

Introduction: The Logical Space of Relationalism

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Confronted with the great variety one can find today in the work of those often labelled (either by themselves or by others) as “relationalists”, “naïve realists” or “disjunctivists”, one could be excused for thinking that relationalism has no common core, but is instead a constellation of views, which at best bear a kind of family resemblance to each other. We believe that this impression would be inaccurate. Relationalism is best thought of not as a constellation of loosely interrelated views, but as a single wellspring of views, which has both a common core, and a variety of versions which differ from each other along two central axes of variation. In the first half of this introduction, we articulate this structure of relationalist views by constructing a common logical space for them. In the introduction’s second part, we use this logical space to introduce the various contributions this volume collects.

1. An Outline of the Logical Space

As we see it, the relationalist outlook on conscious perception contains three distinct threads. First, there is a “metaphysical” thread, which suggests that conscious perceptions, by their very nature, relate us to worldly mind-independent elements. This thread involves the idea that our mental states are constitutively world-involving, and so also the idea that the boundary of the mind reaches beyond the boundary of the head. Second, there is a “phenomenological” thread, which suggests that perception’s nature, specified in the metaphysical thread, accounts for perception’s phenomenal character. This thread involves the idea that perception’s phenomenal character is intimately dependent on the worldly mind-independent elements to which the perceptions relate us. Third, there is the “disunity” thread. This thread largely developed from relationalists’ efforts to contend with the charge that perception’s world-involving nature cannot account for its phenomenal character, since there are hallucinations which have the same character but lack the world-involving nature. In rejecting this charge, relationalists established the disunity thread, which suggests that perceptions and hallucinations have sharply different natures, and that the realm of conscious sensory experiences is therefore disunified. This disunity thread also involves the idea that similarities in introspective judgments about how things sensorily appear to us do not necessarily reflect similarities in the nature of our sensory experiences themselves.

Naturally, there are important and delicate links between the three threads. Still, contemporary relationalists often differ starkly in their commitments along the phenomenological and disunity threads, while remaining remarkably consonant with respect to the view’s metaphysical thread. We therefore suggest that relationalism has a metaphysical common core, along with variations along the phenomenal and disunity threads.

1.1. Relationalism and the Nature of Perception

The common metaphysical core of relationalism is a thesis meant to specify conscious perception’s nature. This thesis—which can be picked out from the work of most, if not all, contemporary relationalists—states that:

Relationalism

To be a conscious perception is to be an obtaining of a certain primitive, non-representational, conscious sensory relation between a subject and various mind-independent external elements, which are the essential constituents of the conscious perception.^{1,2}

Here, we shall refer to the relation postulated in Relationalism simply as a “perception relation”, although others sometimes call it “acquaintance”. Readers who feel this choice is significant should be able to replace our terminology with theirs.

At first glance, Relationalism can seem like a trivial thesis. If one takes it to be a plain truism that to be a conscious perception is to be an obtaining of a certain conscious sensory relation between a subject and various elements (namely, those that the subject perceives), then it can be obscure why the thesis is substantive. Moreover, suppose you follow us (and standard practice) in taking the “constitution” mentioned in Relationalism to be the distinctive

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¹ See, e.g., Brewer (2011, p. 93), Campbell (2002, p. 117), Genone (2016, p. 6), Martin (2002, pp. 392–393; 2004, p. 39; 2006, p. 354) and Snowdon (1990, p. 124). Relationalists sometimes disagree over the existence of unconscious perceptions and whether they can be given a relational analysis (Anaya & Clarke 2017; Phillips 2015; Zięba 2019; Beck 2022). Here we set this issue aside, focusing only on conscious experiences.

² We use “Relationalism” (capitalized) to refer to the metaphysical thesis, and “relationalism” (uncapitalized) to refer to fuller positions, which combine Relationalism with other theses from the “phenomenological” and/or “disunity” threads.

mereological relationship that exists between a complex structured whole (such as an obtaining of a relation) and its metaphysical-joint-carving and structurally arranged parts (such as the relation and its relata). Then, you might well feel that since any obtaining of the perception relation has the subject, the perceived elements, and the perception relation itself as appropriate parts, it is a truism to say that these parts are “constituents” of the relation’s obtaining, i.e., of the conscious perception. This can only add to the obscurity surrounding (Relationalism)’s substantiveness.

But there is more to the thesis of Relationalism than that. First, Relationalism holds that the perception relation (or, the *S perceives x* relation) is primitive, in the sense that it is distinct from relations that it plausibly supervenes on. In particular, the primitiveness of the relation entails that the perception relation is not identical to any of the relations *x causes S (in manner M) to be in mental condition C*, generated by assigning appropriate values to *M* and *C*. This commitment rules out so-called “conjunctivist” views, on which to perceive an element is to have the element cause one to be in a certain intrinsic state, to be related to mind-dependent sense-data, to sense in a particular manner, or to entertain a certain representation. By ruling these views out, the relationalist is resisting potential suggestions by inner-state, sense-data, adverbialist or representationalist views to the effect that the metaphysics of perception could be developed by merely adding some further external causal condition to their preferred metaphysics of experience.

Second, Relationalism holds that the constituents of a conscious perception are *essential* constituents of the perception. This has the non-trivial implication that perceptions that are had by distinct subjects, or perceptions that are of distinct elements, are themselves essentially distinct. It also has the non-trivial implication that no experience in which nothing is perceived could have the same essence as a perception. Hereafter, we use “constituent” to mean “essential constituent” (unless otherwise specified).

Third, by requiring that at least one *mind-independent* element is perceived in any perception, Relationalism is differentiated from sense-data views, on which the essential constituents of perceptions are all mind-dependent.

Fourth, the mind-independent elements perceived are required to be *external*, in the sense that they must be in the subject’s physical environment. By virtue of this requirement, Relationalism is differentiated from views on which perceptions are relations to uninstantiated properties.

Finally, Relationalism holds that the *S perceives x* relation cannot be identified with any representation relation. This commitment rules out views on which to perceive an external element is to represent it in a certain way. In particular, the view that to perceive an element is to entertain an element-dependent sensory representation of it (i.e., a sensory representation of a kind which could not exist without the element’s existing) is ruled out by the “non-representational relation” requirement. This view is not ruled out by the requirement that perception is a primitive relation. It should be noted, however, that the “non-representational relation” requirement is compatible with holding that perceptions have representational properties, i.e., that they represent things as thus and so. For example, if some naturalist tracking theory of representation is correct, and if a certain perception type happens to bear that theory’s naturalist tracking relation to a certain state of affairs type, then perceptions of that type will end up representing states of affairs of that type. That the *S perceives x* relation itself is not a representation relation is consistent with this, since a relation which is not essentially, or by its nature, representational can still have instantiations which happen to represent under contingent further circumstances.³

On the present understanding, then, Relationalism is a thesis about the nature of perception, on which to be a conscious perception is to manifest the mind’s power to reach beyond our own boundaries and essentially relate us to mind-independent elements in our environment. Note, however, that this minimal thesis is silent both with respect to the nature of conscious perception’s phenomenal character, and with respect to conscious perception’s relationship with other sensory experiences, such as hallucinations. As these are areas in which different versions of relationalism differ from each other, we shall treat them as axes of variation around which we can organize the space of relationalist views found in the literature.

1.2. Relationalism and the Phenomenal Character of Perception

Since the thesis of Relationalism undertakes no commitments about the nature of perception’s phenomenology, a relationalist could in principle embrace the quietist view that a conscious perception’s phenomenal character cannot be metaphysically analyzed.⁴ Most relationalists are not quietists, however, and the relationalist literature is filled with a host of analyses of perception’s phenomenal character. Here, we shall attempt to locate these analyses in a common logical space.

Many (though perhaps not all) relationalist analyses of perception’s phenomenal character are motivated by the idea that a perception’s phenomenology is nothing other than a sensuous openness to perceived reality. This idea is

³ On this understanding of Relationalism, Travis’ (2013) view that perceptions do not have representational properties is a commitment that goes beyond mere Relationalism.

⁴ How one understands “metaphysical analysis” can vary, but here we shall take quietism to exclude reductive identification, grounding, or constitutional characterization of perception’s character, while allowing claims about what that character (merely) metaphysically supervenes on.

famously captured in Martin's (2002, pp. 392-3) comment that

One ... view would be one on which one asserted that mind-independent objects are present to the mind when one perceives, but ... that when one has such experience, its object must actually exist and genuinely be present to the mind. Call this, naïve realism.

Even if we set aside Martin's way of capturing it, the general "sensuous openness to perceived reality" idea is frequently expressed in relationalist circles, and much relationalist writing on perception's phenomenology can be understood as locating itself relative to it. For this reason, we will construct this section's logical space around various ways of interpreting what "sensuous openness" is.

A deep fault-line crossing our logical space separates two distinct ways of understanding what it is to be "sensuously open" to perceived reality: On what we shall be calling "Russellian relationalist" views, to be sensuously open to perceived reality is for perception's phenomenal character to be shaped (in a sense to be clarified shortly) by perceived reality. Alternatively, on what we shall be calling "Fregean relationalist" views, to be sensuously open to perceived reality is for perception's phenomenal character to be "shaped" exhaustively not by perceived reality, but by our own manners of being open to it.⁵ In this section, we hope to clarify the contrast between these two outlooks and the dialectic landscape surrounding the choice between them.

Two preliminary points before we begin: First, we believe that our label "Russellian relationalism" corresponds, to a good degree, to what is often called "naïve realism" in contemporary literature. But to avoid getting too much into exegetical issues, we decided not to use "naïve realism". Second, Kriegel (2009) and others hold that an experience's phenomenal character has two distinguishable components – its qualitative character (i.e., what it is like to have the experience) and its subjective character (i.e., the for-me-ness of the experience, or the subjective perspective the experience provides to one).⁶ We wish our discussion to be orthogonal to whether one accepts this distinction. Readers who do accept the distinction should take our talk of phenomenal character to pick out only qualitative character.

1.2.1. Sensuous Openness, Russellianism and Fregeanism

Our focus in this section is on the Russellian construal of the idea that a perception's phenomenal character is a subject's sensuous/phenomenal openness to perceived reality. There are several ways of rigorously developing this idea, giving rise to a complex space of possible Russellian positions. We will be mapping this logical space and using it to place some existing views. The logical space is a four-dimensional space, each dimension of which corresponds to a question that we might ask about Russellianism.

On the Russellian interpretation, our sensuous openness to reality is understood as the idea that the phenomenal character of perception is somehow shaped by reality, where this shaping is not to be understood as a causal relation. The first question that we might ask about this idea is whether it should be formulated by appealing to an identity thesis that tell us what the phenomenal character of perception is, or in terms of specifying the essential constituents of phenomenal character. Thus, we can distinguish between two versions of Russellianism:

Identity Russellianism

A perception's phenomenal character is identical to a structured totality that includes perceived elements.⁷

Constitution Russellianism

A perception's phenomenal character is constituted by a structured totality that includes perceived elements.

