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Fregean Particularism

Susanna Schellenberg (Rutgers)

It is Monday morning and I am riding the train through the post-industrial wasteland of northern New Jersey. I gaze out of the window and, suddenly, I see a deer. Let’s call it Frederik. The next morning, I am again on the train, riding through northern New Jersey. And, again, I see a deer. Let’s call it Ferdinand. It is the same time of day. Everything looks exactly the same on Tuesday as it did on Monday—including the deer. However, unbeknownst to me, the deer I see on Tuesday is not the same as the one I saw on Monday. So I am seeing different particulars.

How does the fact that I am seeing Frederik on Monday and Ferdinand on Tuesday affect my perceptual state? One possible answer is to argue that the content of my perceptual state on Monday is constituted by Frederik, while the content of my perceptual state on Tuesday is constituted by Ferdinand. If this is right, what is the nature of this singular perceptual content? When we suffer a non-veridical hallucination as of an object, then it seems to us that there is a particular object present, where in fact there is no such object. If veridical perceptual states have singular content, what is the content of a hallucination? Since in hallucination, we are not perceptually related to the particulars we seem to see, a hallucination cannot have singular content. What content, then, does a hallucination have? Finally, what accounts for the phenomenal character of hallucination, whereby it seems to us that a particular is present when no such particular is actually before us?

These questions can be put into focus by articulating two desiderata for any account of perception. One desideratum is to explain perceptual particularity, that is, to explain in virtue of what a perceptual state is constituted by the perceived particular. Let’s call this the *particularity desideratum*. The other

desideratum is to explain what accounts for the possibility that perceptions of qualitatively identical yet numerically distinct particulars could have the same phenomenal character. Let's call this the *phenomenal sameness desideratum*. More generally, the phenomenal sameness desideratum is to explain what accounts for the possibility that perceptions, hallucinations, illusions of distinct environments could have the same phenomenal character.¹

In Section 1, I will discuss these two desiderata in turn. In Section 2, I will consider several ways one might attempt to satisfy both desiderata and will show why they do not succeed. In Section 3, I will develop a particular way of understanding singular content that satisfies both desiderata. I will call this view *Fregean particularism*. In Section 4, I will compare Fregean particularism to competitor views. In developing this account of singular content, I will consider many views along the way. I will argue against them only to the extent that it helps motivate Fregean particularism and situate it within a broader philosophical context.

1. Two Desiderata for an Account of Perception

We can understand the claim that two experiential states have the same phenomenal character as follows:

Phenomenal Sameness: If two experiential states e_1 and e_2 of the experiencing subject S have the same phenomenal character, then S would be unable to discern any difference between e_1 and e_2 , even if her perceptual and introspective abilities were ideal.

An experiential state, as understood here, is the state one is in when one is either perceiving, hallucinating, or suffering an illusion. It is important to distinguish the case in which two experiences have the same phenomenal character from the case in which they are merely subjectively

¹ One might argue that the only case in which two consecutive perceptions genuinely have the same phenomenal character are ones in which one consecutively perceives qualitatively identical, yet numerically distinct particulars. If one holds this, one would hold that the phenomenal sameness desideratum does not apply to cases in which a hallucination seemingly has the same phenomenal character as a perception. I will here assume that a hallucination could have the same phenomenal character as a perception and so will take the phenomenal sameness desideratum to apply more generally. However, the argument of this paper would need to be adjusted only slightly to apply to the more restrictive view on which a perception and a hallucination could never have the same phenomenal character.

indistinguishable. We can all agree that we might have two consecutive experiences e_3 and e_4 that are so similar that they are subjectively indistinguishable. We may be unable to tell them apart because we fail to properly attend to the details presented to us. Or, we might attend to all the details presented to us, but nonetheless be unable to tell the two experiences apart because we lack the requisite perceptual capacities. Neither is a case in which e_3 and e_4 have the same phenomenal character. After all, in the first kind of case, we could notice the difference between e_3 and e_4 if we paid better attention; in the second kind of case, we could notice the difference between e_3 and e_4 if our perceptual capacities were better.

The classic case of two perceptions that have the same phenomenal character is the case of consecutively perceiving qualitatively identical yet numerically distinct objects, *ceteris paribus*. More generally, if in two consecutive perceptions there is no qualitative difference in the environment (despite there being a difference in numerical identity of the perceived objects) and if the subject is perceptually related to the environment in the very same way, then, *ceteris paribus*, there is no difference in phenomenal character between the two perceptual states. In short, phenomenal character can be exactly the same even if the environment varies.

Moving on to the particularity desideratum: we can all agree that when a subject perceives a particular, she is causally related to the particular she perceives. It is uncontroversial and compatible with almost any view of perception that there is such a causal relation between a subject and a perceived particular—though views differ dramatically with regard to how much explanatory weight the causal relation can carry. Consider the case of two experiences, one of which is a perception of an object, the other of which is a hallucination with the same phenomenal character. It is uncontroversial and compatible with almost any view of perception that there is a difference in causal relation between the two experiences. When a subject perceives an object, she is causally related to the mind-independent object she is perceiving. When a subject suffers a hallucination with the same phenomenal character, she is not causally related to a mind-independent object that it seems to her she is perceiving. Acknowledging that there is a difference in causal relation between the two experiences is not sufficient to satisfy the

particularity desideratum. To satisfy the particularity desideratum, we need to explain in virtue of what a subject's perceptual state M brought about by being perceptually related to the particular α is constituted by α

We can all agree moreover that when a subject consciously perceives her environment, she is perceptually conscious of a particular. Now, our experience can be as of a particular, even if we are not in fact perceptually related to a particular. After all, when we suffer a non-veridical hallucination as of, say, a yellow rubber duck, it sensorily seems to us that there is a yellow rubber duck where in fact there is no such duck. So our phenomenal character can be as of a particular even if we are not perceptually related to that particular. In this sense, perceptual experiences are (as) of particulars. We can call this aspect of phenomenal character *phenomenological particularity*.

Phenomenological particularity: A mental state manifests phenomenological particularity if and only if it phenomenally seems to the subject that there is a particular present.

So a mental state manifests phenomenological particularity if and only if the particularity is in the scope of how things seem to the subject: phenomenological particularity does not require that there be a particular that seems to the subject to be present, but just that it seems to the subject that there is a particular present.

Every perceptual experience (as) of a particular manifests phenomenological particularity. Indeed it is unclear what it would be to have a perceptual experience that seems to be of a material, mind-independent particular without its sensorily seeming to the subject that such a particular is present. If a subject has an experience that is intentionally directed at a particular and subjectively indistinguishable from perceiving a particular, it will seem to her as if she is experiencing a particular—regardless of whether she is in fact perceptually related to a particular, or is suffering an illusion or hallucination as of a particular. So phenomenological particularity is a feature of any perceptual experience—be it a perception, a hallucination, or an illusion.

We can distinguish the relatively uncontroversial idea that perceptual experience manifests phenomenological particularity from the controversial idea that perception is characterized by *relational particularity*. A mental state is characterized by relational particularity if and only if the mental state is constituted by the particular perceived. More precisely:

Relational particularity: A subject's perceptual state M brought about by being perceptually related to the particular α is characterized by relational particularity if and only if M is constituted by α .

To satisfy the particularity desideratum, we need to show how it is that a perceptual state is constituted by the particular perceived, and thus characterized by relational particularity (rather than mere phenomenological particularity).

Often relational particularity and phenomenological particularity are implicitly equated. This is problematic. One should allow for the possibility that a subject can be intentionally directed at what seems to her to be a material, mind-independent particular even if there is no such particular present and so acknowledge that a perceptual state could manifest phenomenological particularity without manifesting relational particularity. Moreover, one should allow for the possibility that perceptions of numerically distinct yet qualitatively identical particulars yield perceptual states that are constituted by different particulars, yet manifest the same phenomenological particularity. As I will show, only if we recognize the distinction between phenomenological and relational particularity can we account for the difference between perceptions of distinct yet qualitatively identical objects.²

The distinction between phenomenological and relational particularity allows us to reformulate the opening questions more specifically. Why think that when we perceive a particular our perceptual state is constituted by the particular perceived and thus is characterized by relational particularity in addition to

² There is moreover a powerful tradition of sidelining relational particularity in favor of phenomenological particularity. For example, Crane—focusing on singular thought—puts all the weight on the cognitive or phenomenological role of a thought, that is, what I call phenomenological particularity: “what matters is not that the [singular] thought happens to refer to just one thing, but that it has a specific cognitive role. Singularity is a matter of the cognitive—that is, the psychological or phenomenological—role of the thought” (Crane 2011: 25). Crane’s focus is not on what makes it the case that a thought is about this particular rather than that one, but rather in virtue of what thoughts have a singular character, that is, what makes them manifest phenomenological particularity.

phenomenological particularity? How should we account for the fact that when we suffer a hallucination, our mental state manifests phenomenological particularity, despite lacking relational particularity? In answering these questions, we can show how it is that in the case of an accurate perception, we are sensorily aware of particulars, and how it is that even when we are suffering a hallucination, our experience can be as of environmental particulars despite the fact that we are not perceptually related to at least one of the particulars to which it seems to us we are related.

