgement necessarily has truth as one of its aims; and the truth of a content depends on the references of its conceptual constitutents. It would be wrong, then, to regard the referential relations in which concepts stand as grafted onto a structure that can be elucidated without any reference to reference (p. 17)

Yet, if the (E)-type conditions should be criticised on these grounds, any conceptualist who wants to invoke an them condition has two good replies here. First, (E_1), to use that condition as our example, does not purport to be an *individuating* possession condition for **ruby**. It is consistent with (E_1) being a *differentiating* possession condition that other, perhaps spurious or low-grade 'concepts' satisfy the condition. Thus, it may very well be that an individuating condition for **ruby** needs to be considerably stronger than (E_1). One respect in which an individuating condition needs to be stronger, perhaps, is that it needs to specify a certain basic role of **ruby** in judgement. The only possession conditions that are plausible candidate determiners of reference are individuating possession conditions.

Secondly, the reason Peacocke gives for the importance of judgement to the reference-determining role of possession conditions – that they aim at truth – does not, in any event, rule out appeal to perceptual experiences. Perceptual experiences aim at truth just as much as assertions, or states of someone's telling one that so-and-so, and the latter states certainly aim at truth. The belief-independence of perception does not show that

experience does not aim at truth, just as the possibility of disbelieving what someone tells one does not show that assertion does not aim at truth.[21]

In section 5.1, we pointed out another notable feature of the possession conditions Peacocke puts forward in *SC*: the transitions they specify into, and out of, the specified attitude to the target content are all *rational transitions* – they all comply with the narrower answer (ii) to the 'transition question'. Consider this example:

> For the thinker to possess the concept **square** (**C**) … he must be willing to believe the thought $\mathbf{Cm_1}$ where $\mathbf{m_1}$ is a perceptual demonstrative, when he is taking his experience at face value, the object of the demonstrative $\mathbf{m_1}$ is presented in an apparently square region of his environment, and he experiences that region as having equal sides and as symmetrical about the bisectors of its sides…. (p. 108)

A judgement with the noted content made under the noted conditions at least normally qualifies as a rational response to the experiences in question. If someone makes that judgement on the basis of the experience, the judgement is susceptible of a rational explanation in terms of the experience. This makes it a rational transition. With regard to this feature, there is a clear contrast with condition (E_1). The latter specifies conditions under which a thinker will 'make a transition' (the phrase is slightly strained here) into an experience with the target content. However veridical that experience is, and however non-deviantly it depends on the things it is of, an experience is *simply not the kind of state* that it makes sense to criticise or assess on grounds of its rationality. Connectedly, it is simply not the kind of state that one can rationally explain, i.e. explain in terms of the subject's reasons for taking it, in the way one can rationally

[21] See Martin (2002a) for a discussion of this 'affirmative' character of perceptual experiences.

explain someone's judgements, actions, or plans. Perhaps (E)-type conditions disqualify as possession conditions (in the strict sense) for just this reason? Perhaps possession conditions essentially can mention only rational transitions into, or out of, attitudes to the target content? We may call the idea that this is so the 'Rational Transition Constraint'.[22]

It is not wholly clear whether Peacocke himself endorses that constraint. In favour of the view that he does, one might observe that all the examples of possession conditions given in *SC* conform to it. This practice coheres with a remark in his most recent reflections on the theory of concepts:

> Suppose concepts *C* and *D* are the same in respect of which transitions in thought a thinker must, as a constitutive matter, be rationally willing to make if he is to possess the concept, where the transitions in question involve a judgment whose content contains the concept. Such a transition may be from a mental state to a judgement; it may be a transition in the reverse direction. (…) Suppose also that the concepts *C* and *D* receive the same account of how the semantic value of each is determined, together with the world, from these transitions. (…) *C* will be identical with *D* in these circumstances because *concepts have the nature they do on account of their role in rational explanation by a thinker's reasons*. It is part of the specification of the example that *C* and *D* have *the same part to play in such rational explanation; that is, they have the same possession condition.* (Peacocke 2005: 167-8, my emphases)

This quotation certainly seems to point in the same direction as McDowell's remarks above, and thus to give succour to the adherent of the Rational Transition Constraint. At

[22] Interestingly, a central theme in McDowell might be taken to support the constraint. The theme is expressed in such terms as '[T]he topography of the conceptual sphere is constituted by rational relations. The space of concepts is at least part of what Wilfrid Sellars calls the 'the space of reasons' (1994: 5) See also McDowell 1994: 11-12, 35, 124-5. It is not clear, however, whether McDowell himself would want to endorse the Rational Transition Constraint.

the same time, Peacocke remarks in *SC* that '[i]t must be legitimate for an account of mastery of a concept to require that the thinker have some kind of sensitivity to instances of that concept in the world around him.' (p. 9) Condition (E) seems to be a very natural way of formulating such a sensitivity, in as much as perceptual experience is a peculiarly immediate way for our minds to be sensitive to the world. To sidestep the issue of interpretation, we might posit a philosopher, Peacocke*, who endorses the Rational Transition Constraint, and who may or may not be in agreement with the Peacocke of *SC* (or of 2005). The question is whether Peacocke* is right.

Since Peacocke* certainly agrees with the basic and major features of *SC*, he certainly agrees that concepts are individuated by the Distinctness Principle (p. 2), quoted in section 5.1 above. It would be natural to think, then, that the Rational Transition Constraint (being a constraint on concept-individuation) can be motivated in terms of the Distinctness Principle. At present, we may take the latter to be simply the general, intuitive Fregean idea that concepts are individuated by cognitive significance (leaving the difficulties encountered in chapter 3 over the precise formulation of the idea on one side). It would be natural to think, in other words, that if we construct a situation in which two concepts count as distinct *solely* on account of an (E)-type condition, they would count as the same by the Distinctness Principle, thus showing the (E) type condition to be spuriously differentiating. Let's suppose that the example of Jill above affords a case where – if the conceptualist is correct – the only differentiating possession condition between **ruby** and **scarlet** is (E_1). The question is whether this entails that for any pair of contents **(…ruby…)** and **(…scarlet…)**, where **scarlet**

replaces **ruby** at *all* places, the one content is informative only if the other is.[23] The answer is obviously 'no'. Suppose that Jill is made to experience something as ruby, by the presence of something ruby, without experiencing anything as scarlet, thanks to the absence of things scarlet. In this circumstance Jill judges that the thing in question is ruby, but currently has no view as to whether anything is scarlet. Thus the contents **That is ruby** and **That is scarlet** differ in cognitive significance for her.

This argument presumes, of course, that the concepts **ruby** and **scarlet** do have a role in judgement for Jill. True, (E_1) does not entail that either concept has such a role. But (E_1) only purports to be a differentiating possession condition; it is fully consistent with (E_1) playing this role that **ruby** is subject to further possession conditions detailing its role in judgment.

5.5 Conclusion

Peacocke's non-circularity argument is the argument that the conceptualism is untenable, because it prevents us from giving the needed non-question-begging, differentiating possession conditions for observational or demonstrative concepts. The conceptualists who, to my knowledge, have responded to the argument in print – including McDowell, Sedivy and Brewer – have objected that it relies on a false or at least unmotivated non-circularity restriction. I have argued that this response is unwise, and suggested an alternative. This alternative seems to honour all the salient constraints upon which Peacocke rests his non-circularity argument.

[23] The reason we have to replace **ruby** with **scarlet** at all places is that to presume that we could do otherwise is to presume that **ruby** and **scarlet** are distinct, which is begs just what is in question at this point.

6

Campbell on the Explanatory Role of Experience[1]

The non-circularity objection is, in broad terms, the objection that the conceptualist is unable to give an adequate account of demonstrative or other observational concepts, because she takes these concepts to be implicated in our experiences of the things these concepts are concepts of. In *Reference and Consciousness* (*RC*) (2002), John Campbell presents a number of arguments that can be seen as variations on this broad theme.[2] They all trade on the same underlying constraint, viz. that perceptual experience of objects has a certain explanatory role to play, particularly in regard to our understanding of demonstratives. The arguments make the case, in various ways, that the conceptualist cannot honour this explanatory role of perceptual experience. In this chapter, I respond to these arguments on behalf of the conceptualist.

Grouping Campbell's arguments together with Peacocke's non-circularity argument (considered in the last chapter) as variations on the same theme, should not obscure various significant differences both among Campbell's own arguments, and between his

[1] I would like to clarify that this chapter was conceived and written at a stage when Prof Campbell was no longer my supervisor. He has not yet had the opportunity to respond to the points I make, or correct possible misinterpretations. When I write 'Campbell might say…' and the like, these solely reflect my own conjectures, and are not grounded on knowledge of how Prof Campbell would actually prefer to respond.

[2] All page-references in this chapter are to this work, unless otherwise noted.

arguments and Peacocke's. The differences pertain to points both of principle and detail, as well as to what conceptualist claim is attacked. As we shall see, at least one of Campbell's arguments purports to discredit not just conceptualism but any view that affirms weak intentionalism. As such it is as much an objection to nonconceptualism as to conceptualism, since nonconceptualism, in our sense, is the thesis that perceptual experience has nonconceptual *intentional* content. Campbell's objections to conceptualism thus figure as stepping stones *en route* not to nonconceptualism but to his 'Relational View' of experience, a radical form of naïve realism, according to which (veridical) experience is of the environment in a somehow more direct or primitive way than any intentional state can be.

6.1 The Explanatory Role of Experience

The two chapters of *RC* dealing with the nature of 'perceptual experience of objects' (p. 114) open with the following comment:

> I have been arguing that experience of objects has an explanatory role to play: it explains our ability to think demonstratively about perceived objects. Experience of a perceived object is what provides you with knowledge of reference of a demonstrative referring to it. (*ibid.*)

This passage posits an explanatory role for experience, and characterises that role in two ways: it is the role of explaining 'our ability to think demonstratively about perceived objects' and it is the role of being 'what provides [us] with knowledge of reference of a demonstrative referring to it'. First of all, we should briefly elucidate what Campbell says is being explained here. To have 'knowledge of reference of a demonstrative' is to know which object it refers to. Such knowledge is, Campbell holds, a precondition for

understanding the demonstrative.[3] He holds moreover that knowledge of reference of a demonstrative is not, in the ordinary case, knowledge whose content is specifiable by a definite description applying uniquely to the relevant object (such as, e.g.. 'the red cup in front of me'), nor could it, in basic cases of demonstrative reference, be such descriptive knowledge. [4] Rather, in the basic cases, knowledge of reference of the demonstrative has the character of what Russell called 'direct acquaintance' with the object of reference.[5] If someone has such knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative, they are able to think demonstratively of the object in question. The converse does not, on the face of it hold, at least if 'demonstrative' means 'demonstrative term': clearly, one can think demonstratively of a perceived object (i.e. have thoughts whose expression would use demonstratives) without oneself or anyone else using a demonstrative term to refer to the object in the relevant context. Still, it is quite clear that Campbell intends to be illuminating the nature of demonstrative thinking about perceived objects in his discussions of what it is to have knowledge of reference of a demonstrative. His operating assumption seems to be that we can 'get at' the nature of demonstrative thinking by considering what it takes to have knowledge of reference of a demonstrative. I will therefore be operating on the interpretation that when Campbell speaks of having 'knowledge of reference of a demonstrative' he is interested in this mental state in so far as it involves what we may call 'grasp of a demonstrative concept', where we grasp such a demonstrative concept whenever we think of an object demonstratively, whether or not we actually use a demonstrative term to refer to the object.

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[3] Campbell thus seems to endorse what Evans (1982: ch. 4) called 'Russell's Principle'.

[4] Strawson (1959) famously argued that demonstrative reference is basic to our scheme of reference to basic objective particulars, and irreducible to descriptive reference (although Strawson did not use just those terms). Campbell endorses this argument, e.g. on p. 249 and in Campbell 1993.

[5] Henceforth in this chapter, 'knowledge of reference of a demonstrative' will always be taken to mean such non-descriptive knowledge.

Campbell motivates the claim that experience 'provides knowledge of reference' in terms of examples of the following kind (pp. 7-10). Suppose that you and I are in a room full of people. At some point, you make a remark about 'that man'. How is it that I am able to understand the remark you make, using this demonstrative? In the ordinary case, I do so by making sure that I have the person in question within my field of view. But I do more than that. I also single him out in my experience of the room: I attend to him. In this way, I come to know who you referred to, and to understand the remark you made using the relevant demonstrative. It seems, then, in this case, that my conscious experience of the man, indeed my conscious attention to him, provides me with knowledge of reference for your demonstrative. This common-sense view, Campbell argues, is fundamentally correct.

As Campbell notes (pp. 7-8), the common-sense view is subject to the objection that conscious *experience* is epiphenomenal. The epiphenomenalist may appeal to blindsight subjects to make his case. These are subjects who are able reliably to answer questions about, and perform simple actions towards, objects positioned in an area of their visual field of which they claim to have no conscious experience.[6] Consider how an understanding of a demonstrative term, such as 'That man' in the example above, is manifested. One aspect is surely that one is able to verify (or, as appropriate, falsify) assertions made in terms of it – 'That man is standing', say – or correctly answer questions made in terms of it – 'Is that man standing?', say. Another aspect is that one is able to act appropriately on the basis of requests made in terms of it – is able reliably to comply if asked to walk over and touch 'that man's' shoulder, say. To some degree,

[6] See Weiskrantz 1986.

blindsight subjects seem to be able to do both of these things, and thus seem to have a good claim to understand the demonstrative terms. Accordingly, they seem to be able to think demonstratively of the object in question. Given that they lack conscious experience of the referent, this suggests that, even in the normal case, it is not conscious experience that provides the understanding of the demonstrative, but rather some sort of information-processing systems operating relatively independently of consciousness. So, anyway, an epiphenomenalist might argue.

Campbell argues however that blindsight subjects *cannot* understand the demonstrative non-descriptively. He argues, that is, they cannot get non-descriptive knowledge of reference of the demonstrative. His reason for denying them such knowledge is bound up with his conception of what knowledge of reference of a term – or, what we take to come to the same thing, grasping a demonstrative concept – is and does, a conception he calls the Classical View:

> *The Classical View* Knowledge of what it is for a proposition to be true is what causes, and justifies, your use of a particular way of verifying, and finding the implications of, that proposition. (p. 24) [7]

One's knowledge of reference of a term is thus a state distinct from the use of that term, as exhibited in the ways in which one is able to verify and act on utterances involving the term. Thus even if a blindsight patient to some extent is able to mimic the pattern of use of demonstratives of a normal perceiver, she does not to that extent exhibit a non-descriptive knowledge of reference of the demonstrative. The reason is that the blindseer lacks precisely what causes and justifies that pattern of use for a normal

[7] Knowledge of what it is for a proposition to be true is what stands to a proposition as knowledge of reference stands to a term.

perceiver. It is this lack of justification, in particular, that makes it compelling to common sense that the blindseer is only *guessing* about the object in her blind field.[8] Blindsight thus does not refute the common-sense idea that conscious experience of an object is what provides knowledge of reference of the demonstrative, or so Campbell argues. Below, we shall elaborate further on what Campbell takes this role of experience, i.e.?in providing knowledge of reference of a demonstrative, to involve.

6.2 Campbell's Targets

Campbell takes reflection on the explanatory role of experience to discredit not merely conceptualism but a number of other influential views of perceptual experience. The latter notably include any view endorsing weak intentionalism, the claim that perception has intentional or representational content. They also include traditional indirect realist or 'representative realist' views of perception, à la Locke (pp.153-156). I will here consider his case only as far as it bears on conceptualism, either specifically or in so far as conceptualism presupposes weak intentionalism.