Identity Russellianism is reminiscent of Tye's (2015) claim that phenomenal character is "out there in the world". However, those who find it odd to say that the phenomenal character of a mental state can be a totality of worldly things, and instead prefer to reserve "phenomenal character" as a term for a mental entity, may read the thesis as suggesting that what a conscious perception is like is identical to what a totality that includes some perceived elements

⁵ The labels "Russellian" and "Fregean" are often used to pick out types of content (Chalmers 2010). Roughly put, on Russellian accounts of content, the represented elements such as objects and properties "enter" the constitution of content. Some of the interpretive questions that we will focus on in the next section can also be asked about Russellian accounts of content. Moreover, the theoretical pressures that shape the choice between Russellian and Fregean relationalism are in many ways analogous to those that shape the choice between Russellian and Fregean representationalism. But our use of the term here should not be taken to imply anything about content or representationalism.

⁶ We take phenomenal aspects such as blurriness (of the kind which we sometimes try to remove by putting on our spectacles), the phenomenology of being here and now, or the phenomenology of there being spatial limits to our perceptual (e.g., visual) fields, to be included in qualitative character. We can use the label "presentational phenomenal character" as a label for what remains of qualitative character after such phenomenal aspects are excluded.

⁷ We speak of a "structured totality" to side-step disagreements over how to individuate perceived elements. For example, on some ways of individuating perceived elements, a conscious perception of a green ball and a red square has the same perceived elements as a conscious perception of a red ball and a green square. Even so, the two perceptions still differ phenomenally by virtue of the fact that the elements form different structured totalities. For brevity, and unless otherwise specified, we will henceforth use terms such as "perceived elements", "perceived properties" and "perceived particulars" to refer, respectively, to structured totalities of perceived elements, properties, and particulars.

is like.

Identity Russellianism is a stronger thesis than Constitution Russellianism. For, arguably, specifying the constituents of an item, even if it is an exhaustive list of its essential constituents, does not tell us what the item is. But saying that an item is identical with a totality entails that the totality constitutes the item. Thus, Identity Russellianism entails Constitution Russellianism.

Identity Russellianism seems to us to be the simplest and most plausible way of capturing the intuitive core of Russellianism. Still, it is not easy to find explicit endorsements of this thesis in the extant relationalist literature. What can be found instead, and easily so, are endorsements of Constitution Russellianism or theses that entail it. Here are some passages:

[T]he phenomenal character of your experience, as you look around the room, is constituted by the actual layout of the room itself: which particular objects are there, their intrinsic properties, such as colour and shape, and how they are arranged in relation to one another and to you. (Campbell 2002, p. 116)

According to this naïve realist view, ...when you genuinely perceive your environment, the phenomenal, conscious character of your experience is constituted, at least in part, by those mind-independent aspects of the environment that you perceive. (Soteriou 2016, p. 83)

Although Russellian relationalists do not explicitly *endorse* Identity Russellianism, we find it hermeneutically plausible that many relationalists are deeply committed to the view. The main reason is that without a commitment to Identity Russellianism, it is unclear why someone might endorse Constitution Russellianism.

The second question about the Russellian interpretation of sensuous openness is whether the perceived elements only partially characterize perceptual phenomenal character or do so fully. One motivation for this question is that a subject's openness, though it is an openness to *perceived reality*, is an openness *of the subject* to that reality. Therefore, features of the subject can have a bearing on what the subject's mode of phenomenal openness is. And on some views, this means that perceptual phenomenal character cannot be fully characterized in terms of perceived elements. Thus, we might distinguish between:

Pure Russellianism

A perception's phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by a totality that only includes perceived elements.

Impure Russellianism

A perception's phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by a totality that includes some perceived elements and items other than perceived elements.

Here again, although the choice between Pure and Impure Russellianism has not been explicitly discussed, there is a deep ambivalence about it in contemporary relationalist circles.

Campbell (2002, p. 116) seems to adhere to Pure Russellianism in writing that

... two ordinary observers standing in roughly the same place, looking at the same scene, are bound to have experiences with the same phenomenal character,

thereby at least flirting with the idea that identity of perceived elements is sufficient for the identity of phenomenal character, which is a thesis that the Impure Russellian would deny.⁸ But Martin (1998, p. 175) explicitly doubts Pure Russellianism when he rhetorically asks,

... why cannot the ways in which things are presented in experience make a difference to what the experience is like, in addition to what is presented?

This difference between Campbell and Martin's attitudes seems to have now grown into a genuine fault-line among relationalists. Some, like Allen (2016), Fish (2009), and Johnston (2006), seem to simply find the Purist intuition that perception's phenomenal character is "exhaustively shaped" by perceived reality compelling and thus adopt Pure Russellianism. Impurists such as Brewer (2011), French and Phillips (2020), Logue (2017), and Soteriou (2013), on the other hand, find it no less compelling that phenomenal character is, at least to some extent, "shaped" by something other than perceived things.

⁸ How can we reconcile the passage we just quoted from Campbell with other passages, in which Campbell suggests that the phenomenal character of a perception depends not just on the perceived scene, but also on the standpoint from which it is perceived? One answer is to read Campbell as a selectionist relationalist. On this reading, Campbell holds (with all Russellians) that identity of perceived elements is sufficient for identity of phenomenal character; merely adding that standpoint conditions serve to select which of the many items in the subject's environment the subject perceives. Of course, other readings of Campbell are also possible.

The third question about Russellianism is whether all perceived elements are relevant to perceptual phenomenal character. Here, what we might call Strong Russellianism holds that all perceived elements are relevant while Weak Russellianism holds that some, but not all, perceived elements are relevant. More precisely:

Strong Russellianism

A perception's phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by a totality that includes all perceived elements.

Weak Russellianism

A perception's phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by a totality that includes some but not all perceived elements.

For reasons that we will discuss in §1.2.3, we think most contemporary Russellian relationalists adopt strong Russellianism. But Weak Russellianism is also an option, motivated by the idea that a subject's openness, though it is an openness to perceived reality, is an openness *of the subject* to that reality. Therefore, there is room for a view on which the subject's modes of openness restrict which perceived elements shape phenomenal character. One particular option here is a view on which openness, in virtue of being phenomenal, is an openness to only the general qualities of perceived elements. This would give rise to a generalist Russellianism, on which only properties shape phenomenal character. We will revisit this option later.

The last dimension of distinction among Russellian views, and generally among accounts of perceptual phenomenal character, has to do with whether these views are uniform or not. Roughly put, a uniform Russellian view is committed to a single Russellian account across the board. How we precisely articulate the distinction between uniform and non-uniform accounts is partly a matter of how we want to divide the board. For example, one might characterize uniformity in terms of providing the same account for all aspects of perceptual phenomenal character, all perceptual modalities, or all sensible properties. Obviously, there are interrelations between these divisions that can be the topics of serious investigation. We leave this issue aside for now and avoid formulating the distinction in precise terms.

As far as we know, almost no contemporary Russellian relationalist has explicitly defended a non-uniform account, and whether the account is implicitly adopted is a difficult question.⁹ Uniformity is obviously attractive, but there are also motivations for non-uniform approaches. For one thing, sensible properties do not seem to form a uniform class. For example, one might distinguish between colors and sounds on the one hand and spatial properties on the other hand. This intuitive idea follows a tradition that extends back, at least, to the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. There are also intuitive distinctions between perceptual modalities. For example, one might think that our tactile mode of openness to reality is different from our visual or auditory modes of openness in that in the former we have a more intimate connection with reality. Lastly, there are also distinctions among aspects of phenomenal character. For example, phenomenal properties pertaining to the perception of colors and sounds seem to be different from those pertaining to spatial perception. One might think that some sort of intrinsic phenomenal quality is undeniable in the former case, while maybe less obvious in the latter. In all these cases, whether the intuitive distinctions map into substantive metaphysical differences is a serious and underexplored question. But if they did, it would not be counterintuitive if they demanded non-uniform accounts of phenomenal character.

The four dimensions of distinction generate many options for Russellian accounts. But as we see the layout of the land, the version of the view that has been explicitly endorsed by most Russellians is Strong Constitutive Russellianism, although we think most Russellians are implicitly committed to the uniform versions of the view. And, as we noted earlier, both pure and impure versions of the view are popular. In what follows, we explore some of the dialectical pressures that are relevant to the choice between the different versions of Russellianism and between Russellian and non-Russellian forms of relationalism.

1.2.2 Russellianism: Pure or Impure, a Dilemma

As we noted in the previous section, the distinction between pure Russellianism and impure Russellianism is divisive in relationalist circles. Here, we describe some of the dialectic pressures that shape the choice between pure and impure Russellianism. We use the following dilemma to frame the discussion:

Pure Russellian Dilemma

- A perception's phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by a totality that only includes perceived elements. (**Pure Russellianism**)

⁹ The exception is Logue (2017). Although see Masrouf (this volume) who gestures in the direction of a non-uniform account. There are also some reasons to think that Soteriou (this volume), French (2014), Noe (this volume), and Martin (1992) might implicitly endorse non-uniform accounts.

- Perceptions can differ in phenomenal character although they do not differ in perceived elements.¹⁰
(**Character-to-Element Indifference**)

Pure Russellians see the perceived elements as the only elements that shape perceptual phenomenal character. One motivation for this view is a specific version of the transparency intuition which, roughly put, holds that reflection on perceptual phenomenal character only reveals contributions of the perceived elements. This intuition, in some form or another, has played an important role in motivating pure Russellian views, not only in relationalist circles, but also among representationalists.¹¹

But Pure Russellianism is inconsistent with Character-to-Element Indifference.¹² If perceived elements are the only items that shape perceptual phenomenal character, then any difference in phenomenal character is due to a difference in perceived elements. In other words, perceptions cannot differ in phenomenal character unless they differ in perceived elements.

However, Character-to-Element Indifference enjoys multifaceted support. For one thing, it seems commonsensical that the same perceived elements can give rise to different perceptual phenomenal characters in different contexts of observation (French and Phillips 2020). For example, the phenomenal character pertaining to the perceived color of an object can vary depending on illumination conditions. Some such as Soteriou (this volume) also support the thesis on the basis of phenomenological theorizing. Finally, some have argued that empirical evidence, sometimes supplemented by conceivability arguments, supports the thesis.¹³

In response to the dilemma, some Pure Russellians have tried to resist the push for Character-to-Element Indifference. A common strategy here (Genone, 2014; Fish, 2009) is to expand the set of perceived elements to include relational properties, such as illumination-dependent colors, perspectival shapes, and objective appearance properties. Following some Russellian representationalists, one can also deny that the conceivability of certain scenarios entails their possibility. But it is not clear that all variations in perceptual phenomenal character can be explained in terms of relational properties, while at the same time maintaining that these properties are mind-independent. The dialectic around conceivability arguments and the empirical evidence is also complicated.¹⁴

A second reaction to the dilemma is to reject the first horn. This can take three forms. One is to adopt Impure Russellianism, on which both perceived reality and something else jointly “shape” perception’s phenomenal character. This position retains the “sensuous openness to perceived reality” idea, while giving it an impure interpretation. On this recently popular interpretation, whatever “shapes” perception’s phenomenal character other than perceived reality does so as a feature of our own sensuous openness to that very reality. Impure Russellians can in principle suggest that the “shaping” of perception’s phenomenal character is jointly accomplished by perceived reality along with anything else. Nevertheless, extant impure proposals about what that other thing is—e.g., proposals by French and Phillips (2020; this volume) and Soteriou (this volume)—suggest that perception’s character is “shaped” by the ways, manners, or modes in which we perceive. A second form is to reject Pure Russellianism by adopting Fregeanism on which, perceived reality does not play a role in the shaping of perceptual phenomenal character; rather, this role is played by manners of perceiving. A third option would be to adopt a view that is neither Fregean nor Russellian. Such a view would hold that neither the perceived elements nor the ways of perceiving them do the shaping. We should however add that what ways of perceiving are, is an open question worthy of further research. We return to this question when we discuss Fregean views.

