DANIEL MENDES CAMPOS XAVIER DEBARRY

COGNITIVE CAPACITIES AND THE UNITY OF PERCEPTION

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Capacidades Cognitivas e a Unidade da Percepção

DANIEL MENDES CAMPOS XAVIER DEBARRY

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“(...) there is no innocent eye.”

E.H. Gombrich

“What we *properly* 'have in view' is precisely what we commonly do *not* look *at*, but *just* look *to* as *authoritative* for our comportment”.
”.

M. Heidegger

Resumo

Examinamos a assim chamada *Visão das Capacidades Cognitivas* (VCC) sobre a experiência perceptual à luz da filosofia de John de McDowell, bem como de suas leituras de Kant e Hegel e de seu debate com Charles Travis. O primeiro capítulo apresenta conceitos fundamentais da VCC segundo McDowell. O segundo capítulo trata do tema das relações racionais entre experiência perceptual e juízos perceptuais, assim como da ideia de "conceito normativo" da experiência no contexto da VCC defendida por McDowell. Além disso, apresenta algumas objeções ao modo como McDowell trata a questão. O terceiro e o quarto capítulos abordam criticamente as leituras que McDowell faz de Kant e Hegel, bem como importantes objeções a essas leituras. O capítulo 5 discute a VCC de McDowell no contexto de seu debate com Travis. O capítulo 6 apresenta uma via média ao debate em questão, através de nossa própria versão de uma VCC.

Palavras-chave: McDowell; Travis; Representacionismo; Experiência Perceptual; Kant; Hegel.

Abstract

We examine what we labeled as the *Cognitive Capacities View* (CCV) of perceptual experience, in light of John McDowell's philosophy as well as his reading of Kant and Hegel and his debate with Charles Travis. The first chapter presents fundamental concepts of CCV according to McDowell's version of it. The second chapter deals with the rational relations between perceptual experience and perceptual judgments, as well as the idea of a "normative concept" of experience in the context of the CCV defended by McDowell. In addition, it raises some objections to the way McDowell handles the issue. The third and fourth chapters critically address McDowell's readings of Kant and Hegel, as well as important objections to these readings. Chapter 5 discusses McDowell's CCV in the context of his debate with Travis. Chapter 6 presents a middle ground to the debate in question, through our own version of a CCV.

Keywords: McDowell; Travis; Representationalism; Perceptual Experience; Kant; Hegel.

ABBREVIATIONS

JOHN MCDOWELL

AIB = McDowell, John. 2003. Autonomy and Its Burdens. *The Harvard Review of Philosophy*. 17-1:4–15.

AMG = McDowell, John. 2008. Avoiding the Myth of the Given. In *HWV*, 256–272.

APM = McDowell, John.1998. Another Plea for Modesty. In *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 108-131.

BOO = McDowell, John. 2010. Brandom on Observation. In *Reading Brandom on Making it Explicit*. London/New York. Routledge,129-144.

C = McDowell, John. 2000. *Comments in Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 31-3: 330–343.

CBGS = McDowell J. 2019. Comments on Brewer, Gupta, and Siegel. *Philosophical Issues* 29:338–347.

CCP = McDowell, John. 2009. Conceptual Capacities in Perception. In *HWV*, 127–144.

CDK = McDowell, John. Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge. In *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 369–394.

HIRK = McDowell, John. 2009. Hegel's Idealism as Radicalization of Kant. In *HWV*, 69–89.

HWV = McDowell, John. 2009. *Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

IDM = McDowell, John. 1998. In Defence of Modesty. In *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 87-107.

MAW = McDowell, John. 1996. *Mind and World*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

PEER = McDowell, John. 2018. *Perceptual experience and empirical rationality*. In Analytic Philosophy, 59, 89–98.

RBGS = McDowell J. 2019. Responses to Brewer, Gupta, and Siegel. *Philosophical Issues* 29:390–402.

RD = McDowell, John. 2007. Response to Dreyfus. *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 50-4:366–370.

RTS = McDowell, John. 2018. Response to Federico Sanguinetti. In Sanguinetti and Abath (2018), 242-5.

RH1 = McDowell, John. 2008. Response to Stephen Houlgate. In Lindgaard (2008), 225–234.

RH2 = McDowell, John. 2009-10. Response to Stephen Houlgate. *The Owl of Minerva*, 41-1/2: 27–48.

RH3 = McDowell, John. 2018. Response to Stephen Houlgate's Response. In Sanguinetti and Abath (2018), 235-239.

RPR = McDowell, John. 2018. Response to Paul Redding. In Sanguinetti and Abath (2018), 240-242.

RTT = McDowell, John. 2008. Response to Travis. In Lindgaard (2008), 258–267.

RWD = McDowell, John. 2016. *Rationalism without dogmas.* In Adams and Browning. 311-328.

TBD = McDowell, John. 2011. Philosophical Explorations. 13 (3): 243-255.1.

TFKG = McDowell, John. 2018. Travis on Frege, Kant, and the Given. In Gersel, Jensen Sørensen & Overgaard. 23-35.

TRHA = McDowell, John. 2009. Toward a Reading of Hegel on Action. In HWV, 166–184.

IMMANUEL KANT

CPR = Kant, Immanuel. 1997. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

JL = Kant, Immanuel. 1988. *Logic*. Transl. Hartman, R. and Schwarz, W. New York: Dover Publications.

UG = Kant, Immanuel. 1992. ('Ultimate Grounds') Concerning the ultimate ground of the differentiation of directions in space. In *Theoretical philosophy*: 1755–1770. Transl. Walford, D. and Meerbote, R. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

G. W. F. HEGEL

ES = Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*. Trans. A.V. Miller, with revisions and commentary by M.J. Inwood. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007.

LPS = Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit* 1827–8, Trans. R. R. Williams. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Phen = Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford UP.

SLM = Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Trans. A.V. Miller. London: Allen-Unwin, 1969.

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

PI = Wittgenstein, L. 2009. Philosophical Investigations. 4th edition, Hacker, P.M.S. and Schulte, J. (eds. and trans.) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

TLP = Wittgenstein, L. 1922. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Ogden, C. K. (trans.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. Originally published as "*Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung*", in Annalen der Naturphilosophische, XIV (3/4), 1921.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

VARIOUS VIEWS ON PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE

Perception provides its subjects with an encounter with the environment. It allows them to have visual awareness of the sun, auditory awareness of a foreign or native speech, olfactory awareness of the smell of roses. In illustrating the visual awareness of a particular sunset, Charles Travis is helpful: “one sees the sun, large and red on the horizon. One sees it sinking into the sea. One sees the red glow it leaves behind”[1]. Perception, in this sense, is an occasion in which subjects perceive things in the environment that serve as a source of information about external objects, such as the sun, the sea, a red glow, the sunset, etc.

As a source of information, perception helps us to know how things are. Suppose Maria ran the red light at a San Francisco intersection. On seeing that she ran the red light a policeman can come to know that he sees a red light run. As this trivial example indicates, it is common ground to take perceptual judgment as rationally intelligible in the light of perception. As Susanna Siegel notes, “[t]he role of perception in justifying external-world beliefs [depends] heavily on what perception tells us about the external world”[2]. Indeed, in philosophical terms, an utterance of the form “I judge that p because I perceive that p” can be understood as revealing perceptual reasons for the judgment

[1] Travis 2013d:270.
[2] Siegel 2017:xiii.

that p. However, there are different ways of making philosophical sense of perceptual judgment and its relation to perception.

Campbell (2002), Travis (2004, 2007, 2013), and Brewer (2018a), for example, say that sensory awareness alone accounts for what is required for cognition to obtain. Call this view Anti-representationalism[3]. According to it, the policeman's visual awareness itself would be sufficient for rationally judging “that I see a red light run”. As Campbell (2002) claims, sensory awareness would be a “state more primitive than thought about the object, which nonetheless, by bringing the object itself into the subjective life of the thinker, makes it possible to think about that object”[4]. Sensory awareness, then, would transmit into another form of awareness, i.e., an awareness that something is the case. However, one can contend that this passage must involve the same capacities needed for the type of cognition under consideration.

Wilfrid Sellars, for example, claims that it is incoherent to take sensory awareness alone as an episode in which something given for knowledge without the involvement of cognitive capacities such as that of judgments would be sufficient to entitle perceptual knowledge. To treat sensory awareness in such a way would be to fall into the “Myth of the Given”, as Sellars famously labeled it[5]. It would be so, roughly, since for Sellars attributions of knowledge must be placed in what he calls the “logical space of reasons”, a space “of justifying and being able to justify what one says”[6]. According to this picture, *what* is knowledgeable - e.g. *that I see a red light run* - might

[3] It should be noted that there are different versions of Anti-representationalism. More specifically, Campbell holds a Relational View. For a Naïve Realist view, see Martin 2002, 2006, and Kalderon 2007; for an Object-based view, see Brewer 2006. I will reunite these versions under the label “*Anti-representationalism*”, for the sake of terminological continuity.
[4] Campbell 2002:6.
[5] For a philosophical and historical overview of the notion of the Myth of the Given, see Sachs 2014.
[6] Sellars 1997:§36.

somehow be available for cognition in sensory awareness *itself*, not only in the related perceptual judgment.

This kind of philosophical thought on sensory awareness generally advocate, as Kern (2017) indicates, the idea that "creatures capable of judgment enjoy sensory awareness whose content is defined by its possibility to serve as the content of judgments"[7]. In a broad sense, I would like to formulate this thought on sensory awareness as expressing the following view:

> *Cognitive Capacities View*: the cognitive capacity for judgment can be actualized in sensory awareness *E* of a rational subject *s*.

It should be noted that there are different ways of elaborating the thought implicit in *Cognitive Capacities View*. Sellars himself, for one, stresses that one of his major aims in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* is to justify his "speaking of experiences as containing propositional claims"[8]. John McDowell, in its turn, says that sensory awareness "*immediately* reveal things to be *the way* they would be judged to be in those judgements" (*AMG*, 9, emphasis added). Even an author from the phenomenological tradition, namely Martin Heidegger, also may be read as holding such a view, when he says things like "[w]hat we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking wagon, the motor-cycle" (...)[9], and that this "is the *condition of the possibility* (...) to take apart in a judgment what has been apprehended"[10].

I will also argue for a *Cognitive Capacities View* in this thesis, by presenting, evaluating, and discussing different (including my own) ways of expressing the thought

[7] Kern 2017:189. Kern labels it as a "capacity account of knowledge". See Kern 2017:189-92.
[8] Sellars 1997:39.
[9] Heidegger 2000:207.
[10] Heidegger 1995:315, original emphasis.

implicit in it. In the current context, I would like the reader to bear in mind that one of my aims is to address the following query, which I condensate as follows:

> *Query*: How should one elaborate the thought that our cognitive capacities are actualized in perceptual experience itself, not only in the judgments in which a subject responds to her perceptual experience?

I propose to address *Query* mainly in the light of what is presumably the most influential *Cognitive Capacities View* in contemporary philosophy, namely McDowell's work on the nature of perceptual experience. Following Sellars, McDowell also believes that the same cognitive capacities exercised in a judgment such as *that I see a red light run* must somehow be actualized in what perceptually gives reasons to the subject's propositional knowledge. In other words, McDowell suggests that the subject's sensory awareness itself must contain at least a partial act of the same capacity that is in full act in her perceptual judgment[11].