Now, Campbell tends not to use the term 'conceptualism' or its cognates. He does, however, identify a certain 'common factor theory' in the following terms:

> [The common factor view] takes it for granted that experience of the world is a way of grasping thoughts about the world. To see an object is, on this conception, to grasp a demonstrative proposition. There are many ways in which one can grasp a proposition: you can grasp it as the content of speech or as the meaning of a wink or sigh. One way in which you can grasp a proposition

[8] Campbell remarks: 'It ought to be possible to view the use of a particular method of verification as being justified by your knowledge of what it would be for the proposition to be true. Your use of the method of verification has an objective, defined and grasped prior to the use of that method of verification. The objective is to find out whether the proposition is true. So it ought to be possible to view the method of verification as a way of meeting that objective.' (p. 23)

> is as the content of vision. The common factor theorist says that ordinary vision involves grasping demonstrative propositions as the contents of experiences. (p. 121)

He similarly identifies a form of disjunctivism making the same claims but adding that the demonstrative proposition grasped is object-dependent. (p. 122) The 'common factor' and disjunctivist theories so identified thus share the view that visual experience involves entertaining, in a certain visual-experiential way, a demonstrative proposition. Conceptualist may be presumed to be happy to endorse that view. Indeed, I will presume that Campbell and the conceptualist can agree that the latter's view has the following three features:

(i) **The Identification** Conceptualism identifies a state of having conscious perceptual attention to an object with a state of entertaining (or 'grasping'), in a certain perceptual-attentional mode, a demonstrative concept of that object.[9]

(ii) **Attitude Assimilation** Conceptualism assimilates perceptual experiences to paradigm propositional attitudes such as beliefs, desires and intentions, in so far as it treats them as involving a distinctive mental relation to a content, where this content is also entertainable in thought.[10]

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[9] Let 'congruentism' be the label for a view endorsing content congruence but rejecting state conceptualism. (These two theses are displayed in the Introduction; for now I will simply assume that this combination is coherent, see section 7.5) The question whether the congruentist is committed to the Identification depends on an ambiguity in 'concept' (hence in 'demonstrative concept') to be discussed in section 7.1. If 'demonstrative concept' is taken in the *abstract* sense, as a constituent of an intentional content, the congruentist is (on independently plausible assumptions) committed to the Identification. However, if 'demonstrative concept' is taken in the *concrete* sense – in particular, if it is taken in the sense of a concrete conceptual capacity (see 7.1) – the congruentist is not committed to the Identification.

[10] The congruentist (see the last note) is committed to Attitude Assimilation as formulated in the text. Still, the outright conceptualist (who affirms state conceptualism in addition to content congruence) assimilates perceptual experiences to paradigm attitudes like beliefs, judgements, plans, etc. even more strongly, in so far as the latter takes the contentfulness of experiences, like the contentfulness of beliefs

(iii) **Weak Intentionalism** Conceptualism takes it that experience is of the world by having intentional content concerning that world.

I will now consider three lines of argument that are more or less explicitly put forward by Campbell. They target, respectively, the first, the second, and the third of these features of conceptualism. In the final section, I respond to an alternative, 'abductive' construal of the second line of argument.

6.3 The Direct Argument

In some passages, Campbell seems to suggest that the explanatory role of experience excludes conceptualism in a fairly direct way. He writes for example

> I have been arguing that we have to think of knowledge of the reference of a demonstrative as provided by conscious attention to the object in question. For conscious singling-out of the object to be what explains your knowledge of reference, it cannot be a matter of demonstrative reference to the thing. Otherwise it would presuppose what it explains. (p. 97)

On one reading, this passage could be taken to suggest the following Direct Argument

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etc. to depend on the activation of conceptual capacities. The congruentist dissociates himself from that further assimilation. On the other hand, *any* weak intentionalist view can be regarded as assimilating perceptual experiences to belief and propositional attitudes to *some* extent. As Johnston (1997: 172) says, 'On the Intentionalist View, visual experience is a sui generic propositional attitude – visually entertaining a certain content concerning the scene before the eyes.' We can thus see content nonconceptualism, congruentism, and outright conceptualism as three progressively stronger assimilations of experience to paradigm propositional attitudes.

The Direct Argument

(1) *S*'s consciously attending to an object *o* explains *S*'s grasping, in a perceptual-attentional mode, a demonstrative concept of *o*.

(2) If the obtaining of a condition *A* explains the obtaining of a condition *B*, the conditions are not identical.[11]

∴ The Identification is false.

It is not wholly clear whether Campbell ought to be read as resting any of his case against conceptualism on the Direct Argument. While some passages seem to suggest an inference along the lines of that argument, I have some hesitation about attributing the argument to him; we may thus regard it as a somewhat peripheral or perhaps honorary member of the class 'Campbell's arguments against conceptualism'. In any event, it is useful to consider the argument on its own merits, since the best conceptualist response to it brings out an important feature of the conceptualist's view. As we shall see, this response suggests a way in which some remarks of Campbell's, on a pretty natural reading, can be called upon to serve as premises of a valid argument *for* conceptualism.

The conceptualist response in question turns on distinguishing two notions of conditions. On one notion, conditions are as fine-grained as epistemic possibilities. Thus the condition of containing water is distinct from the condition of containing H_2O, since it may be informative for someone who knows that the condition of containing water is met to be told that the condition of containing H_2O is met. On this 'epistemic' notion of conditions, premise (2) of the Direct Argument is certainly true: to explain

[11] I use 'states' and 'conditions' interchangeably in this chapter.

something certainly requires saying something informative. However, on this epistemic notion, the inference is invalid, since the notion of conditions relevant to the conclusion is not so finely individuated. The notion of conditions relevant to the Identification is rather a more coarse-grained, 'metaphysical' one. On the latter notion, modern science has discovered that the condition of containing water *just is* the condition of containing H_2O.[12] If one relies on the epistemic notion of conditions in the premises, the Direct Argument is a fallacy of equivocation.

If, on the other hand, one assumes the metaphysical notion of conditions, premise (2) of the argument is false. At least, it is false if the notion of *explanation* is taken generically, as, say, an informative answer to a 'why' question. In this generic sense, one can explain why someone breached the parking code, say, in terms of the wheels of her car not being inside the yellow lines. Here, the explanation gives not the cause of the offence, but rather what constituted this particular breach of the parking code.[13] Arguably, in this generic sense, it makes sense to explain a condition (on the metaphysical notion) in terms of a re-description of the selfsame condition. Thus suppose a beginning physics student asks his teacher, 'Why is the air pressure inside this container increasing?' At least for some purposes, a teacher may informatively and appropriately reply 'Because the force, per unit area, exerted on the inside of the container by air molecules is increasing.' The informativeness of this answer in no way implies that air pressure is not the same as force per unit area exerted by air molecules. Such re-descriptions may be informative, and hence in a generic sense explanatory,

[12] For the special case of *truth* conditions, Burge (1991: 196) notes 'the distinction between (1) construing "truth condition" as a requirement that has to be met for an Intentional state to be veridical (here the truth condition itself has Intentional or referential properties), and (2) construing a "truth condition" as what the requirement makes reference to – what would fulfil the requirement if the Intentional state is veridical (here the truth condition is something like a state of affairs).' (Burge credits the distinction to Searle). The 'epistemic' notion of conditions corresponds to Burge's first notion of truth conditions, the 'metaphysical' notion to his section notion.

[13] The example is drawn from Child 1994.

since they may bring to mind new sorts of connections between the state of affairs in question and others. Suppose that our physics student has learnt some elementary laws about force, but that his grip on the notion of pressure is merely recognition-based or deference-dependent. When his teacher re-describes the phenomenon in terms of force, the student can at once see it as a special case of the preservation of momentum, or of the law of action-and-reaction, say. The conceptualist sees the relation between describing someone as consciously attending to something and describing him as grasping (in a perceptual-attentional way) a demonstrative concept of that thing as parallel. The first description portrays the state as a special case of perception and conscious experience. It makes vivid that the state is one a subject can be in only if they have a conscious, perceptual relation to the attended object. The second description casts the state as a special case of thinking and reasoning. It makes it vivid that the state is one subjects can be in only if they are thinking some, however elementary, thoughts about the object and are in a position to connect their mental 'take' on the object with their background knowledge or overall world view.

Of course, there are more specific notions of explanation on which premise (2) is plausible, even when 'conditions' are understood in the metaphysical sense. In particular, (2) is plausible if we take the notion of explanation at play to be one of *causal* explanation, since no condition causally explains itself. Suppose, then, that we take the notion of explanation in (2) to be that of causal explanation. The problem is that this makes (2) plausible at the expense of (1). When (1) is re-interpreted as saying that conscious attention to an object causally explains grasp (in a perceptual way) of a demonstrative concept, it becomes much more doubtful whether we ought to accept it. Whereas Campbell makes a pretty compelling case that conscious attention to an object

somehow provides and is a necessary condition for grasping a demonstrative concept of that object, he does not do much, as far as I can see, to argue that conscious attention to an object *causally explains* grasp of a demonstrative concept. Indeed, I cannot see that Campbell even explicitly asserts that conscious attention to the object causes grasp of the demonstrative concept. What he does argue at length, as we saw above, is that conscious attention 'causes … the *use of particular procedures for verifying and finding the implications of* propositions containing the demonstrative' (p. 26, my emphasis). Yet Campbell's Classical View distinguishes sharply between having knowledge of reference of a term – grasping the concept the term expresses – and using particular methods or procedures in verifying and finding the implications of propositions involving the term. Between the latter conditions, a causal relation is explicitly asserted to hold:

> *The Classical View* Knowledge of what it is for a proposition to be true is what causes, and justifies, your use of a particular way of verifying, and finding the implications of, that proposition. (p. 24)

Intriguingly to the conceptualist, Campbell sometimes says that conscious attention causes (and justifies) the use of particular procedures for verifying and finding the implications of propositions, and sometimes says that knowledge of reference of the demonstrative causes (and justifies) this use. The following passage is notable in this regard.

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

knowledge of reference of the demonstrative is provided by conscious attention to the object.' (pp. 25-26)

This is intriguing to the conceptualist since, on a pretty natural reading, it allows one to construct a valid argument for the conceptualist identification. Let 'KOR' abbreviate 'having knowledge of reference of a demonstrative', 'CA' abbreviate 'conscious attention', and 'the CJ role' abbreviate 'the role of causing and justifying the use of particular procedures for verifying (etc.)'. We can then formulate the following argument, which is of the form Lewis (1972) suggested we use to establish theoretical and psychophysical identifications:

The Lewis-Type Argument

(1) KOR = the state that has the CJ role.

(2) CA = the state that has the CJ role.

∴ CA = KOR.

This argument of course fits in very nicely with the conceptualist account above of how it can be explanatory to re-describe a state of consciously attending to an object as a state of grasping a demonstrative concept.[14] Thus on one natural reading of some of Campbell's central characterisations of the explanatory role of experience, far from ruling out conceptualism, the role actually demands it.

[14] While the Lewis-Type Argument is formally exactly like the arguments for theoretical and psychophysical identifications put forward by Lewis (1972), it is, arguably, disanalogous from the latter in so far as Lewis took the two premises of his arguments to differ significantly in their epistemic source: one to depend on conceptual analysis and the other on empirical research. In the Lewis-Type Argument the two premises seem broadly on a par as regards their source.

Although the reading of the passage above on which it involves a commitment to the premises of the Lewis-Type Argument is at least pretty natural, is it not very charitable, in light of Campbell's express rejection of the conclusion of the argument. Is there any alternative way of reading what he explicitly says, on which he is not committed to the premises? Campbell repeatedly and unequivocally affirms that KOR is (at least) *a* state that has the CJ role. The affirmation that CA is (at least) *a* state that has the CJ role is perhaps less emphatic, but still seems relatively clear. I can only see two ways of escaping the Lewis-Type Argument against this background. The first option is that KOR and CA are two distinct states that equally play the CJ role. They both, in the same sense, cause and justify the use of certain procedures for verifying and finding the implications of propositions. I find it hard to see how this sort of overdetermination could be motivated.[15] The second option is that CA plays the CJ role in a different sense from that in which KOR plays it, in that CA plays it 'at one remove', via KOR. That is to say that CA causes KOR which in turn causes and justifies the use of the procedures for verifying etc.

If this second option is correct, we may strengthen 'explanation' in premise (1) of the Direct Argument to 'causal explanation'. If we do the same for 'explanation' in premise (2), and adopt the metaphysical notion of conditions, then premise (2) is plausible and the inference valid. This second option is thus independently attractive for Campbell. However, as noted, I cannot see that he argues for, or even explicitly asserts, that conscious attention causally explains grasp of demonstrative concept. Nor can I see any compelling reasons for that causal claim.

[15] In the text attached to ft. n. 29 below we will discuss another putative case of overdetermination that Campbell expressly argues is unproblematic. I here want to point out that even if Campbell is right about this, the same would not apply to the form of overdetermination envisaged in the text here, viz. one in which two distinct (relatively) categorical states play the same causal role.

6.4 The Argument against Attitude Assimilation

The following passage delivers the most sustained attack in *RC* specifically directed against conceptualism.

> Experience is what explains our grasp of the concepts of objects. But if you think of experience as intentional, as merely one among many ways of grasping thoughts, you cannot allow it this explanatory role. Suppose someone said: 'Actually, reading newspapers is the fundamental way in which you understand the concepts of a mind-independent world. All your conceptual skills depend on your ability to read newspapers.' The natural response to this would be that reading newspapers does indeed involve the exercise of conceptual skills, but it is simply one way among many of exercising those conceptual skills. Just so, if all there is to experience of objects is the grasping of demonstrative thoughts about them, then experience of objects is just one among many ways in which you can exercise your conceptual skills. At this point we do not have any way of explaining why there should be anything fundamental to our grasp of concepts about experience of objects. (p. 122) [16]

In saying that the conceptualist treats experience merely as 'one among many ways of grasping thoughts', Campbell is not denying that the conceptualist can recognise experience as special in *some* ways. He allows (p. 121) that the conceptualist can treat experience as involving a special perceptual *attitude* to – a special *mode of entertaining* of – conceptual content, one expressible by, say, 'It visually appears to S that so-and-so' or 'S has the visual impression that so-and-so'. In a similar way, we can posit, for example, a certain 'testimonial' attitude to an intentional content, one instantiated in being told that so-and-so, perhaps by a newspaper.[17] His point seems to be rather that being special in this way is not being special enough. If visual experience is one attitude

[16] For present purposes we can read 'conceptual' for 'intentional'. Campbell does indeed argue that the explanatory role of experience rules out even weak intentionalism, but in this passage he seems to be engaging with conceptualism specifically.

[17] See ft. n.19, chapter 2, and the text attached to it for a brief discussion of testimony reports and the testimony states that they report.

and being told something another, there is no reason why the former should have the special role it has for grasp of demonstrative concepts. The Attitude-Assimilation aspect of conceptualism prevents it from recognising the explanatory role of experience.