Impure Russellianism is not a cost-free choice. One noteworthy cost is that the view is in tension with the negative version of the transparency intuition which, roughly put, is the idea that reflection on perceptual phenomenal character does not reveal any aspects that are not contributed by the perceived elements. This might be a bullet that is worth biting, especially in response to the pressures that push us to embrace Character-to-Element Indifference. But one

¹⁰ This is the negation of the thesis that two conscious perceptions differ in phenomenal character only if they differ in perceived elements. This last thesis, which we call “Character-to-Element Difference”, has several names in the literature. For example, Soteriou (this volume) calls it “diaphaneity”, while Byrne and Greene (this volume) call it the “difference principle”. It is an individuation thesis, which in slogan form says that a perception’s character is individuated no more finely than the perceived elements. As an individuation thesis, it tells us next to nothing about the nature of perception’s phenomenal character, or about why it is individuated in the way that it specifies. Compare: That two real numbers differ if and only if the result of subtracting one from the other is non-zero tells us next to nothing about what real numbers are, or about what they are individuated in this way.

¹¹ See, e.g., Moore (1903), Harman (1990), Tye (2000), Martin (2002) and Pautz (2020). Russellian representationalism was introduced in fn. 5.

¹² Strictly speaking, for the constitution Russellian this only holds under the assumption that phenomenal characters constituted by the same totalities are phenomenally the same. We do not know of any pure Russellian who rejects this assumption in the extant relationalist literature.

¹³ See Block (2007, 2010), Pautz (2014, 2017), Masrour (2015, 2017), and Beck (2019a, this volume).

¹⁴ To a great extent, the discussion here mirrors some of the debates over Russellian representationalism, where some have argued, sometimes on the basis of conceivability arguments (Shoemaker 1994, 2000, 2006; Chalmers 2010; Thompson 2009, 2010) and sometimes on the basis of empirical evidence (Block 2007, 2010; Pautz 2014, 2017; Masrour 2015, 2017) that perceptual representations with identical Russellian contents can have different phenomenal characters.

might wonder why we should not embrace a Fregean relationalist account, if we are willing to sacrifice negative transparency. The Impure Russellian could respond that she still respects positive transparency, that is, the thesis that perception, for the most part, has the phenomenal character of openness to a mind-independent reality. But to substantiate this response, the Impure Russellian needs to provide a principled reason for differentially respecting phenomenological data (positive vs. negative transparency).

A second worry here is that it is not clear whether the Impure Russellian can offer a principled account of how the Russellian and the non-Russellian elements jointly shape phenomenal character. The Pure Russellian and the Fregean relationalist accounts seem to have an easier task here.¹⁵ These two worries jointly motivate the thought that Impure Russellianism might be a slippery slope. Some of the contributions to our volume speak to this issue.

1.2.3 Russellianism: Strong or Weak, A Trilemma

As we noted earlier, almost all Russellian relationalists adopt Strong Russellianism, that is, the idea that all perceived elements shape phenomenal character. But there are reasons against Strong Russellianism and in favor of the Weak version of the view. The choice between strong and weak Russellianism gives rise to a complex theoretical landscape that can be framed with the following trilemma:

Strong Russellian Trilemma

- Particulars are among the perceived elements of ordinary perceptions. **(Perceptual Particularism)**
- A perception's phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by a totality that includes all perceived elements. **(Strong Russellianism)**
- Ordinary perceptions can have identical phenomenal characters but differ in the particulars perceived. **(Particular-to-Character Indifference)**¹⁶

The three theses clash with each other. Strong Russellianism implies that all perceived elements in a perception are constituents of its phenomenal character. This thesis, that we might call Elements Constitution, is widely accepted by relationalists, including Impure Russellians (e.g., Brewer 2011; French and Phillips 2020), Pure Russellians (e.g., Fish 2009; Johnston 2006), and some who are harder to classify (e.g., Sethi this volume, and forthcoming). In fact, the commitment to Elements Constitution is the reason for which we said earlier that most Russellians are Strong Russellians. But Elements Constitution, joined with Perceptual Particularism, entails that particulars are among the constituents of the phenomenal characters of perceptions which, in conjunction with the assumption that mind-independent external elements which one does *not* perceive are *not* constituents of one's perception's phenomenal character, entails that conscious perceptions of different particulars have phenomenal characters with distinct constituents. Since phenomenal characters with distinct constituents themselves differ, it follows that perceptions of distinct particulars have different phenomenal characters, which contradicts Particular-to-Character Indifference.

How can the Russellian resolve this tension? One option would be to reject Perceptual Particularism. Suppose you saw Barack Obama in a rally. Perhaps when you did so you only perceived his properties or maybe the general fact that there is a person with such and such visible characteristics at that location. If so, you didn't perceive the particular person. But this option seems very counterintuitive. Suppose Obama has an indistinguishable twin. We still want to say that you saw Barak Obama at the rally and not his twin. It is hard to make sense of this under the option that we do not perceive particulars.

Another option is to reject Particular-to-Character Indifference in favor of Particular-to-Character Difference, the thesis that ordinary perceptions with different perceived particulars cannot have identical phenomenal characters. In fact, many relationalists embrace the stronger thesis that conscious perceptions differ in phenomenal character if they differ in perceived elements (call this, "Element-to-Character Difference"). So this would be a natural option for the Strong Russellian.

But Particular-to-Character Difference is a thesis which many find untenable. One common objection to the thesis involves introspection: Suppose you perceive first one rubber duckie, and then another. As the two duckies are indistinguishable, it seems that your introspective powers can detect no phenomenal differences between your two perceptions. The postulation of introspectively undetectable phenomenal differences in this case is, furthermore,

¹⁵ Impure Russellianism can be further subdivided by distinguishing between silentist and substantialist versions of it. The distinction is this: Silentists hold that it is impossible to say which aspects of positive/narrow phenomenal character are constituted (or otherwise determined) only by perceived things, and which are constituted (or otherwise determined) by further things. Substantialists hold that silentism is false. To illustrate this distinction, note that Soteriou (this volume) is plausibly a substantialist, because he outlines an impurist Russellian relationalism which explicitly argues that structural features of our perceptual point of view (i.e., things other than what we perceive) determine a particular aspect of phenomenal character, namely, the partial way in which perceived things appear to us. We are not sure if any impurist Russellian relationalists are silentists. That said, we suspect that French and Phillips (2020, this volume) might be silentists, because to the best of our judgment, they never explicitly specify how what we perceive interacts with the ways in which we perceive it to determine phenomenal character.

¹⁶ Strictly speaking, since Particular-to-Character Indifference entails Perceptual Particularism, we can express the tension in terms of a dilemma. But we felt that an explicit statement of Perceptual Particularism will make it salient and help the discussion.

implausible. So, we should hold that your two perceptions do not differ in phenomenal character. However, the two perceptions do differ in perceived particulars – in each, different duckies and different instances of yellowness and duck-shapedness are perceived. Therefore, Particular-to-Character Difference is false. More abstractly put, the objection is that the postulation of phenomenal differences that are in principle introspectively undetectable is implausible, and therefore, that we should hold that if there were phenomenal differences between perceptions of distinct but qualitatively identical particulars—be they distinct but qualitatively identical individuals, or distinct instances of the same property—then introspection would in principle be able to detect them. Since introspection is unable to detect such differences, however, they do not exist. This contradicts Particular-to-Character Difference (Montague 2016; Schellenberg 2010; also cf. Mehta 2014).¹⁷

Another, perhaps deeper, objection to Particular-to-Character Difference is that the notion of phenomenal character is definitionally linked to the notion of *a way that one feels*. If the notions were so linked, then introspection aside, adherents of Particular-to-Character Difference would be vulnerable to the following argument: It is highly implausible to hold that normal perceivers of distinct but qualitatively identical individuals (or: of distinct instances of the same property) feel different ways. We should therefore hold that the perceivers feel the same way. But given the definitional link between ways subjects feel and phenomenal character, it follows that the perceivers' perceptions have the same phenomenal character. Particular-to-Character Difference's entailment of the contrary is thus incoherent.¹⁸

A third option for the Russellian is to abandon Strong Russellianism in favor of Weak Russellianism, according to which a perception's phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by a totality that includes some but not all perceived elements. Weak Russellianism allows that we exclude some of the perceived elements from the constituents of perceptual phenomenal character. This enables the Russellian to accommodate concerns about Particular-to-Character Difference by endorsing phenomenal generalism (Mehta 2014; Montague 2016; Schellenberg 2010). Phenomenal generalists deny the Phenomenal Particularity thesis (on which if a mind-independent particular is consciously perceived in a given perception, that particular is among the constituents of the perception's phenomenal character), and instead hold that particulars perceived in a conscious perception are *never* constituents of the perception's phenomenal character, and that differences in perceived particulars don't make a difference to the phenomenal characters of perceptions. So, by generalist lights, the fact that one perceives different rubber duckies, or different instances of yellowness and duck-shapedness, at different times, does not entail that one's perceptions differ phenomenally. On this view, the sensuous openness to reality is an openness to the general qualities of perceived things. To uphold the idea that perceived reality "shapes" perception's phenomenal character, the generalist Russellian can suggest that perceptual phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by a totality that includes the sensible properties of perceived elements. She can thus retain the thought that two conscious perceptions differ in phenomenal character if they differ in perceived properties. While the move from Strong to Weak Russellianism is significant, its possibility does suggest that Russellianism, whether pure or impure, is compatible with phenomenal generalism.

A potential concern for phenomenal generalist Russellianism is that by eliminating particulars from perception's phenomenal character, it prevents perception's character from having a role in explaining how perception enables us to refer to particulars, and to acquire knowledge about them (Campbell 2002; McDowell 1998, 2008, 2009; Johnston 2006). Relationalists who believe that perception's character does indeed have such a role, will therefore be hesitant to embrace phenomenal generalism. They will require an alternative strategy for addressing concerns over Particular-to-Character Difference.

One such alternative strategy emerges from a proposal made by both Beck (2019b) and Masrouf (2023) who distinguish between two conceptions of phenomenal character: One (which Masrouf calls "ontic" and Beck calls "broad") on which a perception's phenomenal character includes both the ways in which the subject is appeared to in the perception, and the perceived elements that so appear to the subject; and another (which Masrouf calls "positive" and Beck calls "narrow") on which a perception's phenomenal character includes only the ways in which the subject is appeared to in the perception.

The distinction between ontic/broad and positive/narrow phenomenal characters creates room for a more nuanced relationalist view, which promises to overcome concerns over Particular-to-Character Difference without resorting to phenomenal generalism. On this view, it is the perception's ontic/broad phenomenal character that can have both perceived particulars and perceived properties as constituents. Particular-to-Character Difference, Elements Constitution, and Phenomenal Particularity can therefore all be true with respect to this character. For the same reason, ontic/broad phenomenal character could also have a role in explaining how perception enables us to refer to particulars, and to acquire knowledge about them. At the same time, a perception's positive/narrow phenomenal character has no perceived particulars as constituents. For this reason, positive/narrow phenomenal character is immune to concerns over Particular-to-Character Difference. In particular, positive/narrow phenomenal character

¹⁷ Interestingly, Mehta (2014) also argues that Phenomenal Particularity requires there to be introspectively undetectable similarities across phenomenal characters of certain experiences, even though the postulation of such differences has no independent motivation.