McDowell considers his philosophical approach to perceptual experience as a "therapeutic" attitude that reflects the implications of a truism: "one can think, for instance, *that spring has begun*, and that very same thing, *that spring has begun*, can be the case. That is truistic" (*MAW*, 27; original emphasis.)[12]. Regarding the nature of perceptual experience, this important thought can be summarized as follows:

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[11] See *PEER*, 91.

[12] Both this therapeutic attitude and this type of truism have a Wittgensteinian heritance. In the case of the former, it refers to Wittgenstein's ideia, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, that philosophy has only pseudo-problems, which need to be dissolved instead of solved. See Wittgenstein (*PI* §124). The latter idea, in its turn, echoes truisms such as *Tractatus* famous sentence which states that "the world is everything that is the case", a conception of world that McDowell surely shares with "the Wittgenstein" of the *Tractatus*. Cf. *C*, 339.

> *Truism*: The way a subject *s* judges things to be is the way experience *E* makes things available to *s*[13].

In *MAW*, McDowell took such a truism somewhat literally: "perceptible facts are essentially capable of impressing themselves on perceivers" (*MAW*, 28), since "*[t]hat things are thus and so* is the content of the experience, and it can also be the content of a judgement" (*MAW*, 26; original emphasis). Nonetheless, although one can take *Truism* as philosophically welcome due to its modesty - a subject naturally judges *that things are thus and so* because she perceives *that things are thus and so* - it faces several objections[14].

One of the problems with the idea that sensory awareness has propositional content is that, if so, we might presuppose that experience includes, or makes perceptually manifest, *a* proposition; for example, if the policeman has a red light run in view the content of his perceptual experience might contain, according to *MAW*'s position, a proposition such as *that I see a red light run*. Yet, people such as Charles Travis deny that propositional contents are things that belong to the scope of sensibility. For Travis, the right manner to make sense of the nature of perceptual experiences is to take them as bringing things like a red light run, and not propositions such as *that I see a red light run*, into view. In borrowing the following remark of Frege, Travis aims to clarify the idea:

> "But don't we see that the sun has risen? And don't we thus also see that this is true? That the sun has risen is no object which sends out rays that reach my eyes, no visible

[13] See *RBGS*, 391.
[14] See, for example, Travis 2004; Hanna 2006; Cussins 2002. For more objections, see Smith 2002.

thing as the sun itself is. That the sun has risen is recognized on the basis of sensory impressions. For all that, being true is not a perceptually observable property"[15].

McDowell himself has admitted that "Travis has forced [him] to think about such cases" (*AMG*, 259), and more recently rejected crediting experiences with propositional content. Also, these types of objections have made him change the way he expresses the thought that sensory awareness must be actualizations of cognitive capacities[16].

McDowell's new position inaugurates in *AMG*. Along the lines of a certain reading of Kant's account of intuitions, McDowell now claims that the contents of perception are not propositional but "intuitional": "What we need is an idea of content that is not propositional but intuitional, in what I take to be a Kantian sense" (*AMG*, 260). Although McDowell insists that *thinkables* - what one can think, for instance, the thought *that I see a red light run* - must somehow be *contents* of perceptual experience, he takes *thinkables* as not being *objects* of sensory awareness anymore. According to him, this must be the case insofar as rational subjects perceive the world in a "special form"[17]. He stresses that human perception involves intuitions in which our perceptual relations to the environment would be actualizations of conceptual capacities, such as that of judgment. But these conceptual capacities, McDowell stresses, would no longer impact the objects of sensory awareness. In other words, although now *thinkables* must somehow be available in the subject's experience, *thinkables* would not be objects of sensory awareness. Moreover, intuitional contents, although still conceptual, would not have a propositional character. So the form of intuitions would encompass an overall

[15] Cited by Travis 2013:229.
[16] See *AMG*, 258.
[17] See *TFKG*, 28.

experience in which cognitive capacities would be actualized in a non-propositional manner.

So far I have sketched three different views on the nature of perceptual experience. In the first, *thinkables* are not involved in sensory awareness at all. It is Travis's position. The second describes *thinkables* as objects of sensory awareness, as it is presented in *MAW*. The latter sets a middle ground in which *thinkables* are contents but not objects of sensory awareness - it is McDowell's new position. Discussing the persuaviness and the philosophical implications of these distinct views will be a central theme of this Thesis. For that reason, I beforehand introduce each and one of them as holding the following views on perceptual experience:

(a) *object-awareness*: *thinkables* are neither contents nor objects of sensory awareness.

(b) *representational-awareness*: *thinkables* are both contents and objects of sensory awareness.

(c) *content-awareness*: *thinkables* are contents but not objects of sensory awareness.

One should already note that, in this Thesis, *sensory awareness* makes reference to perception with regard to modalities such as vision, audition, olfaction, and so on. The term *awareness-that*, in its turn, refers to propositional attitudes such as judgments, thoughts, beliefs, and the like. For instance, vision affords the policeman awareness of Maria running the red light; this is, accordingly, a form of sensory awareness. Awareness-that is rather a cognitive process: in this case, the policeman, says, judges *that Maria ran the red light run*.

One must take (a), (b), and (c) as candidates for the best explanation for sensory awareness - in other words, as the best answer to *Query*, at least in the case of (b) and (c). One also must have in mind that awareness-that is the sort of thing that may or may not be included in an account of perceptual experience, depending on the view one adopts. *Representational-awareness* and content-awareness, for instance, argue that awareness-that (in the form of *thinkables*) is somehow involved in perceptual experience. *Object-awareness*, on the contrary, holds that *awareness-that* is not something to be detected in perceptual experience. In sum, what I want is to make it clearer right from the start that what is at stake for us is the role of *awareness-that* in sensory awareness with regard to perceptual experience. And as I have said, I propose to do it in the context of McDowell's *Cognitive Capacities View*.

Somewhat in line with the so-called “Pittsburgh School of Philosophy”, I propose to follow the steps taken by people such as McDowell, who seek to explore the relationship between thought, language, and experience not only from ideas found in the work of contemporary analytic philosophers such as Frege, Sellars, and Travis (among others), but also through the lenses of thinkers traditionally foreign to the analytic tradition - certainly Hegel, but also, and quite significantly, Kant[18].

Surely, Kant's account of intuitions may be read as an ancestor of the contemporary debate on the philosophical nature of perceptual experience. Several interpretations of his ideas are used as insights to problems typically discussed in analytic philosophy. Robert Hanna, for example, highlights that “contemporary

[18] Hence Thornton: “Richard Rorty has described [McDowell] as a member of the 'Pittsburgh School of Neo-Hegelians' (alongside Robert Brandom and John Haugeland)” (Thornton 2004:3). For an overview of The Pittsburgh School of Philosophy, see Maher 2012. Although McDowell rejects the label (See Corti 101), it illustrates the Kantian and Hegelian influence on these authors.

non-conceptualism (...) can be traced directly back from Evans's *Varieties of Reference* to the first *Critique*"[19]; more than that, he accuses McDowell himself of drafting "Kant into service in support of the conceptualist/descriptivist cause, without acknowledging even so much as the possibility of a non-conceptualist reading of Kant's theory of cognition"[20]. I will discuss the debate between non-conceptualist and conceptualist interpreters of Kant in detail in Chapter 3. For now, what I want to stress is that Kant's account of intuition is unavoidable in the debate I intend to address.

More specifically, I will mainly discuss what Travis, within his debate with McDowell, labeled as "Kant's slogan", which refers to the following dictum of Kant[21]: "The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding" (*CPR*: A79/B104-5). This much discussed passage is read by McDowell as follows:

> "The unity of intuitional content reflects an operation of the same unifying function that is operative in the unity of judgements (...). That is why it is right to say the content unified in intuitions is of the same kind as the content unified in judgements: that is, conceptual content. We could not have intuitions, with their specific forms of unity, if we could not make judgements, with their corresponding forms of unity" (*AMG*, 264).

McDowell's interpretation of Kant's slogan has also great relevance in his reading of Hegel. One must note that McDowell, as a matter of fact, takes Hegel as having a significant importance in his thinking on perceptual experience. The Preface of *MAW* made it clear: "one way that I would like to conceive this work is as a prolegomenon to a

[19] Hanna 2006:85.
[20] Hanna 2006:89.
[21] See Travis 2013c:224.

reading of the *Phenomenology*" (*MAW*, ix). For my concerns, what is vital here is that, with respect to Kant's Slogan, Hegel "is close to Kant"[22], as Stephen Houlgate stresses.

The significance of Kant's slogan, in fact, has a lot to do with McDowell's new position. As we will see in more detail, it illuminates a way to take the logical form of judgments to have a distinctive role in intuitions. More specifically, for people such as McDowell Kant's slogan recommends that the capacity for judgment can be actualized in a non-discursive way in intuitions.

However, Travis contends that cognitive capacities such as that of judgments will be in operation only downstream from perceptual experience, that is to say, only when things in the environment, thanks to our cognitive capacities for thought and judgment, are evaluated as true or false. According to Travis, a perceptual judgment, plausibly, is explanatorily subsequent to sensory awareness[23]. Until then, though, sensory awareness should be treated as neutral in how it *will* be represented as being some way in a perceptual judgment - as being a red light run, for example. For Travis, indeed, although perceptual experience is a source of information about how things are, it does it "silently": "In perception, things are not presented, or represented, to us as being thus and so. They are just presented to us, full stop"[24].

Although one can agree with Travis that propositions are not objects of sensory awareness, one may contend that this putative neutrality of perceptual experience has some limitations. For example, think of someone who comes from a place, let us assume, where there is no such thing as a red light run, and who sees the same scene

[22] Houlgate 2018:90.
[23] Cf. Wilson 2019: "On the plausible assumption that perceptual belief is explanatorily subsequent to experience, the latter need have no content independently of the former. This is Travis's view" (Wilson 2019:203).
[24] Travis 2004:65.

at the same time and location as the policeman did. Plausibly, on the one hand, one may say that the foreign's sensory awareness did not inform her that someone ran the red light; on the other hand, as the policeman's sensory awareness somehow informed him about someone running the red light, one may also say that the policeman visual awareness contains more - or at least a different - information about the scene. This raises the following question: is there any significant difference between the perceptual experiences of the San Francisco policeman and the foreign person?

My purpose in this Thesis is to argue that the information about the world available in perceptual experience is, despite Travis, significantly dependent on the subject's cognitive capacities. I will argue that our cognitive capacities have a perceptual effect on sensory awareness, insofar as these capacities are actualized distinctly in them. Though in line with Travis's condition that propositions cannot be objects of sensory awareness, I aim to search for another path to accommodate the idea that cognitive capacities can be actualized in perceptual experiences.

To offer a version of *Cognitive Capacities View* I will follow McDowell's reading of Kant's slogan. In a *Critical* framework, I aim to develop a version of a *Cognitive Capacities View* as an approach to intuitions in terms of the proposal that things such as a red light run are perceived *as single units*, thanks to the operation of *a priori concepts* (or the *categories*) in perceptual experience itself. My approach to McDowell, however, will differ in one crucial aspect. Whilst for McDowell Kant's Slogan indicates that *empirical* concepts are in play in perceptual experience - “I conceived [perceptual experience] in terms of how experience makes it possible to bring perceived items under this or that empirical concept” (*RTS*, 243) - I will argue instead that perceptual

experience reflects *general* concepts, such as that of unity, as Kant's slogan claims. In the end, I hope to accommodate some of Travis's objections to *Cognitive Capacities View* while preserving McDowell's insight that for perceptual experiences and perceptual judgments to bear a rational relation to each other they must share a conceptual nature.