To meet this argument with an appeal to the Identification – to insist that conscious attention simply *is* to entertain, in a perceptual-attentional mode, a demonstrative concept, and that *that* is why attention is special to our grasp of demonstrative concepts – seems question-begging. The conceptualist has a better reply, however. Campbell's argument presumes that distinctions in attitude to (in the mode of entertaining of) a content are of no significance to an account of concepts. But this presumption – which we may call the Indifference principle – is subject to counterexamples that do not have anything to do with experience, and as such must be wholly non-question-begging in this context. A first shot at formulation of the principle is

> **Strong Indifference** For the purposes of explaining what it is to grasp a given concept, the exercise of that concept in the content of, or otherwise essentially connected with, propositional attitudes of one mode is no more fundamental than its exercise in the content of, or essentially connected with, propositional attitudes of any other mode.[18]

A relatively uncontroversial counterexample to Strong Indifference is judgement. Many and perhaps most philosophical theories of concepts agree that judgement, or belief, has a certain centrality not shared by, say, uncommitted attitudes such as merely leisurely

[18] The exercise of a concept is 'essentially connected with' propositional attitudes of a given mode if transitions into or out of such attitudes is a somehow telling or characteristic trait of the psychological role of the concept.

entertaining a thought that A.[19] Most theories will agree that it is necessary for possessing the concept *toad*, say, that one has certain beliefs about toads; few will agree that it is necessary that one leisurely entertains certain thoughts about toads.

However, Campbell's objection does not need anything as strong as Strong Indifference. The centrality of judgement, as Campbell might point out, seems to apply *across the board* to all concepts. In contrast, experience is directly central only to a restricted set (or a certain type) of concepts: most concepts do not require very particular experiences to be entertained. The following principle would thus suffice for the purposes of Campbell's argument

> **Weak Indifference** For the purposes of explaining what the difference between grasping one type of concept and grasping another type of concept consists in, the exercise of the concepts in question in the content of, or otherwise essentially connected with, propositional attitudes of one mode is no more fundamental than their exercise in the content of, or essentially connected with, propositional attitudes of any other mode.

Yet Weak Indifference is still subject to putative counterexamples that do not have anything in particular to do with experience. One putative counterexample is the apparently special role of intention in an account of normative concepts.[20] Many

[19] In section 5.4.2 we observed how Peacocke assigns special significance to judgments in his account of concepts. Agreeing that judgments indeed have a certain pre-eminence in an account of concepts is consistent with the point made in that section, that differentiating possession conditions may be also specified without appeal to judgement.

[20] Arguably, another counterexample to the spirit, if not the letter, of Weak Indifference is the apparently central role of counting for grasp of concepts of numbers, and perhaps for other arithmetical concepts such as addition. For arguments that counting is fundamental to grasp of concept of number, see Geach 1957 and Carey forthcoming. Counting is not an attitude, so there is no conflict with the letter of Weak Indifference. But it is a special way of *using* the concepts in question.

philosophers have thought that there is an essential connection between someone's making the judgement that she ought to act in a certain way, that subject's being rational, and her intending to act in that way. One formulation of this link is given by Normative Judgement Internalism (NJI). Ralph Wedgwood has recently put that claim as follows:

> **Normative Judgement Internalism** 'Necessarily, if one is rational, then, if one judges "I ought to Φ", one also intends to Φ.' (Wedgwood 2004: 407)

NJI has often been associated with non-cognitivism; however, as Wedgwood argues, it is consistent with cognitivism and even realism.[21] If the claim – or a slightly weaker claim that still maintains a distinctive link between normative judgement and intention – is correct, then it will plausibly have a reflection in an account of normative concepts. It will plausibly imply, say, that possession of the concept **ought** presumes that one somehow treats a judgement that one ought to Φ as making an intention to Φ rational. Whatever the details, such an account will give a distinctive role to transitions into intentions for grasp of **ought**. Admittedly, NJI may not have such a reflection if we are operating within an atomist view of concepts, where we distinguish sharply between a concept and its role in cognition; however, on such an atomist view, the kind of argument Campbell purports to run does not so much as get started. His fundamental idea, underlying the argument, is that it is essential to demonstrative concepts that they have a certain cognitive role tightly dependent on experience.[22]

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[21] I should note that Wedgwood himself is neutral on NJI.

[22] An atomist view of concept is defended in Fodor 1998. Campbell's Classical View (ch. 5) agrees with Fodor in so far as it takes the reference of a concept to be explanatorily prior to its use in thinking and action. However, the Classical View allows that there is an essential link between the concept and certain canonical patterns of use, since the concept is individuated in terms of the knowledge of its reference

It would not be attractive to respond to this problem for Weak Indifference by denying NJI. Even someone not convinced by NJI may agree that there is a live meta-ethical debate to be had here. A general principle in the theory of concepts needs to merit high initial confidence if one is to be justified in appealing to it in order to rule out a substantive meta-ethical claim, supported by a certain measure of argument, that conflicts with it. Weak Indifference has yet to earn such confidence.[23]

Another rejoinder on behalf of Campbell is that, even if NJI is correct, and whether or not NJI is in conflict with Weak Indifference, there is a crucial disanalogy between the role intention plays for normative concepts and the role experience (as the conceptualist conceives it) plays for demonstrative concepts. Experience (as so conceived) involves entertaining the very demonstrative concepts in question. By contrast normative concepts, for all NJI says, do not figure in the content of the intentions themselves. This point, however, does not seem very powerful. Even if the posited contrast obtains, it is not evident why it should matter. Campbell's complaint against conceptualism here is on the score that it treats experience as a way of grasping thoughts – that it assimilates it to paradigm propositional attitudes – not on the score that it treats it as involving the grasp of demonstrative thoughts in particular. Further, it is at least debateable to what extent the posited contrast really obtains. A case can be made that normative concepts do essentially figure in the content of intentions. At least, such a case can be made conditionally on NJI. If NJI is correct, the question arises why it is correct. Perhaps it reflects a primitive principle of rationality. But there is at least some attraction to the idea that it reflects rather an overarching intention, to which we are somehow rationally

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which is required for grasping it, and different ways of knowing the reference are essentially connected with different patterns of verifying and finding the implications of propositions using the concept.

[23] It is not in the same league as, say, the Frege-Geach point, which perhaps merits such confidence.

committed, to do what we ought to do – or, as we might say, to do the right thing –. In that case, the transition mentioned by NJI falls out as a special case of ordinary instrumental reasoning.[24]

Could Campbell shift tack at this point, conceding that Weak Indifference is refuted by the counterexample, but maintaining that Weak Indifference is still stronger than anything his argument against Attitude-Assimilation needs? This is doubtful. If our counterexample to Weak Indifference works, it allows us to construct an argument paralleling Campbell's argument against Attitude-Assimilation as follows.

> Our grasp of normative concepts is explained (at least in part) through essential connections to intention. But if you think of intentions as conceptual, as merely one among many ways of grasping thoughts, you cannot allow it this explanatory role. (…) If all there is to intentions to act is the grasping of certain thoughts about actions, then intentions to act are just one among many ways in which you can exercise your conceptual skills. At this point we do not have any way of explaining why there should be anything fundamental to our grasp of normative concepts about intention.

The suggested upshot is that intentions do not have conceptual content. I take it to be pretty uncontroversial that this conclusion is false, and thus that this parallel argument

[24] I owe this suggestion to Olav Gjelsvik, who developed it in a talk to the *Filosofisk Seminar* at Oslo, September 2005.

proves too much.[25] Since Campbell's argument seems relevantly parallel, it is not sound.

Perhaps Campbell would concede this point. Yet perhaps he would say that he never intended to give a deductively sound argument. The argument against Attitude Assimilation might be intended rather to posit a certain explanatory challenge. This would be a 'second-order' explanatory challenge of saying what it is about experience that makes it intelligible that experience has the 'first-order' explanatory role of making demonstrative propositions available to be grasped, and (on Campbell's view) of causing and justifying the use of certain procedures for verifying and finding the implications of these propositions. Why could not, say, a testimony state – a state of being told that so-and-so, perhaps by a newspaper – just as well fill the same explanatory role? Campbell's own answer to this question is that experience is experience of the categorical objects and their categorical properties. As we shall see presently, Campbell argues that intentionalists are unable to account for how experience could be of the categorical, and therefore are unable to allow that we can have a conception of what the world is like categorically.

6.5 The Argument from Experience of the Categorical

A central idea in *RC* is that we have a conception of what the mind-independent world is like intrinsically or categorically.[26] The idea is, more fully, that we have not only a

[25] Some philosophers think that there are certain primitive intentions that do not have conceptual content, e.g. Peacocke (1992: 92-96) and O'Shaugnessy (1980). They would certainly not take this to be true of intentions in general though.

[26] Campbell shifts between talking in terms of 'intrinsic' and 'categorical', apparently treating these terms as equivalent. This equivalence is not obvious. It seems that there could be categorical relational properties: perhaps spatial relations are such properties? Conversely, some philosophers, including Heil (2003), have argued that there are intrinsic dispositional properties. It seems that it is categorialness rather than intrinsicality that Campbell is concerned with in the first instance. To the extent that the categories diverge (if indeed at all), we should take him to be concerned with categoricity.

conception of the dispositional structure of the world, but also, over and above this, a conception of what the world is like categorically, one that indeed grounds our conception of what the world is like dispositionally. Campbell follows Shoemaker (1980) in suggesting that the dispositional structure of things can be specified by specifying the conditional powers which properties endow their bearers with. Thus the property of roundness endows its bearer with the power to roll, if pushed while on a flat surface, conditionally on its being made of a rigid material (among other things). Shoemaker indeed argues that our knowledge of, and our conception of, a given property is exhausted by our conception of the cluster of conditional powers which it endows its bearers with. Campbell rejects this view as incoherent, arguing that the view makes it impossible to explain how we can have the understanding of causality that we have, among other things (p. 241-249). I will here accept, at least for the sake of argument, that Campbell is right that we do have a conception of the categorical properties of things, over and above our conception of the clusters of conditional powers that things are endowed with.

Campbell's view might be made vivid as follows. Suppose a group of scientists has created a computer simulation of the entire region of the world I have ever been causally in contact with, and that the states of this computer realise a system functionally isomorphic to the relevant region of the world. Let Twanders be a system whose internal functional organisation is identical to that of my brain, and who is hooked up with the computer system. Twanders receives input from and feeds back output to the system, input and output which are functionally isomorphic to those I receive and feed back to my environment. To make the symmetry as complete as possible, suppose that Twanders has come into being through interactions with outputs

from the computer system in a way that is relevantly like natural selection. Campbell's point is that Twanders cannot have a conception of what his environment is like that is both identical to my conception and no less true than mine. It is part of my conception that when something has the power to roll, if rigid, on a flat surface, and so on, this power is grounded in the categorical roundness of the thing. Nothing is round in the computer system (let's say); in particular, the entities that have the conditional power to exemplify (the functional equivalent of) rolling when subjected to (the functional equivalent of) pushing are not round. If Twanders had the same conception of what his enviorment is like as I do, he would be wrong about the ground of the conditional power in question. Yet there is no sufficient reason to say that Twanders is wrong and I am right, so we differ in our conceptions of the world.

Campbell argues that nothing other than experience of the world could provide me with my conception of what the world is like categorically. He argues, moreover, that experience can provide me with this conception only if experience is of categorical objects, and their categorical properties. [27] In other words, experience can provide me with a conception of the categorical only if it meets

> *The Intrinsicness Condition*: Experience is experience of the categorical. (p. 137)

Campbell's contends that, if weak intentionalism is correct – if experience is of whatever it is of by having intentional content concerning those things – then experience cannot meet the Intrinsicness Condition. If we affirm weak intentionalism,

[27] It should be noted that the claim that experience provides, and is fundamental to, our conception of what the world is like categorically – and so, what it is like dispositionally – is in no way meant to suggest commitment to a form of phenomenalistic reduction of our empirical thinking to thinking about the directly observable. The idea is that we could not have had any conception of the dispositional or categorical character of the world if we didn't have the conception of categorical properties that perception provides us with, formed in terms of demonstrative concepts.

we will be committed to a view of experience on which it is merely of clusters of dispositional properties. Thus we will be committed to a dispositionalist view of thought in general à la Shoemaker, which, as we have seen, Campbell rejects as incoherent.

Why is weak intentionalism supposed to be incompatible with the Intrinsicness Condition? Campbell's argument here is fairly complex. The following sketch does not do justice to all the subtleties of the argument, but does, I hope, capture the key moves. Let's call anyone who accepts weak intentionalism an 'intentionalist'. The intentionalist needs to give an account of how experience can have whatever representational content it has. At the end of the day, the only facts about experience the intentionalist can appeal to here are 'upstream' causal connections between the environment and the experiences evoked by it, and 'downstream' causal connections between the experiences thus evoked and the beliefs, judgements, desires and other intentional states and acts to which the experiences give rise. Now consider first the 'upstream' side of things. Here one might think that the intentionalist can appeal to the idea that a perceptual experience is of categorical roundness, say, thanks to its systematically causally depending on distal instances of categorical roundness. Campbell does not deny that categorical roundness is causally relevant to experiences (or at least to the brain states that realise the experiences). Indeed, he is himself committed to categorical objects and properties having such a role, for he agrees that experience can be of an object (or a property) only if that object (or property) has a role in bringing about the experience (or the brain state that realises the experience).[28] Rather, the reason why appeal to causation by categorical properties on the 'upstream' side is ineffectual, he

[28] Campbell's 'Causal Condition' (p. 147) is formulated only in terms of objects but the suggestion certainly seems to be that it generalises to properties. For present purposes, the distinction between experiences and brain states does not matter . I should also note that we skate over many fine distinctions sometimes posited between causation, causal relevance, causal efficacy, etc.; Campbell does not, as far as I can see, rest anything on such finer distinctions between causal notions.

argues, is that '[w]e can think of the representation as being caused by a disposition just as well as we can think of it as being caused by the categorical.' (p. 150) Appealing to the 'downstream' side connections does not do the trick either. On the contrary, these downstream effects of the perceptual states favour interpreting these states as having content concerning the dispositional characteristics of the environment:

> If you varied the intrinsic nature of the objects around the subject, but kept their dispositional characteristics constant, the very same pattern of functional connections would still be appropriate for the use of the subject's perceptual representations. And the actions of the subject would also be of the same type, in responding to and manipulating the affordances of the external stimuli. So on a Representationalist view, we seem to have no motive for going beyond [the view that experience represents the properties as dispositional and the objects as collections of functional connections.] (p. 150)

An account of the intentional content of perception in terms of the network of causal connections perceptual states occupy does not, then, entitle the intentionalist to perceptual content concerning the categorical.

The intentionalist seems well advised to concede, at least for the sake of argument, that some account of perceptual content needs to be given, and that such an account somehow has to appeal to the causal liaisons of perceptual states with the environment on the one hand and with other psychological states on the other. Perhaps this concession is non-obligatory at the end of the day, but it would be rash to presume so. A better option would be to question Campbell's claims regarding the 'upstream' side. His claims here commit him to a thoroughgoing overdetermination, for the following reason. On the one hand, his insistence that experience is experience of categorical properties coupled with his acceptance of the Causal Condition, commits him to the

causal relevance of categorical roundness to the production of a certain type of experiences (viz. those whose status as roundness-representing is in question). On the other hand, if the clusters of dispositions grounded by roundness were not also relevant to the production of experiences of this type, then surely causal considerations would favour taking categorical roundness as what is represented, pace Campbell. Campbell is aware of this commitment to overdetermination; he writes:

> If we ask whether it is the dispositional or the categorical that is causing the brain state, then it seems evident that we do not need to choose: the dispositions are present because the categorical objects or properties are present, and each has a role to play in explanation. (p. 148-9)

The idea seems to be that if a cup broke on hitting the table, it is true to say that it broke because it was fragile, and equally true (but perhaps serving different explanatory aims) to say that it broke because it has a certain molecular structure, where the latter is a (distinct) categorical ground for its fragility. The idea here that a disposition and its categorical ground can peacefully co-exist and determine the same effect is certainly not uncontroversial.[29] Some intentionalists may thus be inclined to reject Campbell's overall argument as internally incoherent on these general ontological grounds. At the same time, it would certainly be more attractive to have a reply neutral on this general issue.