1.1. Relationalism and Representationalism

There are two radically different conceptions of perception. According to *relationalism*, a perceptual state is constitutively a matter of standing in an awareness or an acquaintance relation to the environment. According to *representationalism*, a perceptual state is constitutively a matter of representing the environment. So while representationalists analyze perceptual states in terms of their representational content, relationalists analyze perceptual states in terms of awareness or acquaintance relations to mind-independent particulars.

Relationalism and representationalism are widely considered to be in conflict.³ But the debate between relationalists and representationalists sets up a false dichotomy. The source of this false dichotomy is that the standard views in the debate are either austere relationalist or austere representationalist. To a first approximation, *austere relationalism* has it that perception is constitutively relational and lacks any representational component. To a first approximation, *austere representationalism* has it that perception is constitutively representational and lacks any relational component that has repercussions for the experiential state.⁴ Against both, I will argue that perceptual

³ For a recent articulation of this view, see Campbell 2002. Though see Schellenberg 2010 for a representationalist view that does not fit this dichotomy; see Beck (forthcoming) for a relationalist view that does not fit this dichotomy.

⁴ For austere representationalist views, see McGinn 1982, Davies 1992, Tye 1995, Lycan 1996, Byrne 2001, and Hill 2009 among many others. For austere relationalist views, see Campbell 2002, Travis 2004, Johnston 2004, 2014, Brewer 2006, Fish 2009, Logue 2014, Genone 2014, Gomes and French 2016, and Raleigh 2014, 2015 among others. Martin (2002, 2004) leaves open the possibility that experience could have content, but his positive view of perception is structurally similar to that of austere relationalists. Campbell (2002) calls his view the “relational view,” Martin (2002, 2004) calls his “naïve realism,” while

relations to the environment and the content of experience are mutually dependent. I will argue that by employing perceptual capacities we are related to our environment—at least in the case of perception. Perceptual capacities function to discriminate and single out particulars.⁵ Thus, perception is constitutively relational. I argue moreover that the perceptual capacities employed constitute the representational content of our perceptual state. Thus, perception is constitutively representational. In this way, I will show that there is no tension between perception being constitutively both relational and representational. But first let's take a closer look at what it means for perception to be relational and what it means for perception to be representational.

Perceiving subjects have been argued to be perceptually related to many different kinds of entities. These entities fall into two groups: abstract or mind-dependent entities, such as qualia, sense-data, propositions, or intentional objects, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, concrete, mind-independent objects, property-instances, or events, such as a white coffee cup resting on a desk. In the current discussion, the thesis that perception is relational means always that perception is constitutively a matter of a subject being perceptually related to concrete, mind-independent objects, property-instances, events, or a combination thereof.

When I speak of perception as being representational without qualification, I mean no more than the idea that perception is a matter of a subject representing her environment such that her perceptual state is characterized by representational content. There are many different ways of understanding the nature of content given this constraint. For present purposes, it will suffice to say that the content can be conceived of as a Russellian proposition, a Fregean sense, an indexical content, a map of the environment, an image-like representation, or in any number of other ways. Moreover, the content can be understood to be either conceptual or nonconceptual, propositional or nonpropositional, and as constituted by the particulars

Brewer (2006) calls his the “object view.” I will refer to the view with the label “austere relationalism,” since the most distinctive features of the view are arguably the central role of relations between perceiving subjects and the world as well as its austerity.

⁵ [Reference omitted for blind-refereeing.]

perceived or as independent of the particulars perceived. Finally, there are many different ways of understanding the relationship between phenomenal character and content. Indeed, accepting the thesis that perceptual experience is representational is compatible with thinking that the content and phenomenal character of mental states are entirely independent. So the thesis that perceptual experience is representational is agnostic on all possible ways of understanding the relationship between content and phenomenal character. I am using the term “representationalism” for any view that endorses the thesis that perceptual experience is constitutively a matter of representing. Representationalism, so understood, is neutral on the relationship between perceptual content and perceptual consciousness.

It will be helpful to contrast the distinction between relationalism and representationalism with an orthogonal distinction between two ways of individuating experiential states. On a *phenomenalist view*, experiential states are individuated solely by their phenomenal character. Versions of this view have been defended by Price (1950), Moore (1953), Tye (1995), Lycan (1996), Byrne (2001), and Block (2003) among others. On an *externalist view*, experiential states are individuated not only by their phenomenal character but also by whatever external, mind-independent particulars (if any) to which the perceiver is perceptually related. Needless to say views differ wildly on just how perceived particulars make a difference to perceptual states. Versions of externalism have been defended by Searle (1983), McDowell (1984), Peacocke (1983, 2009), Campbell (2002), Martin (2002), Soteriou (2005), Brewer (2006), Byrne (2001, 2009), Johnston (2004), Hill (2009), Fish (2009), Burge (2010), Schellenberg (2010), Logue (2014), and Genone (2014) among others.

The motivations for thinking that perception is constitutively representational typically go hand in hand with the motivations for embracing the phenomenalist view. Similarly, the motivations for thinking that perception is constitutively relational typically go hand in hand with the motivations for embracing the externalist view. However, the fault line between relationalism and representationalism does not coincide with the fault line between phenomenalist and externalist views. Sense-data theory, as defended by Price (1950) and Moore (1953), is a phenomenalist view that rejects representationalism. Moreover,

one can argue for an externalist view that endorses representationalism (Searle 1983, Peacocke 1983, McDowell 1984, Burge 2010, Byrne 2009, Hill 2009, and Schellenberg 2010).

In what follows, I will consider the austere versions of both representationalism and relationalism in more detail and will assess how they fare in satisfying the particularity and phenomenal sameness desiderata. As I will argue, austere representationalists can easily satisfy the phenomenal sameness desideratum, but not the particularity desideratum. By contrast, austere relationalists can easily satisfy the particularity desideratum, but not the phenomenal sameness desideratum. I will offer a synthesis of these approaches that satisfies both desiderata.

1.2. Austere Representationalism

The key idea of austere representationalism is that to have a perception, illusion, or hallucination is to be in an experiential state with representational content that corresponds one-to-one with the phenomenal character of the experiencing subject: any changes in content go hand in hand with changes in phenomenal character and vice versa. Insofar as the representational content corresponds one-to-one with phenomenal character, it is phenomenal content.

If representational content is phenomenal content, then two experiential states with the same phenomenal character cannot differ in content—irrespective of what particular, if any, the subject is related to. So a perceptual state can have the same phenomenal content as a mental state brought about by suffering a hallucination or illusion. According to austere representationalism, if I see Frederik on Monday and Ferdinand on Tuesday, my perceptual states will have the very same content. More generally, there can be an exact duplicate of an experiential state and its content, brought about by being perceptually related to particular α , in an environment in which the experiencing subject is perceptually related to the numerically distinct particular β . Furthermore, there can be an exact duplicate of an experiential state and its content in an environment in which the experiencing subject is not perceptually related to any relevant mind-independent particular. So if experiential content is phenomenal content,

then it is general content. There are many different ways of understanding general contents. They can be thought of as *de dicto* modes of presentation, Russellian propositions, or existentially quantified content to name just a few options.

Stated more precisely, austere representationalism is committed to the following three theses:

1. Experiential states have content.
2. A perception, an illusion, and a hallucination can have the same phenomenal character.
3. The content of an experiential state corresponds one-to-one with its phenomenal character in that any changes in content go hand in hand with changes in phenomenal character and vice versa.⁶

It follows from these three theses that:

4. Perceptual content is not constituted by the mind-independent particulars perceived.

So austere representationalists are committed to denying that perceptual content is singular content, and thus cannot satisfy the particularity desideratum by appeal to the singular content of perception. I will embrace the first two theses of austere representationalism, but will reject the third. By rejecting the third thesis, the commitment to the fourth thesis can be avoided.

First, however, let's take a closer look at austere representationalism. One way of understanding experiential content under the constraint of the austere representationalist thesis is that it is existentially quantified content of the form that there is an object x that instantiates a property F :

$$(a_{p,i,h}) \quad (\exists x)Fx$$

Most objects instantiate a multitude of properties. For example, most visually perceivable objects instantiate spatial, color, and location properties. Most auditorily perceivable objects instantiate pitch, loudness, duration, and timbre properties. I will work with the simplifying assumption that there can be an experience (as) of an object that instantiates only one property. My argument, however, easily generalizes to the more realistic case in which one experiences an object instantiating a multitude of properties.