¹⁸ In response to such concerns, some relationalists (e.g., Gomes and French, 2016) have offered uncompromising rebuttals.

may be both definitionally linked to the notion of “a way that one feels”, and fully transparent to introspective examination and comparison with other positive/narrow phenomenal characters.

To recapitulate this discussion, the choice between the Strong and the Weak versions of the view presents the Russellian with a complicated set of opposing considerations. On the one hand, the Strong version of the view is attractive in that by preserving Phenomenal Particularity it respects the role of the phenomenal character of perception in grounding our ability to refer to particulars and have knowledge of them. On the other hand, Phenomenal Particularity threatens the link between phenomenal character and introspection and is in tension with the idea that phenomenal character is definitionally linked to the notion of the way that one feels. Russellian relationalists could choose the bullet that they want to bite here, but another option is also available to them. This option, however, requires introducing a distinction between ontic/broad and positive/narrow phenomenal characters.

1.2.4 Fregean Relationalism

One lesson from our discussion so far is that it is not easy to rigorously articulate a Russellian interpretation of the intuitive idea that perception consists in a phenomenal openness to perceived reality. Doing so requires choosing between Pure vs. Impure and Strong vs. Weak versions of the view. To make this choice, the Russellian must decide whether all the elements perceived shape the phenomenal character of perception, and as we saw, this involves a complicated set of tradeoffs. No version of Russellianism is cost-free. We think this motivates taking non-Russellian versions of relationalism, and specifically Fregean versions of the view, more seriously. This is not to say that the Fregean versions of the view are cost-free. We think that there are no cost-free options here and exactly because of this all options need to be carefully examined before we can pick the best one. We thus close the present subsection with a brief exploration of some Fregean versions of relationalism. As Fregean relationalism remains a rather unexplored view, our discussion will be brief.

Fregean relationalism holds that the perceived elements that constitute perception make no contribution to its phenomenal character, which is instead fully shaped by the ways, manners, or modes in which these elements are perceived. This view is attractive in that it can accommodate the internal dependence of (positive/narrow) phenomenal character, is compatible with phenomenal generalism, and can explain Character-to-Element Indifference.

As we noted earlier, what modes or manners of perceiving are, is an open question. Some (e.g., Logue 2017; Beck 2019a) take them to be intrinsic properties of the subject that are involved in the causal or neuro-computational process subserving perception.¹⁹ Others (arguably, French and Phillips 2020; this volume) take them to be primitive. Others still (e.g., Masrour, this volume) take them to be structural/functional properties derived from perceptual laws. Finally, on some views modes of perception are partly analyzed in terms of properties, or property instances, of distal objects.

The possibility of analyzing modes of perceiving partly in relation to distal elements illustrates that there can be views that are Fregean in letter but not in spirit. For example, Chalmers (2010) and Schellenberg (2018) are Fregeans in letter but Russellians in spirit, because they individuate modes of perceiving equally as finely as the distal elements that those modes relate one to (which, for Chalmers are Edenic properties, and for Schellenberg are types of property instances). Of course, Both Chalmers and Schellenberg are representationalists, but relationalist views with structures analogous to theirs are also possible, viz., views on which modes of perceiving are individuated as finely as the distal targets of awareness which those modes relate one to, and which constitute phenomenal character.

A potential complaint against someone wishing to take up a view that is Fregean in both letter and spirit is this: To say that perceived elements make no contribution to positive/narrow phenomenal character is to abandon the idea that a perception’s phenomenology is a sensuous openness we have to perceived things. But if someone is willing to abandon that idea, then she might as well abandon relationalism. To put more meat on this worry, we can say that Fregean relationalism does not seem to respect phenomenal transparency, in abandoning phenomenal particularity it robs perceptual phenomenal character from its role in grounding reference and knowledge of particulars,²⁰ and in denying property constitution threatens to undermine the role of perceptual phenomenal character in grounding our grasp of sensory properties. Since these have been some of the core motivations for embracing relationalism in the first place, it is unclear what motivates a specifically relationalist version of Fregeanism.

Here, a Fregean can respond that given the balance of considerations violating the transparency intuition is a cost worth paying. This can be combined with the idea that, rather than its phenomenal character, it is the relationalist nature of perception that explains its role in grounding particular knowledge and reference. A more conciliatory response would be appeal to the distinction between positive/narrow and ontic/broad phenomenal character. This

¹⁹ Soteriou’s (2013, this volume) holds that perception’s phenomenal character is shaped by the subject’s manner of perceiving the world, and adds that that manner itself is determined by fairly constant subjective structural features of the subject’s point of view. Since the subjective structural features Soteriou has in mind can plausibly be taken to be intrinsic to the subject, Soteriou’s view could be read as holding that modes of perceiving can include intrinsic properties of the subject.

²⁰ Sethi (this volume) develops this worry in detail.

would enable one to combine a Fregean relationalist account of positive/narrow phenomenal character with a Russellian account of ontic/broad phenomenal character. This view can still conceive of perception's phenomenal character as a sensuous openness to perceived things, by allowing ontic/broad phenomenal character to include perceived things' *appearing* various ways to the subject. By appearing various ways to the subject, perceived things clearly enter the subject's sensuous viewpoint on the world (cf. Martin 1998, p. 173). Moreover, their entering this viewpoint enables them to bear on what the subject knows and can refer to. This conciliatory form of Fregean relationalism can thus remain faithful to the "openness to reality" conception of perception's phenomenal character role in grounding reference to and knowledge of particulars.²¹ It remains to be determined whether such Fregean views can accommodate the role of perception in grasping sensible qualities.²²

1.3. Relationalism and the Unity of Perceptual Experience

Relationalism is an account of the nature of (conscious) perceptions. But as is well-known, an important theoretical challenge for the relationalist is to show how and why the existence of perceptual experiences that cannot be understood in a relationalist fashion does not threaten the relationalist view of conscious perceptions. As a working definition, by a perceptual experience we mean an experience that is, in a sense to be precisified soon, introspectively indistinguishable from a conscious perception. The standard relationalist reaction to such cases has been to adopt Disjunctivism, which roughly put, is the thesis that perceptual experiences come in multiple classes with different natures. The disjunctivist's refusal to give a uniform analysis of the nature of perceptual experiences gives rise to a set of worries that have motivated some relationalists to abandon disjunctivism. In this section, we'd like to partially map out the space of positions that are relevant to this issue. To keep the discussion manageable, we focus on hallucinations as paradigm examples of perceptual experiences that both motivate and pose a problem for the disjunctivist.

Disjunctivism is sometimes articulated as the claim that the "good cases" do not share a fundamental kind with the "bad cases", where the bad cases are perceptual experiences that do not receive a relational analysis.²³ But the further specification of the relevant notion of fundamental kind has not been an easy task (see Martin 2004, 2006; Mehta 2022; Logue 2012a, 2012b). Here, we will simply take Disjunctivism to be the thesis that some perceptual experiences do not have the nature of conscious perceptions. Put this way, Disjunctivism is a general view that can be combined with non-relationalist accounts of perception. But in fact, almost all disjunctivists adopt a relationalist analysis of perception. Thus, Relationalist Disjunctivism combines Relationalism with the view that some perceptual experiences are not obtainings of a certain primitive, non-representational, conscious sensory relation between a subject and various mind-independent external elements, which are essential constituents of the perceptual experiences. To put things succinctly, we say that Relationalist Disjunctivism is the view that some perceptual experiences have a relational nature, but some do not. Here and in what follows we will be using the label Disjunctivism to refer to Relationalist Disjunctivism.

We use the following quadrilemma to carve out the relevant logical space.

Unity of Perceptual Experience Quadrilemma

- All experiences with perceptual phenomenology have the same generic nature. (**Narrow Cartesianism**)
- Some experiences are perfect hallucinations. (**Orthodox Assumption**)
- Experiences that are in principle strongly indistinguishable from perceptions have perceptual phenomenology. (**Narrow Introspection-Character Link**)
- To be a conscious perception is to have a relational nature. (**Relationalism**)

We assume, without argument, that conscious perceptions have a phenomenal character that sets them apart from non-perceptual experiences. We call this phenomenal character perceptual phenomenology. As a working characterization, an experience has perceptual phenomenology iff it has the sensory phenomenology of presenting mind-independent external elements.²⁴ A veridical experience of a cat in the corner of the room has perceptual phenomenology, while an episode of visually imagining the same situation typically lacks perceptual phenomenology. Under this characterization, there can be controversy about whether certain cases have perceptual phenomenology. For example, it is contentious whether afterimages have perceptual phenomenology.²⁵

According to Narrow Cartesianism, all experiences that have perceptual phenomenology have the same generic nature,

²¹ Beck (2019b; this volume) develops this hybrid form of Fregeanism in some length. See also Beck and Masrou (manuscript)

²² For a partial defense of the idea that Fregeanism can do so at least in the case of spatial perception see Masrou's contribution to this volume.

²³ The terms "good case" and "bad case" are used, e.g., by Martin (2006) and Logue (2011).

²⁴ We assume that an experience cannot have the phenomenology of presenting an item without the item thereby seeming present in the phenomenal sense. Thus, perceptual phenomenology entails what is sometimes called phenomenal presence. For an extensive review of the debate about phenomenal presence see Dorsch (2018).

²⁵ Masrou (2013), for example, argues that after-images typically lack perceptual phenomenology, while Phillips (2012) defends the opposite thesis.

that is, their nature receives the same general analysis. Sameness of generic nature requires sameness of generic constituents. We do not offer a rigorous analysis of generic natures and the identity conditions for generic constituents. But, as we see it, there is a good degree of implicit agreement among philosophers of perception about the application of these terms. For example, everyone in the debate agrees that a relationalist and a sense datum theorist offer different accounts of the generic nature of perception. This makes sense only if we assume that mind-independent external particulars are of a different generic type than sense data. We will thus assume that mind-dependent particulars are not of the same generic kind as mind-independent ones in the sense that is relevant to the debate over the nature of perception. Everyone also agrees that a relationalist offers the same analysis of the generic nature of a conscious perception of an unmoving apple and a conscious perception of a tennis match. Thus, an unmoving apple and a tennis match are of the same generic kind in the relevant sense. For similar reasons, we assume that particulars are of different generic kinds than universals; concreta are of different generic kinds than abstracta; and external items are of different generic kinds than internal ones.

Narrow Cartesianism is a specific version of the more general Cartesian thesis that experiences that have the same generic phenomenal character have the same generic natures. This, combined with the idea that there is a generic perceptual phenomenal character, entails narrow Cartesianism. One motivation for the general Cartesian thesis is the intuition that types of phenomenal character are joints in nature. In our view, this general Cartesianism, is one of the main motivations behind the rejection of Disjunctivism, although as we shall show soon, not all versions of Disjunctivism require rejecting the thesis.