Such a reply can be found, I suggest, by considering Campbell's claim regarding the 'downstream' side. In the penultimate quotation, we cited Campbell's reason why appeal to causal connections between perceptual states and beliefs, desires and other intentional states and acts entitles us only to content concerning the dispositional. The

[29] For a recent attack on the idea, see John Heil (2003: chs. 8-11). For a recent defence, see Mellor (2000: 774-6).

reason may, I take it, be spelled out as follows. Suppose that I am plugged into Twanders's environment, receiving the input he did. We have then 'varied the intrinsic nature of the objects around [me], but kept their dispositional characteristics constant.' Things react to any activity of mine, which I initiate in an either epistemic or practical interest, just as they did before. If I initiate some procedure of verification – if, say, I do what would have constituted my attending more closely to things on my left, in my previous circumstances – the distal and proximal upshot is as before. If I initiate some practical endeavour the rewards and punishments are as before. So it might seem that there would be nothing to motivate any change in my patterns of theoretical or practical reasoning: 'the very same pattern of functional connections would still be appropriate for the use of [my] perceptual representations'. Indeed, that very same pattern of connections would be appropriate for all of my representational states. If this pattern of use is all that we are to appeal to in fixing the intentional content of the states, the natural conclusion is that content is insensitive to any difference between my circumstances before and after the shift. To ascribe content that goes beyond that seems to be a gratuitous over-ascription, positing content not motivated by anything that matters to my psychological life. Thus we have to conclude that the contents of my representational states in general do not go beyond anything common to the two types of circumstances, i.e. beyond anything dispositional. A fortiori, the contents of my perceptual representations do not go beyond this.

The argument assumes that since there will be no shift in the functional role of any of my representational states after I have taken Twanders's place, none of my representational states has a functional role such as to favour interpreting the state as being of a categorical object or property. This assumption is questionable; indeed, it is

questionable on assumptions Campbell shares. While he is insisting that we have a conception of categorical properties, he does not deny that we also have a conception of the clusters of conditional powers these properties ground. So consider me before I shift places with Twanders. If Campbell is right, I have one notion **C** of categorical roundness and a distinct notion **D** of the cluster of conditional powers that roundness grounds. It is not plausible to think that these notions have the same functional role in cognition. If they did, it would be hard to see how one could plausibly argue, as Campbell does, that notions of the categorical play a vital and indispensable role in our *cognitive* lives, in particular in our understanding of causation:

> all causation … constitutes causation only because it is ultimately related to causation involving the categorical. If we try to abstract away from the links to causation involving the categorical, then we stop talking about causation at all. (p. 249)

Since my notion **C** differs in functional role from **D**, this constitutes a counterexample to the assumption that none of my representational states has a functional role such as to favour interpreting it as being of a categorical object or property. Even if it is true that the functional role of each of my representational states remain constant after I switch places, that assumption cannot be inferred. The difference in functional role of **C** from **D** precisely is a reason for going beyond the dispositional in interpreting **C** as opposed to **D**. Once we have secured that the notion **C** refers to a categorical property, we can proceed to argue that experience is of the categorical, by arguing that perceptual experience has distinctive functional links with the notion **C**.

Indeed, it is not obvious that we should grant even the premise that there will be no shift in the functional role of any of my representational states after I have taken Twander's

place. Let a 'pure functional role' be a functional role that can be specified without reference to categorical properties. The stipulations on the case certainly entail that there will be no shift in the *pure* functional role of any of my representational states after I taken his place. However, it is at least arguable that there will be a change in the *im*pure functional roles of at least some of my representational states, including the states involving the notion **C**. Where these states previously had the role of responding in a certain way to categorical roundness, it is at least arguable that, at some point after the move, they no longer have that role, but perhaps that of responding in a certain way to the categorical property that realises that role in the computer environment.[30]

Perhaps someone would object, on Campbell's behalf, that our response to his argument here begs the question. According to this defender of Campbell, the whole force of his challenge is to ask the intentionalist to show *how it can be* that I have a notion, **C**, of categorical roundness and a distinct notion, **D**, of 'dispositional roundness' (as we may say), with different roles in our thought about the world. The intentionalist cannot simply help herself to this difference in role in giving an account of how experience can be of the categorical. The account of how experience can be of the categorical has to be logically prior to, and so cannot presuppose, the claim that there is a cognitive, hence functional, difference between the notions **C** and **D**. Or so someone might object.

There are several issues that ought to be disentangled here. One issue is whether some question is begged in our response to the argument Campbell gives *specifically* for the

[30] The situation is parallel to that in Twin Earth cases. Do the notions I use when I think of the substance in lakes and rivers have the same functional role as the notions my *doppelganger* uses when he thinks of the substance in lakes and rivers? Certainly, the *narrow* functional roles are the same. But the wide or 'long-armed' functional roles of our notions are not the same. It is at least arguable that, if I were to take his place, the functional role of my notion would shift. (The question whether this would happen depends on the importance of evolutionary considerations to reference determination, perhaps among other things.)

claim that experience, as the intentionalist conceives it, is bound not to meet the Intrinsicness Condition. In his argument here, he not merely allows but rather insists that the intentionalist has to appeal to the functional interconnections between perceptual states and further cognitive and other psychological states. Since our response points precisely to such functional interconnections, viz. between experience and **C**, and to the functional differences between **C** and **D**, it is hard to see why this should not be a legit move.

Another issue is whether we ought to agree that a necessary condition for thought to be of the categorical is that experience is of the categorical. We do not need to answer this question, since the current response is entirely consistent with this necessary condition. Yet another issue is whether we ought to agree that an account of how experience can be of the categorical is logically or explanatorily prior to an account of how such a notion as **C** can be of the categorical. The current response is admittedly inconsistent with this priority claim. However, if the intentionalist who gives the response is a conceptualist, it is no surprise that she does not respect the idea that one can account for how experience is of whatever it is of prior to accounting for how it is possible for thoughts to be of whatever it is of: if thought and experience have the same kind of content, we would not expect such priority. Yet why should we accept the priority claim in question?

At this point, a connection might be made with a further issue. At the end of the last section, we identified a certain 'second-order' explanatory challenge. The 'first-order' explanatory role of experience include such factors as its being a necessary condition for our grasp of demonstrative concepts, and, Campbell argues, for the its being what

causes and justifies our use of certain procedures for verifying and finding the implications of demonstrative propositions. The 'second-order' explanatory challenge was to say what it is about experience that makes it intelligible for experience to play this role. Campbell's answer is that experience is experience of categorical objects and categorical properties – that experience meets the Intrinsicness Condition. The intentionalist giving the current response agrees that experience meets that condition. But it does not seem that she can let this claim have the role Campbell assigns to it, of answering the 'second-order' explanatory challenge, precisely because her account of how experience can be experience of the categorical violates the priority claim. Therefore, if the 'second-order' explanatory challenge has to be met, and the only way to meet it is by way of an account of how experience can meet the Intrinsicness Condition, then that account should respect the noted priority claim. By the same token, if the 'second-order' challenge can be addressed in other terms, the violation of the priority claim has not been showed to be problematic. In the next section, I will consider in outline how a conceptualist may seek to address the challenge.

Before turning to that issue, however, I will briefly note one more objection Campbell might want to make to the above response. This invokes another of his background principles, viz. his Classical View (p. 24), according to which knowledge of reference of a notion is what causes and justifies one's use of the notion, and thus in some sense is prior to the use. On this basis, he rejects functionalist views that identify having an experience of or thought about something with the disposition to use the experience or thought in a certain way, what we may call 'role functionalism':

> [O]ne natural form for a functionalist account of experience of objects to take is this: experience of the object, you might say, is on a functionalist analysis no more than the ability to verify propositions

> about the object. All it comes to, that you have experience of the object, is that you can make suitable use of your representations of the object. … [O]n this functionalist analysis, experiencing the object is the very same thing as having a collection of dispositions to use a demonstrative term in various ways. (p. 134-135)

However, an intentionalist who gives our response to the argument is not committed to role functionalism. While the above response to Campbell's argument appeals to a difference in functional role between **C** and **D** , it is not committed to denying that these different functional roles rest on anything deeper. The intentionalist is free to assume, say, that notion **C** consist in a relation to an item in Frege's third realm, where the functional role of **C** is a consequence of this relation. She is similarly free to assume that it consist in some form of knowledge of reference, where the functional role in question is a consequence of this knowledge. [31] Campbell would insist that the knowledge of reference in question requires that the subject has had experience of the referent. The intentionalist may agree about this, even though she denies that experience's being of the categorical is explanatorily prior to thought's being of the categorical.

6.6 Turning the Tables on the Conceptualist

We have argued that conceptualism is consistent with perceptual experience's having a certain 'first-order' explanatory role to play in our grasp of demonstrative concepts; a role which includes such elements as being a necessary condition for grasping demonstrative concepts, and causing and justifying the use of certain methods for verifying and finding the implications of propositions that use these concepts. Yet we

[31] The following may be a partial analogy. Someone who distinguishes, in ethical terms, between bravery and cowardice by saying that only bravery is loved by the gods is not committed to saying that the ethical superiority of bravery *consists in* its being loved by the gods; he is free to say that it consists in its being noble, where its being loved by the gods is a consequence of its being noble.

may raise a further, 'second-order' question: what is it about experience that makes it intelligible that it has this special 'first-order' role? How come that some other kind of state, such as being told something, perhaps by a newspaper, could not play the same role? If the conceptualist has nothing plausible to say at this point, then even if there is no deductively sound argument against her view from the (first-order) explanatory role of experience, it may be thought that there is an abductively compelling argument against her, at least if one supposes that an alternative view, say the Relational View, gives a better explanation at this second-order level.[32]

To see how a conceptualist might go about meeting the challenge, let's consider the counterexamples we identified above to Strong and Weak Indifference: judgement and intention. What is it about these states that make it intelligible that they have the special role they play in an account of concepts in general or of some designated type of concepts? For the case of judgement, the story plausibly has something to do with judgement's aiming at truth. Now, most and perhaps all concepts have a constitutive connection with truth, in that they combine to form complete contents with truth-conditions. The centrality of judgement to all or most concepts is thus intelligible in the light of the nature of judgement as aiming at truth.[33] The story about the role of intentions in normative concepts goes perhaps like this. A central part of the point of normative terms and concepts is precisely their use to direct action, in particular intentional action. To look at it from the opposite angle, intentional action has a special link to normative concepts in so far as it is action of the type that paradigmatically is

[32] As noted in ft. n. 10 above, a congruentist is not committed to assimilate perceptual experiences to paradigmatic attitudes like beliefs, judgements, intentions, etc. *as strongly* as the outright conceptualist. In answering the 'second-order' explanatory challenge, the congruentist thus has more resources to avail himself of than the outright conceptualist. He can, for example, put weight on the idea that perceptual experiences trade on more primitive representational capacities. In the text, however, I attempt to answer the challenge from the more restricted point of view of the outright conceptualist. Nothing *prevents* the congruentist from giving the same answer.

[33] Peacocke (1992: 17) makes this point. See also ft. n. 19 above.

responsive, in the right sort of way, to normative considerations. In the light of this tight link, it is intelligible that intentions, as the states that immediately control intentional action, should have the special role they do in grasp of normative concepts. These brief remark of course only gesture in the direction of an explanatory connection, but they may serve to indicate how the story might be filled out.

What I suggest, in broad outline, is that the conceptualist can do something similar, for experience in relation to demonstrative concepts, to what we just gestured at in the case of intention and normative concepts. Our brief remarks about intentions suggest that a constitutive account of intention, or of intentional action, will centrally invoke the normative concepts with which intention is closely connected. Similarly, the whole drift of our argument in sections 1.2 and 1.3 above – our argument for the intentionalism step and the conceptualisation step in the simple argument – was that a constitutive account of experience will centrally invoke the demonstrative concepts with which experience is, according to the conceptualist, closely connected. To make the central and vital contribution of experience to demonstrative concepts intelligible in this way does not beg the question, since the reflections on experience with which we start are themselves neutral on the issue of conceptualism or even weak intentionalism.

Thus consider our argument, in section 1.2, for premise (1) of the simple argument, viz.

(5) *e* is a state of its perceptually seeming to one that A.

We started here with reflections on experience in neutral terms: we noted the putative transparency of experience; the insufficiency, for an adequate characterisation of experience, of mentioning the particulars that are the objects of awareness; the consequent need to mention what properties the subject is aware of; and the need,

consequent on the latter, to mention what things are experienced *as* having what properties. At that point we noted the analogy between the descriptions of experience thus arrived at and intentional descriptions such as 'conceiving of x as F'. This led us to conclude in favour of (1). We proceeded, in section 1.2, through the arguments from intelligibility and demonstration, to argue that this supported the thesis of content congruence,. The crucial point is that by reflection on experience, from a neutral standpoint, we were led to recognise features of perceptual experience which make it a good fit for the conceptualist re-description. This, it seems to me, counts as a way of making intelligible the central and vital connection between experience and demonstrative concepts.

Another example of a pattern of reasoning, exhibiting the same feature, may be reflection upon the directness of experience. Many philosophers have been struck by the directness or immediacy of perceptual experience: its feature of being of whatever it is of in a peculiarly direct or immediate way. According to some, what perception is of, in the first place, is some non-physical and somehow private and ephemeral sense data. According to others, perception is not of anything but ordinary physical objects and some of their properties. (Conceptualists generally fall in the latter group.) Both groups agree however that the things in question are given in a peculiarly direct way. Now how is this peculiar directness or immediateness to be characterised? Here, many philosophers of perception, who have not been concerned to argue either for or against conceptualism (at least not in the first instance), have explicitly or (more often) implicitly been assuming that this feature can be characterised in terms of the possibility of demonstrative reference. A representative recent example is the following from A. D. Smith

> When you look at this page, what you are directly aware of is, according to the Indirect Realist, not a page of a book. When you speak and think about *this* thing, your mind is, therefore, directed at some mere proxy for a physical object. … when I look at the 'same' page as you, I am immediately aware of a different proxy. My *this* is different from yours. (Smith 2002: 15-16)

Paul Snowdon explicitly argues for characterising directness in terms of demonstrative reference:

> *x* d[irectly] perceives *y* iff *x* stands, in virtue of *x*'s perceptual experience, in such a relation to *y* that, if *x* could make demonstrative judgements, then it would be possible for *x* to make the *true* demonstrative judgement 'That is y'. (Snowdon 1992: 56)

The point here is not to suggest that Smith, Snowdon and other philosophers of perception who argue in a similar way are committed to conceptualism. The point is rather that when we try to characterise a feature of perception that is independently striking – its directness – it is natural to invoke the notion of demonstrative reference. This illustrates how reflection on experience, proceeding from a neutral standpoint, may lead us to appreciate features of perception that make it a good fit for the notions typically invoked by the conceptualist, viz., in the present terms, that perception involves its appearing to one that *that* thing is *that* way.[34]

[34] Yet another tack the conceptualist might take, in addressing the second-order explanatory challenge, is of course to give something like the Lewis-Type Argument above. If sound, that argument certainly, in some sense, makes it intelligible why perceptual experience should have a special and indispensable role with regards to grasp of demonstrative concepts.