⁶ McGinn (1982), Davies (1992), Tye (1995), Lycan (1996), Byrne (2001), and Pautz (2009) among others have defended views that are committed to these three theses.

The thesis that experiential content is existentially quantified content posits that an experiential state represents only that there is an object that instantiates the relevant properties in the external world. No element of the content depends on whether such an object is in fact present. So it is possible to be in a mental state with the relevant content regardless of what object is present or even whether there is an object present. The perceived object does not fall out of the picture altogether: although no reference to the particular object perceived is necessary to specify the content, the austere representationalist can say that a subject perceives an object o at a particular location only if o satisfies the existential content of the subject's experiential state. So the content is accurate only if there is an object at the relevant location that instantiates the properties specified by the content. The crucial point is that whether an object of the right kind is present bears only on the accuracy of the content. It has no repercussions for what is represented.

The main advantage of austere representationalism is that it easily and elegantly explains how a perception, hallucination, and illusion could have the same phenomenal character. Indeed, accounting for this possibility is one of the main motivations for analyzing experiential content as phenomenal content. As Davies puts it: “the perceptual content of experience is a phenomenal notion: perceptual content is a matter of how the world seems to the experiencer ... If perceptual content is, in this sense, ‘phenomenological content’ ... then, where there is no phenomenological difference for a subject, then there is no difference in content” (1992: 26). By equating experiential content with phenomenal content, austere representationalists can easily satisfy the phenomenal sameness desideratum.

The main problem with austere representationalism is that it does not satisfy the particularity desideratum. The view cannot account for the difference between the perceptual content brought about by a subject perceiving cup₁ at time t_1 and her perceptual state brought about by being perceptually related to the qualitatively identical cup₂ at time t_2 . Davies explicitly embraces this view: “if two objects are genuinely indistinguishable for a subject, then a perceptual experience of one has the same content as a

perceptual experience of the other” (1992: 26).⁷ According to austere representationalism, sameness of phenomenal character entails sameness of content. A view according to which two experiential states with the same phenomenal character cannot differ in content—irrespective of what particular, if any, the subject is related to—cannot satisfy the particularity desideratum in terms of perceptual content. Therefore, if perceptual content should reflect relational particularity, then perceptual content cannot be equated with phenomenal content.

Now an austere representationalist could say that the perceptual relation between the perceiving subject and the perceived object does play a role. After all, the austere representationalist could argue that the form of a veridical perception is a conjunction of two elements, namely, the content and the relation to the perceived particular:

$$(b_p) \quad HS\langle(\exists x)Fx\rangle \text{ and } RS\alpha$$

Subject S stands in a representation relation H to the existentially quantified content that there is an object x that instantiates the property F and S stands in a perceptual relation R to particular α . By contrast, the form of a hallucination is:

$$(b_h) \quad HS\langle(\exists x)Fx\rangle$$

We can call this view *conjunctivism*. Conjunctivism has it that two elements are in place in a successful perceptual experience. In the case of a hallucination, the subject stands in relation only to the proposition that there is an object that has a certain property. Conjunctivism is a representational view that individuates perceptual experiences not just by the relevant mental states, but also by the perceptual relation between the experiencing subject and the environment. The problem with conjunctivism is that

⁷ McGinn (1982) and Millar (1991) argue for a similar thesis. This view is subject to well-known counterexamples, which I will not rehearse here. They have been discussed in detail by Soteriou (2000) and Tye (2007) by expanding on Grice’s (1961) discussion of so-called “veridical hallucinations.” Searle (1983) aims to account for particularity within the framework of existentially quantified contents by building causal conditions into the existential contents. In short, the idea is that a descriptive condition picks out an object as the cause of the experience. By doing so, Searle builds causal relations to particular objects into perceptual content. Given Searle’s view about the relationship between content and phenomenal character, this approach is at odds with the phenomenal character of experience.

the experiential state is in no way affected by the particular perceived (if any). Therefore, the particularity desideratum is not satisfied. Although conjunctivism builds perceptual relations between subjects and particulars into the form of perception, this relational element has no effect on any aspect of the perceptual state, for example, its content or phenomenal character. So conjunctivism is simply a version of austere representationalism that makes explicit that in the case of an accurate perception a perceptual relation holds between the subject and the perceived particulars.

With austere representationalists, I will argue that phenomenal character does not track relational particularity. Yet against austere representationalists, I will argue that perceptual content is singular content. First, however, let's assess how austere relationalism fares with regard to the particularity and phenomenal sameness desiderata.

1.3. Austere Relationalism

Austere relationalists argue that no appeal to representational content is necessary in a philosophical account of perception and that perception constitutively involves at least three components: a subject, her environment, and a perceptual relation between the subject and particulars in her environment. This perceptual relation is understood as, for example, an acquaintance or a sensory awareness relation. So austere relationalists have it that perception is constitutively a matter of a subject S standing in an acquaintance or an awareness relation R to a mind-independent particular α :

$$(c_p) \quad R S \alpha$$

In this way, austere relationalism conceives of the form of perception in a way that a hallucination could not possibly fit. As Brewer formulates the idea:

The course of perceptual experience ... provide[s] the subject with the grounds for her actual beliefs about the world, and also for the various other beliefs which she might equally have acquired had she noticed different things, or had her attention instead been guided by some other project or purpose. It does so, though, not by serving up any fully formed content, somehow, both in advance of, but also in light of, these attentional considerations, but, rather, by presenting her directly with the actual constituents of the physical world themselves. (2006: 178)

Austere relationalism is a radical version of disjunctivism, that is, in short, the view according to which perceptions and hallucinations share no common element or do not belong to the same fundamental kind.⁸ Traditionally disjunctivists argued that while hallucinations are not representational, perceptions do represent mind-independent particulars.⁹ Austere relationalism is a radical version of disjunctivism insofar as it denies not only that hallucinations are representational, but that perceptions are as well.

Austere relationalism is structurally similar to sense-data theory and is motivated in part by its insights. So it will help to contrast the two views. Both views understand phenomenal character as constituted by the particulars perceived. However, while sense-data theorists argue that the particulars perceived are sense-data, austere relationalists argue that the particulars in question are material, mind-independent objects, property-instances, or events. This difference has many repercussions. One repercussion is that sense-data theorists take the structure of a perception to be the very same as that of a hallucination. In both cases a subject's experience consists in being acquainted with sense-data. Since hallucinations and perceptions have the very same structure, sense-data theorists can easily satisfy the phenomenal sameness desideratum. A second repercussion is that since sense-data theorists have it that a subject can be in the very same experiential state regardless of whether she is perceptually related to a mind-independent particular, the view is committed to denying that perceptual states are constituted by the particulars perceived. Therefore, sense-data theorists cannot satisfy the particularity desideratum.

In contrast to sense-data theorists, austere relationalists conceive of the fundamental structure of a perception in a way that precludes hallucinations from having that structure. After all, since a hallucinating subject is not perceptually related to the material, mind-independent particular she seems to be seeing, a hallucination cannot be modeled on the *RS α* -form of perception. This way of thinking about perceptual experience has many virtues. The most salient for the present discussion is that austere

⁸ The metaphysical thesis that perception and hallucination share no common element was first articulated by McDowell (1982). Among others, Martin (2002) formulates the key idea of disjunctivism as being that perceptions and hallucinations do not belong to the same fundamental kind.

⁹ See, for instance, Hinton 1973, Snowdon 1981, and McDowell 1982.

relationalists can easily satisfy the particularity desideratum. Insofar as the subject is perceptually related to particular α , her perceptual state is constituted by α .

However, austere relationalism comes at a price. Austere relationalists account for relational particularity in terms of phenomenal character. As a consequence, the phenomenal character brought about by being perceptually related to α necessarily differs from the phenomenal character brought about by being perceptually related to β . This is the case even if α and β are qualitatively identical. Moreover, the phenomenal character of a perception will necessarily differ from the phenomenal character of a hallucination. So austere relationalists cannot satisfy the phenomenal sameness desideratum.

The natural solution to the problem is to argue that it is not the phenomenal character of a perceptual state, but rather its content, that grounds relational particularity. Since the austere relationalist holds that perceptual states do not have representational content, this solution is not open to her. In the rest of this paper, I will present a way of satisfying the particularity desideratum while respecting the intuition that perceptions of numerically distinct, yet qualitatively identical particulars do not differ phenomenally. I will argue that although perceptions of numerically distinct particulars necessarily differ with regard to their content, this difference is not revealed in phenomenal character.