The structure of the Thesis is as follows. In Chapter 1, I aim to clarify the fundamental notions of McDowell's view on the philosophical nature of perceptual experience, namely that of “cognitive capacities”, “perceptual experience”, “concept”, and “conceptual content”, to prevent common misunderstandings on what is really at stake for McDowell in this kind of debate. Chapter 2 deals with McDowell’s notion of reasons *as such*. In line with Adrian Cussins’s objections to McDowell, I will argue that perceptual experience must be guided by a normative concept other than “truth”. In Chapter 3, my goal is to examine McDowell's former and new positions in light of his reading of Kant. To do so, I will appeal not only to “conceptualists” but also to “non-conceptualists” readers of Kant, such as Robert Hanna, Lucy Allais, Colin McLear, among others. In Chapter 4, I bring McDowell’s Hegel along with Kant in order to give a detailed presentation of McDowell’s reading of Kant’s Slogan. Mainly through his exchange with Stephen Houlgate, I discuss McDowell’s reading as well as some objections to it. Chapter 5 discusses the so-called “McDowell-Travis Debate” over the question of whether or not perceptual experiences have content. I present Travis's arguments against McDowell as well as his response to Travis. In Chapter 6, I aim to offer a reframing of McDowell’s *Conceptual Capacities View*. I also try to suggest a

middle ground to the Travis-McDowell debate. Finally, I list some objections to my own version of *Cognitive Capacities View* as well as some ideas for avoiding them.

1.0 MCDOWELL ON PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE

This chapter aims to provide a critical reading of the fundamental notions used by McDowell in his work on the philosophical nature of perceptual experience. My appeal to McDowell takes place with the flavor of a critical appropriation of some of his fundamental insights on the rational relations between mind and world. Way more than a criticism *per se*, my goal is to strengthen McDowell's general argumentation, to fill what I think to be some putative gaps in his *Cognitive Capacities View*.

I take as a starting point the adoption of some of McDowell's most established notions regarding his analyses of perceptual experience. In doing so, I hope to offer a formulation of McDowell's main ideas to prevent common misunderstandings about this kind of philosophical debate over perceptual experience. Making sense of McDowell's thoughts is not a trivial task. Terms such as “conceptual capacities”, “perceptual experience”, “concepts”, “content”, and “representation” can display different meanings depending on the kind of issue in question. So I believe both supporters and critics should know what McDowell has in mind when he uses such terminology. Also, McDowell develops his ideas through conversations with thinkers from different philosophical traditions, from Kant to Evans, Hegel to Davidson. It is not my goal to provide a detailed account of each and one of McDowell's main interlocutors, although I aim to offer in Chapter 1 a clarification of the essential themes discussed by McDowell regarding authors such as Sellars, Davidson, Evans, and Peacocke, to name the most relevant ones concerning the first part of this Thesis. As I have mentioned, I will do that with a critical look. Having as a background Adrian Cussins's non-conceptualist criticism

of McDowell, I set some objections to *Cognitive Capacities View*[25]. Especially with regard to different ways to elaborate a *representationalist* account on perceptual experience, I will discuss these objections throughout the Thesis[26].

The structure of the chapter is as follows. I begin by presenting what McDowell understands by “conceptual capacities”. From Kern's perspective, I will show the relations between conceptual - or in our terms cognitive - capacities and their actualization. Next, I show what is at stake in McDowell's philosophical approach to perceptual experience. Then, I clarify the notion of “concept” as McDowell uses it. Next, I will clarify in detail McDowell's notion of “conceptual content”. Within the context of Travis's (2004) and Wilson's (2018) exposition of four necessary conditions for representational content, I show how McDowell's view on the contents of perceptual experience oscillates between a properly representationalist view defended in *MAW* and a more recent hybrid view which combines representational and non-representational aspects. That said, the task of Chapter 1 is to set, from McDowell's overall thinking on perceptual experience, the basis of a *Cognitive Capacities View* of perceptual experience.

[25] Two good introductions to the debate between conceptualist and non-conceptualists views on perceptual experience are Gunther 2003 and Smith 2002a. I will treat both notions in more detail throughout this Thesis.

[26] For reasons that will become clear, my point is that representationalist and Anti-representationalist objections to McDowell, besides their affinity in holding a non-conceptualist view, have distinct presuppositions, for instance, the obvious fact that one of them holds that experiences have content, while the other does not. Travis claims, for example, that any notion of representation ends up being committed to conceptualism (See Travis 2013e:147-51). Campbell also addresses something along the same lines (See Campbell 2005:207-12). Then, what I want to stress is that the representationalist and Anti-representationalist objections must be treated according to their specificities.

1.1 THE SCOPE OF A COGNITIVE CAPACITIES VIEW

Recall:

> *Cognitive Capacities View*: the cognitive capacity for judgment can be actualized in sensory awareness *E* of a rational subject *s*.

As we can see, the *Cognitive Capacities View* expresses one term we have clarified above: “sensory awareness”. So we still need to make sense of notions such as “cognitive”, “cognitive capacities”, and “actualization of cognitive capacities”. To put the point another way, we have to comprehend what one means by the idea of the actualization of the cognitive capacity for judgment in sensory awareness.

I will use the term “cognitive capacities” to give expression to some non-perceptual cognitive activities or elements traditionally approached by the philosophy of perception[27]. Examples of cognitive activities are those related to propositional attitude states, such as thoughts (in the sense of the act of thinking), judgments, beliefs, among others. Examples of cognitive elements, in its turn, are the concepts a subject possesses. The idea here is that these cognitive constituents are somehow available to the subject for being consciously accessed; for instance, beliefs about red light runs or the meaning of a word.

At first sight, according to the *Cognitive Capacities View*, sensory awareness is influenced by - or at least closely related to - cognition. But precisely here lies our philosophical question about perceptual experience: what is this link between cognition and sensory awareness? Initially, I like to frame the issue as follows.

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[27] O'Callaghan helpfully illustrates the difference between *extra-perceptual* (in O'Callaghan terms) and *perceptual* cognitions: “seeing an elephant differs from remembering an elephant, and hearing a duck's quack differs from making a logical inference” (O'Callaghan 2011:788).

On the one hand, some philosophers argue that cognition has only a cognitive effect on sensory awareness. Call this c-effect view. For instance, McDowell's new position expresses the thought that although cognitive constituents must be involved in sensory awareness, one should understand them as not being objects of sensory awareness. Recall, to McDowell's new position, *thinkables* are contents, not objects of sensory awareness. On the other hand, some say that cognition has a perceptual effect (p-effect) on sensory awareness. That is the case in McDowell's former position. Remember that, in *MAW*, McDowell argues that propositional contents are objects of sensory awareness, as the subject perceives *that things are thus and so*. Accordingly, what I mean by a p-effect view is the thought that cognitive constituents have a proper perceptual influence on sensory awareness; in other words, that cognitive constituents would have the power to influence the objects of sensory awareness.

Setting aside their differences for the moment, one should note that p-effect and c-effect views have one thing in common: both are versions of a *Cognitive Capacities View*. What I want to stress is that they are in opposition, for instance, to Travis's overall view. Whereas p-effect and c-effect views share a conception in which cognitive constituents can somehow influence sensory awareness, Travis holds that although cognition helps one to recognize worldly items as being instances of concepts, the latter does not belong to the realm of sensory awareness. On the contrary, concepts, in his terms, just amount to awareness-that, something that occurs only downstream from sensory awareness.

Furthermore, the *Cognitive Capacities View* also states that cognitive capacities can be actualized in sensory awareness. So likewise, I aim to clarify (i) what is a

cognitive capacity, (ii) the nature of judgment as a cognitive capacity, (iii) in what sense cognitive constituents can be identified with the capacity for judgment, and (iv) how cognitive constituents are meant to be actualized in sensory awareness.

In what follows, my understanding of such matters goes along with Andrea Kern's much helpful work on the concept of a conceptual capacity. And before comprehending what a cognitive capacity is, it is useful to see how Kern understands the concept of a *capacity*. She highlights that the concept of a capacity must be analyzed in terms of a *form of explanation*:

> "To think of a particular activity as an instance of a capacity is to think of this activity as an instance of something general that explains (...) the agreement of this activity with the concept of the capacity under which the activity is brought. It explains why the activity is in accordance with the concept that describes the capacity. When someone exercises the capacity to x then this means that it is no accident that her activity is in accordance with the concept of x. Rather, it is explained by her capacity to x. To put the thought the other way round: The concept of a capacity is empty unless one thinks of a capacity as a form of explanation of the activity that its concept describes"[28].

In line with Kern's approach, one can say that a cognitive capacity is something that explains someone's acting in accordance with what has a *cognitive* nature. To actualize something that has a cognitive nature, in this sense, is acting in light of a cognitive capacity. The actualization of cognitive capacities, therefore, is explained by the concept of cognitive capacities.

Now, consider the cognitive capacity for judgment. According to Kern, the act of judging taken as an act of a capacity should be understood as an act that "*comes* to

[28] Kern 2019:160.

be". Kern's point is that the concept of judging comprises (i) the circumstances in which there is a distinction between judging qua *capacity* and judging qua *act* and (ii) the enabling conditions of the *transition* from capacity to act. In this sense, Kern stresses that, on the one hand, the concept of judgment as an act contains the conditions that explain the subject's possibility of using the concepts she possesses in judgments even if she doesn't use them, as, for example, in cases in which such conditions do not obtain. On the other hand, if these conditions obtain, the idea is that the subject may actually use these concepts in a judgment. In Kern's words: "what explains a subject's judgment is (...) [her] capacity for knowledge whose concept contains the idea of conditions whose obtaining explains the transition from capacity to act. What explains judgment's actuality is thus, and in this sense, nothing other than this capacity"[29]. In light of Kern's account I propose the following definition:

> (Def) "Judgment as a Cognitive Capacity" = The capacity for judgment explains the act of judgment.

As one can observe, the *Cognitive Capacities View* privileges the cognitive activity of judgment as a capacity. One of the reasons for this is that McDowell, Travis, and Kant (among others discussed in this Thesis) focus on judgment as the paradigmatic cognitive activity. Another one is that what is at stake for us is the supposed influence of the unity of *judgments* in intuition, as Kant's slogan indicates.

Nevertheless, it is true that some may miss the cognitive activities of thought and belief in one's *Cognitive Capacities View* account, especially with regard to the distinctions between judging, believing, and thinking. Suppose that our policeman

[29] Kern 2019:160

makes a judgment he can express by saying “I see a red light run”. This judgment reflects his capacity to judge that so and so is a red light run. Also, his act of judgment endorses a propositional content as true. Regarding belief, however, one may argue that it is a different cognitive constituent. In fact, a belief may have the status of a “stand” cognitive constituent, whereas judging properly refers to an activity[30]. The idea is that to believe something does not imply endorsing the belief. Now, think of our policeman as he gives Maria a ticket for running the red light. Plausibly, this act may be taken as a manifestation of the policeman's belief *that Maria ran the red light*. As in the case of judgment, to believe something is to endorse a propositional content as true, that is to say, to be normatively guided by the standard of truth. Regardless of the distinctions between belief and judgment, in the context of what concerns us, I will be neutral on the distinctions between judgment and belief. So one must have in mind that what describes the concept of judgment will also apply to belief in this Thesis[31].