These intuitive remarks of course fall far short of a full answer to the second-order explanatory question. They can, however, be seen roughly to indicate a way in which a conceptualist might be able to develop such an answer.

7

Conceptual Capacities and Experience

Let *state conceptualism* be the following view

> **State conceptualism** The concrete representational capacities in virtue of the activation of which a perceptual experience has the content it has are conceptual.

In this chapter, I argue that this view is false. At least, I argue that it is false on the condition that (concrete) conceptual capacities are subject to a certain 'Availability Constraint', a condition which has, in effect, been widely granted on both sides of the debate between conceptualists and nonconceptualists.

Is state conceptualism, in our sense, a view which anyone holds? McDowell certainly seems to suggest it when he writes:

> [W]e need a conception of experiences as states or occurrences that are passive but reflect conceptual capacities, capacities that belong to spontaneity, in operation. (McDowell 1994: 23)

If experiences 'reflect conceptual capacities … in operation' that is presumably because they have the content they have in virtue of the activation (operation) of these capacities. Brewer has recently defended the thesis

> (CC) Sense experiential states have conceptual content. (2005: 217)

on the following (fairly standard) explication

> As I am using it, a *conceptual state* – that is to say, a mental state with *conceptual content* – is one whose content is the content of a possible *judgement by the subject*. So a mental state is *conceptual*, in this sense, if and only if it has a representational content which is characterizable only in terms of concepts which the subject himself possesses … (2005:217-218)

When (CC) is taken in light of the first sentence of this explication, it entails our thesis of Content Congruence. When (CC) is taken in the light of the second sentence, it points towards state conceptualism. It does not, however, take us all the way there. The denial of state conceptualism is consistent with holding (i) that the content of experience is characterisable only in terms of demonstrative concepts, and (ii) that any subject of experience is guaranteed to possess the relevant demonstrative concepts. This is consistent since one might hold that the relevant demonstrative concepts are somehow guaranteed to be made available to the subject by the perceptual experience in question, where that experience having the content it has depends not on these demonstrative concepts but on more basic nonconceptual capacities.[1] Still, although the element in Brewer's formulation of his view that points towards state conceptualism thus is consistent with its denial, state *non*conceptualism, it is pretty clear from his argument

[1] We shall return to the consistency of this view below.

that he intends to oppose the latter, nonconceptualist view (e.g. from his discussion of Heck at pp. 221-22). I will thus take it that both McDowell and Brewer endorse state conceptualism.

Someone might wonder what the word 'concrete' is doing in our formulation of the view. The term is explained in section 7.1 below, and the significance of its inclusion will become clear as the argument progresses. Chiefly, it is there to remind us that we are dealing with a notion of capacities on which the individuation of capacities is subject to causal continuities between the stages of its possession. This contrasts with an 'abstract' notion of conceptual or representational capacities, on which conceptual/representational capacity *A* is conceptual/representational capacity *B* just in case they are capacities to entertain the same content, and where someone who has *A* may be completely causally disjoint from someone who has *B*.[2]

The shape of my argument is this. After setting out the view that conceptual capacities are subject to the Availability Constraint, I argue that representational capacities, conceptual or otherwise, in general are subject to constraints of Veridical and Causal Dependence. I go on to argue that *perceptual* representational capacities – the capacities in virtue of the activation of which a perceptual experience has the content it has – do not jointly meet the three constraints of Availability, Veridical Dependence and Causal Dependence. Since representational capacities in general are subject to the two latter, I infer that the odd man out here is the first, the Availability Constraint. It follows that the representational capacities in question are not conceptual.

[2] Throughout, 'conceptual' and 'representational capacities' are *concrete* capacities, unless otherwise noted or clearly suggested by the context.

7.1 Abstract vs. Concrete Conceptual Capacities

Helen and Maria are both able to think an indefinite range of thoughts about water. They think moreover of water in the same way – as, say, the natural kind of stuff that is potable, colourless, odourless, and makes up the majority of the contents of the lakes and rivers around them. Do Helen and Maria have the same concept of water? In one sense of 'concept', they surely do – if two thinkers ever share a concept. Correlatively with this sense of 'concept', there is a sense in which Helen and Maria share a conceptual capacity – the sense, namely, on which the criterion of identity for a conceptual capacity is that capacity *A* is capacity *B* just in case *A* and *B* both are capacities to entertain one and the same concept (in the sense in which Helen and Maria share one). I will call this the 'abstract' sense of concepts and conceptual capacities.

However, in another sense of 'conceptual capacity', Helen and Maria do not have the same conceptual capacity. Helen could lose her capacity without Maria losing hers and vice versa. Helen's getting hers was not in any way causally related to Maria's getting hers (these women live on different continents before the time of global communication, let's say). Correlatively with this notion of conceptual capacity, there is a sense in which Helen and Maria have two distinct concepts of water. I will call this the 'concrete' sense of concepts and conceptual capacities.[3]

A conception of concepts that captures pretty well the first, abstract sense of 'concept' is the conception of them as meanings expressible by words and communicable among speakers (it does not matter here whether meanings are on the level of reference, or on the level of mode of presentation, as long as meanings are objective and shareable). The

[3] Helen's and Maria's distinct concrete capacities stand to the abstract conceptual capacity they share as tokens to a type.

concepts of Peacocke (1992), discussed in chapter 5, are concepts in this sense. A conception of concepts that captures pretty well the second, concrete sense of 'concept' is the conception of them as mental files. To activate a concept, on this conception, is to access a file; to acquire one, to set up the appropriate file; to retain one, for there to be the right sort of causal continuity in the file-system from one moment to the next. I do not intend to allude to any very specific theory of mental files here; only to the general picture it evokes of a certain concrete particular around which our thinking about a certain object or property is organised.[4]

The point just made about retaining a concrete concept will be important in this chapter. To bring the feature into view, let us turn to a cross-temporal comparison, involving a single persisting subject. At the age of thirteen, Lisa got the capacity to think of alkalinity in chemistry class. However, being uninterested in chemistry, she quickly lost it, and for many years had no notion of alkalinity (as we may say).[5] Then, at age thirty, Lisa gets interested in chemistry all of a sudden, and again gets a capacity to think of alkalinity, acidity, and the rest. Just as there is a sense in which Helen and Maria share a concept of water, there is a sense in which Lisa acquires one and the same concept of alkalinity at thirty as she did at thirteen. Correlatively, she acquires the same old abstract conceptual capacity. Yet there is also a sense in which she gets a *new* conceptual capacity at age thirty. This sense is supported by the idea that her new capacity may be causally disjoint from her old one: in her coming to entertain thoughts

[4] Theories of mental files are discussed by Perry (1980) and Richard (1990).

[5] Of course, Lisa's neural and cognitive machinery at that time was such that, if she were to be given the right lessons, or shown the right paradigm examples, or get the appropriate interests, or the like, she would have been led to entertain thoughts about alkalinity. The notion of 'capacity' in play here however is stricter one. It requires that one can entertain such thought without the assistance of lessons, further perceptual experiences, engaging in long and complicated chains of reasoning, etc. It requires, to put it positively, that one can entertain such thought fairly immediately upon simple reflection (subject, of course, to performance limitations). This characterisation is not entirely lucid, but will do for our purposes.

of alkalinity again, no memory trace of her lessons at age thirteen is causally relevant (perhaps there are no memory traces of these at all).

This reason to affirm distinctness of concrete conceptual capacity is important, since it allows that, even on the concrete sense, one may retain one and the same conceptual capacity across time. Say that Lisa got interested in chemistry in January 2005 and remains interested for a couple of years. Then, intuitively, the capacity she exercises in thinking of alkalinity on the 2.5.2005 can be and most likely will be the very same capacity she exercised in thinking of alkalinity on 1.5.2005.[6] Her capacity on May 2nd is causally continuous with that of May 1st. She would not have had the former if she had not had the latter. The capacities trade on the same continuous mental file.

Our distinction between abstract and concrete concepts, and conceptual capacities, is similar in spirit to a distinction drawn by Peter Geach and (following him) Evans. [7] Geach writes:

> A concept, as I am using the term, is subjective – it is mental capacity belonging to a particular person. (My use of "concept" is thus to be contrasted e.g. with Russell's use of it in *The Principles of Mathematics* and again with the use of it to translate Frege's "*Begriff*"; Russell's 'concepts' and Frege's *Begriffe* were suppose to be objective entities, not belonging to a particular mind.) The subjective nature of concepts does not however imply that it is improper to speak of two people as "having the same concept"[.] (Geach 1957: 13-14)

[6] Perhaps, if Lisa reads voraciously, discusses intensely or experiments laboriously on alkalinity in the twenty-four hours in between, she will count as having a 'new concept' of alkalinity. This issue of course depends on how holistically conceptual capacities are to be individuated. We may sidestep such issues here; let's simply assume that Lisa does none of these things.

[7] See also Campbell 1994: ch. 6 for a interesting discussion of 'conceptual abilities', clearly understood to be concrete conceptual capacities.

Evans introduces Geach's term 'Ideas' for what Geach calls 'concepts'[8]:

> [I] shall allow myself to say this or that particular thought-episode comprises such-and-such an Idea of an object, as well as such-and-such a concept. [Evans adds in a footnote that 'what are here called 'concepts' will also sometimes be called 'Ideas'.] This is simply a picturesque way of rephrasing the notion that the thought is a joint exercise of two distinguishable abilities. An Idea of an object, then, is something which makes it possible for a subject to think of an object in a series of indefinitely many thoughts, in each of which he will be thinking of the object in the same way. (1982: 104)

In a footnote *ad loc*, Evans adds

> We cannot equate an Idea (a particular person's capacity) with a Fregean sense, since the latter is supposed to exist objectively (independently of anyone's grasp of it). (1982: 104)

Our distinction between abstract and concrete concepts, or conceptual capacities, seems essentially to correspond to the distinction Geach intends to draw in terms of 'subjective' vs. 'objective' concepts, and Evans in terms of Ideas vs. Fregean senses. If this is so, however, I reckon there is one feature Geach and Evans both seem to ascribe to subjective concepts or Ideas, viz. that of non-shareability, which is inessential. Suppose that a four-dimensionalist view of subjects, like that defended by Sider (2003), is correct, and that 'Lisa-at-thirteen', 'Lisa-at-1.5.2005' and 'Lisa-at-2.5.2005' refer to three distinct person stages. Our reason for distinguishing between the concrete conceptual capacity of Lisa-at-thirteen and Lisa-at-1.5.2005 was not simply that these are (as we now can see from Sider's four-dimensionalist perspective) distinct subjects;

[8] We should note that Evans's use of Geach's term 'Idea' here is liable to mislead, since he pretty clearly uses the term for what Geach calls a 'concept', whereas Geach himself distinguishes between concepts and Ideas. For Geach, an Idea is a particular (non-repeatable) exercise of a concept (see 1957: 53, 54, 56). Evans clearly speaks of Ideas as capable of repeated exercise in indefinitely many thoughts. Our concrete conceptual capacities are certainly capable of repeatable activation in this way.

our reason was that of causal discontinuity. Accordingly, the distinctness between Lisa-at-1.5.2005 and Lisa-at-2.5.2005 does not force us to distinguish between the concrete conceptual capacities these subjects exercise. A natural generalisation of this point is that there is no obstacle in principle to person-stages belonging to distinct persisting agents sharing a concrete conceptual capacity, provided that suitable causal relations obtain between them. If Burge's (1979) argument for anti-individualism is on the right lines, this possibility is vividly exemplified by his examples. Consider Burge's famous subject who (on the description Burge argues that we are antecedently committed to) believes that he has arthritis in his thigh, notwithstanding his incomplete understanding of 'arthritis'. Since this subject has this and possibly many other beliefs about arthritis, he seems to be capable of thinking of arthritis – to have a conceptual capacity to conceive of arthritis. Yet his conceptual capacity (given that he has one) clearly causally depends on the capacity of other members of his speech community to think of arthritis. If it were not for the fact that other members of his speech community has this capacity, Burge's subject would not have had it. This is analogous to how Lisa-at-2.5.2005's conceptual capacity causally depends on Lisa-at-1.5.2005's conceptual capacity, and disanalogous to how Helen's concrete capacity to think of water relates to Maria's, from whom she is wholly causally separate. I will thus not take non-shareability to be an essential feature of concrete conceptual capacities.

7.1.1 Two other distinctions among representational capacities.

So far in this section, we have talked about conceptual capacities. Yet to coherently discuss what is at stake in this chapter – state conceptualism – we need a more neutral and generic term that stands to 'conceptual capacities' as the more neutral and generic term 'intentional content' stands to 'conceptual content'. 'Representational capacities' is the term I use for this purpose, allowing us to draw a distinction between conceptual

and non-conceptual representational capacities. Now, since 'representational capacities' is introduced as a more neutral term that stands to 'conceptual capacities' as 'intentional content' stands to 'conceptual content', someone might be led, more or less tacitly, to assume the following:

> **The State-Content Bi-Conditional** An intentional state has conceptual content iff the representational capacities in virtue of the activation of which the state has the content it has are conceptual.

Now, any assessment of this Bi-Conditional presumes an answer to the following two questions:

(i) Under what conditions are contents conceptual?

(ii) Under what conditions are representational capacities conceptual?

The point I want to stress is that, on at least some candidate answers to (i) and (ii), the Bi-Conditional is a substantive and even, arguably, false claim. I will run through one example. Suppose the that the right answer to (i) is simply

(i-a) A content is conceptual iff it is the content of a possible thought.

(i-a) and the thesis of content congruence (the claim that the content of a perceptual experience is the content of a thought a subject can think if she has the experience) entail

Perceptual experience has conceptual content

Now, when we apply the State-Content Bi-Conditional to the latter conclusion, we get

The representational capacities in virtue of the activation of which a perceptual experience has the content it has are conceptual.

This is of course our thesis of state conceptualism. What this shows is that the rejection of state conceptualism, which we advocate here, is inconsistent with acceptance of content congruence, which we advocate in earlier chapters, if the State-Content Bi-Conditional and (i-a) are jointly true. In section 7.5 below, we shall address the threat of inconsistency which some readers may perceive here.

The second contrast I will draw is one between 'autonomous' and 'anaphoric' representational capacities. Consider a certain representational capacity *C*. Then that capacity is anaphoric iff a subject's successful exercise of *C* to represent *F*s constitutively depends on the exercise of a distinct representational capacity *A* to represent *F*s. We may think of the capacity exhibited in the competent use of anaphors as a representational capacity. Thus when I say 'Anyone who owns a donkey beats it.' I exercise, in my competent tokening of 'it', a representational capacity to represent a donkey (though, of course, to say so much is not to tell the whole story of what I do in using an anaphor competently). The successful exercise of this capacity to represent a donkey depends on the exercise of my competence with the predicate 'donkey', earlier in the utterance, to represent a donkey. Another example of an anaphoric representational capacity may be talk about objects portrayed in paintings. Suppose that you and I are looking at a one of Turner's seascapes, and I say: 'The ship over there is a barque.' I take for granted here that the patches of paint on the canvas that I gesture at represent a ship at least in part in virtue of Turner's intention that they represent a ship. If I succeed in referring to a ship represented in the painting, my success depends on Turner's exercise of his capacity, as a painter, to represent a ship in painting one. More generally, representational capacities activated within the scope of pretence arguably count as anaphoric. If a representational capacity is not anaphoric, I will say that it is

'autonomous'.[9] Since we only have finitely many representational capacities, and since the dependency relation here, on the intended interpretation, disallows circles, not all representational capacities could be anaphoric. The distinction drawn here is of course far from lucid, and its point has yet to emerge. It will do so over the next two sections. To anticipate, the distinction will allow us to see why rejecting the state conceptualist's idea that perceptual content depends on demonstrative conceptual capacities does not commit one to deny the plausible claim that such capacities are available to us.[10]

7.2 Constraints on Concrete Conceptual Capacities

We now return to the question, recently raised, of under what conditions representational capacities are conceptual. In the debate between conceptualists and nonconceptualists, Evans's (1982: 100-105) Generality Constraint has loomed large on both sides here. Evans explicitly took conformity to that constraint to be a necessary condition for representational capacities to be conceptual – for such capacities to be of the kind exercised in thought:

> It is one of the fundamental differences between human thought and the information-processing that takes place in our brain that the Generality Constraint applies to the former but not to the latter. When we attribute to the brain computations whereby it localizes the sounds we hear, we *ipso facto* ascribe to it representations of the speed of sound and of the distance between the ears, without any commitment to the idea that it should be able to represent the speed of light or the distance between anything else. (Evans 1982: 104, ft. n. 22)

[9] Note that an autonomous representational capacity need not be atomistic. Thus one's concept of energy may be autonomous even if it constitutively depends on one's concepts of force, of mass, and so on (as suggested by Block 1986 among many others).