According to the Orthodox Assumption, some experiences are perfect hallucinations. As we are using the term, a perfect hallucination is an experience that (a) does not have a relational nature and (b) is in principle strongly indistinguishable from experience that have perceptual phenomenology.²⁶ Two experiences are strongly indistinguishable when any experience that is indistinguishable from one is indistinguishable from the other.²⁷ Experiences are in principle indistinguishable when their indistinguishability is due neither to defects in the deployment of introspective capacities nor to the fact that the conditions are sub-optimal for their deployments.

On Narrow Introspection-Character Link, experiences that are in principle strongly indistinguishable from conscious perceptions have perceptual phenomenology. We call this thesis narrow because it is entailed by the conjunction of the general principle that experiences that are in principle strongly indistinguishable have the same phenomenal character and the thesis that all conscious perceptions have perceptual phenomenology.

The four above theses are inconsistent with each other. The conjunction of Narrow Cartesianism and Relationalism entails that all experiences with perceptual phenomenology have a relational nature.²⁸ But Narrow Introspection-Character Link and the Orthodox Assumption together entail that some experiences, namely perfect hallucinations, have perceptual phenomenology but lack a relational nature. Thus, the four theses cannot be held together.

The quadrilemma can help us explore the logical space of positions that a relationalist can take with respect to perfect hallucinations.²⁹ Obviously, a relationalist adopts Relationalism. So, she must reject one of the three other theses to dissolve the quadrilemma. Since disjunctivists typically accept both Relationalism and the orthodox assumption, a disjunctivist must deny either Narrow Cartesianism or Narrow Introspection-Character Link. This, as we shall elaborate on soon, distinguishes between two different brands of Disjunctivism, one orthodox and one relatively recent.

It might be thought that the standard disjunctivist solution to the quadrilemma is to deny Narrow Cartesianism. But this is not the only option, and arguably, some orthodox disjunctivists such as Martin (2004, 2006) and Fish (2009) accept Narrow Cartesianism while denying Narrow Introspection-Character Link instead. This may not be clear at first sight, since these authors do not use the concepts of perceptual phenomenology and strong indistinguishability. So, let us elaborate.

There are three routes to denying Narrow Introspection-Character Link. The first route is to adopt the ontic/broad conception of phenomenology. On our working characterization, an experience has perceptual phenomenology iff it has the sensory phenomenology of presenting mind-independent external elements. Under the ontic/broad reading, an experience has perceptual phenomenology only if it is in fact a sensory presentation of mind-independent external elements. Thus, it would be natural for those who adopt the ontic/broad conception, whether relationalist or not, to deny that perfect hallucinations have perceptual phenomenology and thus reject Narrow Introspection-Character

²⁶ Here and in what follows, by indistinguishable we mean introspectively indistinguishable.

²⁷ Strongness is, in effect, an anti-sorites condition. See Masrouf (2020) for discussion.

²⁸ The entailment needs the thesis that perceptions have perceptual phenomenology. But this is entailed by the way we have defined perceptual phenomenology: the generic phenomenology that conscious perceptions have.

²⁹ This quadrilemma is a specific articulation of the general contours of the theoretical forces that shape the logical space. It is possible to articulate these contours in alternative ways. For example, a similar quadrilemma can be articulated with more specific modal commitments. Or another quadrilemma could be articulated in terms of general theses that link phenomenal character to natures. Studying these would add to the richness and the grain of our understanding of the logical space. But this is a task that goes beyond the scope of this introduction.

Link. The second route is to argue that perfect hallucinations lack perceptual phenomenology because they lack phenomenal character entirely. The third route is to hold that, despite their strong indistinguishability from perceptions, perfect hallucinations do have some phenomenal character, but lack perceptual phenomenology.

Although interpreting orthodox disjunctivists such as Martin and Fish about this issue is not a straightforward matter, it is not easy to see how they may not be committed to at least one of these routes.³⁰ Thus, we think that the orthodox solution to our quadrilemma is to deny Narrow Introspection-Character Link. On this solution, perceptual experiences come in two types, a type that has perceptual phenomenology and a type that lacks it. Experiences that belong to the former type have a relational nature, while experiences that belong to the latter lack it. This form of Disjunctivism is compatible with Narrow Cartesianism. So, we shall henceforth call it Cartesian Disjunctivism.

Arguably, Cartesian Disjunctivism comes with some serious costs. For one thing, the ontic/broad conception is vulnerable to the same objections that threaten phenomenal particularism: it gives rise to an epistemic gap between phenomenal character and introspection and severs the connection between phenomenal character and the way one feels. For another thing, the ontic/broad conception turns some theses that are intuitively substantive theses into trivial truths. Take Narrow Cartesianism, as an example. This thesis does not seem to be a trivial truth. For, possible worlds in which experiences with the same phenomenal character have different natures are *prima facie* conceivable. But on the ontic conception such worlds are not even *prima facie* conceivable, because, under this conception, experiences with different natures cannot, by definition, have the same phenomenal character.

The other two routes to Cartesian Disjunctivism are costly too. The idea that perfect hallucinations lack phenomenal character is in stark tension with the ample empirical evidence that isolated brain activity is sufficient for some phenomenal character. Thus, the second route is empirically implausible. As for the third route, it is hard to see how there could be differences between the positive/narrow phenomenal characters of perfect hallucinations and perceptions that are in principle strongly indiscernible.

Partly due to these worries, some relationalists have turned to views that entail the denial of Narrow Cartesianism. Sethi (2021, 2022), for example, defends the view that sensible qualities such as colors are ontologically flexible in that they can have both mind-dependent and mind-independent instantiations. On this view, color perception is constituted by a perceptual relation between a subject and mind-independent colors instantiated in the environment while a color hallucination is constituted by a relation to external colors whose existence depends on being perceived. Sethi does not discuss Narrow Cartesianism and may not adopt our identification scheme for the generic constituents of perceptual experiences. But her view, interpreted by the conceptual framework that we have adopted here, would entail that some hallucinations have perceptual phenomenology but lack the same nature that perceptions have. Sethi's view would thus dissolve our quadrilemma by rejecting Narrow Cartesianism. Locatelli (this volume) defends the idea that phenomenal properties are disjunctive properties that can be realized by distinct realizers. When properly translated into our framework, this view entails the denial of Narrow Cartesianism. In what follows, we shall refer to disjunctivist views, such as Sethi and Locatelli's, that result in the denial of Narrow Cartesianism, Anti-Cartesian Disjunctivism.

Anti-Cartesian forms of Disjunctivism are recent additions to the literature and have not received much discussion yet. Looking forward, one potential challenge for these views can be to explain what grounds the fact that experiences that are not constituted by relations to mind-independent external elements can nevertheless have perceptual phenomenology.

As versions of Disjunctivism, Anti-Cartesian and Cartesian views also face some similar challenges. For example, it has been argued that Disjunctivism is in tension with perceptual science (Burge 2005, 2011). Another alleged challenge is that not every form of Disjunctivism sufficiently removes the threat of hallucinations. As Martin (2004, 2006) argues, adopting a negative account of the phenomenal character of hallucinations is the only way to fully avoid the threat of hallucinations. On this negative account, the nature of experience in a hallucination is exhausted by its indistinguishability from perception.³¹ However, the negative account of hallucination has been under significant pressure since its inception. For one thing, articulating the view precisely has not been an easy task (Siegel 2008; Pautz 2020, chp. 5.5; Vega-Encabo 2010). Another worry is that hallucinations seem to ground knowledge of sensible

³⁰ One of the main reasons to think that Martin is committed to the ontic/broad conception is his seeming commitment to phenomenal particularism. Fish, on the other hand, seems to adopt the second route when he denies that hallucinations have phenomenal character. This said, we should note that interpreting Martin is not straightforward because as some like Logue and Raleigh (this volume) have noted, those passages that seem to commit Martin to the ontic conception, for example passages where he says that perceptions of numerically distinct duplicates differ phenomenally, can be interpreted as claims about phenomenal natures as opposed to phenomenal character. Interpreting Fish is not straightforward either because although he expressly denies that causally matching hallucinations have phenomenal character, he also claims that neural activity alone is sufficient for some kind of perceptual phenomenal character (Fish 2009). One interpretation of this seemingly contradictory stance is that Fish is using the ontic/broad sense when he denies phenomenal character to hallucinations while allowing that they can have some positive character. Understood in this way, he can be interpreted as adopting either the first route or the third route.

³¹ Martin's proposal is about causally matching hallucinations.

qualities and this is hard to explain under negative Disjunctivism (Johnston 2004; Pautz 2007, 2013). We will revisit this worry in the next section.

This brings us to the third relationalist solution to our quadrilemma, which involves denying the Orthodox Assumption. One could deny this thesis by arguing that there are no experiences that are in principle strongly indistinguishable from conscious perceptions but lack a relational nature. Some theorists have adopted a purist version of this strategy by arguing that all hallucinations have a relational nature (Ali 2018; Raleigh 2014). Some have defended a mixed strategy on which hallucinations can be exhaustively divided into two groups. Experiences in the first group have a relational nature and experiences in the second group are in principle strongly distinguishable from conscious perceptions (Masrouf 2020; Logue 2012b).

This strategy does not face the challenges that threaten the disjunctivist. But it faces challenges of its own. One important challenge can be brought up by asking whether causally matching hallucinations are possible on this view. If they are, then the proposal must explain how causally matching hallucinations can be in principle strongly distinguishable from conscious perception. This is not an easy task. For, by definition, causally matching hallucinations and conscious perceptions have the same proximal causes. Thus, it is hard to see how they can be introspectively distinguishable from conscious perceptions. Another option would be to offer a relationalist account of causally matching hallucinations (VandenHomberg forthcoming; Ali, this volume). But this seems to be a tall order. A third option is to deny that causally matching hallucinations are possible. But this option seems to be in tension with some orthodoxies in perceptual science.

The existence of perceptual experiences that do not have a relational nature presents the relationalist with an important theoretical choice. The relationalist must either adopt Disjunctivism and sacrifice the ambitions to provide a uniform analysis of perceptual experience, or somehow deny that there are perceptual experiences that do not have a relational nature. In this subsection we used a quadrilemma to provide a fine-grained analysis of the relationalist options and the costs and benefits that they involve. We should note though that while we have carved out the logical space by characterizing the phenomenal difference between perceptions and hallucination as the difference between having and lacking perceptual phenomenology, the generic structure of the quadrilemma is independent of this specific gloss. The same generic quadrilemma could have been characterized by saying that the phenomenal difference between perceptions and hallucinations is the difference between having and lacking the phenomenology of vividness, or the phenomenology of being here and now, etc.

2. The Contributions to this Volume

Our volume is divided into three parts. The first, about perception's phenomenal character, contains essays addressing that character's dependence on the perceived elements, the subject's internal makeup, and the nature of the perception relation. The second part, about the unity of perceptual experience, contains essays addressing disjunctive and non-disjunctive accounts of hallucinations. The third part, about relationalism and empirical knowledge, contains essays addressing a theme we have not developed above – one which suggests that a relationalist metaphysics of perception can provide us with epistemological benefits, which rival metaphysical treatments cannot. Let us review these parts in turn.

2.1. On Perception's Phenomenal Character

Part one of this volume concerns some of the questions that surround the choice between different Russellian and non-Russellian versions of relationalism. To this end, four of the seven chapters in this part represent Impure Russellian and Fregean relationalist accounts. We do not showcase Pure Russellian relationalism. This does not mean that Pure Russellianism is not represented in this part of the volume. For, as a general position, Pure Russellianism is commonly adopted by the contemporary representationalists who combine representationalism about perception with a Pure Russellian account of perceptual content. Pure Russellian relationalism and Pure Russellian representationalism thus form the two core contemporary versions of Pure Russellianism.³² The first part of the volume is divided between Impure Russellian relationalists, Fregean Relationalist and representationalists who are Pure Russellian or Pure Russellian in spirit.