2. Varieties of Singular Content

If the content of perception is singular content, then what is the content of a hallucination? A hard-line response to this question is to argue that hallucinations have no representational content. Such a view is motivated by a particular understanding of what it means to represent an object: singular content is radically object-dependent, such that an experiential state has representational content only if the experiencing subject is perceptually related to a particular in her environment. So only if a subject is related to an object, can she represent the object. Drawing on this understanding of the conditions for representing an object, the conclusion is drawn that a hallucinating subject is not in a mental state with

content: it only seems to her that she is representing. So there is only the illusion of content.¹⁰

A view on which perceptual content is radically object-dependent amounts to a disjunctivist view of experiential content. Content disjunctivists accept the austere relationalist thesis that perception and hallucination share no common element or do not belong to the same fundamental kind. In contrast to austere relationalists, however, they hold that a perceiving subject represents the particulars to which she is perceptually related.

Content disjunctivists face the same problems as any other disjunctivists. One problem is that the cognitive significance and the action-guiding role of experiential content is downplayed. When a subject hallucinates, the way things seem to her plays a certain cognitive role. If it seems to her that she is perceptually related to a white cup, she may, for example, reach out and try to pick it up. If one denies that hallucinations have representational content, this cannot be explained. It is not clear how the mere illusion of content could motivate the subject to act. Consider Harman's example of Ponce de Leon who was searching Florida for the fountain of youth (Harman 1990). The fountain of youth does not exist, yet Ponce de Leon was looking for something particular. As Harman argues convincingly, he was not looking for a mental object. He was looking for a mind-independent object that, as it so happened, unbeknownst to him, did not exist. A second problem—and the problem most salient for present purposes—is that, insofar as content disjunctivists hold that hallucinations do not represent, they leave unclear what explains the phenomenal character of hallucinations. So it is not clear how content disjunctivists satisfy the phenomenal sameness desideratum. While content disjunctivists acknowledge that a hallucination could seemingly have the same phenomenal character as a perception, they do little if anything to explain this phenomenon.

The problems of disjunctivism are avoided if perceptual content is not understood as radically object-dependent. That would allow that hallucinations can have at least some kind of content. One way

¹⁰ Versions of this view have been defended by Hinton (1973), Snowdon (1981), Evans (1982), and McDowell (1982, 1984).

to develop such a view is to argue that the content of a hallucination involves a gap that in the case of a perception is filled by a particular. Traditionally, gappy contents are thought of in terms of Russellian propositions.¹¹ On the gappy Russellian view, the content of hallucination expresses that the object that seems to be present seems to instantiate property F . The content of a hallucination will be an ordered pair of a gap and a property:

$$(d_h) \langle _, F \rangle$$

In the case of an accurate perception of an object o , the gap is filled by that object:

$$(d_p) \langle o, F \rangle$$

There are several problems with the Russellian gappy content view. One problem is that the content of hallucination has too little structure to account for hallucinations as of multiple objects. If I hallucinate a green dragon playing a red piano, the content of my experience will contain multiple gaps and nothing that marks their difference other than these gaps being bound with distinct properties. Putting aside the problem of how a gap could be bound by properties, it is unclear how such a view could account for the difference in phenomenal character between hallucinating a green dragon playing a red piano and hallucinating a green elephant riding a red bicycle.

A second problem is that to account for a hallucination as of an object that seems to be instantiating a property that is in fact an uninstantiated property, such as supersaturated red or Hume's missing shade of blue, the Russellian must conceive of the content of hallucination as potentially constituted by uninstantiated properties. By doing so, she commits herself not just to a controversial metaphysics of properties but also to a controversial view of phenomenal character. The view is metaphysically controversial since accepting the existence of uninstantiated properties requires some kind of Platonic "two realms"-view on which there is more to reality than the concrete physical world. The

¹¹ See Braun 1993. Such a Russellian way of thinking about gappy contents has been defended also by Bach (2007) and Tye (2007). [Reference omitted for blind-refereeing.]

view is phenomenologically controversial since it is not clear what it would be to be sensorily aware of a property.¹² After all, properties are not spatio-temporally located and not causally efficacious. The Russellian could respond to the phenomenological problem by distinguishing between being sensorily and cognitively aware of something. This would allow her to accept that we cannot be sensorily aware of properties, but argue that hallucinating subjects are cognitively aware of properties. However, now the problem arises as to how a perception and a hallucination could have the same phenomenal character. After all, being cognitively aware of something is phenomenally distinct from being sensorily aware of something (see e.g. Kriegel 2011). If this is right, then it is unclear how the Russellian could satisfy the phenomenal sameness desideratum.¹³

These problems are avoided, if perceptual content is understood as constituted by Fregean modes of presentation of mind-independent particulars rather than bare properties and objects. In the rest of this paper, I will develop and defend Fregean particularism, which will include a Fregean account of gappy contents. By doing so, I will present a way of satisfying both the particularity and the phenomenal sameness desiderata.

3. Fregean Particularism

The austere versions of relationalism and representationalism are not the only options. An alternative is to argue that perceptual experience is constitutively both relational and representational. On such a view, a perception, a hallucination, and an illusion with the same phenomenal character share a metaphysically substantial common element. However, there are also substantial differences with regard to their content: while the token content of perception is singular content, the form of illusion and hallucination is derivative of the form of perception. Perception plays multiple roles: it yields conscious mental states, it

¹² For a classical elaboration of this worry, see Williams 1953.

¹³ For a more detailed discussion of these two problems and for a discussion of alternative ways that the Russellian might respond to these two problems, see [reference omitted for blind-refereeing].

justifies beliefs, and it provides us with knowledge of our environment. To account for these multiple roles, perceptual content needs to serve multiple explanatory purposes. At the very least, perceptual content must have both a component that grounds perceptual consciousness and a component that, in the case of an accurate perception, grounds perceptual particularity. By grounding perceptual particularity the content can account for the epistemic role that perception plays in our lives.

I will develop Fregean particularism by exploiting the idea that perceiving a particular is constitutively a matter of employing perceptual capacities by means of which that particular is discriminated and singled out. If one possesses a perceptual capacity, one can employ it even if no particular of the kind that the capacity functions to single out is present. Therefore, the very same perceptual capacities that are employed in perception (good case) can also be employed in illusion and hallucination (bad case).

Now, the employment of such perceptual capacities generates a perceptual state that is characterized by representational content for the following two reasons: the employment of perceptual capacities generates a perceptual state that is *repeatable* and has *accuracy conditions*. Being repeatable and having accuracy conditions are jointly key signatures of representational content. I will give support to each claim in turn. The very same perceptual capacity C_α can be employed to single out particular α_1 or to single out particular α_2 . Moreover, the same perceptual capacity can be employed to single out α_1 at time t_1 and at time t_2 and thus yield the same perceptual state at t_1 and t_2 .¹⁴ If this is right, then there is a repeatable element that is constitutive of perceptual states, namely, the perceptual capacities employed and, moreover, employing perceptual capacities generates a perceptual state that has a repeatable element. Now, when one discriminates and singles out a particular from its surround, one may do so more or less

¹⁴ One could argue that different time-slices bring about a difference in perceptual states. If one holds this, then the relevant perceptual state would be different, but it would be different only in this respect.

accurately, and the perceptual state generated thereby will be more or less accurate.¹⁵ After all, a perceiver can single out an object and correctly single out only very few of its properties; or she can single out the same object and correctly single out many of its properties. The first perceptual state will be less accurate with regard to the environment than the second.¹⁶ So employing perceptual capacities yields perceptual states that exhibit key signatures of representational content: it yields something that is at least in part repeatable and that can be accurate or inaccurate. With a few plausible further assumptions, these considerations establish that employing perceptual capacities yields perceptual states with content. The thesis that content is constituted by employing perceptual capacities that function to single out particulars implies that perceptual content is singular.¹⁷ After all, if the fact that perceptual capacities single out particulars in some situations but not others has any semantic significance, then the token content yielded by employing perceptual capacities in perception will be constituted by the particulars singled out.¹⁸

By contrast, an austere representationalist view (or any other view on which perceptual content is general) holds that the content is the very same regardless of what particular (if any) the experiencing subject is related to. A general content lays down a condition that something must satisfy to be the object determined by the content. The condition to be satisfied does not depend on the mind-independent

¹⁵ One might object here that not all discriminatory capacities yield things that have accuracy conditions. For example, thermometers discriminate temperatures, but we do not say that the state thereby produced has accuracy conditions. In response, it is apt to say that the temperature indicated by the thermometer either matches the temperature in the environment or fails to match the temperature in the environment. In this sense, the state of the thermometer in which it indicates a particular temperature has accuracy conditions.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the relationship between singling out objects and singling out the properties this object instantiates, see Pylyshyn and Storm 1988, Pylyshyn 2007, and Fodor 2008.

¹⁷ [Reference omitted for blind-refereeing.]