[10] The three distinctions drawn in this section are prima facie independent of each other. Nothing I have said rules out, for example, concrete nonconceptual anaphoric representational capacities. Whether there are such capacities have to be assessed case by case.

Several later writers, both on the conceptualist and the nonconceptualist side, have agreed with Evans on this point.[11] We will follow the apparent consensus here.

It should be borne in mind that the Generality Constraint applies to concrete conceptual capacities, as the following passage from Evans in effect brings out:

> If we make [the] claim [that the thought that *a* is *F* and the thought that *b* is *G* are structured], then we are obliged to maintain that, if a subject can entertain those thoughts, then there is no conceptual barrier, at least, to his being able to entertain the thought that *a* is *G* or the thought that *b* is *F*. And we are committed in addition to the view that there would be a common partial explanation for the subject's having the thought that *a* is *F* and his having the thought that *a* is *G*: there is a single state whose possession is a necessary condition for the occurrence of both thoughts. (Evans 1982: 102)

Suppose that a subject, at *t*, thinks that *a* is *F*, and then, a few moments later, at *t´*, thinks that *a* is *G*. Suppose, however, that our subject lost his capacity to think of *a* just after *t* (as Lisa lost her capacity to think of alkalinity long before turning fourteen), yet suddenly regains a new and causally unrelated capacity to think of *a* just before *t´*. Do we have reason to think of the subject so described as exhibiting compliance with the Generality Constraint (with respect to his capacity to think of *a*, in a certain way)? We do not. It is consistent with our description that the capacity the subject has at *t* was one that would not have enabled her to think that *a* is *G*, and, conversely, that the capacity he had at *t´* would not have enabled her then to think *a* is *F*. In that case there would not be the intended 'common partial explanation'; nor, intuitively, would the Generality Constraint be met.[12]

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[11] See Brewer 1999: 193-4 and Heck 2000: 496 for an example from the conceptualist and nonconceptualist side, respectively.

[12] Campbell nicely describes this aspect of the Generality Constraint: '[T]he idea that humans possess concepts does not just require that there should be a certain pattern in the totality of thoughts that

If conceptual capacities are subject to the Generality Constraint, they are also subject to the following

> **Availability Constraint** If a thinker has a conceptual capacity to think of *F*ness at a time *t*, then the thinker at *t* has the capacity (without requiring further instruction, or further experiences, etc.) to activate it in thinking any one out of an indefinite range of thoughts about *F*ness, where this range is limited only by her overall repertoire of conceptual capacities at *t*.[13]

The Availability Constraint differs from typical formulations of the Generality Constraint simply in making explicit the idea that a conceptual capacity is globally available to be activated in thinking various thoughts *whenever it is possessed*.[14]

The constraints of Generality and Availablity express a 'horizontal' constraint on conceptual capacities, in so far as they put conditions on how a conceptual capacity interacts with other conceptual capacities. Conceptual capacities, and indeed any other representational capacities, are plausibly subject also to some 'vertical' constraints, specifying how such a capacity must relate to the world in general or to *F*ness in particular if it to be a capacity to represent *F*ness. Two pretty plausible ideas in this area are, first, that veridical activations of a representational capacity have a certain primacy over misrepresenting activations, and, secondly, that activations causally dependent on

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someone understands. It requires that there should be a causal structure in the grasp of thoughts that is responsible for the total patterns in which thoughts are understood.' (1994: 213)

[13] The claim that the range of thoughts entertainable is limited *only* by her overall repertoire of conceptual capacities might need minor qualification. Considerations of logical form and categorical appropriateness might impose further limitations.

[14] Of course subject to various performance limitations (the thinker may be sleeping, or preoccupied by some vital project, etc.).

what is represented have certain primacy over activations not so dependent. The following is a first pass at formulating constraints relying on these ideas:

Veridical Dependence The activation of an autonomous representational capacity to represent *F*ness presupposes that at least some activations of the *same capacity* are cases of (non-accidentally) correctly representing something as *F*.[15]

Causal Dependence The activation of an autonomous representational capacity to represent *F*ness presupposes that at least some activations of the *same capacity* are (non-accidentally) caused by *F*ness.

Let me admit at once that these formulations must be read as having a tacit 'other things being equal' at the start, and need much further refinement.[16] For one thing, many composed representational capacities are exceptions to the constraints as they stand. Thus the capacity to represent something as a blushing, non-human animal is, if Mark Twain is right, never activated veridically to represent something as such. A fortiori, that capacity is never activated because something is a blushing, non-human animal. The reason we do not infer that the target capacity is therefore dubious is, plausibly, that the component capacities are often activated in a way that is in accord with the constraints, both singly and in other combinations. The restriction of the constraints to autonomous capacities may help explain how we can think and talk of witches, elves, dragons, and the like, given that this involves some sort of pretence. At the same time,

[15] The dependency on the veridical asserted here is plausibly asymmetric, i.e. the constraint obtained by replacing 'correctly representing' by 'misrepresenting' is not plausible. This asymmetry is exploited by asymmetric dependency theories of content, as defended in Fodor 1990.

[16] One issue (beyond the ones to be noted presently) which we shall have occasion to return to below is whether 'some activations' quantify only over actual activations, or should be considered to quantify also over counterfactual ones.

surely not all witch-talk involves pretence. And what about flawed scientific conceptions such as that of the ether, or of Vulcan? I will make no attempt here to refine the formulations of the constraints to take such examples into account, or to explain why such refinements are not, at the end of the day, needed. I will take it to be pretty uncontroversial that these two constraints are met at least by central and paradigmatic cases of representational capacities. I will take it, moreover, that any theory that is committed to widespread violation of both of the constraints ipso facto has some serious explaining to do.[17] Indeed, I will here simply take for granted that if we have a choice between saying that perceptual representational capacities meet Availability, but systematically breach Veridical and Causal Dependence, and saying the converse, there is no question but that we should say the latter.

Both Veridical and Causal Dependence are specified in terms of sameness of representational capacity. It is crucial that the notion of representational capacity here is the concrete one. This is evident in the interpersonal case. Suppose that two radical interpreters *A* and *B* are considering Helen. Interpreter *A* hypothesises that Helen entertains thoughts about water. His colleague, *B*, questions this, noting that, as far as they have been able to establish so far, the alleged acts of water-representing have not been triggered by the relevant presence of water, nor, on any interpretation they have found so far, do these alleged acts correctly represent anything as water. Clearly it would be absurd for the interpreter *A* to dismiss these worries by noting that *Maria*'s water-thoughts are correct and suitably caused by water in paradigm cases. Yet, if interpreter A is in fact right in both his hypotheses, Helen and Maria have the same

[17] Chalmers's (2006) recent theory of colour vision is an example of such a theory. Chalmers argues, on the one hand, that visual experience represent so-called 'perfect colours'. On the other, he contends that nothing has perfect colours or, nomologically, could have. Chalmers insists that he can live with this consequence, but he admits that it puts the capacities to represent perfect colours in an unusual group, and presents an at least prima facie explanatory challenge for him.

abstract conceptual capacity. Thus if sameness of abstract representational capacity was in question in these constraints, his response should make sense.

The point extends to our first cross-temporal case. Suppose that Lisa's thoughts about alkalinity at the age of thirteen were often caused (albeit indirectly) by the alkalinity of things, and correctly represented things as such. Our two interpreters are now considering Lisa at thirty, noting that, as far as they have yet been able to establish, it is hard to make out the candidates acts of alkalinity-representing as correlating, causally or veridically, in any non-accidental way with that property. Again, it would be misconceived for the interpreters to appeal to the well-behaved nature of Lisa's alkalinity-thoughts at thirteen. The situation is different if we turn to our second, short cross-temporal case, running from 1.5.2005 to 2.5.2005. If our interpreters find much error and little apparent causal grounding among Lisa's alleged acts of alkalinity-representing on the 2.5.2005, the doubts to which this may give rise over whether she is *really* thinking of alkalinity could appropriately be allayed by noting the more well-behaved character of her thoughts on the 1.5.2005.

7.3 Perceptual Representational Capacities as Nonconceptual

Perceptual experiences have intentional content, so much seems pretty plausible. I take it to be uncontroversial, moreover, that if a mental act or event has intentional content, its having the content it has depends, causally or constitutively, on the activation of certain concrete representational capacities, viz. ones that are capacities to represent whatever is the representational content of the mental act or event. We may thus ask whether the representational capacities that have this underpinning, content constituting role for perceptual experiences are conceptual or not. State conceptualists, as we have seen, say 'yes'; state nonconceptualists 'no'. I will now argue that the latter are right.

The argument has broadly two steps. First, if the highly specific representational capacities activated in perception satisfy the Availability Constraint, they are very short lived or, as we might say, contextually idiosyncratic. They go out of existence shortly after coming into being. State conceptualists generally admit this. The description of the conceptual capacities in question as 'demonstrative' or 'context bound' is usually meant to acknowledge this feature of short-livedness or contextual idiosyncracy. Yet, and this is the second step, this feature makes it hard to see how the conceptual capacities could meet the constraints of Veridical and Causal Dependence, notably in the case of illusions. More precisely, it makes it hard to see how they could meet these constraints unless they are anaphoric, which the state conceptualist cannot plausibly take them to be.

The first step, then, seeks to establish that the most specific representational capacities that are activated in vision (or other perception) are very short lived if they are subject to the Availability Constraint. Consider the capacity, activated in vision, to represent a highly specific shade of red, red_{108} say. Suppose that Gustav at *t* looks at a red_{108} patch under optimal conditions, in which the patch indeed appears red_{108} to him.[18] Shortly after *t*, the patch changes colour so that nothing any longer looks red_{108} to him. Let *t´* be a moment sometime after that change – say a ten seconds or so later – when Gustav still has no experience of anything as red_{108}. Does Gustav at *t´* have a conceptual capacity to represent red_{108}, and moreover to represent it in the non-descriptive way in which it was represented in his experience (and so not as, say, 'the shade of colour I just saw'). If he does, then the Availability Constraint entails that he at *t´* is capable of thinking any one

[18] I am operating on the supposition that 'appears F' etc is not hyperintensional here. The supposition is not essential, but allows us to avoid unnecessary prolixity. In chapter 2, section 2.2, we argued that 'looks F' is hyperintensional if 'believes that something is F' is.

of an indefinite range of thoughts about red_{108} (a range limited only by his overall conceptual repertoire at that time).[19] Moreover he is capable of doing so without any further experiences beyond those he actually has at *t´*, and so, in particular, without the benefit of visual experience of red_{108}. We have good empirical reason to doubt that Gustav has this capacity. Briefly, to retain the ability to entertain thoughts about red_{108} when one no longer experiences anything as red_{108} places demands on memory. Yet our memory capacity, even across short time spans, is not as fine-grained as our experiences. As Raffman (1995) and Kelly (2001) report, several psychological experiments suggest that people's capacity reliably to re-identify shades of colour (say) across time – even relatively short times – are inferior to their capacity reliably to distinguish shades of colour that are simultaneously presented. This finding does not prove that the subjects do not retain a capacity to think of the maximally specific shade of colour that they were able to distinguish in simultaneous presentation; perhaps subjects retain that capacity but are unable reliably to activate it about anything? However, we must ask what justification we have for ascribing that capacity? Why is not this a gratuitous over-ascription? The situation is unlike cases, vividly identified by Burge (1979) and others, where we credit people with a notion of elms, or of arthritis, even though they are highly unreliable in their application of these notions. In the latter cases, the subjects in question use words referring to elms, or to arthritis, as the shared terms of a linguistic community with which they interact: we can thus ascribe a concrete conceptual capacity to think of elms, say, thanks to their interactions with the speech community. Of course, Gustav might at *t´* essay to think of red_{108} by voicing 'That shade was F', where he uses the demonstrative 'that shade' as part of a public language. However, for demonstratives as for other terms, it is the *type* that has a characteristic

[19] Note, again, that Gustav's capacity, at *t´*, to entertain thoughts like 'The shade of colour I just saw would not find favour in the Navy', does not mean that he has the noted capacity, since red_{108} is descriptively represented in these thoughts.

use in public language, and the demonstrative type 'that shade' does not of course have a fixed reference. Different people at different places will refer to different shades by uttering tokens of that type. I conclude, then, that Gustav at *t´* does not have the capacity to think an indefinite range of (non-descriptive) thoughts of red_{108}. Therefore, given the Availability Constraint, he does not at *t´* have a conceptual capacity to represent red_{108}. Thus if he had such a conceptual capacity to represent red_{108} at the earlier time *t* (when actually seeing something red_{108}), that capacity was very short-lived – strongly bound to the experience of the red_{108} patch in which it was activated. This completes the first step.

The second step of the argument seeks to show that, if the representational capacities activated in vision have this short-lived character, they do not meet Causal and Veridical Dependency. I will argue, first, that these constraints are breached in illusions. I will then suggest, in a rather intuitive fashion, that the constraints are breached in spirit even in veridical perception.

7.3.1 Illusions as a special problem for the conceptualist

The argument to be given that state conceptualists face a special problem over illusions is inspired by Heck's (2000) recent argument against conceptualism. Consider a case where I have an illusory experience of a white desk as red_{108}.[2021] If the state conceptualist is right, my illusory experience has the content it has thanks to the

[20] Here and elsewhere I am operating on the assumption that colour is as primary a quality as shape. If this assumption is rejected, the example could be run instead in terms of shape perception, leaving the special complications of colour for later. This does not beg any questions, as the complications introduced by a secondary-quality view are orthogonal to the issue between conceptualists and nonconceptualist.

[21] I do not have in mind a garden-variety case of perceptual relativity, where colour constancy effects ensure that I am under no inclination to judge that the patch is red; I am considering a case where I would, unless suspecting something to be wrong with my perception, judge that the desk is a shade of red. The correct description of perceptual relativity and perceptual constancy is a fascinating and delicate topic. I will be presuming, for now, that it is orthogonal to the dispute between the conceptualist and the nonconceptualist. See Kelly 2001b for an argument that the conceptualist faces a special problem here, and Peacocke 2001a for a rejoinder, on behalf of the conceptualist.

activation of certain demonstrative conceptual capacities, to which I can give linguistic expression by saying 'That (part of the) desk has *that* colour' or 'That (part of the) desk is (coloured) *thus*'. What story can the state conceptualist tell about the conceptual capacities thus expressible? In particular, what story can she tell about their reference?