Note that this also applies to thoughts. Well, to think that something is the case is to be guided by the standard of truth. Accordingly, judgment, belief, and thought have the same normative conditions and imply the following stance on propositional content: judging, believing, and thinking are supposed to be endorsements of propositional content in the light of truth. For that reason, one must consider that the cognitive activity of thought will also be taken as implicit in the idea of the cognitive activity of judgment as a capacity.

Another cognitive constituent to be discussed is “concept”. Following Kern again, I will take concepts, in the sense of being a cognitive element, as a capacity. What is

[30] Cf. Shoemaker 2009.
[31] I follow Kern here. See Kern 2017:18-9.

significant here is her suggestion that the capacity for concepts and the capacity for judgment are not two distinct capacities.

> "[T]he claim that someone capable of judging possesses concepts is not to be understood to suggest that such a subject would have two distinct capacities - a capacity for concepts and a capacity for judgment. The capacity we have in mind when we attribute concepts to someone is essentially actualized in judgment. (...) That is to say, having the capacity for concepts and having the capacity for judgment are one and the same capacity"[32].

This should be understood as a consequence of Kern's characterization of judgment as an act that connects conceptual representations in a way that the subject is able to endorse it as true. For instance, Maria's red light run can be evaluated as being true or false as long as a subject is capable of connecting these conceptual representations - say, "Maria" and "red light run" - in accordance with the logical form of judgment, for example, one form that gives expression to a sentence like "Maria is running the red light". I will also keep up with Kern in this regard, and take the capacity for concepts as interchangeable with the capacity for judgment. So one should consider that, in a certain sense, a concept is also a cognitive *activity*.

McDowell uses the term "actualization of conceptual capacities" very often. I will take McDowell's talk on actualizations of conceptual capacities as expressing something along the lines of "Judgment as a Cognitive Capacity". It is true that McDowell's new position no longer comprehends the contents of sensory awareness as reflecting exactly the contents of judgment. (I discuss the matter in detail throughout this

[32] Kern 2017:21.

Thesis). However, in a broader sense McDowell says something very similar to Kern: “To put a Kantian thought in a contemporary idiom, the content of intuitions is of the same general kind as the content of judgments. And of course the content of judgments is conceptual” (*CCP*, 127). Adapting the definition of “Judgment as a Cognitive Capacity”, I wish to point out that, above all, McDowell holds that conceptual actuality in sensory awareness is explained by conceptual capacities.

We still need to make sense of the idea of a cognitive capacity that can be actualized not only in cognitive activities but also in sensory awareness. However, it is still too early to deal with that. We need first to clarify other notions regarding the philosophical nature of perceptual experience. That is the task of what comes next.

1.2 PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE

I will take “perceptual experiences” as occurrences in which a particular subject has sensory awareness of the environment, for instance, the perceptual experience *of* our policeman, in which he has the visual awareness of a red light run. Although ”sensory awareness” can be taken as *one form* of perceptual experience, in a sense there is distinction between the notions of perceptual experience and sensory awareness[33]. The reason for this is that there are different aspects to be approached when we take a look at sensory awareness. One of them is (i) the relation between the subject who perceives - e.g. our policeman - and what is out there to be perceived, for instance, things such as cars and traffic lights, as well as events such as a red light run. Another is (ii) the epistemic role of sensory awareness in perceptual knowledge. Also, one might

[33] Bengson, Grube, and Korman 2011 offer a similar and helpful discussion on these kinds of differences.

take into account (iii) the first-person perspective in sensory awareness[34]. That said, I will use the term “perceptual experience” to encompass episodes in which the aspects (i), (ii), and (iii) are somehow relevant in an account of sensory awareness.

It is often said that perceptual experience has a *phenomenal character*[35]. The notion of phenomenal character gives voice to the idea that undergoing a perceptual experience involves what is like for you, in a first-person perspective, to have that experience. Consider the example of the phenomenology of foreign languages. Some philosophers, in fact, say that a native speaker and a nonspeaker of a given language hear it differently. The differences in how they hear it amounts to a *phenomenal difference*, and these differences depend on the first-person perspective of the subject of perceptual experience. Now, one may also plausibly say that there is a sense in which there is no difference between the two perceptual experiences if one takes into account what would be their sensible features.

It is common to treat these distinct approaches in terms of the difference between two standpoints: on the one hand, from a first-person perspective which is sensitive to subjective aspects; on the other hand, from a third-person perspective which is neutral regarding the phenomenal character of perceptual experience. For these reasons, one should note that there can be different senses at stake when one discusses “perceptual experience”. “Perceptual experience”, in one sense, is sensitive to the concepts a subject possesses; in another, it can be treated as bearing a common

[34] I borrow these three aspects from Siegel 2019a:348.

[35] Hence Tye: “What it is like to undergo an experience varies with the experience. Think, for example, of the subjective differences among feeling a sore wrist, experiencing an itch in an arm, smelling rotten eggs, tasting Marmite, having a visual experience of bright purple, running one's fingers over rough sandpaper, feeling hungry, experiencing anger, and feeling elated. Insofar as what it is like to undergo each of these experiences is different, the experiences in *phenomenal character*” (Tye 2009:2, original emphasis). Cf. Shoemaker 1994.

sensory character that is neutral to the concepts a subject possesses[36]. I will frame these distinct approaches to "perceptual experience", depending on the standpoint one adopts, as follows:

> *The commonality of sensory character*: the standpoint that treats the sensory features of perceptual experience as neutral to the concepts a subject possesses.
>
> *Concept possession sensitivity*: the standpoint that treats the sensory features of perceptual experience as sensitive to the concepts a subject possesses.

I will use "sensation" and its variants - visual sensation, auditory sensation, olfactory sensation, and so on - for experiences taken in the sense of *The commonality of sensory character*; relatedly, I will use "sensible features" to designate low-level sensations such as that of color, shape, texture, timbre, volume, pitch, a specific odor, etc. In its turn, I will use "sensory awareness" for experiences taken in the sense of *Concept possession sensitivity*.

Note that although the perceptual experience of, say, the color red can be taken as a *sensory awareness* of the color red, what I want to emphasize is that at the level of sensory awareness the subject's visual awareness of that color amounts to a first-person perspective experience. So it is in that sense that there is a distinction between the *sensation* of red and the *sensory awareness* of red. Travis helps us see the difference:

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[36] Cf. Bengson, Grube, and Korman 2011:180.

> "To deny that *that John was walking* is a visual phenomenon is thus not to deny that what Pia saw was John, walking (and thus, of course, his walking). It is not as though once we subtract *that John was walking* from the objects of perception proper, what is left is just some congeries of colours and shapes. What one sees is what was there: John, walking (etc.)"[37] .

Travis's point is that even if we treat perceptual experience as having the character of object-awareness to the detriment of awareness-that, according to both views on sensory awareness what we experience is not "*merely* shapes, colours, movements (etc.)". To put the point another way, for our concerns, the experience of red in the sense of sensory awareness (i.e., in the sense of the *Concept possession sensitivity*) *can* be taken as distinct from the experience of red in the sense of "mere" sensation (that is to say, in the sense of *The commonality of sensory character*). It is also noteworthy that I will use the term "perceptual experience" for perceptual experiences taken as sensory awareness. I will also use "perceptual experience" and "experience" interchangeably.

That said, sensation will refer in this Thesis to what can be considered as being common between two (or more) possible perceptual experiences. To make my point, suppose that it is at least potentially possible that two subjects undergo the same perceptual experience. For instance, presume that the American and the foreign subjects in the red light example see the same scene, from the same angle and distance, at the same place, under the same luminosity, and so on. The idea is that

[37] Travis 2010:838-9. Here, Travis criticizes Siegel in that he supposes that she offers only a "false choice" for an account of perceptual experience: on the one hand, awareness of "congeries colors and shapes", on the other hand, awareness-that. In her response to Travis, Siegel claims, however, that she agrees "with him that we could be perceptually related to K-properties, even if the Content View were false" (Siegel 2013:857). Although for Travis it would be impossible for K-properties - such as the property of, say, being a car - to figure in experience, what I want to highlight is that what is at stake in that specific debate is sensory awareness, not sensation.

even if they may undergo the very same perceptual experience regarding its sensible features, sensory awareness still could be different depending on a subject's possession of a given concept. Peacocke (1992) nicely frames the issue as follows:

> "Once a thinker has acquired a perceptually individuated concept, his possession of that concept can causally influence what contents his experiences possess. If this were not so, we would be unable to account for differences which manifestly exist. One such difference, for example, is that between the experience of a perceiver completely unfamiliar with Cyrillic script seeing a sentence in that script and the experience of one who understands a language written in that script. These two perceivers see the same shapes at the same positions. The positioned scenarios and the protopropositional contents of their respective experiences can be identical. The experiences differ in that the second perceiver recognizes the symbols as of particular orthographic kinds , and sequences of the symbols as of particular semantic kinds"[38].

In this context, contemporary philosophers dispute what would be the best philosophical approach to experience. On the one hand, some advocate that *The commonality of sensory character* is essential for any philosophical investigation of perceptual experience. From what we might call a *standpoint of theory*, they contend that third-person or sub-personal aspects involved in experience must be considered. Here is Tyler Burge on the *standpoint of theory*: "Science provides a fundamental level of classification that must show up in, and cannot be fudged in, any other serious, correct, explanation-based classification of [perceptual states]. Science is our best guide to determining the basic natures of kinds that it describes and explains"[39]. The

[38] Peacocke 1992:89-90.
[39] Burge 2011:44.

standpoint of theory, then, recommends that the level of sensation must be taken into account if one intends to make a suitable philosophical investigation of perceptual experience. On the other hand, what I will call the *standpoint of phenomenology* treats experience exclusively from a person-level or first-person perspective. McDowell is a good example. According to him, although “the utility, or even the theoretical indispensability, of cognitive science” (*CPE*, 198) is uncontroversial, one should not conflate the roles played by philosophy and cognitive science. For an author like McDowell, what is at stake in cases like the foreign language example is the way meaning may be manifest in sensory awareness. In that sense, he believes that it is hard to see how one, from a first-person perspective, could access such a neutral level of auditory perception, something that, according to him, is a subject matter of cognitive sciences. In his own words, the meaning of the utterances of a language is not something to be found “'beneath' the words, to which we are to penetrate by stripping off the linguistic clothing; rather, as something present in the words - something capable of being heard or seen in the words by those who understand the language” (*IDM*, 99). For McDowell, to treat perceptual experience from *the standpoint of theory* is, then, to make “bad epistemology”. In his own words, “since there is no rationally satisfactory route from experiences, conceived as, in general, less than encounters with objects, glimpses of objective reality, to the epistemic position we are manifestly in, experiences must be intrinsically encounters with objects” (*CPE*, 193). Surelly, one can, from *the standpoint of theory*, analyze experience within this framework. Nonetheless, such a search for this level of sensation would be, for McDowell, an “off-key phenomenology [that] reflects a serious epistemological difficulty” (*CPE*, 192). It is noteworthy that Travis also

circumscribes his approach to the scope of first-person experiences. This is so since most of Travis's opponents treat experience at the personal level. As Wilson makes clear,

> “Travis does not rule out the existence of sub-personal representations, nor is his view (*pace* Burge (…)) incompatible with modern psychological or neuroscientific explanations of perception. Rather, [his] argument targets a distinctly philosophical notion of representation that is held by many [McDowell included], though not all, philosophers who advocate representational views of conscious perception” (Wilson 2019:201).