¹⁸ Here and throughout “*A* is constituted by *B*” is understood in the sense that *A* is at least partially constituted by *B*—leaving open that there may be other things that jointly with *B* constitute *A*. Moreover here and throughout “*A* is constituted by *B*” is understood such that it does not imply that *A* is materially constituted by *B*. So “*A* is constituted by *B*” does not imply that *B* is a component of *A*. There are a number of ways to understand constitution given these constraints. For the sake of specificity, I will work with the following notion of constitution: *A* is constituted by *B*, if and only if *A* is grounded in *B*, where grounding is understood as a relation that can hold between entities such as mental states and material, mind-independent particulars (and not just between propositions). So when I say that *A* is constituted by *B*, I mean that *A* is at least partially grounded in *B* without *B* being a component of *A*. “*A* grounds *B*” does not entail that *A* is a component of *B*”. For example, it is generally accepted that truthmakers ground the truth of the propositions they make true, and it is generally accepted that truth makers are not components of the propositions they make true.

particular that satisfies it. So the relation between content and object is simply the semantic relation of satisfaction.

3.1. Perceptual Capacities and Modes of Presentation

The idea that content is constituted by employing perceptual capacities by means of which we (purport to) single out particulars is analogous to the Fregean idea that modes of presentation are a way of grasping or referring to particulars. Indeed, it is analogous to the Fregean idea that modes of presentation both have a cognitive significance and are a means of referring to particulars. A mode of presentation is the specific way in which a subject refers to a particular. While Frege introduces the distinction between sense and reference with a perceptual case, he does not develop the notion for perceptual content. His focus was never on lowly mental faculties like perception. Nonetheless, we can apply his view of modes of presentation to the case of perception. Applied to that case, the idea is that a mode of presentation is the specific way in which a subject singles out a perceived particular. We can think of perceptual capacities as the mental counterpart of modes of presentation. While a mode of presentation is a component of a thought or a proposition, a perceptual capacity is a mental tool. According to Frege, concepts are mappings from objects onto truth-values (Frege 1879). Similarly, perceptual capacities are mappings from particulars onto accuracy conditions.

One key motivation for introducing modes of presentation is to capture a fineness of grain in content that reference to mind-independent particulars alone could not achieve. On a Russellian understanding, alternative possible modes of presentation can be expressed only insofar as one may have different cognitive attitudes to the same content. The way in which one perceives or thinks of the object is not expressed in the content proper.

Paralleling the distinction between singular and general content, there are two standard ways of thinking about Fregean modes of presentation. If one focuses on the role of modes of presentation as accounting for cognitive significance, then it is natural to think of them as *de dicto*. A *de dicto* mode of

presentation is general in that it can be the very same regardless of what (if anything) the experiencing subject is perceptually related to. If, by contrast, one focuses on the role of modes of presentation as a way of referring to a particular, then it is natural to think of them as *de re*. A *de re* mode of presentation is singular in that what particular (if any) the subject is perceptually related to has repercussions for the token content.

A *de dicto* mode of presentation lays down a condition that something must satisfy to be the particular determined by the content. Chalmers, among others, understands Fregean senses in this way: “Fregean content is supposed to be a sort of phenomenal content, such that, necessarily, an experience with the same phenomenal character has the same Fregean content” (2006a: 99, see also Thompson 2009). A *de dicto* mode of presentation constitutes a way of representing mind-independent particulars irrespective of whether the relevant particulars are present. If the content of experiential states were constituted by *de dicto* modes of presentation, then the content of a perception, a hallucination, or an illusion with the same phenomenal character would be

$$(e_{p,h,i}) \langle MOP_d^o, MOP_d^F \rangle$$

where MOP_d^o is a *de dicto* mode of presentation of an object and MOP_d^F is a *de dicto* mode of presentation of a property. Such an account of perceptual content implies a two-stage view of determining reference: first, we represent a general content, and in a second step, we refer to mind-independent particulars based on this content.¹⁹ Representing a *de dicto* mode of presentation is, on this view, independent of the second step, in which a particular may be determined. Such a two-stage view faces the problem of how the content grounds the ability to refer to external particulars. Insofar as a *de dicto* mode of presentation can be the very same regardless of what (if anything) the experiencing subject is perceptually related to, this way of thinking about content amounts to a version of austere

¹⁹ For an argument against such a two-stage view of determining reference, see Johnston 2004: 150f. Johnston does not distinguish between *de dicto* and *de re* modes of presentation, and as a consequence sees the problem articulated in the main text as a problem for any Fregean view *tout court*. As I will show, it is only a problem for a view on which Fregean senses are *de dicto* rather than *de re*.

representationalism and faces all the difficulties of that view. Any view on which perceptual content is constituted by *de dicto* modes of presentation fails to satisfy the particularity desideratum for the same reasons that austere representationalism does.

This problem is avoided if perceptual content is analyzed as constituted by *de re* rather than *de dicto* modes of presentation. Understanding modes of presentation as *de re* (rather than as *de dicto*) is motivated by recognizing that modes of presentation play a dual role: they have a cognitive significance, and they single out or refer to mind-independent particulars. Understanding perceptual content as constituted by *de re* modes of presentation recognizes that representing a particular is not independent of singling out the particular that is the referent of the sense. By contrast to *de dicto* modes of presentation, *de re* modes of presentation are singular in the good case.

Now, on one way of understanding *de re* modes of presentation, a subject can have a contentful experience only if she is (perceptually) related to the very particular that she purports to single out. This view is a version of content disjunctivism, which we critically discussed in the previous section.²⁰ What we need is an understanding of *de re* modes of presentation on which modes of presentation grounds the relational particularity of accurate perceptions and the phenomenological particularity of perceptions, hallucinations, and illusions.

3.2. Content Types and Token Contents

I argued that regardless of whether we are perceiving, hallucinating, or suffering an illusion, we employ perceptual capacities by means of which we purport to single out mind-independent particulars. Since in the bad case, we fail to single out the particulars that we purport to single out, our perceptual capacities are employed baselessly. They are employed baselessly insofar as they do not fulfill their function to operate on environmental particulars. This failure is not at the level of employing the relevant capacity, but rather at the level of singling out a particular. Employing perceptual capacities accounts for the fact

²⁰ For a defense of such a view, see Evans 1982 and McDowell 1984.

that we are intentionally directed at a seeming particular, a process that invests the hallucinatory and illusory state with structure. Moreover, the argument that employing perceptual capacities yields a perceptual state with representational content in virtue of the capacities being repeatable and constituting a phenomenal state that is either accurate or inaccurate generalizes from perception to hallucination and illusion. So given that even in the bad case, the subject is employing perceptual capacities, there is good reason to think that her mental state has content.

We have distinguished between employing perceptual capacities *tout court* (regardless of what if anything is singled out) and employing perceptual capacities while either successfully singling out a particular or failing to do so. We can apply this distinction to content and thereby distinguish between *content types* that are constituted by the perceptual capacities employed and *token contents* that are constituted both by the perceptual capacities employed and the particulars (if any) thereby singled out.

A perception, a hallucination, and an illusion with the same phenomenal character will all be characterized by the same content type. After all, they all result from employing the same perceptual capacities. Thus, the phenomenal sameness desideratum is satisfied. However, their content token will differ at least in part. After all, in the case of perception, the perceiver successfully singles out the particulars she purports to single out, while, in the case of hallucination and illusion, the experiencing subject fails to single out at least one particular she purports to single out. Thus, the particularity desideratum is satisfied.

3.3. Token Contents: Singular Modes of Presentation and Gappy Modes of Presentation

How should we understand the token content of a perceptual state? According to Fregean particularism, the token content of an accurate perception e_I of a cup α_I and the property-instance π_I will be

$$(\text{content}_{e_I}) \langle \text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_I), \text{MOP}_{\pi}(\pi_I) \rangle$$

where $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_I)$ is a singular mode of presentation of the cup α_I that is the product of employing a perceptual capacity that functions to single out the kind of object under which α_I falls. So “ α_I ” is

functioning as the name of an object. “ MOP_{ra} ” is a functional expression that expresses a function from objects to singular modes of presentation. $MOP_{r\pi}(\pi_1)$ is a singular mode of presentation of the property-instance π_1 that is the product of employing a perceptual capacity that functions to single out instances of the property under which π_1 falls. So while $MOP_{ra}(\alpha_1)$ is a *de re* mode of presentation of the object α_1 , $MOP_{r\pi}(\pi_1)$ is a *de re* mode of presentation of the property-instance π_1 . I am assuming that the *res* of a *de re* mode of presentation can be any mind-independent particular perceived, be it an object, a property-instance, or an event. To avoid any confusion, I will speak of singular modes of presentation rather than *de re* modes of presentation. For any given particular there will be many possible modes of presentation. For the content specified by $MOP_{ra}(\alpha_1)$ to be determinate, it is important that it is conceived of as one particular mode of presentation of the relevant object. Similarly, for the content specified by $MOP_{r\pi}(\pi_1)$ to be determinate, it is important that it is conceived of as one particular mode of presentation of the relevant property-instance.