Heck argues, first, that the demonstrative term here, say 'that colour' will refer to the colour the patch actually has:

> The reason is that the demonstrative 'that color' refers to the color that the part of my desk actually has (the colour of the part of my desk to which I was referring when I uttered the words 'that part of my desk': The reference of this demonstrative, like that of demonstratives generally, is fixed by the world. (Heck 2000: 494)

As Heck points out, McDowell seems to agree about this, at least in some passages (e.g. at McDowell 1994: 56-57). If the conceptual capacity expressed by the demonstrative is of whatever the demonstrative referred to, it is a capacity by the activation of which one represents whiteness. It follows that one represents the desk as white. Thus it turns out that the experience veridically represents the desk as it is. But this contradicts the initial stipulation that the experience is illusory.

Heck anticipates the objection that this just shows that there is something wrong about the details of that account just given, and that we should shift to one on which the relevant demonstrative conceptual capacity represents red_{108}. Heck replies:

> [The] claim [that the reference of the demonstrative concept is fixed by a 'sample' so as to limit its candidate referents to the sample's actual properties] is not one McDowell can easily abandon, for

> what alternative conception of how the concept's reference is fixed is available to him? The most obvious alternative would be to say that its reference is fixed by the content of my perceptual experience. But to say that would be to appeal to a level of perceptual representation McDowell does not want: If the content of my perceptual experience is to fix the content of my demonstrative concept of the color experience presents to me, my concept of that color cannot also be *part of* the content of that experience. If it were, the content of the demonstrative concept would be fixed by the content of that same concept. (Heck 2000: 496)

The 'most obvious alternative' Heck has in mind here seems to be an account that says something like the following

> **The Experience-Based Account** The demonstrative conceptual capacity 'made available' in my illusory experience represents red_{108} because it depends on my experience of something as red_{108}.

Heck contends that this account is unavailable to the conceptualist. In our terms, we may spell out an argument to this effect as follows. The account mentions an experience of something as red_{108}. Anyone accepting weak intentionalism accepts that the experience has intentional content to the effect that something is red_{108}. It thus depends on the activation of a representational capacity *R* to represent red_{108}. Yet, according to the state conceptualist, *R* is just the demonstrative conceptual capacity 'made available' by the experience. Thus the Alternative Account is viciously circular in the mouth of the state conceptualist.

It is worth noting, as Heck (2000: 498) does, that the Experience-Based Account may be non-circular in the mouth of other theorists.[22] A state nonconceptualist, for example, holds that the noted capacity *R* is nonconceptual, but is free to admit that there is also a demonstrative conceptual capacity 'made available' by the experience, and that the Alternative Account holds for it. The point I want to emphasise is that, from the point of view of such an account, a demonstrative concept is anaphoric in our terms: it is such that the activation of it successfully to represent redness_{108} depends on the activation of a distinct capacity *R* to represent redness_{108}. This point is important in that it allows a state nonconceptualist to admit the existence of bona fide demonstrative concepts referring to properties things appear to have but in fact lack.

Does the state conceptualist have any third alternative, to both the Experience-Based Account and to the account Heck finds in McDowell (according to which the demonstrative concept represents whiteness)? Charles Pelling (under review) has suggested such an alternative on the conceptualist's behalf.[23] His suggestion is two-pronged. On the one hand, he suggests that the conceptualist can say simply that it is a primitive fact about the relevant demonstrative conceptual capacity that it represents red_{108}. On the other hand, he argues that this primitive or (to use a less tendentious term) Simple Account does not, despite initial appearances, leave the conceptualist at a significant explanatory disadvantage compared to the state nonconceptualist. At first

[22] Heck (*ibid.*) suggests, however, that we call concepts for which an Alternative-style account holds 'experience-dependent' concepts rather that 'demonstrative' concepts. This is presumably because he associated 'demonstrative' with demonstrative terms, and holds, as we have seen, that the reference of demonstrative terms is fixed via a sample object so as to limit their candidate referents to the properties the object actually has. Here, when 'demonstrative' occurs in front of 'concept(ual capacity)', is associated rather with the short-livedness and context-bound character of the concept(ual capacity) in question. We thus do not have Heck's reason for the terminological change.

[23] Pelling (under review) derives from his presentation to the 2005 Edinburgh MindGrads Conference, 'Conceptualism, Demonstrative Colour Concepts, and The Problem of Illusory Experience.' My understanding of Heck's argument has profited greatly from Pelling's presentation, and from conversations with him.

sight, she may indeed appear to be at such a disadvantage. The nonconceptualist and the conceptualist agree that there is a demonstrative conceptual capacity, let's say *D*, somehow 'made available' in my illusory experience. The conceptualist says, on the Simple Account, that it is a primitive fact that *D* represents red_{108}. The nonconceptualist is, by contrast, free to give the Experience-Based Account of how *D* represents red_{108}, and as such seems to have a more substantive account of *D*. Yet, as Pelling points out, this in effect passes the explanatory buck from *D* to *R*, i.e. to the (for the nonconceptualist distinct) representational capacity activated in the experience. Moreover, he maintains, at this stage the nonconceptualist will be forced to give the Simple Account. More generally, his contention is that the nonconceptualist will not be significantly better placed to account for how *R* succeeds in representing red_{108} than the conceptualist is to account for how *D* represents red_{108}.[24]

Pelling's point shows, at least, that Heck's argument needs to be reinforced. Such reinforcement can be provided, however. In particular, Pelling's suggestion that the nonconceptualist is no better placed to account for the reference of *R* than the conceptualist is to account for the reference of *D* can be shown to be false. We have argued that *D* is very short-lived, given that it is subject to the Availability Constraint. Now, let us suppose that when I have my illusory experience, I have not had any experience, veridical or otherwise, of red_{108} for a long time, and that I will not do so again afterwards for a long time. Thus *D* comes into being in the illusion and passes away soon thereafter. Thus we cannot appeal to the fact that *D* is activated as the result of the visible presence of something red_{108}, or is activated in correctly representing

[24] In discussion of Pelling's paper at the Edinburgh conference, Professor Christopher Peacocke expressed broad sympathy with the criticism of Heck, at least in so far as agreeing with Pelling that Heck's argument leaves it open to the conceptualist to insist that, in my visual experience, I activate a demonstrative conceptual capacity representing red_{108}.

something as red_{108} at other occasions. On the face of it, then, *D* clashes with both Causal and Veridical Dependence. By contrast, the nonconceptualist is not committed to think of *R* as a highly transient capacity. For her, *R* is a standing capacity of mine, as entrenched in me as any of my standing non-indexical conceptual capacities – if not more.[25] If I went through a phase of red_{108}-perceptions a few years ago, the nonconceptualist can point to these occasions at ones at which I activated *R* in a veridical and suitably causally grounded way. At this point in the argument, it is should be emphasised that these earlier occasions do *not* help the state conceptualist in her account of *D*. True, these earlier occasions 'made available' a concrete demonstrative concept *D´* of red_{108}. But this concrete capacity is as distinct from my current capacity as Lisa's capacity to think of alkalinity, at thirty, is distinct from her capacity to think of alkalinity, at thirteen. As we saw, it is wrong-headed to appeal to the causal well-groundedness and general thruthfulness of Lisa's capacity to think of alkalinity at thirteen to sustain the clam that her alleged capacity to think of alkalinity at thirty is bona fide. For the conceptualist, it would be just as absurd to appeal to the correctness and well-groundedness of *D´* in making the case that my current capacity *D* succeeds in representing red_{108}. We see then, that the state nonconceptualist has at least *much less* trouble in giving an account of *R* meeting Causal and Veridical Dependence. Since these constraints plausibly matter to the determination of reference, the nonconceptualist is placed to give a relevantly superior account. At least the second prong of Pelling's suggestion is thus false.

What about the very idea that my illusory experience of something as red_{108} depends on the activation of a short-lived demonstrative conceptual capacity, *D*, representing

[25] For example, it is arguable that evolutionary considerations have a more significant role in the emergence of *R*, having the reference it has, than they do for at least most ordinary conceptual capacities. See Dretske 1995 for an argument along these lines.

red_{108}? Is this very idea simply incompatible with Causal and Veridical Dependency? Perhaps a determined conceptualist would argue as follows. 'For the short time when you possess *D*, you can *think* that something is, was, or will be red_{108}.[26] This thought is true if it is possible veridically to represent anything as red_{108} at all.' It could justly be complained, however, that this thought is too trivial, or too undifferentiating, to really count for the purposes of Veridical Dependence. Its truth-condition does not serve to distinguish red_{108} from non-red_{108} things within a world, and thus would not help an interpreter within that world, who cannot transport his interpretee across modal space, to decide whether she means red_{108} as opposed to anything else. Perhaps the conceptualist would reply: 'You could simply make a few wild guesses. You could guess, say, that the Queen's favourite cardigan is red_{108}. Perhaps this thought just happens to be correct.' This of course conflicts with the condition of non-accidentalness. Moreover, the problems confronting the conceptualist seem, if anything, even harder for Causal Dependency. It is hard to see, then, how the conceptualist can avoid the conclusion that the idea that *D* autonomously represents red_{108} violates Causal and Veridical Dependency.

A possible objection might be set aside at this point. It might be thought that any purported refutation of the idea that *D* represents red_{108} just is implausible, since it *just is plausible* that I can think, somehow demonstratively, of the red shade the desk appears to have.[27] As noted above, however, a state nonconceptualist is free to allow that I can do so, consistently with the criticisms just put forward. The state nonconceptualist is free to give the Experience-Based Account and thus to see these

[26] Again, I disregard any hyperintensionality in 'think' here. This is merely in order to avoid unnecessary prolixity. For a similar point with regard to 'appears', see ft. n. 18 above.

[27] See Johnston 2004 for a compelling defence of the possibility of thinking demonstratively of features on the basis of outright hallucination. If Johnston is right for hallucination, it is hard to see why demonstrative thinking of a feature something appears to have but in fact lacks should be impossible.

demonstrative capacities as anaphoric. As such, they would not be subject to Causal and Veridical Dependency. The state conceptualist, however, could not see these concepts as anaphoric.[28]

7.3.2 The problem generalised to veridical experiences

The short-livedness of demonstrative conceptual capacities applies just as much to those implicated in veridical experience as to those activated in illusion. If this short-livedness makes for a conflict between these capacities and some highly general constraints on representational capacities, we should expect this conflict to be identifiable not just in special or unusual cases but more generally. Now, illusion may perhaps count as a fairly common and ordinary feature of our perceptual experience. Yet, as the status of illusions as quite ordinary perceptual experiences is controversial, it is interesting to see if the conflict can be identified irrespective of such cases. I reckon this is so, as I will now will try to make plausible in a intuitive and provisional way.

Suppose that I veridically perceive something as red_{108} at *t* and, then, after having closed my eyes for ten seconds, veridically perceive something as red_{108} again at *t´*. The conceptualist is committed to saying that there are *two* short-lived concrete representational capacities activated here. Is this at all plausible? Since the activations of these capacities were veridical and appropriately caused there is no outright conflict with Veridical and Causal Dependence as these constraints stand. Yet the idea that there is no standing readiness to represent red_{108} things as such, activated on two occasions here, seems at implausible as the idea that I have no standing readiness to represent

[28] There is room for an account on which these concepts are anaphoric not on conscious perceptual experience of something as having the feature in question, but on some sort of sub-conscious state representing something as having that feature. This suggestion would probably not be attractive to McDowell (1994) or Brewer (1999), given their lack of enthusiasm for constitutive links between the personal level and the subpersonal level. In any event, it is hard to see how one could be motivated in accepting this position but rejecting the state nonconceptualist position articulated in this chapter.

something as a dog when I encounter one. Moreover, consider another type of concrete representational capacity: say some fairly ordinary capacity to represent trees, say. We would not take one or two putative activations of what is putatively a tree-representing capacity to be sufficient to establish that we are truly dealing with a capacity to represent trees, even if these putative activations would, on the interpretation of them as cases of tree-representing, be veridical and suitably caused. Surely, we would want to see if this construal gives reliably correct and suitably caused activations across relevantly different contexts (bushes vs. trees, conifers vs. leafy trees, real trees vs. fake trees, etc.). The constraints of Causal and Veridical Dependence will begin to cut real ice for an interpreter only when she starts to make such cross-contextual comparisons. These are ex hypothesi not available for demonstrative conceptual capacities. This makes it doubtful whether, construed as autonomous capacities, they really meet the applicable constraints on representational capacities.[29]

7.4 Objections and Replies

I will briefly consider two objections to the argument of the last section: one found in Brewer (2005), the other taking forward Pelling's strategy of pointing out problems for the state nonconceptualist corresponding to those identified for the state conceptualist.

7.4.1 Brewer's reply to Heck

In a reply to Heck, Brewer argues that successful demonstrative reference to a shade of colour requires 'some ability to keep track of the shade in question over certain variations in viewing conditions: some changes of perspective, lighting, the presence or

[29] The appeals to the judgements and considerations of radical interpreters are used as an argumentative device in this chapter, in order to suggest that we do, at least implicitly, take the reference of various representational capacities to be subject to the constraints in question. The metaphysical underpinning of this argumentative device could be developed in various ways, e.g. in terms of a general 'interpretationist' view of intentional states (see Child 1994). However, one does not prejudge this question in using the device.

absence of shadows, and so on.' (2005: 223) He goes on to suggest that colour illusion may happen because these 'tracking requirements' may be violated:

> Errors in colour perception are perfectly possible on this account, though, when the required tracking fails, and the relevant demonstrative color concept 'coloured thus' is not available to the subject. Her experience in the relevant respect consists in a failed attempt to grasp that concept, a failed attempt at demonstrative reference to the specific shade in question, and is therefore, and in that sense, mistaken. (*ibid*.)

On the face of it, however, this reply seems inconsistent with the conceptualism Brewer defends in the same paper. As we saw, his basic thesis (CC) is that 'sense experiential states have conceptual content,' where he takes a conceptual content to be 'one which is characterizable only in terms of concepts which the subject himself possesses.' (2005:217-218) My illusory experience is a sense experience. It has the representational content, on one specification, that a certain object is red_{108}. Yet this cannot be the appropriate specification for Brewer's purposes since (let's pretend) I do not possess the (non-indexical) concept of red_{108}.[30] As conceptualists generally concede, if the fine-grained content of experience is to be characterised in terms of concepts the subject herself possesses, it has to be specified in demonstrative terms – as say, the content that a certain object is coloured *thus*. Yet, according to Brewer, I do not succeed in grasping, hence not in possessing, any such demonstrative colour concept. This contradicts his thesis (CC) on the explication provided.

Could Brewer remove this contradiction by weakening his definition of a conceptual state so as require only that its content be characterisiable only in terms of concepts

[30] The pretence can easily be eliminated by couching the example in terms of someone other than me (who, perhaps, count as having a concept of red_{108}).

which the subject herself *either* possesses *or* attempts but fails to grasp? Yet if one can have a contentful experience without grasping the relevant concepts – without having the relevant conceptual capacities – the contentfulness of the experience does not depend on the activation of such capacities. This contradicts state conceptualism, yet, as we noted in the introduction above, Brewer is reasonably interpreted as accepting state conceptualism.