That said, I would like to stress right from the start that one must have in mind that McDowell treats perceptual experience exclusively from the standpoint of phenomenology, in what he believes to be the proper method to describe perceptual experience in philosophical terms. Accordingly, I would like to make it clear that it is not my aim in this Thesis to investigate the metaphilosophical issues regarding what I am calling the standpoints of theory and phenomenology. This dispute over the best approach to experience is, in fact, a very interesting one. But exactly for that reason, it maybe deserves an entire Thesis. With respect to my concerns, however, it will be untenable to cover all the relevant aspects of it. What is relevant for the moment, though, is that for McDowell only contents that share the same nature - in that case, a conceptual nature - can figure in first-person rational relations between a subject and the world, in the sense of them being able to serve as reasons for perceptual judgments. In the next section, we will see in what sense McDowell takes perceptual experience as having a conceptual nature.

1.3 CONCEPTS AND THE CONCEPTUAL

The idea that cognitive capacities - or in McDowell's terms “conceptual capacities” (*CBGS*, 341)[40] - are involved in sensory awareness naturally brings with it the notion of “concepts”. In the philosophical literature, some take concepts as abstract entities (Frege and neo-Fregeans[41]); others (e.g. Laurence & Margolis 2007) take them as mental representations. Although these concerns surely belong to an interesting and prolific field of investigation, it is important to state beforehand that concepts (or the “conceptual”) will not be approached in this way in this Thesis. I will focus instead on the following issues: (i) what it means for something to fall under a concept; (ii) the relation between concepts and perceptual judgments; and (iii) the rational relation between sensory awareness and perceptual judgments.

With respect to (i), I will follow Travis's notion of concepts as being what settles the questions about when something falls under it. As Travis claims, “[t]o fall under a concept (...) is to satisfy a certain demand: to be the right sort of thing for that status (right sort depending on the concept)[42]. What falls under a concept, in this sense, are worldly things, such as an instance of the color red, an external object like a traffic light, or an event such as a red light run. I will call these worldly things “worldly items”, in line with McDowell's more recent terminology[43].

Concepts are said to bear a sort of generality. Maria's red light run, for instance, is a particular worldly item that falls under the generality of being a red light run. The concept “being a red light run”, then, is meant to settle questions when something is a

[40] I will use the notions of “cognitive capacities” and “conceptual capacities” interchangeably.
[41] E.g. Peacocke 1992 and Zalta 2001.
[42] Travis 2019:73.
[43] See, for example, *RBGS* and *CBGS*.

case of a red light run. One should note that, in general terms, this is close to Kant's claim that concepts stand on the “unity of the act of bringing various representations under one common representation” (*CPR* B 93). Similarly, McDowell describes this relation between particularity and generality as one in which a subject understands a given “circumstance (…) as a particular case of a general type of state of affairs” (*MAW*, 37)[44]. Following McDowell, I will also take the relation in question as one in which a subject understands that the same circumstance - e.g. red light runs - can be entertained by me, you, Maria, the policeman or someone else on different occasions.

Regarding (ii), I will take perceptual judgments as a rational recognition that something satisfies - or not - the demands of falling under a concept. In judging “that I see a red light run” the policeman recognizes Maria's red light run as being a particular case that falls under the concept of being a red light run. So the idea is that in judging that something is a case of such-and-such, one commits oneself to the conceptual demands that settle when something would be such-and-such.

McDowell understands the relation between the sensory awareness of particular cases and the commitments to this or that generality in perceptual judgments as a warranted relation. For him, it can be so only if there is a proper rational relation between perceptual experience and perceptual judgment. To say that a relation is warranted is the same as to say that it obtains in the light of other things. In *MAW*, McDowell uses the notions of “warrant” and “rational relation” interchangeably[45]. But the reader must be warned that there are different concerns about McDowell's talk of warrant of perceptual judgments.

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[44] I will discuss the implications of McDowell's reading of Kant on generality in Chapter 5. Cf. Gersel 2018.
[45] See *MAW*, 191.

In general, McDowell uses such terminology to highlight that conceptual capacities can be actualized in the exercise of an active thinking by a subject that is able to appreciate the rational credentials of its own perceptual knowledge[46]. What McDowell wants to emphasize is that this process implies that a rational subject bears a capacity for *self-consciousness*. But for us, the point worth noting is that McDowell has different applications to this idea.

Within the context of texts such as *MAW*, *AMG*, and *TFKG*, to name a few, what McDowell (mainly) intends is to describe what he takes to be the conceptual nature of sensory awareness and its rational relation to perceptual judgments. As we will see in more detail below, he focuses on the conceptual nature of sensory awareness as a natural consequence of the idea that rational subjects have a conceptual capacity that could be actualized not only in active thinking, but also in sensory awareness.

In texts such as *PEER*, *PEBRC*, *CBGS* and *RBGS*, however, he is mostly concerned with issues regarding the epistemic status of experience as opposed to the so-called “bad cases” of hallucinations or illusions. In that respect, such a notion of self-consciousness is meant to suggest that, when things go well, the subject's sensory awareness may *include* that she is in a perceptual state. To put the point another way, when a subject perceives that things are thus and so, experiential warrant is guaranteed, according to McDowell, by the self-conscious character of sensory awareness, that is, by the fact that self-consciousness includes her being in a perceptual state. So self-consciousness here relates to the matter of whether or not

[46] See *PEBRC*, 151.

veridical experiences can warrant perceptual knowledge, as well as how this relates to the epistemic standing of a rational subject both in the bad and good cases[47].

Those two applications must not be conflated. Although they are related to each other, McDowell stresses that regarding *content* and its relation to *conceptual* capacities, they concern different issues. He notes the following with respect to this specific topic of the epistemic standing of a rational subject: “there is no need to attribute content to perceivings, let alone to speak of concepts” (...). I do not speak of concepts in [*PEER*]. Where I do speak of concepts, my governing concern is (...) with the property of being conceptual, which I conceive as belonging primarily to certain capacities, and only thereby to certain contents” (*RBGS*, 395). Moreover, he emphasizes that in the case of the epistemic status of sensory awareness, his “point is about the capacity for knowledge through perception, not directly about *the experiences that subserve it*” (*RBGS*, 390, emphasis added). I would like to make clear that *“the experiences that subserve” perceptual knowledge is exactly the concern of this Thesis, and that I will focus on the nature of sensory awareness and its relation to perceptual content instead of issues regarding the epistemic status of experience* per se.

Accordingly, one should note that I will use and take “rational relation” and “warrant” interchangeably to refer to that kind of relation in which perceptual experience bears a rational link with perceptual judgments. In that regard, McDowell stresses that a perceptual judgment is said to be rational only when relations within the space of concepts obtain - the ones “which link the contents of judgments of experience with other judgeable contents” (*MAW*, 12). That said, our question now is as follows: how sensory awareness can be in rational relation to perceptual judgments?

[47] See Sedivy 2019 for an overview of McDowell's position on these issues.

Authors such as Travis (2004, 2007, 2013), Campbell (2002), and Brewer (2019) argue, from what is often called an Anti-representationalist view, that the rationality of perceptual judgments is sufficiently provided by the relation between a subject and the sensible features presented by her experience. I will take a closer look at Anti-representationalist accounts in Chapter 5. For now, what I want to stress is that according to them, the cognitive capacity to bring worldly items under concepts is an act that occurs only downstream from sensory awareness.

McDowell agrees with the idea that to make a perceptual judgment is to take a "step beyond" sensory awareness since the latter does not involve any intellectual *activity*, such as properly thinking about a worldly item. For him, when a subject exercises her cognitive capacities for perceptual judgment "she makes something of what she perceives" (*RBGS*, 390). He also agrees with the idea that our perceptual contact with the world obtains through a direct relation with particular worldly items and their sensible features[48].

This relation - "[the] experience of the world that puts us in a position to think about it", as Campbell expresses it[49] - is seen by McDowell in what he calls a *normative* way: "[The] relation between mind and world is normative (...) in this sense: thinking that aims at judgment (...) is answerable to the world - to how things are (...)" (*MAW*, xii). But for McDowell, this normative responsiveness to the world could be considered properly normative and relevantly rational only insofar as it is understood as a relation in which not only perceptual judgments but also perceptual experiences are taken as involving cognitive capacities: "we cannot really understand the relations in virtue of which a

[48] See *AMG*, 11.
[49] Campbell 2002:1.

judgment is warranted except as relations within the space of concepts (...), which hold between potential exercises of conceptual capacities" (*MAW*, 7). McDowell's point is that to guarantee that this relation is rational we must presuppose that the same capacity exercised when we bring wordly items under concepts – for example, when we make perceptual judgments – is somehow also in operation when worldly items are perceptually given to us in experience[50].

In *MAW*, McDowell claims that insofar as perceptual experience involves conceptual capacities, they exhibit a *content* that presents particular worldly items in experience as truth-makers of our perceptual judgments: "The very idea of representational content brings with it a notion of correctness and incorrectness: something with a certain content is correct, in the relevant sense, just in case things are as it represents them to be. I can see no good reason not to call this correctness 'truth'" (*MAW*, 162). The notion of content, as we can see from the citation above, is something that McDowell defends as his view on the nature of sensory awareness at least since *MAW*. But it is important to clarify what McDowell has in mind when he uses terms such as "content" and "representation". It should be noted that McDowell no longer treats experience as having a representational character. He now believes that "[e]xperiences of perceiving do not represent what their subject perceives; they *reveal* it" (*RBGS*, 393, emphasis added). Nevertheless, McDowell still refers to sensory awareness as involving conceptual content, at least in a certain sense[51]. But what sense is that? I will address this issue in detail in the next section.

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[50] McDowell's talk of *operation* instead of *exercise* is crucial when he refers to perceptual experiences. What he wants to emphasize is that whilst judgments, with their discursive and intellectual character, are the paradigmatic exercises of conceptual capacities, "In experience conceptual capacities are passively drawn into operation" (*RBGS*, 391). I will take a closer look at McDowell's idea that conceptual capacities have a passive character in experiences in a moment.

[51] See *RBGS*, 391.

1.4 CONCEPTUAL CONTENT

The idea of representation is closely related to the idea of content. In general, a representational state is said to have content if it has correctness (or accuracy) conditions that apprehend the way things are in the world. A representational state such as a judgment, for example, surely has content: the content of a given judgment is correct, as McDowell indicates, if “things are as it represents them to be”. A judgment such as *that I see a red light run* is correct, then, if the worldly item in view in a subject's sensory awareness is in fact a red light run. Arguably, judgment is the expression of a capacity that belongs to reason. And as McDowell suggests, an empirical judgment is, indeed, answerable to how things are in the world. But as we saw above, for McDowell this responsiveness must be understood as properly normative, which implies that capacities that belong to reason must also be involved in sensory awareness itself. Such a capacity that belongs to reason, in that respect, is said to be responsible for *content*. Therefore, according to McDowell's view, for sensory awareness to be normatively related to perceptual judgments, it must have content. And if that content reflects capacities that belong to reason, they must be taken to be conceptual in this sense. Therefore, sensory awareness, for McDowell, must have conceptual content, in order to normatively be in rational relations with perceptual judgments. But if that is so, what is the nature of the conceptual content of sensory awareness?