A perception e_2 that has the same phenomenal character as e_1 and is of a qualitatively identical yet numerically distinct cup α_2 and property-instance π_2 will have the distinct content

$$(\text{content}_{e_2}) \langle MOP_{ra}(\alpha_2), MOP_{r\pi}(\pi_2) \rangle$$

Given injectivity, $MOP_{ra}(\alpha_1) \neq MOP_{ra}(\alpha_2)$ and $MOP_{r\pi}(\pi_1) \neq MOP_{r\pi}(\pi_2)$. So token contents differ depending on the particular to which the subject is perceptually related. This is the case even if the particulars are qualitatively identical.

In the case of a hallucination that has the same phenomenal character as e_1 , the same perceptual capacities are employed as in e_1 . But the environmental requirements for successfully singling out the particulars are not met. So no particulars are singled out. As a consequence, the capacities are employed baselessly and so the ensuing token content is defective.

One way of understanding the idea that the content is defective is to say that it is gappy. There is nothing metaphysically spooky about gaps. The gap simply marks the failure to single out a particular. So

the content of a hallucination in which we purport to single out an object that instantiates a property is

$$(\text{content}_h) \langle \text{MOP}_{ra}(__), \text{MOP}_{r\pi}(__) \rangle$$

where $\text{MOP}_{ra}(__)$ specifies the kind of object that would have to be present for the experience to be accurate and $\text{MOP}_{r\pi}(__)$ specifies the properties that this object would instantiate were the experience a perception rather than a hallucination. More specifically, $\text{MOP}_{ra}(__)$ is a gappy mode of presentation that is the product of employing a perceptual capacity that functions to single out objects of the kind that the hallucinating subject purports to single out while failing to single out any such object. It accounts for the intentional directedness of the experience at a (seeming) particular object. $\text{MOP}_{r\pi}(__)$ is a gappy mode of presentation that is the product of employing a perceptual capacity that functions to single out property-instances of the kind that the hallucinating subject purports to single out while failing to single out any such property-instance. It accounts for the intentional directedness of the experience at a property-instance. In short, $\text{MOP}_{ra}(__)$ is a gappy, object-related mode of presentation and $\text{MOP}_{r\pi}(__)$ is a gappy, property-related mode of presentation. So for a perceptual capacity to be employed baselessly amounts to the ensuing token content being gappy.²¹

An example will help clarify the idea. Consider Hallie who suffers a hallucination as of a white coffee cup. The content of her hallucination specifies both the kind of object that would have to be present for her experience to be accurate and the properties that this object would have to instantiate. The content is indeterminate insofar as it does not specify any particulars. The content would be accurate if the subject were related to a particular white cup. It is important that the content would be accurate regardless

²¹ Burge has been read as defending a gappy content view. However, as Burge writes of his view, “I have heard interpretations ... according to which there is a ‘hole’ in the representational aspects of the proposition, where the hole corresponds to the object (which completes the proposition). I regard these interpretations as rather silly” (1977/2007: 75). Burge argues that there are demonstrative elements in the content of a mental state that are in place regardless of whether they refer to the object of experience. As he puts it, “I do not think that a physical *re* in the empirical world ... is itself ‘part of’ the belief. ... In my view, the Intentional side of a belief is its only side. In many cases, in my view, a belief that is in fact *de re* might not have been successfully referential (could have failed to be *de re*) and still would have remained the same belief. Moreover, the belief itself can always be individuated, or completely characterized, in terms of the Intentional content” (1991: 209). The way I am using the terms, what Burge refers to as *de re* would be more aptly labelled *de dicto*. More importantly, insofar as on Burge’s view the intentional content of two experiences can be the very same regardless of the environment, the content does not reflect relational particularity.

of whether the subject is perceptually related to this or that qualitatively identical white cup. This is just to say that the content of a hallucination does not reflect relational particularity.

Depending on how one understands the nature of properties that subjects experience, one might argue that the content of hallucination is gappy only in the object-place, but not in the property-place. On such a view, the content of hallucination would be: $(\text{content}_h)' \langle \text{MOP}_{r\alpha}(__), \text{MOP}_{r\pi}(\pi_1) \rangle$. By contrast, I am arguing that a hallucinating subject who seems to be perceiving a property instantiated by an object is not related to a property-instance. After all, she is not related to any relevant object that could be instantiating the property. Due to this, the content of a hallucination is not just gappy in the object-place, but also in the property-place. Of course, it is possible that while hallucinating, one accurately perceives many mind-independent particulars. In this case, only some of the modes of presentation constituting the content will be gappy.

I will discuss the nature of gappy contents in more detail shortly, but for now let's turn to illusions. In the case of an illusion that has the same phenomenal character as e_I , the same perceptual capacities are employed as in e_I , but, as in the case of hallucination, the environmental requirements for successfully singling out at least one of the particulars that the subject purports to single out are not met. Since the subject fails to single out a property-instance, the token content that ensues from employing the relevant perceptual capacity is gappy:

$$(\text{content}_i) \langle \text{MOP}_{r\alpha}(\alpha_1), \text{MOP}_{r\pi}(__) \rangle$$

So the token content of an illusion is gappy only in the property-place.

In sum, we can distinguish four different kinds of token contents of perceptual experience with same phenomenal character:

$$(\text{content}_{e1}) \langle \text{MOP}_{r\alpha}(\alpha_1), \text{MOP}_{r\pi}(\pi_1) \rangle$$

$$(\text{content}_{e2}) \langle \text{MOP}_{r\alpha}(\alpha_2), \text{MOP}_{r\pi}(\pi_2) \rangle$$

$$(\text{content}_h) \langle \text{MOP}_{r\alpha}(__), \text{MOP}_{r\pi}(__) \rangle$$

$(\text{content}_i) \langle \text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_1), \text{MOP}_{r\pi}(_) \rangle$

Each of these four experiences instantiates the following content type:

$(\text{content}_{\text{Type}}) \langle \text{MOP}_{ra}[_], \text{MOP}_{r\pi}[_] \rangle$

where $\text{MOP}_{ra}[_]$ can be tokened by $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_1)$, $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_2)$, $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_3)$, $\text{MOP}_{ra}(_)$, or any other singular mode of presentation of a particular.

So Fregean particularism is characterized by the following three conditions:

- (1) The content of any two perceptions e_1 and e_1^* that have the same phenomenal character and in which the subject is perceptually related to the same particular α_1 in the same way will include the token singular mode of presentation $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_1)$, where $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_1)$ is constituted by employing the perceptual capacity C_α that functions to single out particulars of the type under which α_1 falls. More specifically, $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_1)$ is the output of employing perceptual capacity C_α that takes particulars of the kind under which α_1 falls as inputs. So $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_1)$ is constituted by the perceptual capacity employed and the particular α_1 thereby singled out.
- (2) A perception e_2 that has the same phenomenal character as e_1 , but in which the subject is perceptually related to the numerically distinct particular α_2 will be constituted by employing the same perceptual capacity C_α . However, since the input in e_2 is a different particular than in e_1 , the ensuing token content $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_2)$ is different. This is the case, even if α_1 and α_2 are qualitatively identical. So singular modes of presentation are injective: if $\alpha_1 \neq \alpha_2$, then $\text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_1) \neq \text{MOP}_{ra}(\alpha_2)$.
- (3) A hallucination or an illusion that has the same phenomenal character as e_1 is constituted by employing the same perceptual capacity C_α but, since there is no relevant particular present, the perceptual capacity is employed baselessly. As a consequence, the token content $\text{MOP}_{ra}(_)$ is gappy.

One objection waiting in the wings is that (content_i) is not an adequate way of characterizing the content of a hallucination since it cannot account for the fact that the content of a hallucination is inaccurate: given the presence of a gap, the content cannot determine an accuracy condition. In response, it is necessary to distinguish two ways in which a content can be inaccurate. One way is for the content to make a claim about the environment that is not accurate. A second way is for it to fail to make an accurate claim about the environment. To illustrate this second sense of inaccuracy, suppose that I claim that Pegasus lives in my apartment. This claim is inaccurate. Given that “Pegasus” does not refer, the inaccuracy in question is that I have failed to make an accurate claim about who lives in my apartment. If

inaccuracy is understood in this second way, then a hallucination can have a gappy content and nonetheless be inaccurate. On this understanding of gappy contents, the fact that a content is gappy implies that the content is necessarily inaccurate insofar as a gappy content could never make an accurate claim about the world.²²

On this view, there is nothing veridical about so-called “veridical hallucinations.” In such a case, a subject is hallucinating, say, an apple, and there happens to be an apple where she hallucinates one to be. But she is not perceptually related to the apple because there is a wall between her and the apple. As a consequence, the content of her experience is gappy. Indeed, the content of hallucinations with the same phenomenal character will have the same content—even if one hallucination is non-veridical and the other is a so-called “veridical hallucination.”