Schellenberg defends an approach which is Fregean in letter but Pure Russellian in spirit. In letter, Schellenberg is a Fregean as she holds that the phenomenal character of perceptions is constituted by the modes in which we perceive, which she identifies with capacities to discriminate and single out particulars. However, her view is Pure Russellian in spirit, as she fully individuates these capacities by the type of particulars that they function to discriminate and single out.

Combining her capacity-based account with a representationalist view, Schellenberg sets out to explain context-dependent perceptual variation. She argues that, due to the fact that we always perceive from a perspective, any

³² Another version, which is not very popular these days, is sense datum theory. Russellian representationalism was introduced in fn. 5.

perception has variant and invariant properties. For example, I perceive the color of my neighbor's lawn to remain invariant as the day goes by and the ambient light changes. But there is also a sense in which the way I perceive the color changes as the character of the ambient light changes. In general, all perception is marked by a duality of constancy accompanied by variation due to changes in the perceptual situation. Drawing on and extending previous work, Schellenberg proposes that this duality can be explained in terms of conscious representations of two distinct sets of properties: the intrinsic properties of objects and their situation-dependent properties, where changes in which of the latter we represent explain context-dependent variation in experience. Schellenberg's proposal is thus similar to pure Russellian relationalist accounts of normal variation, such as Fish's (2009).

Masrou's contribution focuses on developing and motivating a Fregean relationalist account of spatial perception, which he contends should be understood in structuralist terms. Masrou characterizes the structural aspects of perceptual phenomenal character by drawing on a distinction between structural and primitive phenomenal properties. Intuitively, structural phenomenal properties correspond to roles within a structure of primitive phenomenal relations, while primitive phenomenal properties are unanalyzable in this manner. Masrou holds that, in principle, structural phenomenal properties can be understood in both Fregean and Pure Russellian ways.

In addition to developing the idea of structural phenomenal properties and showing how they can be integrated with empirical psychology, Masrou defends three theses. First, phenomenology of spatial perception can be understood in purely structuralist terms. Second, this phenomenal structuralist account of spatial perception can explain how spatial perception grounds our grasp of spatial properties. Finally, although phenomenal structuralism can be understood in both Russellian and Fregean manners, Fregeanism is a better fit for phenomenal structuralism. The chapter develops and motivates a Fregean relationalist account of spatial perception that analyzes Fregean modes of perceptual presentation in terms of structural/functional properties.

In his contribution, Noe argues that rather than construing perception as a relation, we should think of it along the lines of a relationship. Perception, on this view, is a form of caring. Although Noe contrasts his view with relationalist views and does not frame his discussion in terms of the divide between Russellians and their rivals, it is possible to see his view as a sophisticated form of Fregean Relationalism. On this interpretation, the analogy with relationships brings to the fore the dependency of perceptual phenomenal character on acts of exploration and maintenance. These acts of exploration and maintenance, however, are not mere enabling preconditions for perceptual experience. They constitutively contribute to its phenomenal character by grounding its "labile and incomplete" nature. Thus, on Noe's view the particular manners in which we perceive the world ground some core features of the phenomenal character of perception such as its partiality and indeterminacy. This is compatible with an impure Russellian view, but interpreted in light of Noe's previous work, we think his view is a form of Fregean relationalism.

Soteriou's chapter outlines an impure Russellian view on which the structural aspects of our subjective point of view shape the way that the perceived elements determine perceptual phenomenal character. But Soteriou's account of these structural aspects is radically different from Masrou's. On his view, a central structural feature of our point of view is its partiality. Perception is inherently partial in that in every act of perceiving an element there are always parts of the element that are not perceived. Soteriou argues that partiality also characterizes perceptual phenomenal character, and that it is due to the spatial resolution of our visuospatial point of view. It is therefore natural for him to deny the diaphaneity of perception, which is Soteriou's label for the Character-to-Element Difference thesis.³³ Soteriou holds that the phenomenal character of perception depends both on which elements we perceive, and on structural aspects of our subjective point of view. Two perceptions can thus differ in phenomenal character although they do not differ with respect to perceived elements.

Soteriou motivates his account by arguing against the idea that there are fully perceived elements. He suggests that this idea would force us to embrace sense data, an implication that relationalists should avoid. Instead, a relationalist should accept the partiality of perception and reject Pure Russellianism. Soteriou thus offers an Impure Russellian relationalist view that appeals to some deep structural features of perception such as its inherent incompleteness.

In their contribution, French & Phillips further develop the impure Russellian relationalist view that they had sketched in their previous (2020) work. On this view, two factors contribute to the phenomenal character of perception, namely, the elements perceived and the manners in which they are perceived. Manners of perception can vary in different contexts. For example, the manner in which the redness of a red car is perceived in normal daylight is different from the manner in which it is perceived under sodium light. In virtue of this difference, the two experiences would have different phenomenal characters. And in virtue of the difference in their phenomenal character, the two experiences would have different subjective impacts on the subject of experience. The subjective impact of the red car under sodium light, in particular, would be similar to the subjective impact of some orange items under daylight. This is why it is appropriate to say that the red car under sodium light looks orange, although, as we understand it, according to French and Phillips, the phenomenal character of the perception of the red car under sodium light is not type-identical with the phenomenal character of an orange car under daylight. In previous work, French and Phillips had argued that

³³ See fn. 10.

their view offers a straightforward account of the phenomenal character of illusory experience. Here, they extend their strategy to how the same elements can give rise to normal perceptions with different phenomenal characters in different contexts.

French and Phillips do not offer a systematic account of how the two factors that contribute to the phenomenal character of perception—the perceived elements and the manners in which they are perceived—do their job. In particular, it is unclear whether the contribution of the perceived items to phenomenal character is only ontic/broad or also positive/narrow. If the former, then French and Phillips can be interpreted as conciliatory Fregeans. Since we suspect that their view is the latter, we think that they are impure silentist Russellians.³⁴ Their view would be impure Russellian since it would hold that both the perceived elements and the manners of perception make a positive/narrow contribution to phenomenal character, and they would be silentists in that they reject systematically specifying how the positive phenomenal character of experience is simultaneously shaped by both the perceived elements and the manners of perceiving them.

The core issue in Byrne & Greene's contribution is whether the version of relationalism offered by French and Phillips is preferable to the representationalist view that they endorse. Byrne & Greene start their contribution by arguing that the core difference between relationalist and representationalist views consist in their different treatments of illusions and that appeals to common sense do not motivate relationalism over representationalism. This implies that to choose between the two views, one needs to focus on whether the relationalist accounts of illusion are tenable. After setting the stage in this way, they mount two lines of offense against French and Phillips' appeal to manners of perception in their account of illusion. First, they argue that French and Phillips are committed to a post-perceptual construal of manners of perception and such an account is incompatible with some findings in perception science. Second, they argue that French & Phillips' appeal to paradigm circumstances in their analysis of manners of perception renders their account circular. Byrne & Greene conclude from these observations that representationalism is preferable to French and Phillips' brand of relationalism. Although these arguments target French and Phillips' treatment of illusions, the arguments, whether successful or not, seem to generalize to the account of context-dependent variation that French and Phillips offer in this volume.

Pautz's primary target in his contribution is also French and Phillips's account of context-dependent variation. Pautz argues that this account is both undermotivated and phenomenologically inadequate. The view is undermotivated in that (a) there are alternative naïve realist accounts of the phenomenon³⁵ and (b) there is not much evidence for the claim that ways of perceiving always partly determine the character of experience. Perhaps in some cases they do not.

Pautz argues that French and Phillips' account is phenomenologically inadequate for three reasons. First, the account is problematic because of its commitment to the Element-to-Character Difference thesis. Pautz argues that this thesis either implies an untenable error theory about introspection-based phenomenal judgments concerning the sameness of phenomenal properties or says something trivial.³⁶ The second objection is that phenomenology supports the act-object account of perception, but French and Phillips' view is incompatible with the act-object account. The last objection is that the view is incompatible with property involvement, the view that the properties presented in experience are the grounds of its phenomenal character.

2.2. On the (Dis)Unity of Perceptual Experience

Questions about the alleged threat that hallucinations pose for relationalist accounts of perception have recently received some fresh attention. Some of this new work defends Disjunctivism, while some offers non-disjunctivist accounts. The contributions in part 2 of the volume continue this trend. The first two contributions by Epstein and Alford-Duguid defend Disjunctivism from two common charges, while Locatelli defends and develops a new version of the view. The contributions by Logue & Raleigh and Ali, in turn, develop and expand on non-disjunctivist proposals.

As we noted earlier, one charge against Disjunctivism is that it is in tension with perception science. In his contribution, Epstein defends Disjunctivism from this objection by arguing that it hinges on phenomenology-related questions that science cannot address. Epstein illustrates his position by taking up Burge's argument that traditional relationalism is inconsistent with the Proximality Principle (roughly stating that proximal stimulations of the same type produce perceptual states of the same type), which in turn is empirically supported by perceptual psychology. On Epstein's careful reading, the dispute raised by this argument is a dispute over whether perceptual psychology suggests that proximal stimulations of the same type produce *phenomenal characters* of the same type. Epstein considers two strategies

³⁴ Silentism was introduced in fn. 15.

³⁵ Some options that Pautz considers are versions of Russellianism that are similar to Schellenberg's and a Martin-style negative view.

³⁶ One way to make sense of this worry is to disambiguate the Element-to-Character Difference thesis on the basis of the distinction between positive/narrow and ontic/broad senses of phenomenal character. On this interpretation, the positive/narrow version is untenable while the ontic/broad version is trivial and uninteresting.

by which one could empirically support this last claim.

The first is by attempting to verify the claim through direct empirical testing. The trouble with this strategy, Epstein says, is that lacking a “consciousness meter”, we need some empirical test for whether two subjects are enjoying the same type of phenomenal character. But traditional relationalists and their representationalist rivals will never agree on such a test. Traditional relationalists hold that a perception and a causally matching hallucination differ phenomenally, despite being neurally—and so also functionally and behaviorally (where these notions are narrowly understood)—identical. Therefore, traditional relationalists could accept no neural, functional or behavioral test of whether two subjects are enjoying the same type of phenomenal character.

The second way of empirically supporting the claim that proximal stimulations of the same type produce phenomenal characters of the same type is by relying on perceptual psychology’s explanatory successes. The idea is that one can only account for science’s success by assuming that proximal stimulations of the same type produce phenomenal characters of the same type. Epstein argues, however, that this strategy is dubious, and that the traditional relationalists can plausibly account for science’s success by merely assuming that proximal stimulations of the same type produce the same type of *enabling conditions* necessary for a subject to enjoy phenomenal characters. Epstein concludes that empirical evidence cannot establish the claim that is at the root of Burge’s argument, and more broadly, that traditional relationalism is an empirically untestable—albeit meaningful and substantive—view.