A better, if more radical, way of removing the contradiction is by denying that illusory experiences *strictly speaking* are members of the kind denoted by 'sense experiential states' in (CC). Rather, illusory experiences (along with hallucinations) are a sort of 'imposter state' – *ersatz* experiences, as we may call them – whose status as experiential states depends only on their being subjectively indiscriminable from sense experiences in the true or *echt* sense: viz. in the sense of veridical experiences that non-deviantly depend on the things they are experiences of. This radical form of disjunctivism has recently been defended by Martin (2004). This disjunctivist view indeed chimes pretty well with what Brewer says about illusions. If *echt* sense experiences depend on the possession of concepts, then if an illusion involves some sort of failure to grasp appropriate concepts, it makes sense to think of the very state of mind that the illusion is as some sort of failure to be an *echt* sense experience.[31]

This is not the place for a thorough assessment of disjunctivism, neither in general nor with respect to this particular version. I will rest content with making two brief remarks. First, if our generalisation of the underlying problem facing the conceptualist above is

[31] Another analogy is this. One's state of mind when one fails to grasp a demonstrative concept, in a compelling case of illusion, will, plausibly, be subjectively indiscriminable from one's state of mind in a case of success. Similarly, the sort of failure to be an *echt* sensory experience that an illusion is, on Martin's (2004) view, is subjectively indiscriminable from cases of success.

correct – if we were right to suggest that the underlying problem generalises to veridical experience – then the disjunctivist move does not help the state conceptualist, even if disjunctivism as such is sound. Second, the disjunctivism that Brewer (2005) is committed to, on the current way of removing the contradiction in his view, is a radical one in the following respect: it draws the distinction between the 'bad-boat-states' and the 'good-boat-states' not between outright hallucinations, on the one hand, and cases where some object is veridically perceived or misperceived, on the other, but between hallucinations and illusions, on the one hand, and (non-accidentally) veridical experiences, on the other.[32] If one adds to this that a bad-boat state is not a genuine sense experience but owes its status as an (*ersatz*) experiential state to its subjective indiscriminability from an *echt* sense experience, it seems very difficult to explain how misperceptions make possible demonstrative reference to physical particulars. For example, if I misperceive a saucer as slightly smaller and darker than it is, I can still think demonstratively of it as *that* saucer. [33] Hallucinations, with which misperceptions are grouped on this view, notoriously do not make possible demonstrative reference to a physical particular. Disjunctivism, then, does not seem to be affords a plausible way out for the state conceptualist.

7.4.2 Can the state conceptualist still say tu qouque*?*

We argued above, in response to Pelling's challenge, that the nonconceptualist is better placed than her conceptualist rival to account for how the representational capacity activated in my illusory experience can represent red_{108}. A central point in our argument

[32] This contrasts with the disjunctivism defended in Snowdon 1980-1, where the crucial distinction is drawn between cases of perception, whether veridical or illusory, and cases of hallucination. See Martin 2002: nt 24 for a brief note on this distinction among disjunctivisms.

[33] McDowell (1990) disputes that the ability to refer demonstratively to the object misperceived is preserved in misperception of location. Peacocke (1991) rejoins that the ability is preserved at least in moderate cases of illusions of location. In any case, I take it to be uncontroversial that some forms of misperception preserve the ability.

was that the nonconceptualist, but not the conceptualist, can appeal to a previous occasion on which I veridically experienced a red_{108} thing as such. Yet how can we be so sure that there are any such previous occasions? Indeed, how can we be so sure that there will be any later occasions? Red_{108} is, after all, a *very* specific shade of colour. Couldn't I go through life and only ever experience something as red_{108} in my illusion? If I could, wouldn't the state nonconceptualist be flouting Veridical and Causal Dependence just as much as the conceptualist?

Two sorts of responses suggest themselves to the nonconceptualist here, each eliciting a natural conceptualist rejoinder. The first response is to invoke counterfactuals. Even if *R* (the capacity activated in my illusion, ex hypothesi representing red_{108}) is in fact only ever activated in that illusion, still, if I had encountered something red_{108} in normal conditions of perception, *R* would thereby have been activated in representing it as such. Perhaps our formulation of the constraints of Veridical and Causal Dependence ought to be weakened so at to allow such counterfactual activation to count?

The natural conceptualist rejoinder this gives rise to is the question why *she* cannot make the same counterfactual move and secure compliance with the thus weakened constraints of Causal and Veridical Dependence. One reason, I submit, is that the notion of *normal* conditions cannot claim similar relevance for a highly context-specific demonstrative capacity. According to the nonconceptualist, *R*, as the concrete representational capacity it is, emerges from genetically determined processes of maturation, and as such has a causal tie with the kinds of perceptual circumstances that were evolutionarily most important to the development of our visual system.[34] These

[34] Dretske 1995 tells a story along these lines. A story in a broadly similar vein, yet revised so as to avoid possibly unwelcome implications for 'swampman-cases', is told by Tye 1995.

circumstances correspond to what count as normal conditions of perception, by our ordinary standards of normality. The concrete demonstrative conceptual capacity *D*, by contrast, comes into being in the context of the illusion and goes out of existence just after it. Why should normal conditions of perception, by our ordinary standards of normality, have any primacy to the determination of reference for *D*?[35]

The second nonconceptualist response is to posit some form of compositional structure in *R*. For an illustration of how such a compositional view might look, consider Byrne's (2003) view of colour perception. On his view, representation of a determinate shade of colour is achieved via a 'map-reference' system where certain primary colours are the 'landmarks' and other colours are identified by their proportion of ('distance from') the primaries. Crudely, orange is visually represented as half red and half yellow.[36] Thus the activation of *R* would involve the combined activation of several more basic representational capacities, where these more basic capacities are jointly exercised, in myriad different combinations, in representing various determinate shades of colour. Now, reference determination for such an interlocking set of representational capacities plausibly has a (locally) holist nature. Suppose that we have an assumption about what the compositional structure of the system of capacities is. We go on to make reference assignments to the atomic capacities, and give rules for how the references of composed

[35] A Twin Earth case may be a useful analogy here. Two radical interpreters A and B are considering me and my *doppelgänger*. Interpreter A hypothesizes that my utterances of 'water' are cases of water-representation while my *doppelgänger*'s utterances of the homophonic type 'water' are cases of XYZ-representation. Interpreter B questions this, noting that if I were to occupy the Twin Earth environment, my 'water'-utterances would, on A's interpretation of them, be neither veridical nor suitably caused (and conversely for my *doppelganger*). Is not interpreter A drawing a gratuitous distinction, B wonders, when he in effect treats my Earthly environment as having a canonical status for the interpretation of my 'water'-utterances while treating my *doppelgänger*'s Twin Earthly environment as having such a status for the interpretation of his 'water'-utterances. I take it, however, that A has a good reply here, insisting that the distinction is not gratuitous because the distinct, concrete representational capacities of my *doppelganger* and me emerged within these distinct environments. The point in the text essentially generalises interpreter *A*'s point to cover concrete perceptual representational capacities.

[36] For our purposes, we do not need to look upon this as more than a toy model.

capacities depend on that of the composing capacities. The evidence for this interpretation is holist in so far as it depends on the *overall* veridicality and causal well-groundedness of the activations of the various composed capacities (as well as of the simple capacities). Such an interpretation is not refuted if a limited number of composed capacities– such as *R* on the current supposition – are in fact never activated in a non-accidentally veridical and suitably caused way.[37]

Again, this will naturally elicit the question from the nonconceptualist is of why she is not entitled to make the same move for her demonstrative conceptual capacities. Here the reason is essentially the one we quoted Evans (1982: 104, ft. n. 22) as giving above. If the conceptualist finds compositional structure here, she will be committed, by the Availability Constraint, to the idea that the various component conceptual capacities are freely re-combinable with any others in the thinker's overall repertoire. Such re-combinability may be plausible with regard to the demonstrative conceptual capacity *D* – it may be plausible that I can think, say, that Granny's favourite cardigan is coloured *thus*, when I possess *D*. It is far from equally plausible for the perhaps quite recherché component capacities posited in a compositional analysis of *D*.

On these grounds, then, possibly among others, we have reason to think that the nonconceptualist is better placed than the conceptualist to account for the fine-grained representational capacities activated in perception.

[37] Compare the example above of how the composed capacity to represent something as a blushing, non-human animal suggests so much.

7.5 Content Congruence without State Conceptualism

It is time to recapitulate. In chapters 1 and 4, we argued positively for the thesis of *content congruence*,

> **Content congruence** The content of a perceptual experience is the content of a thought that a reflective subject is in a position to think if she has the experience.

In chapters 2 and 3, we defended this thesis against the objection that it confuses sense and reference, or that it confuses different kinds of senses (modes of presentation). In chapters 5 and 6, we defended the thesis – and indeed conceptualism more generally – against the objection that it leads to a viciously circular or otherwise deeply inadequate view of observational or demonstrative concepts. The tone throughout the first six chapters, then, has been decidedly friendly to conceptualism.

That changed in the present chapter. Here we have moved to reject the thesis of *state conceptualism*

> **State conceptualism** The concrete representational capacities in virtue of the activation of which a perceptual experience has the content it has are conceptual.

Now, as we noted in the Introduction, content congruence and state conceptualism have been closely intertwined with each other in paradigmatic conceptualist views, including those of McDowell (1994) and Brewer (1999). This naturally raises the question if not

there is a fatal inconsistency – or at least a troubling tension – at the heart of the present thesis.[38]

In this final, brief section, I will allay this worry that our defence of content congruence is at odds with our rejection of state conceptualism. Within the limited space available, I cannot offer a detailed defence of the compatibility of these views. I will have to rest content with outlining the general way in which I would proceed to quell the worry more comprehensively.

When considering whether there is even a prima facie problem to be solved here, two points should be kept firmly in mind. First, our arguments for content congruence are relatively neutral on the individuation-conditions for thought content. In particular, they are consistent both with a Fregean and a Russellian view of the content of thoughts. If the content of thinking is even more coarse-grained, content congruence is if anything even more plausible.[39] The drift of our arguments for content congruence is, then, that whatever the precise individuation-conditions for the contents of basic perceptual judgements might be, the same conditions apply to perceptual content.

The second point to keep in mind is our reason, developed in this chapter, to deny that perceptual representational capacities are conceptual.[40] The reason was that these

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[38] We saw one way in which one might argue for such inconsistency in section 7.1.1 above, by appeal to the State-Content Bi-Conditional and the claim that content is conceptual iff it is the content of a possible thought.

[39] It is thus not surprising that Stalnaker (1998), who notoriously defends the view that the contents of propositional attitudes are to be individuated in terms of sets of possible worlds, affirms content congruence.

[40] It is important to note here that the conceptual and representational capacities talked about are *concrete* capacities (see chapter 7, section 7.1). The criterion of identity for an *abstract* representational capacity is simply that rep. capacity *A* is rep. capacity *B* just in case the content entertained in activating *A* is the content entertained in activating *B*. On the abstract notion, content congruence trivially entails sameness of representational capacities in thought and in perception; consequently, since the representational

capacities do not satisfy the Availability Constraint jointly with the constraints of Causal and Veridical Dependence. Since the two latter constraints seem to apply to *all* representational capacities, the plausible conclusion is, we argued, that the Availability Constraint is violated. *Given* that Availability is a constraint on conceptual capacities, it follows in turn that the capacities in question are not conceptual. The key point is that, in failing Availability, these capacities fail to exhibit a certain functional role of being ever-available (subject to performance limitations) for the thinking of any one of an indefinite range of thoughts about the things they represent. As we noted above, this seems to be a 'horizontal' constraint on conceptual capacities. It specifies how a given conceptual capacity is available to interact with other such capacities. We contrasted this with a 'vertical' constraint, specifying a relation between the capacity and the world it represents.

The posited difference between perceptual representational capacities and conceptual capacities, i.e. that latter only meet the Availability Constraint, thus represents a relatively 'horizontal' difference in their functional characteristics. Now the question I want to raise, pulling the two point just made together, is this: Why should this difference in functional characteristics entail that the individuation-conditions for the contents made entertainable by perceptual representational capacities differ from the individuation-conditions for the contents made entertainable by the conceptual capacities? Some differences in functional role between representational capacities certainly do matter to content. To take a crude example, if representational capacity *A* tends to be activated by the presence of dogs and to issue in the pursuit of dogs, while representational capacity *B* tends to be activated by the presence of cats and to issue in

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capacities used in thinking are conceptual (if any are), it straightforwardly follows that they must be conceptual in perception too. Confusion of this abstract notion with the (intended) concrete notion may be fuelling the impression that content congruence is *obviously* incompatible with state nonconceptualism.

the pursuit of cats, then we plausibly do have a difference in functional role that matters to content. Yet there are other examples where there is, in a broad sense, a difference in functional role between two sets of representational capacities, yet where we are pre-theoretically committed to content congruence. I will consider two cases.

Fluency in German involves a set of representational capacities to say something in German. Fluency in English involves a set of representational capacities to say something in English. The former set differs from the latter in that the English capacities are more constrained than the German in regard of word order whereas the German are more constrained than the English in regard of adding the suffixes to words. In a broad sense, this qualifies as a difference in what we may call the functional profile of the capacities. Yet, common-sensically, it does not make translation between German and English impossible: it does not prevent content congruence.

The second example is this. Liz is a highly intelligent physics PhD and Tom is an eight year old boy. Tom has the representational capacity to think of tables and chairs, cats and dogs, and other everyday things around him. Liz also has capacities to think of these everyday matters. Yet Liz is free to integrate these capacities with her capacities to think of highly sophisticated and recherché theoretical matters. Thus she can think that her table teeming with charm quark, say. Her tables-and-chairs-bound representational capacities thus, in a wide sense, have different functional profile from Tom's: they have a much wider freedom of interaction with other capacities. Yet, pre-theoretically, this does not make it impossible for Liz to think just the same everyday

thoughts that Tom can think: it does not make it impossible for them both to think, say, that there is a cat on the table. In other words, it allows for content congruence.[41]

My suggestion is that the difference between perceptual representational capacities and conceptual capacities is analogous to that between Tom's and Liz's representational capacities in this respect: it is a difference in the 'freedom' or 'global availability' of the capacities, where this difference does not prevent content congruence.[42] At present, this suggestion will have stand as a research proposal more than as a vindicated claim. However, the brief points just made should dispel the impression that it is obvious that our defence of content congruence is incompatible with our rejection of state conceptualism. The weight of the arguments *for* content congruence, on the one hand, and weight of the arguments *against* state conceptualism – conditionally on concepts being subject to the Availability Constraint – on the other hand, suggest to me that any tension between these views is indicative of some other misclassification. Perhaps what such a tension would show, to the extent that there is a tension here, is that perceptual representational capacities are rightly considered conceptual even if they are *not* freely available to be used in thinking whenever possessed, as we expect paradigmatic concepts to be. I must leave this as an important question for future consideration. For now, I shall be satisfied if I have identified at least a serious possibility that content

[41] Of course, if the individuation of thought content is strongly holist, then Liz and Tom cannot think the same thoughts even about everyday matters. Yet this is prima facie a drawback for the strong holism, not for our example.

[42] The analogy is telling in another respect too. If we look at Tom's total set of representational capacities, they are of course much more constrained in what contents they can entertain than the contents that Liz's total set of representational capacities allow her to entertain. Analogously, the perceptual representational capacities of a reflective subject are much more constrained in what contents they can entertain (what they can realise as the content of perceptual experience) than the conceptual capacities of the subject. The analogy should not be pressed too far, of course, as the limitations of the perceptual representational capacities cannot be overcome in the way Tom can overcome the limitations on his current representational capacities.

congruence and state *non*conceptualism are two jointly true views of how perceptions relate to thoughts in content.

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