3.4. Content Types: Potentially Singular Modes of Presentation

So far I have specified the token contents. How should we understand the content types? According to Fregean particularism, a perception, a hallucination, and an illusion with the same phenomenal character share a metaphysically substantial common element: the perceptual capacities employed. Employing perceptual capacities yields a content type that experiential states with the same phenomenal character have in common. So, Fregean particularism avoids any disjunctivist commitments. There is a stock of distinct content types $MOP_{ra}[\text{---}]$, $MOP_{r\beta}[\text{---}]$, $MOP_{r\gamma}[\text{---}]$, $MOP_{r\delta}[\text{---}]$, which combine with particulars to form singular modes of presentation of objects, property-instances, and events.

Now, why are these content types not just general contents? In response, content types are potentially particularized contents. To motivate this, consider again Hallie who hallucinates a cup. On the basis of her hallucination, she thinks, “That is a white cup.” Since there is no white cup present, she fails to refer and the content of her thought is not singular. However, it is not general either. After all, she purports to refer to a mind-independent particular. Failing to be a singular content does not imply that the

²² For a dissenting view of the truth-value of gappy propositions, see Everett 2003.

content is general. There are other options. One alternative is to say that the content has the form of a singular content while failing to be a token singular content. It is a potentially singular content. As in the case of a failed singular thought, the content of hallucination is neither a general content nor a singular content. It is structured by two-levels: the content type and the token content; more specifically, a potentially particularized content type and a gappy token content. In virtue of its singular form, the experience manifests phenomenological particularity. The potentially particularized content type can be analyzed as a schema that gives the conditions of satisfaction of any perceptual state with that content.

Although in the case of an accurate perception the token content is at least in part constituted by the particulars perceived, the very same content type can be tokened if no relevant particular is present. The token content of a hallucination is naturally not constituted by any mind-independent particulars perceived. While the content type is not dependent on particulars (if any) perceived it is nonetheless relational. It is relational since it is constituted by employing perceptual capacities that function to discriminate and single out particulars. As a consequence, relations to particulars are implicated in the very nature of content, even at the level of the content type.

One might object that the content of a hallucination and the content of a perception could never be tokens of the same type. After all, the former is gappy and the latter is not. In response, particulars can be tokens of the same type even if the particulars differ significantly. For them to be tokens of the same type they need only to exhibit the feature relevant to classification under that type. There are many ways to type contents. One is with regard to whether or not they are gappy. On this way, gappy contents and non-gappy contents would be tokens of different types. However, another way to type contents is with regard to the perceptual capacities employed that constitute the content. This is the kind of content types in play here.

3.5. Advantages of Fregean Particularism

The thesis that perceptual content is constituted by employing perceptual capacities allows for a

substantive way of analyzing perceptual content as nonconceptual. After all, perceptual capacities can be understood as nonconceptual analogs to concepts.

A second advantage of Fregean particularism is that the thesis that perceptual content is constituted by employing perceptual capacities allows for a way to analyze the difference between perception and cognition as a difference in representational vehicle, where that difference in representational vehicle is explained in terms of a difference in the capacities employed. The representational vehicle of perceptual representation is the employment of perceptual capacities. The representational vehicle of cognition is the employment of cognitive capacities.

A third advantage is that the view neither implies that the experiencing subject stands in a propositional attitude to the content of her experience nor does it rely on there being such a relation between the subject and the content of an experience. So there is no need to say that the experiencing subject ‘exes’ that p , —to use Byrne’s (2009) phrase.

A fourth advantage is that Fregean particularism can easily account for hallucinations as of multiple objects. We rejected the Russellian gappy content view on grounds that it cannot account for hallucinations as of multiple objects. How can Fregean particularism account for such hallucinations? In response, hallucinations as of multiple objects are unproblematic for Fregean particularism, since it is the mode of presentation that is gappy and so the content of a hallucination is not altogether gappy in the object-place. As a consequence, there is sufficient structure to account for hallucinations as of multiple objects.

3.6. Fregean Particularism, the Particularity Desideratum, and the Phenomenal Sameness Desideratum

I have argued that the content of experiential states is constituted both by the perceptual capacities employed and the particulars (if any) thereby singled out. In this way, perceptual experience is constitutively both relational and representational. In this section, I will compare Fregean particularism to

austere relationalism and austere representationalism. In doing so, I will show how it satisfies both the particularity and the phenomenal sameness desiderata.

Fregean particularism accepts the central relationalist insight that relations to particulars are constitutive of perceptual states. If perceptual content is constituted by perceptual capacities that function to discriminate and single out mind-independent particulars, then relations to particulars are implicated in the very nature of perceptual content. Moreover, if the fact that perceptual capacities single out mind-independent particulars in some environments but not others has any semantic significance, then the content ensuing from employing perceptual capacities will be constituted at least in part by the perceived particulars.²³

Since perceptual content is constituted by the particulars perceived, Fregean particularism allows for a straightforward way of accounting for the particularity desideratum. The particular to which the subject is perceptually related secures the relational particularity of her perceptual state. There is a difference between the token contents of perceptions of numerically distinct but qualitatively identical objects. To explain this, consider Percy who sees a white cup at time t_1 . Without Percy noticing, the cup is replaced by a qualitatively identical cup, so that at time t_2 , Percy sees a cup that is numerically distinct from the one he saw at t_1 . The content of his perceptual state at t_1 and at t_2 is distinct despite the fact that the difference in content is not reflected in the phenomenal character of his perceptual states. The content of Percy's perceptual states is distinct since it is constituted by a singular mode of presentation of a different object before and after the switch. So what Fregean particularism shares with relationalism (that austere representationalism lacks) is the ability to satisfy the particularity desideratum.

However, in contrast to austere relationalism, Fregean particularism can easily account for the phenomenal sameness desideratum. Fregean particularism accepts the minimal representationalist commitment that perception is constitutively a matter of representing one's environment such that one's

²³ [Reference omitted for blind-refereeing.]

perceptual state is characterized by representational content. Employing perceptual capacities in a sensory mode constitutes both the representational content and the phenomenal character of experiential states. In experiential states with the same phenomenal character, the same perceptual capacities are employed in the same sensory mode. So in contrast to disjunctivists and austere relationalists, I am arguing that a hallucination, an illusion, and a perception with the same phenomenal character share a common element that explains their sameness in phenomenal character.

How does Fregean particularism make room for content that manifests phenomenological particularity while lacking relational particularity? In response, even if one happens to be hallucinating or suffering an illusion, the capacities employed do not cease to function to do what they do in the case of perception, namely, discriminate and single out particulars in the environment. Employing them is the basis for the intentional directedness at particulars in perception and accounts for the intentional directedness at a seeming particular in illusion and hallucination. Thus, employing perceptual capacities accounts for the fact that when we suffer an illusion or a hallucination, it seems to us as if a particular is present. In this way, employing perceptual capacities grounds phenomenological particularity. So while the gap in the token content of a hallucination marks the lack of relational particularity, the intentional directedness at an object is accounted for by the (gappy) mode of presentation. Even though in the case of illusion or hallucination, the experiencing subject fails to single out at least one of the particulars that she purports to single out, the gappy token content is inherently related to external and mind-independent particulars of the type that the subject's perceptual capacities function to single out in the good case. Whether a perceptual capacity is employed baselessly will not affect the phenomenal character of the experience. Only if this is the case can the view satisfy the phenomenal sameness desideratum. For only if it is not revealed in phenomenal character whether a perceptual capacity is employed baselessly could a perception, an illusion, and a hallucination have the same phenomenal character.

So, with representationalists but against austere relationalists, I am arguing that the phenomenal character of a hallucination manifests phenomenological particularity without being characterized by

relational particularity. However, with relationalists and against austere representationalists, I am arguing that the content of perception grounds relational particularity. Fregean particularism satisfies the particularity desideratum since it does not equate perceptual content with phenomenal content. Although content types remain the same across experiential states with the same phenomenal character, token contents are constituted by the particulars (if any) perceived. As a consequence, there can be differences in content that are not reflected in phenomenal character. While Fregean particularism rejects the austere representationalist thesis that perceptual content is phenomenal content, and consequently is not compatible with so-called strong representationalism, it is compatible with weak representationalism. That said, if the content type is the same between two experiences, the phenomenal character will be the same. So Fregean particularism holds that there is a kind of content that covaries with phenomenal character.