With regard to McDowell, this question does not have an easy answer. On the one hand, the position formerly defended in *MAW* has been reformulated since his changing of mind was inaugurated in *AMG*. As we saw, whilst in the 1994 book McDowell claims that the contents of experiences bear a *propositional* form, i.e. the very

same form of the contents of judgments, he has contended more recently that sensory awareness has what he labels an “intuitional content” that exhibits, now, a non-propositional form. On the other hand, to the extent that McDowell sees intuitional contents as still having a conceptual nature, we can observe that McDowell’s new position has preserved some of its old assumptions. In the face of these complexities, McDowell's overall position on the nature of the conceptual content of sensory awareness deserves a deep examination. And as the aim of Chapter 1 is to clarify some of the basic notions McDowell uses - such as that of “content” - I will not discuss his former and new positions in detail here, though I will discuss them at length in the next chapters.

At the moment, what I want the reader to bear in mind is that despite its specificities McDowell's former and new positions are different expressions of the *same* thought, in this case, that “*[t]hat experience has content is an implication of the idea that conceptual capacities are operative in experience*. (Exactly what content? That depends on the specifics of how conceptual capacities are operative in experience, and there are *various options* here.)” (*RGBS*, 394, emphasis added). So above all, for now, the important thing for us is that conceptual capacities *entail* conceptual content, and that, in this context, what is relevant for Chapter 1 is the *thought* that conceptual capacities must be operative in sensory awareness, not yet *how* McDowell expresses this thought. That said, let's see in more detail in what sense McDowell ascribes conceptual content to experiences.

A good way to introduce McDowell's understanding of the notion of conceptual content is to clarify it through a look at the long-run debate between representationalist

and Anti-representationalist views on perceptual experience. Especially for my purposes, having this perspective as a background is indeed suitable since the so-called “Travis-McDowell Debate” opposes these two thinkers in the following manner: treated as holding a Representationalist view, McDowell claims that sensory awareness has content; as an Anti-representationalist, Travis argues, *contra* McDowell, that experiences do not involve any kind of content[52]. For the moment, I would like the reader to pay attention to the following provisionally definitions:

Representationalism: The thesis that sensory awareness has content.

Anti-representationalism: The thesis that Representationalism is false[53].

I will not discuss Travis's Anti-representationalist arguments against McDowell in Chapter 1 - I will do so in Chapter 5, where I will deal in detail with the “Travis-McDowell Debate”. Nevertheless, I will take a first approximation to Travis here in order to appeal to his understanding on what would be the necessary conditions for representational content in experience.

Before we can grasp what is at stake in the Travis-McDowell Debate, it is crucial to clarify the terminology used in the debate, especially “representation”. “Representationalism” encompasses a specific notion of representation within the debate. Wilson (2018) nicely frames and presents the kind of representation (*p-representation*, as Wilson calls it) that authors such as McDowell and Travis have in mind. The type of representation in question does not refer, for example, to the idea that

[52] See Gersel 2018a for an overview of the debate.
[53] As footnote 3 indicates, I will take Anti-representationalism as different versions of one position that, broadly speaking, denies that perceptual experiences bear any kind of content. I will treat the matter in detail in Chapter 3.

a map can represent the city of London[54]; also, it is not saying that rings on a tree can represent its age[55]. Moreover, it does not refer to the existence of subpersonal representations described by neuroscience or the psychology of perception[56]. Now, let us see, through four conditions suggested by Travis (2004:63) and condensated by Wilson (2018:201), the set of characteristics of the so-called p-representation:

> (i) *Objectivity*: "The representation in question consists in representing things as so (thus, truly/veridically, or falsely/non-veridically)."
>
> (ii) *Face Value*: "It has, or gives perceptual experience, a face value, at which it can be taken or declined (or discounted)."
>
> (iii) *Givenness*: "It is not autorepresentation [representation-by the subject]. (It is allorepresentation [representation-to the subject], though here, not crucially.)".
>
> (iv) *Availability*: "When we are thus represented to, we can recognize that and how, this is so; most pertinently, we can appreciate what it is that is thus represented to us as so" (Wilson 2018:201).

An important caveat before I proceed. From now on, I will borrow Wilson's term "p-representation" and its variants (e.g., "p-represented", "p-representing", and so on) to

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[54] Cf. Siegel 2010. In her defense of the so-called *Content View*, Siegel claims that such a view can be refined into a proposal that finds the following *similarity* between visual experiences and beliefs: "like beliefs, maps, and newspapers, visual experiences have contents, and just as the contents of beliefs are conditions under which the belief state is true, so the contents of experiences are conditions under which the experience is accurate" (Siegel 2010:30). It should be noted, though, that one might not be misled by Siegel's *analogy* between the contents of experience and, say, maps. According to Siegel's account, experiences would have the very same content of perceptual beliefs or judgments.

[55] As Prinz, for instance, claims "carrying information is not sufficient for representation" (Prinz 2004:53). In effect, rings do not actually represent age, just as smoke does not in fact represent fire. To say that rings represent a tree's age is merely a way to express something like "the rings indicate the tree's age". See also Dretske (1981, 1986).

[56] Cf. Burge 2005. As Wilson 2018:201 points out, although there is a fact that the subpersonal representations are related to experience, what is at stake for Travis is what would figure as content of personal-level experiences. McDowell shares this kind of thought with Travis. See, for example, *TBD*, where McDowell contrasts his position with Burge's.

refer to *this type* of representation, to establish a clear distinction from other notions of representation. It is also noteworthy that there are non-conceptualist notions of p-representation - e.g. Evans (1982) and Peacocke (1992) and. I will discuss such non-conceptualist views on p-representation in section 2.2. For now, let me show how each one of these four conditions for p-representation helps us to clarify McDowell's defense of the notion of conceptual content.

Objectivity suggests that p-representations have *correctness conditions*, in the sense that a correct perception would be true. McDowell is undoubtedly committed to this idea. Recall his remark: “something that has certain content is correct, in the relevant sense, only when things are such as that something represents. I cannot find any good reason for not calling this correction 'truth'” (*MAW*, 162). Thus, p-representation, characterized as a representation of “things as such”, must involve conceptual capacities, if we want to establish a properly normative relationship between judgment, truth, and experience. In *MAW's* terminology, the subject perceives *that things are thus and so*, where a content manifesting a “that-”clause in sensory awareness enables it to establish a rational relation to perceptual judgments. Even though McDowell has recently abandoned the view that sensory awareness has propositional content, he continues seeing it as having a conceptual nature, since he still recommends that a subject “*perceives things to be as she judges them to be*”, which implies that sensory awareness still involves conceptual capacities. According to McDowell, the point is that not only perceptual judgments have conceptual content: experience *itself* has the same type of content. So his overall position suggests something along the following lines: “A judgment of experience does not introduce a

new kind of content, but simply endorses the conceptual content, or some of it, that is already possessed by the experience on which it is grounded." (*MAW*, 48-9).

Face Value's characteristics are also present in McDowell's thought. The idea is that sensory awareness makes available something that has a determinate face value: for example, a given sensory awareness may p-represent *that Maria ran the light*. This particular way of *being such and such* leaves to the subject the acceptance or rejection of the face value of her sensory awareness. To accept sensory awareness at face value would be to judge that things are as they appear; to reject its face value would be, in McDowellian terms, to "refrain" from an initial inclination to judge that a thing is the way it appears. This would be the case of illusions or hallucinations. Müller-Lyer's illusion is a well-known example. This illusion presents us with two segments A and B with identical lengths, which give the impression of having different dimensions. In an illusion of this type, what is given in sensory awareness is defeasible, since there may be circumstances where a subject has reasons to believe that her sensory awareness is misleading, thus being able to judge that the things p-represented are not the way they appear. If, on the contrary, the subject is not aware of these reasons, she tends to judge that things are as they appear. In this regard, McDowell states: "Minimally, it must be possible to decide whether or not to judge that things are as one's experience represents them to be. How one's experience represents things to be is not under one's control, but it is up to one whether one accepts the appearance or rejects it" (*MAW*, 11).

To the extent that *Face Value* indicates the possibility of both the rejection and the acceptance of content, p-representation could only be a case where the subject is a *consumer* and not a *producer* of the content of her sensory awareness. This is the idea

behind *Givenness*. Unlike judgment, we cannot, in fact, choose the content of what we perceive. According to a famous dictum of *MAW*, "[i]n experience one finds oneself *saddled with content*" (*MAW*, 10, emphasis added). Whilst perceptual judgments have an active nature, McDowell invites us to presuppose that sensory awareness involves a *passive* operation of conceptual capacities. This means, according to McDowell's suggestion, that p-representation is not a matter of autorepresentation, that is, content resulting from a representation *by* the subject, as in the case of judgments, but of allorepresentation, once the content is given *to* the subject in sensory awareness. For the sake of clarification, take a look at how McDowell explains Sellars's metaphor "of experiences as containing propositional claims" (Sellars 1997:39): "It is not that the *subject* of an experience claims that things are a certain way, which would imply that she takes them to be that way (...). In the metaphor it is an *experience itself* that claims that things are a certain way" (*RPR*, 240, emphasis added). Travis also says something useful: "presentation here is, perhaps to, or for, but not *by* us. It belongs to a *source* of knowledge, not to enjoying it. The (re)presenter here is, not us, but something McDowell calls 'The Understanding' - in this role a personification of our capacity for thought; exercised somehow, but not by us"[57]. More recently, McDowell expressed the same thought in a somewhat different manner, in suggesting that a subject's "experience of perceiving [is not] making a knowledgeable judgment [since] the experience in which it is manifest to her that things are as she judges them to be is not itself a knowing" (*RBGS*, 390). *Givenness* can also be comprehended through McDowell's understanding

[57] Travis 2019:37, original emphasis. Similarly: "For McDowell, one has not said what might make it rational to judge a sheep to be before you merely in saying what object is before you. What makes this rational, if anything, is not just the object, but something about what that object is like. This last, however, is, for him, not itself an object of our visual awareness but simply 'given' to us in our enjoyment of that awareness. It is given to us that things are certain ways for them to be (vide McDowell 2018: 34). What gives this to us? McDowell's answer is something he calls 'The Understanding', 'the faculty of concepts'" (Travis 2018:56).

of the notion of *thinkables*. To shield his arguments from any accusations of idealism, McDowell, in *MAW*, brings the notion of *thinkables* to establish a difference between thoughts understood as thinkables contents (what one can think) and thoughts understood as *acts* of thinking:

> "'Thought' can mean the *act* of thinking; but it can also mean the *content* of a piece of thinking: what someone thinks. Now if we are to give due acknowledgment to the independence of reality, what we need is a constraint from outside *thinking* and *judging* (...). The constraint does not need to be from outside *thinkable contents*. It would indeed slight the independence of reality if we equated facts in general with exercises of conceptual capacities - acts of thinking - or represented facts as reflections of such things; or if we equated perceptible facts in particular with states or occurrences in which conceptual capacities are drawn into operation in sensibility - experiences (...). But it is not idealistic, as that would be, to say that perceptible facts are essentially capable of impressing themselves on perceivers (...). (*MAW*, 28; original emphasis).