Relational disjunctivists hold that hallucinations, unlike perceptions, lack a relational nature. This thesis does not come with a commitment to a specific positive analysis of the nature of hallucinations. As such, it is open to a disjunctivist to adopt any non-relationalist account of hallucinations, such as a sense datum view or a representationalist account. However, in his influential screening off argument, Martin (2004, 2006) argues that any such positive account would screen off the naïve realist’s explanation of the phenomenal character of perception. Thus, Martin argues, relationalists should hold that a causally matching hallucination’s nature is exhausted by its indistinguishability from corresponding perceptions. Since Martin’s influential screening off argument, many disjunctivists have been hesitant to endorse a positive metaphysical account of hallucinations.

Although this negative epistemic form of disjunctivism has been a popular view among relationalist disjunctivists, as we noted in § 1.3 it has received ample criticism from opponents of relationalism. One such criticism targets a specific implication of negative disjunctivism. Negative disjunctivism entails that hallucinations are neither representations of sensible qualities, as the representationalist typically maintain, nor relations to mind-dependent instances of sensible qualities, as the modern sense datum theorist would maintain. But, the argument goes, this position is untenable. For, hallucinations provide us with some knowledge of the nature of sensible qualities. A hallucination of a red apple, for example, provides us with some knowledge of what redness is. But if in having this hallucination the mind stands in no relation to redness or one of its instances, then it is unclear how the hallucination can ground knowledge of what redness is.³⁷

In his contribution, Alford-Duguid calls the thesis that causally matching hallucinations do not present particulars or sensible qualities the Null View and sets out his task to motivate and defend this thesis. Alford-Duguid motivates the null view by arguing that sensory presentations of sensible qualities and particulars require occasion-sensitive relations to them. This, Alford-Duguid argues, shows that the only way that a causally matching hallucination might sensorily present a particular or a sensory quality is for the hallucination to be constituted by a relation to mind-dependent sense data. Thus, granting that there are no mind-dependent sense data, the occasion-sensitivity of sensory presentation entails the null view.

After blocking a phenomenological argument against the view, Alford-Duguid sets his goal to defend the Null View from epistemic arguments. He starts by arguing that the epistemic arguments developed in Johnston (2004) and Pautz (2007) are problematic because their main premise, the idea that hallucinations can ground *de re* knowledge (Johnston) or *de re* belief (Pautz) of sensible qualities, are too close to their conclusion. Alford-Duguid thus concludes that the best epistemic argument against the Null View should start with the weaker premise that hallucinations ground general knowledge of sensible qualities. For example, a hallucination of a red chair can ground the general knowledge that there is some color darker than yellow. He then develops a positive account of how a hallucination can ground this general knowledge that is compatible with the Null View. A hallucination of a red chair, Alford-Duguid proposes, justifies the general belief that there is a color darker than yellow by way of justifying the modal belief that there could be something with a color darker than yellow. But this, he maintains, can be explained simply by the indiscriminability of the hallucinatory experience from a potential perception of a color that justifies the demonstrative belief that that color is darker than yellow. This explanation, if plausible, would be fully compatible with the Null View. Alford-Duguid thus concludes that even the best epistemic argument against the Null View fails. Thus, neither the phenomenological nor the epistemic arguments against the Null View are successful and negative disjunctivism is safe.

We noted in §1.3 that Disjunctivism comes in two different flavors. To slightly generalize from our discussion there,

³⁷ See Johnston (2004) and Pautz (2007, 2013, 2020); cf., Alford-Duguid & Arsenault (2017). Johnston and Pautz’s arguments can also be interpreted as concerning perceptual knowledge of reference rather than of natures.

Cartesian disjunctivists deny Introspection-Character Link in either its general or narrow form. The former move allows them to deny that perceptions and bad cases have the same phenomenal character, and the latter move allows them to deny that bad cases have perceptual phenomenology. Either way, the Cartesian disjunctivist maintains the connection between phenomenal character and the nature of experience that Cartesianism posits, while denying that perceptions and bad cases have the same natures. The anti-Cartesian disjunctivist, in contrast, accepts that perceptions and bad cases can be either identical in phenomenal character or share perceptual phenomenology, but denies either the general or the narrow Cartesian principle. This enables the metaphysical disjunctivist to hold that despite their intimate phenomenal similarity, the good and the bad cases have different natures.

In her contribution, Locatelli defends and develops an anti-Cartesian disjunctivist account. Locatelli rejects Cartesian Disjunctivism, which she calls “standard disjunctivism”, by arguing that it rests on an account of phenomenal character that severs the connection between phenomenal character and introspective indistinguishability, which is central to the concept of phenomenal character. As for the interpretation that the Cartesian disjunctivist might be relying on a different concept of phenomenal character, she argues that this interpretation threatens to turn a debate that seems substantive to its participants, into a terminological one.

Locatelli’s positive proposal is to hold that phenomenal properties are disjunctive properties which are identical with the disjunction of several realizers. For example, the phenomenal property of ‘seeming to present a red spherical ball on a pink background’ can be realized by several realizers such as the subject of experience veridically seeing a red spherical ball on a pink background, the subject seeing a red prolate spheroid ball on a pink background from a point of view from which the ball looks spherical, or the subject hallucinating a red spherical ball on a pink background.

Locatelli locates this view within a broader disjunctivist approach to certain properties such as determinables and dispositions. Drawing on this parallel, she argues that a disjunctive property account of phenomenal character has the virtue of explaining how phenomenal properties can be reducible to their realizers while being ineliminable because they ground certain similarities between otherwise diverse realizers. She also argues that her account provides an attractive account of context-dependent variation in experience.

The first three contributions in this part defend or develop disjunctivist accounts. But as we noted in the previous section, another possible solution to the challenge posed by hallucinations is to deny the orthodox assumption that perfect hallucinations are possible. The last two chapters in this part concern this non-disjunctive form of relationalism.

The primary goal of Logue and Raleigh’s chapter is to defend non-disjunctivist relationalism in its broadest form. Logue and Raleigh do this by distinguishing between different versions of the view and exploring the interplay between these versions and the relationalist’s broader background commitments.³⁸

According to Logue and Raleigh, the main challenge for the non-disjunctivist approach are “neurally-matching” hallucinations, which are hallucinations in which the subject’s brain processes are type-identical with those involved in a veridical perception. If neurally-matching hallucinations are possible, an assumption that Logue and Raleigh grant, then this possibility can undermine the non-disjunctivist approach by potentially entailing that total hallucinations are possible.³⁹ Logue and Raleigh distinguish between two strategies to block this entailment. First, one can block the entailment by arguing that neurally-matching hallucinations do, in fact, have objects and thus are amenable to a relational analysis. Second, one can block the entailment by arguing that neurally-matching hallucinations are, in fact, distinguishable from possible perceptions.⁴⁰ They call the former strategy the “object-supplying” strategy and the latter the “indistinguishability-denying” strategy.

The rest of their chapter examines the strategies in detail. Logue and Raleigh argue that among the object-supplying strategies the most promising version for dealing with Brain in a vat/Matrix style scenarios (regarded by some as neurally-matching hallucinations) is one according to which some of the physical components of the computer or the virtual objects that depend on these components serve as the external, mind-independent objects of perception. This, Logue and Raleigh argue, is the best strategy because unlike some other options, it does not require a commitment to exotic metaphysical objects and has been endorsed by opponents of relationalism on independent grounds.

After discussing the object-supplying strategy, Logue and Raleigh turn their attention to the Indistinguishability-

³⁸ Logue and Raleigh’s label for the non-disjunctivist form of relationalism is New Wave Relationalism. They also do not use the labels that we have used in the intro such as the Orthodox Assumption, Perfect Hallucination or the Fregean/Russellian divide. Some of the technical concepts that they use are also defined slightly differently. For example, they characterize New Wavers as those who deny the occurrence of “total hallucinations”, where total hallucinations are subjectively indistinguishable from genuine perceptions and do not receive a relational analysis. Thus, their total hallucinations need not be strongly indistinguishable from perceptions and are not, therefore, the same as our perfect hallucinations. Thus, strictly speaking, Logue and Raleigh’s characterization of the new wave strategy is slightly different from our denial of the Orthodox Assumption. But the difference is ignorable in this dialectic context.

³⁹ The previous footnote explains how Logue and Raleigh define total hallucinations.

⁴⁰ On this strategy, neurally matching hallucinations would not be perfect hallucinations.

Denying strategy. Here, they argue that the biggest challenge for this strategy is a commitment to ‘neural determinism’. This, roughly put, is the thesis that the neural state of a subject at a moment determines the subject’s neural states at the next moment (excluding the neural states that are determined by non-neural inputs). This, Logue and Raleigh argue, implies that neurally-matching hallucinations cannot be subjectively distinguishable from perceptions because such hallucinations would give rise to the same post-perceptual neural states as matching perceptions. Logue and Raleigh then argue that the best option for the Indistinguishability-Denying strategy is to reject neural determinism, where this can be done by embracing top-down causation. Here, top-down causation is the thesis that mental states can causally explain the neural states that a subject is in. Logue and Raleigh maintain that although top-down causation might strike some as metaphysically far-fetched, it can be explained by embracing a broad metaphysical inextricabilist view on which the mind and the physical processes that underly it are interdependent in a fashion that prevents us from providing a complete account of one without mentioning the other.

Ali’s contribution develops a bold version of Logue and Raleigh’s object-supplying strategy. According to Ali, the experiences traditionally taken to be hallucinations—what Ali calls “hallucinatory perceptions”—should be understood on the model of perceptions of pictures. Just as we can seem to be presented with anything when we are in fact merely perceiving a picture surface, so in hallucinatory perceptions we can seem to be presented with anything when we are in fact having a perception of a bit of reality. For example, the appearance that a bloody dagger is present can be a part of perceiving some painted piece of canvas; and in just the same way, the appearance can also be a part of Macbeth’s hallucinatory perception of some non-bloody, dagger-free part of reality.

In his contribution, Ali develops his proposal in detail and uses it to account for many of the features thought to be distinctive of hallucinations. In particular, Ali accounts for the thought that hallucinations do not involve real objects with real properties, for the thought that hallucinations cannot ground original *de re* knowledge of particulars, and for the thought that the objects of hallucinations are mind-dependent, private and potentially modality-limited. In accounting for these thoughts, Ali repeatedly draws on a distinction between the real, mind-independent and public things we perceive (picture surfaces, in picture perception cases; other parts of reality, in hallucinatory perception cases) and the seemings we have that certain (“pictorial” or “hallucinatory”) objects are present; where these objects may not exist, may be private, and may have a mind-dependent status. By Ali’s lights, the features thought to be distinctive of hallucinations are best understood by considering the great difference between what we perceive in hallucinatory perceptions and the seemings that we have in their course.

Ali closes his contribution with a discussion of several objections, including one which explores the relationship between his expressed relationalism and his apparent appeal to representations in accounting for hallucinatory perception’s phenomenal character. Specifically, the objection is that Ali’s account of hallucinatory perception relies on representational seeming states, which are incompatible with a relationalist outlook. In response Ali suggests, first, that seemings might be understood non-representationally; and second, that even if they are understood representationally, that would not render his view objectionable to a relationalist. As Ali sees it, his relationalism is secure as long as he denies (as he does) both that the perception relation is representational, and that representations supplant the role of perceived worldly objects in phenomenal character.