4. Fregean Particularism and Alternative Views

It has been argued that a content that purports to be of a particular object but fails to refer is best thought of as a general content (Burge 2010). It has, moreover, been argued that a singular content is object-dependent such that we cannot be in a mental state with a token content that purports to be of a particular, but fails to refer (Evans 1982, McDowell 1984).

Fregean particularism avoids the pitfalls of both approaches in that it makes room for a notion content that manifests phenomenological particularity but lacks relational particularity. According to Fregean particularism, the content of hallucination is structured by a content type and a token content, neither of which is a general content. The content type is a potentially particularized content schema. The token content is gappy. In contrast to a view on which *de re* modes of presentation are radically object-dependent such that there cannot be a token content if there is no object to be represented, Fregean particularism shows that *de re* modes of presentation are only partly constituted by the particulars perceived. Singular modes of presentation are constituted by the perceptual capacities employed and the

particulars perceived. While the perceptual capacities employed provide the general element of perceptual content, the objects, events, and property-instances singled out provide the particular element. If no particulars are perceived, as in the case of a total hallucination, the token content is constituted only by the perceptual capacities employed. While the token content of hallucination is defective in virtue of the perceptual capacities being employed baselessly, the mere fact that perceptual capacities are employed gives the token content enough structure to ground the phenomenal character and thus the phenomenological particularity of hallucinatory states. So Fregean particularism makes room for hallucinations to have a token content, even though no mind-independent particular is perceived.

In contrast to the gappy Russellian view discussed earlier, Fregean particularism does not posit that the object-place is gappy in the case of a hallucination. It is rather the mode of presentation in the object-place that is gappy. So even if one hallucinates multiple objects, there is enough structure in the content to distinguish the various objects that one seems to be perceiving. The structure is provided by the gappy modes of presentation.

Now, one might argue that there is no reason to appeal to gaps to account for the content of hallucinations. An alternative solution is to say that the gaps are filled by intentional objects. On such a view, experience is a matter of representing properties that are attributed to intentional objects (see Lycan 1996 and Crane 1998). These intentional objects can be thought of as existing abstracta or as non-existing concreta. Such a view is less attractive than Fregean particularism for at least two reasons. One reason is that if hallucinations are construed as relations between subjects and intentional objects, then one is pressed to construe perceptions as relations between subjects and intentional objects as well. However, doing so leads to well-known problems.²⁴ A second reason is that positing intentional objects does not secure any explanatory advantage over Fregean particularism with regard to the phenomenal character of

²⁴ For a discussion of the skeptical problems that ensue if the content of mental states is understood as constituted by intentional objects or relations to intentional objects, see Brewer 1999. Loar (2003) argues that a view on which perception is construed as a relation to an intentional object is phenomenally implausible.

experience, and is furthermore less powerful in explaining both the relational particularity of perceptions and the absence of relational particularity in hallucinations. Finally, a difference in token contents between perceptions and hallucinations with the same phenomenal character can explain the epistemic difference between them.²⁵ An intentional object view does not have this benefit.

I have argued that perceptual content should be understood as serving multiple explanatory roles insofar as it grounds both phenomenal character and perceptual particularity. An alternative way of satisfying these two explanatory roles is to argue that experience has multiple layers of content. On such a multiple contents view, different layers of content satisfy the two explanatory roles. There are many reasons to introduce multiple layers of content. My argument, if right, undermines at least one motivation for the multiple contents view, namely, the motivation that one layer grounds phenomenal character while another layer accounts for the reference-fixing role of perception. Chalmers (2006b) argues, for example, that one layer is a Fregean content that is associated with a primary intension that is a function from centered worlds to extensions (where the Fregean content is understood as *de dicto*), while the other layer is a Russellian content that is associated with a secondary intension, which is a function from uncentered worlds to extensions. What these views have in common is that one layer of content grounds phenomenal character, while the other determines the reference of the mental state.

Fregean particularism is motivated by many of the same concerns as the multiple contents view, but it does not entail the multiple contents view, and it is not a particular version of that view. The multiple contents view entails that experience has different sets of accuracy conditions associated with the different layers of content. The thesis that experience has multiple explanatory purposes involves no such entailment. While on Fregean particularism, any perception, hallucination, and illusion is characterized by a content type and a token content, the content type and token content do not constitute two distinct layers of content. After all, they do not determine two different sets of accuracy conditions. Only the token

²⁵ [Reference omitted for blind-refereeing.]

content determines accuracy conditions. The content type is no more than a content schema. So according to Fregean particularism, the content of a perceptual experience has only one set of accuracy conditions. Thus the view provides a way of satisfying the different explanatory roles of perceptual content without introducing a second layer of content. As the second difference between the two views will show, there are powerful reasons to resist introducing multiple layers of content to account for the different explanatory roles of perceptual content.

In contrast to the multiple contents view, Fregean particularism is a view of both the constituents of perceptual content and of what holds these constituents together. It takes seriously Frege's insight that modes of presentation play a dual role: they have a cognitive significance and they determine a reference—at least in the successful case. On the multiple contents view, the cognitive significance and the reference-determining roles of content are accounted for on different levels of content. Experiences with the same phenomenal character will have the same content on one level, but, depending on their environment, they may have a different content on the other level. The relation between the phenomenal content and the perceived object is simply the semantic relation of satisfaction.

Insofar as the multiple contents view analyzes perception as the co-instantiation of two independent elements it is a version of what I called conjunctivism. It is a version of conjunctivism on which the relational element is not simply a perceptual relation between a subject and an object, but rather constitutes an object-dependent layer of content. In contrast to the simple version of conjunctivism that I considered in Section 1, the multiple contents view can satisfy the particularity desideratum, since one level of content is constituted by the particulars perceived. However, since the layer of content that accounts for relational particularity is independent of the layer of content that grounds phenomenal character, the question arises as to how phenomenal contents are connected to what they are about. Consider Chalmers's epistemic two-dimensional semantics. As Chalmers notes, “primary intensions do not determine extensions in a strong sense (although they may still determine extension relative to context)” (2006b: 596). The layer of content that grounds the phenomenal character of the experience

does not itself determine an extension. Chalmers considers the possibility of accounting for the reference-determining role of modes of presentation by stipulating that the content of an expression-token is an ordered pair of its primary intension and its extension (2006b: 596). Although such an ordered pair plays the role of determining reference, it does so trivially, given that the extension is part of the ordered pair. The question remains as to how the primary intensions, that is, the phenomenal contents, are connected to what they are about.

The notion of a singular mode of presentation that I have developed cannot be identified with an ordered pair of a *de dicto* mode of presentation and a referent. To deny that the content can be identified with such an ordered pair is not to deny that the content can be analyzed into two layers, one of which is constituted by the perceived particular (if any), the other of which is independent of the perceived particular (if any). However, the ability to analyze *A* in terms of *B* does not imply that *A* is identified with *B*.²⁶ Being in a perceptual state is not just a matter of being intentionally directed at a (seeming) mind-independent particular and, in the successful case, being causally related to that mind-independent particular. Content needs to be connected to its referent by some non-attribitional means. On Fregean particularism, perceptual capacities fulfill the role of connecting mental states with the particulars perceived. Perceptual capacities play both a reference-fixing role and constitute content that grounds phenomenal character. Thus, employing perceptual capacities constitutes singular modes of presentations, namely modes of presentation that are constituted by the perceptual capacities employed and the particulars thereby singled out. In this way, employing perceptual capacities constitute representational content that account for the Fregean idea that modes of presentation both have a cognitive significance and are a means of referring to particulars.

²⁶ For a critical discussion of two-dimensional semantics, see also Speaks 2009.

5. Coda

If a distinction is drawn between what an experience is of and what one takes one's experience to be of, then we can drive a wedge between the content and the phenomenal character of an experience, without thinking of them as entirely independent. By driving a wedge between phenomenal character and content, one can account for the possibility that a perception, a hallucination, and an illusion can have the same phenomenal character while accounting for differences that are due to the experiencing subject being perceptually related to different particulars (or not being perceptually related to any particulars). Content plays the dual role of grounding relational particularity in the case of an accurate perception and grounding phenomenological particularity regardless of whether the subject is perceiving, hallucinating, or suffering an illusion. Moreover, insofar as employing perceptual capacities constitutes phenomenal character and secures the reference of the perceptual state, Fregean particularism rejects all ways of factorizing perceptual content into internal and external components. In this way, the suggested view combines the virtues of relationalism and representationalism, while avoiding the difficulties of the austere versions of these views. According to Fregean Particularism, perceptual content is constituted by general elements, namely the perceptual capacities employed, and particular elements, namely the external, mind-independent particulars perceived.

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