It is noteworthy that McDowell, despite no longer taking *thinkables* as items "essentially capable of impressing themselves on perceivers", still takes *thinkables* as something that can somehow be *included* in sensory awareness, if we understand *thinkables* as something that *can* figure in perceptual experience. Although the perceiving of a worldly item like a red light run is no longer taken by McDowell as including a sensory awareness of a fact such as "Maria ran the red light", *thinkables* could still be contents of perceptual experience, in the sense that the rationality of the judgment *that she ran the red light* would be intelligible through the way the relevant worldly item appears in perceptual experience itself.

Finally, *Availability* is an implication of *Face Value* and *Givenness*: the content given in sensory awareness is available to be accepted or declined and it is a matter of allorepresentation. What I want to stress is that (i) the content must convey to the subject that *o* is *F*, even if she refrains from the initial inclination and judge otherwise - as *per Face Value* - and (ii) that the content cannot be explained by any non-perceptual state, such as a judgment, as per *Givenness*. Moreover, the subject must be able to consciously register the content of sensory awareness. Consequently, p-representation cannot be explained by any sub-personal form of representation, as *per* the *standpoint of phenomenology*. In other words, it is not enough for sensory awareness to have content: the subject must be able to access and grasp this content from a first-person perspective. Therefore, *Availability* suggests that what makes it possible to recognize the content of the p-representation is the way things appear in sensory awareness. Those appearances are what allows one to recognize the contents of one's sensory awareness, which makes these contents available to the subject from a first-person perspective to serve as reasons for perceptual judgments. In *MAW*, McDowell states something exactly along the same lines, in arguing that it only makes sense to speak of reasons for a subject's belief if she recognizes these reasons as *her* reasons, the "*subject's reasons for* believing something" (*MAW*, 163, original emphasis).

From the four conditions for p-representation and their relation to McDowell's notions of conceptual content, I propose the following formulations regarding content:

Content[1]: That sensory awareness *E* has content *C1* is an implication of the idea that *E* has correctness or accuracy conditions. *C1* is neutral regarding the nature of the contents of *E*[58].

Content[2]: Sensory awareness *E* is said to have content *C2* if *E* is (i) a case of p-representational *Content*[1], (ii) *C2* has a propositional nature, and (iii) p-representations are both objects and contents of sensory awareness [one *sees that things are thus and so*].

Content[3]: That sensory awareness *E* has content *C3* is an implication of the thought that conceptual capacities are somehow involved in *E*. *C3* is neutral (i) regarding the nature of the contents of *E*, (ii) if p-representations are objects or only contents of *E*, (iii) if *C3* may express all the four conditions for p-representational content, and (iv) if *C3* combines p-representational and non-p-representational aspects.

So after all, how should one express McDowell's notion of content?

Regarding *MAW* I believe that a difference between *Content*[1] and *Content*[2] must be established, insofar as the notion of *Content*[1] admits the involvement of (auto)representational contents. As the term appears in *MAW*, “representation” is a matter of p-representation, and “the content of experience” is a case of *Content*[2], insofar as McDowell is committed to allorepresentration. It is true that McDowell's use of the term “representation” in texts such as *MAW* could suggest that conceptual capacities are actively involved in sensory awareness. Moreover, McDowell's propositionalist

[58] I.e., if the content is propositional, conceptual, intuitional, non-conceptual, non-propositional, p-representational, etc.

position also defended in the same book is not that helpful, since he used to claim that the contents of experience were of the form *that things are thus and so*, that is to say, the same form of the paradigmatic actualization of conceptual capacities, namely judgments. However, he never treated experiences as being a case of representation *by* the subject, as he highlighted more recently: "since my earliest expressions of the thought that conceptual capacities are in operation in the perceptual experience of rational subjects, I have insisted that in experience itself conceptual capacities are not exercised by the subject (...)" (*RBGS*, 391). Accordingly, *MAW*'s notion of "representational content" might be understood as *Content*[2]. Nevertheless, for the introductory purposes of Chapter 1, we should rather treat McDowell's view on content as *Content*[3], since he always took "content" as an implication of the involvement of cognitive capacities in sensory awareness, regardless of the distinct ways in which he expresses it throughout his thinking[59]. As will become clearer in the next chapters, although McDowell, after Travis's objections, no longer takes p-representations as *objects* of sensory awareness, he still considers p-representations (i.e. *things being such and such*) as *contents* of sensory awareness. Roughly, according to McDowell's new position, contents now are non-perceptual aspects of the subject's sensory awareness. As Travis illustrates: "For McDowell, we *can*, in seeing Sid eating the

[59] It is somewhat unclear whether McDowell's version of *Content*[3] is assessable for truth (or correctness) conditions. On the one hand, because of the non-propositional character of this new kind of content. One can argue, for instance, that non-propositional contents can't actually determine the face value of an experience, insofar as it can't have determinate correctness conditions - a content expressed by "that *o* is *F*" can't have a non-propositional form. Indeed, McDowell's new non-propositionalist position denies that experiences represent "things as so". In that sense, McDowell's version of *Content*[3] would not admit *Objectivity*, one of the conditions for p-representation. Besides that, McDowell's recent writings place no special focus on the question of correctness. However, McDowell's new position holds that a subject "*perceives things to be as she judges them to be*", which leaves unaddressed the question if this ideia of perceiving a thing "*to be as...*" still has something to do with *Objectivity*. Be that as it may, at least for now I will take McDowell as still holding something along the lines of *Objectivity*, as McDowell is not clear on the relations between propositional and non-propositional contents. I will discuss that issue in detail in Chapter 5.

chilidog, learn *that* Sid is eating a chilidog. But such is only thanks to an assistant, which provides us with something more to go on: something not an *object* of perceptual awareness, though somehow, perhaps, indissolubly, present in our form of enjoying it" (Travis 2018:36; original emphasis). Accordingly, McDowell's former and new positions are meant to take p-representations as contents of sensory awareness.

Now we are able to address - at least initially - the question "what does McDowell mean by conceptual content?". Regarding the position defended in *MAW*, one must take conceptual content as *Content*^{2}, as he used to be committed to all of the four conditions for p-representation. For the sake of terminological continuity and simplicity, we can identify *Content*^{2} with *representational-awareness* - I just add the letter "p", according to the specific notion of p-representation. Hence:

> *p-representational-awareness*: *thinkables* are both contents and objects of sensory awareness [as *per Content*^{2}].

With respect to McDowell's new position, one must take conceptual content as *Content*^{3}, since he no longer holds that the notion of content is a *consequence* of the involvement of propositional contents in experience, but a result of the idea that conceptual capacities imply certain kinds of conceptual contents to experience. Likewise, *Content*^{3} can be identified with *content-awareness*. Recall:

> *content-awareness*: *thinkables* are contents but not objects of sensory awareness [as *per Content*^{3}].

As I have been stressing, any version of a *Cognitive Capacities View* must be committed to an attempt to provide a way of expressing the *thought* that cognitive

capacities - and so conceptual contents - must somehow be included in sensory awareness. That said, what matters for now is that p-representation has always been an aspect of McDowell's notion of conceptual content. This is enough for us to properly start examining McDowell's notion of reasons.

1.5 CONCLUSION

John McDowell has the most influential *Cognitive Capacities View* on perceptual experience. To the extent that many of his arguments and concepts set the grounds of the debate on the philosophical nature of perceptual experience, my aim was to clarify McDowell's terminology, to prevent common misunderstandings of it. With respect to the concept of a cognitive capacity, I have stressed that a cognitive act - such as judgment - is explained by its capacity. I also highlighted that McDowell considers perceptual experiences only from a first-person perspective, in what I labeled the *standpoint of phenomenology* in contrast to the *standpoint of theory*. Regarding the "conceptual", I have explained that McDowell's concern is a certain philosophical image of the involvement of conceptual capacities in perception rather than an ontological approach to concepts. Moreover, I have argued that McDowell's former and new positions hold a specific notion of representational content - what Wilson calls "p-representation" - in accordance with four conditions advanced by Charles Travis. Then, I have proposed a distinctive reading of some issues discussed in *MAW* in light of the notion of p-representation.

2.0 MCDOWELL ON REASONS

In this chapter I discuss classical objections to conceptualism. I also offer a clarification of McDowell's notion of reasons *as such*. More specifically, I take a close look at his dialectical approach in *MAW* to the following authors and their respective ideas: Sellars's notion of the "space of reasons"; Davidson's account of the role of perceptual experience in empirical thinking; Evans's notion of non-conceptual content; and Peacocke's notion of "scenario contents". Finally, I present Adrian Cussins's non-conceptualist objections to McDowell.

2.1 THE GIVEN AND THE SPACE OF REASONS

Truism can also be read as a suggestion that sensory awareness has *epistemological significance*. Recall:

> *Truism*: The way a subject *s* judges things to be is a way her sensory awareness makes it available to her how things are.

That indicates that authors such as McDowell take experiences as playing a rational role in empirical thinking, in the sense that experiences must be able to give reasons for perceptual judgments. In other words, they must "constitute warranted judgments about the world" (*MAW*, 5).

MAW's way to frame the idea that experiences have epistemological significance is to set it in a middle ground between, on the one hand, Donald Davidson's so-called "coherence theory of truth and knowledge"[60]; on the other hand, Gareth Evans's

[60] See Davidson 2000.

suggestion that perceptual experience has a non-conceptual content that nonetheless serves as a basis for perceptual judgments[61].

Positions such as Davidson's and Evans's aim to be responses to the idea that conceptual capacities as well as perceptual experience should play a role in empirical thought. Nevertheless, at first sight it can seem to be difficult for conceptual capacities and external reality to share the same space, i.e., the space of reasons and justification. For that reason, according to McDowell there is a threat of an unending oscillation between these two positions, as we must wish to guarantee the following conditions: one the one hand, the constraint from a reality external to our freedom to exercise conceptual capacities (as *per Givenness*); on the other, the avoidance of the idea that "sensory impingements" or "brute impacts" in experience are able to establish any rational constraint from the world in a thinker's perceptual judgment. McDowell sees an unwanted consequence here: Davidson's position, in defending that only beliefs can warrant other beliefs (as we will see in more detail below), seems to interrupt any chance of a rational contact with external reality, if we understand it as an extra-conceptual impact on a subject's sensibility; and although Evans's view is an attempt to regain our rational contact with the world, it is not a properly normative move, since it goes from a non-conceptual to a conceptual content.

McDowell's strategy to get off this oscillation, as indicated above, will be to take experience as already involving conceptual capacities. But before we can get to grips with McDowell's suggestion, as well as with a clarification of Davidson's and Evans's positions, I first need to place the background of those issues.

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[61] See Evans 1982.

The view that sensory awareness has epistemological significance is elaborated by McDowell from the perspective that our thinking is answerable to the empirical world through our sensibility. If that is the case, we might take this answerability to the empirical world as a responsiveness to *experience*. For McDowell, experiences, in this sense, might be treated as a "tribunal" that mediates the way our empirical thinking is answerable to how things are[62]. This is exactly what McDowell takes as a "minimal empiricism": experiences *can* provide "verdicts" in order for us to judge how things are in the world[63].