2.3. On Relationalism’s Epistemological Benefits

One of relationalism’s selling points has long been the claim that it can overcome the threat of skepticism by providing our empirical knowledge with a particularly secure perceptual basis. Relationalism’s critics, however, protest this. They argue, first, that relationalism’s resources cannot genuinely overcome skepticism, and second, that whatever epistemic benefits relationalism does offer, those same benefits can also be offered in non-relationalist framework. The third part of this volume re-invigorates and re-orientates this debate, first, by shifting its focus from skepticism to whether and how perception provides a secure basis for empirical knowledge; and second, by exploring how relationalism’s epistemological advantages are related to its commitments about perception’s phenomenal character.

Three of the four contributions in this part—those by Chudnoff, Sethi, and Beck—agree that a relationalist theory of empirical knowledge has advantages that non-relationalist views cannot match, in part because relationalism allows perception to relate us to the very truth-makers of our knowledge, thereby securing our knowledge’s epistemic credentials. The three contributions differ, however, both in focusing on different epistemological advantages, and in holding that relationalism must undertake different phenomenological commitments to secure these advantages.

Both Chudnoff and Beck suggest that relationalism can secure a special kind of “knowledge that”. According to Beck, what makes this kind of knowledge special is its conclusiveness - it is knowledge based on a mental state (specifically, a perception, relationally conceived) that could not exist if the proposition known were false. Chudnoff offers a different answer. By his lights, what makes the knowledge in question special is that the knowledge’s status as knowledge is entirely guaranteed by its being based on a suitable perception. Chudnoff thus maintains that a relationalist outlook can accommodate not just the idea that perception can guarantee “knowledge that”’s factivity, but also that it can guarantee “knowledge that”’s whole standing as knowledge. In contrast with Chudnoff and Beck, Sethi’s focus is not on “knowledge that” states, but on a certain epistemic ability. Specifically, Sethi outlines a Campbell-inspired view, on which relationalism alone can secure the ability to recognize the validity of inferences such

as “that color is saturated; that color is dark; therefore that color is saturated and dark”. These inferences involve multiple perception-based demonstrative references, occurring across different times (or sense modalities) to a single property; and their validity requires the property in question to be the same. Following Campbell, Sethi holds that the ability to recognize the validity of these inferences underwrites a certain “knowledge which”, which may be glossed as knowledge of the identity of the property presented across the relevant times or sense modalities. She maintains that a key advantage of relationalism is its unique ability to accommodate this “knowledge which”.

Another way in which the contributions by Chudnoff, Sethi, and Beck differ is in the phenomenological commitments they think relationalism ought to undertake to secure its epistemological advantages. Chudnoff recommends a relationalism on which perception’s phenomenal character can reflect not just what is the case, but also what perception enables one to know is the case. Specifically, taking inspiration from Husserl, he suggests that perceptual experiences have a phenomenal aspect of validity—i.e., they can be felt with or without certainty—which reflects one’s consciousness of oneself as either enabled to know or not. This might make it plausible to interpret Chudnoff’s preferred version of relationalism as carrying commitments about perception’s subjective, as opposed to qualitative, phenomenal aspects.⁴¹ Sethi and Beck’s contributions, on the other hand, are primarily concerned with perception’s qualitative character. In particular, Sethi and Beck take contrasting positions about whether the epistemological advantages of relationalism require is to postulate that distinct perceived properties cannot appear the same. Here, Sethi answers that they do, and so advocates for a relationalism on which, e.g., distinct colors cannot all look red. She argues that a relationalism that lacks this feature cannot secure the aforementioned “knowledge which”. Beck, on the other hand, advocates for a kind of relationalism on which distinct properties can all look the same. He outlines how such a relationalism can still secure conclusive knowledge. So if, as seems arguable, a relationalism that can secure conclusive knowledge can also secure Sethi’s “knowledge which”, Beck and Sethi’s views stand in sharp contrast with each other.

Having situated Chudnoff, Sethi, and Beck’s contributions with respect to each other, let us dive a bit deeper into each of them.

According to Chudnoff, relationalism’s central advantage over its rivals is that it can accommodate the thought that we have “perceptually secured knowledge”, i.e., beliefs that amount to knowledge simply because they are based on suitable perceptual states. His core idea is that if a perceptual state can make a belief based on it amount to knowledge, then it can do so partly because it includes awareness of the believed proposition’s truth-maker. Since relationalism can readily deliver just the necessary awareness of this truth-maker, it is particularly well-positioned to accommodate the existence of perceptually secured knowledge. Chudnoff’s main concern, however, is that perceptually secured knowledge ought to be both safe and undefeated, and yet it is unclear how perception can ensure safety and prevent defeat. Chudnoff’s solution is to develop a relationalism on which perception can afford us awareness not just of the truth-makers of the propositions we believe, but also of more inclusive states of affairs, which make it true that we are enabled to know those very propositions. Drawing both on cognitive psychology (specifically, perceptual reality monitoring theories of perceptual consciousness and the phenomenon of boundary extension in scene perception) and Husserlian phenomenological reflection, Chudnoff argues both for the plausibility of his awareness thesis, and for the idea that it is reflected in perception’s phenomenal character. The upshot is that, since perception can make us aware of our beliefs’ truth-makers’ enabling us to know the beliefs’ contents, perception can also ensure that the conditions for knowing the beliefs’ contents (including, safety and non-defeat) are met.

Sethi’s frames her contribution as a defense of the view that two conscious perceptions which differ in perceived properties also differ in phenomenal character (call this thesis, “Property-to-Character Difference”). She argues that in spite of their explicit claims to the contrary, French and Phillips, as well as Beck, are committed to denying this thesis, and that consequently, their versions of relationalism lack the epistemological advantage of securing “knowledge which”. Sethi’s argument can be summarized thus: She begins by observing that French and Phillips, along with Beck, hold that multiple distinct colors can all look red. From this, together with the view that perceived properties can contribute to a perception’s phenomenology only by modifying how objects look (or otherwise appear), she concludes that by French and Phillips’, as well as Beck’s, lights, two conscious perceptions which differ in perceived properties can nonetheless have the same phenomenal character. However, if a single phenomenal character is compatible with multiple distinct properties’ being perceived, Sethi reasons, it cannot be apparent to the perceiver which property she is perceiving. And if this is not apparent to the perceiver, then the perceiver cannot recognize the validity of inferences whose validity requires the same property to be the referent of multiple perception-based demonstrative references, occurring across different times or sense modalities. In this way, a relationalism that allows multiple distinct colors to look red, must forgo the advantage of securing “knowledge which”.

Beck’s contribution seeks to develop a relationalism that secures a positive answer to the following question: Suppose you perceive a ball’s redness, and on that basis alone come to believe that the ball is red. Must your belief be true, given that it has the basis that it does? In other words, is your belief conclusively based? The threat to Beck’s positive

⁴¹ We suspect that since this phenomenal aspect is self-directed, it may count as a subjective phenomenal aspect. Chudnoff may well disagree with this assessment, however.

answer is the following line of thought: “There is arguably strong empirical support to the view that you can perceive a ball’s yellowness but still have it appear to you just as the redness actually appears to you. Therefore, the phenomenal character of your actual perception does not fix whether you are seeing a red or a yellow ball. As a consequence, your perception does not provide your belief with a conclusive basis.” Since Beck is a relationalist who accepts the first premise of this line of thought, his response cannot be to insist that a perception’s positive/narrow phenomenal character does fix whether you are seeing a red or a yellow ball. So instead, Beck develops a Fregean relationalism on which it is perception’s ontic/broad phenomenal character which fixes what state of affairs you are perceiving. According to Beck, the perceived state of affairs is a constituent of the perception’s ontic/broad phenomenal character. Furthermore, because it consciously appears to the subject, the state of affairs can also contribute to the basis of the subject’s beliefs. In short, your belief that the ball is red does have a conclusive basis after all. This basis is the ball’s being red’s appearing a particular way to you. Were the ball not red, its being red would neither exist, nor appear to you at all. So by appearing as it does to you, it necessitates the truth of your belief that the ball is red.

Although they do so in very different ways, the contributions by Chudnoff, Sethi and Beck all explore the epistemological benefits of relationalism’s particularly tight connection between perception and the world. They do not, however, seek to establish the existence of an equally tight connection between cognition and the world. In her contribution, Titus (nee Miracchi) attempts just that, and with great force.

Titus’ ultimate goal is to articulate a view on which perception and knowledge are on equal footing insofar as they are distinct relations between the subject and the world, which constitute distinct agent achievements, and manifest distinct agent capacities. She construes this goal as involving an extension of a capacities-based version of relationalism from the perceptual to the doxastic domain. This extended relationalism requires Titus to rethink the mental architecture of perception and cognition, as well as the normative links between perception and knowledge. Accordingly, her contribution focuses on reimagining this architecture and these links by providing a novel Agential Account of both.

Titus frames her Agential Account as an alternative to a view she takes many relationalists (as well as non-relationalists) to mistakenly accept, and which she dubs “the Interface Account”.⁴² Simplified, the Interface Account says that perception is normatively and causally “closer to the world” than belief, because experience’s epistemic contribution is prior to the epistemically relevant properties of the rest of the agent’s mental repertoire, and because experience’s contents (more or less) determine, in a defeasible way, which beliefs the agent is immediately justified to hold. Titus argues that this Interface Account is afflicted with many problems. Specifically, it (1) renders the epistemology of perceptual belief hostage to thorny issues about perceptual content, (2) leads to a questionable quasi-inferential model of justification, (3) might be refuted by empirical discoveries about perceptual experience’s etiology, and (4) wrongly implies that all cases of cognitive penetration are pernicious. Titus believes that to solve all these problems it would be best to replace the Interface Account with a model on which both perception and knowledge are distinct aim-governed mental engagements with the world. The Agential Account constitutes just that model. Unlike the Interface Account, the Agential Account likens the relationship between perception and knowledge to the relationship between dribbling and avoiding a defender in a basketball game: Dribbling and avoiding a defender are distinct competencies governed by their own norms, so that when dribbling occurs outside the context of passing a defender, it cannot be evaluated for satisfying the norms of competent passing. Nevertheless, competent avoiding of a defender can at times depend on and affect dribbling without compromising dribbling’s competency (i.e., its satisfaction of its governing norms). Similarly, on the Agential Account, perceiving, on the one hand, and forming and sustaining of belief, on the other hand, are distinct competencies governed by their own norms, so that when perceiving occurs outside the context of forming and sustaining belief, it cannot be evaluated for justifying—or for having the power to justify—this or that belief. Nevertheless, competent belief forming can at times depend on and affect competent perceiving, without compromising perceiving’s competency (i.e., its satisfaction of its governing norms). The key lesson here is that perception’s epistemic significance is entirely instrumental – it is due to the ways in which the agent can competently use perception to further her distinct epistemic ends.

While Titus’ Agential Account does not entail relationalism, she (as aforementioned) explicitly develops it to complement her broader relationalist and thoroughly anti-Internalist project. The project is anti-Internalist in that it generally rejects the idea that the mind—in either perception or knowledge—is causally or metaphysically inner. Instead, the view is that both perception and knowledge relate us to worldly constituents, and both provide us with understanding. Specifically, perception provides us with a perspectival understanding of our surroundings, and knowledge with an understanding of the facts.

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⁴² We are actually unsure which relationalists accept the Interface Account. Beck’s contribution to this volume may reject it, while Sethi’s view does not seem to take a stance about it.

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