Yet, McDowell notes that this is often questioned. Sellars (1956), for example, criticizes the view that experiences can serve as a tribunal, by drawing attention to a distinction between two different logical spaces: "the logical space of reasons" and "the logical space of nature". As we will see, this logical distinction will put a pressure on the idea that our access to the empirical world through experience can be treated as having cognitive significance. In McDowell's words, we are facing an impasse along the following lines: "[According to Sellars's concern] whatever the relations are that constitute the logical space of nature, they are different in kind from the normative relations that constitute the logical space of reasons" (*MAW*, xv). I want now to show the characteristics of these two logical spaces.

For McDowell, one can take the logical space of reasons as the space of concepts, in the sense that the space of reasons, for Sellars, is the space of justifications and rational relations. It is noteworthy that McDowell connects Sellars's space of reasons with Kant's *faculty of spontaneity* - "the faculty for bringing forth

[62] McDowell borrows such terminology from Quine 1961.
[63] For a detailed exposition of McDowell's understanding of "minimal empiricism", see Gersel 2018. See also Kern 2019 for a critical approach to "minimal empiricism".

representations itself" (*CPR* B75/A51)[64]. McDowell's appeal to Kant aims to describe conceptual capacities as elements that operate in the faculty of spontaneity, understood as a realm that comprehends the relations between freedom and reason. In turn, Sellars situates the logical space of nature as a realm of *law*, in opposition to the space of reasons. Sellars's point is that the space of nature cannot include a normative context in which, for example, a subject's stance towards a judgment with the content *that things are thus and so* can be correctly or incorrectly adopted. For that reason, an empirical description, as Sellars understands it, could never be placed in a space where freedom is constitutive of it; a concept such as that of "knowledge", then, would only be intelligible in a normative context of the logical space of reasons. Sellars himself spells out the distinction: "In characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says" (Sellars 1956:298-9).

In taking the way Sellars characterizes the distinction between the logical spaces of reasons and nature, McDowell addresses the following question: "which logical space would be the home of the concept of *experience*?" (*MAW*, xv, emphasis added). For McDowell, if we take Sellars's indication that experiences are to be equated with impingements by the world in a subject we end up considering them as an empirical description that naturally must be placed in the logical space of nature. In fact, according to Sellars sensory impressions could not be placed in a normative space where things can be correct or incorrect, as we should not suppose that an empirical description is equivalent to something that can be set in the space of reasons.

[64] Cf. Pippin 1997.

Experience, then, could not be considered a “tribunal”. What we have seen from this short explanation of the way Sellars rejects empiricism is part of his famous attack on the “Myth of the Given”. To fall into this myth, then, would be to incoherently conceive experience as having epistemological significance while recognizing it as *not* being a tribunal. McDowell illustrates the issue as follows: “The trouble about the Myth of the Given is that it offers us at best exculpations where we wanted justifications. (…) then the best [experiences understood as impingements] can yield is that we cannot be blamed for believing whatever they lead us to believe, nor that we are justified in believing it” (*MAW*, 13). The quest for a Given (with its capital “g”) can be formulated as a response to the following worry: we must recognize an external constraint on our freedom to exercise conceptual capacities in empirical justifications since the deployment of empirical concepts is something that could only occur in the space of reasons. The Given, then, is meant to calm the anxiety to bring a definitive external fundament to empirical justifications[65]. With that overview of the notions of the Given and the space of reasons in hand, I now turn to Davidson's and Evans's positions.

[65] Kern frames the issue in the form of a regress argument: “Imagine I answer the question 'Why do you judge p?' by saying, 'Because I judge q', and the question 'Why do you judge q?' by saying, 'Because I judge r', and the question 'Why do you judge r?' by saying, 'Because I judge s'. What I am doing in this series of answers is changing the content of the judgment - I rest p on q, q on r, and r on s - while holding constant the nexus between the respective content and myself. Each time, the nexus is that of judging, even as the content varies. Thus, at no point in this series of answers is the explanation of the judgment such as to answer the original question, because every answer is such that it solicits the same kind of question, just with respect to a different content. It follows that there must be an explanation of judgment that answers the question 'Why do you judge p?' not by adducing a different content from the one that is to be grounded but instead by adducing a different sort of nexus to this content, namely, one that explains judgment in a way that forecloses the possibility of soliciting the kind of question from which we began” (Kern 2019:161).

2.2 CAUSAL RELATIONS AND NON-CONCEPTUAL CONTENT

Davidson is also presented by McDowell as someone who rejects empiricism; more specifically, as "(…) someone whose reflection about experience disqualifies it from intelligibly constituting a tribunal" (*MAW*, xvi)[66]. Like Sellars, he denies that experiences can rationally warrant our empirical thinking, if experiences are understood as extra-conceptual impacts on a subject's sensibility. In McDowell's own words, "Davidson is clear that if we conceive experience in terms of impacts on sensibility that occur outside the space of concepts, we must not think we can appeal to experience to justify judgments or beliefs" (*MAW*, 14).

What drives Davidson's point is his coherentist view of truth and knowledge. The key argument to his position is that since "nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief" (Davidson 1986:310) experiences can only have a *causal* – never a *rational* – determination to a subject's empirical justification[67]. Therefore, experiences could only be outside the logical space of reasons. It is noteworthy that, for McDowell, what Davidson has in mind about the space of concepts is something that the former agrees with: Davidson is right in holding that only the space of reasons can comprehend rational relations. Consequently, if experiences are taken to be extra-conceptual impingements, Davidson's conclusion would also be correct, since the justificatory appeal to experiences "(...) would be to fall into the Myth of the Given, with its confusion of justification and exculpation" (*MAW*, 14).

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[66] However, Alves Dissertation contends that McDowell's reading is not that fair with Davidson. According to Alves, McDowell takes Davidson as a straw man. I cannot discuss the issue here. See Alves Dissertation for a detailed approach to the Davidson-McDowell debate.

[67] As Kern states, Davidson's coherentism, in sum, "denies that perception can place a rational constraint on judgment. Perception, as such, cannot be a source of rational constraint. Perception is a mere enabling condition for judgment, not something that provides a ground for it" (Kern 2019:159).

However, McDowell believes that Davidson's conclusion is insufficient. In denying experience any relevant relation with justification, Davidson's coherentist theory would only give us an illusory impression that a merely causal relation with a reality external to thought would be able to re-establish thought's directedness towards that same external reality. For McDowell, we must go further than Davidson, to guarantee that empirical thinking is not just causally determined by experience. In other words, one might seek to offer a picture where empirical judgments are constrained by external reality in a rational way, lest we lose our contact with the world in significant terms. McDowell summarizes the undesired consequences of Davidson's position as follows:

> "If we focus on the freedom implied by the notion of spontaneity, what was meant to be a picture of thinking with empirical content threatens to degenerate into a picture of a frictionless spinning in a void. To overcome that, we need to acknowledge an external constraint on the exercise of spontaneity in empirical thinking. But now we come to the other side of the standing difficulty: we must avoid conceiving the external constraint in such a way that it could at best yield exculpations where we needed justifications" (*MAW*, 50-1).

It is noteworthy that Davidson's overall position regarding the role of experience in empirical justification can also be described from what he calls a "dualism of scheme and content", where "scheme" is supposed to mean "conceptual scheme" and "content" can be understood as "empirical content" (*MAW*, 5)[68]. In that sense, something with conceptual content - e.g. judgments and beliefs - would be opposed to an extra-conceptual empirical content according to Davidson. But for McDowell, there is a

[68] See Davidson 1984:183-198.

twofold problem with the use of the notion of "content" here: first, as *per Availability* contents should be available in experience to serve as *basis* for perceptual judgments; second, only a contentful state should be able to maintain a rational relation with another contentful state[69]. Therefore, Davidson's suggestion of an empirical *content* could not hold, if we treat experience as not having a rational relation with empirical justification.

With that in hand, McDowell draws attention to an alternative view of experience that is a candidate to offer a way to regain a contentful - in that sense, a rational based relation - contact with the world, namely Evans's account of perceptual experience.

Evans ascribes content to perceptual experiences in the following manner: "In general, we may regard a perceptual experience as an informational state of the subject: it has a certain *content* - the world is represented a certain way - and hence it permits of a non-derivative classification as *true* or *false*"[70]. As we can see, this passage endorses *Objectivity*: the world is p-represented *truly or falsely* in experience. But according to Evans, when a subject makes an experience-based perceptual judgment she moves from a non-conceptual to a conceptual content:

> "The informational states which a subject acquires through perception are *non-conceptual*, or *non-conceptualized*. Judgments *based* upon such states necessarily involve conceptualization: in moving from a perceptual experience to a judgment about the world (usually expressible in some verbal form), one will be exercising basic conceptual skills (...). The process of conceptualization or judgment takes the subject from his being in one kind of informational state (with a content of a certain kind, namely,

[69] Hence McDowell: "rational relations (...) link the contents of judgments of experience with other judgeable contents" (*MAW*, 12).
[70] Evans 1982:226, original emphasis.

non-conceptual content) to his being in another kind of cognitive state (with a content of a different kind, namely, conceptual content)"[71].

The key to Evans's position is the suggestion that conceptual capacities *do not need* to be involved in experience for us to have a content suitable available to serve as a rational basis for perceptual judgments. His description of experience as having a not yet conceptualized content has its roots in a conception that takes perceptual states as presenting the operation of a more "primitive" capacity than that exercised by mental states such as that of thought, reason, and understanding. These higher conceptual capacities, then, would only be in operation downstream from experiences. One way to make sense of what Evans has in mind is to consider those more primitive states as something that rational animals (i.e., creatures that are able to exercise conceptual capacities) share with non-rational animals. It is noteworthy, though, that Evans considers *experiences* as states whose contents can only be available as "input[s] to a *thinking*, *concept-applying*, and *reasoning system*"[72] , i.e., as rational powers which only rational creatures possess. Accordingly, experiences would be non-conceptual perceptual states available to a subject capable of putting her conceptual capacities into exercise.

In addition, it should be noted that Evans's view has phenomenological motivations.

One of Evans's phenomenological points is that there are many cases in which our conceptual repertoire is not capable of capturing through words or phrases the fine grained details presented in perception. In that respect, the example of color experience

[71] Evans 1982:227, original emphasis.
[72] Evans 1982:229.

is brought by Evans in the form of a rhetorical question: “Do we really understand the proposal that we have as many colour concepts as there are shades of colour that we can sensibly discriminate?”[73]. To make sense of Evans's point, consider two color samples with quite similar shades of red. Evans's suggestion is that in most cases – especially if you are not, say, a color expert – a subject will be able at best to (correctly) judge that the color samples are red, even though the content of the experience in question perceptually presents these shades of red in a more specific way. Evans's argument can be formulated as follows:

(1) Our more primitive sensible capacities are able to discriminate the fine detail of shades of color.

(2) Our repertoire of color expressions do not have concepts for all the fine-grained shades of color discriminated by our sensible capacities.

(3) Our capacity to sensibly discriminate shades of color outstrips our conceptual capacities.

(4) The content of perceptual experience is non-conceptual.

Another phenomenological point stressed by Evans suggests that the contents of perceptual experiences are “belief-independent”[74]. As Müller-Lyer's example shows, the optical illusion continues to p-represent a misleading appearance, even though the

[73] Evans 1986:158, original emphasis.

[74] Hence Evans: “In general, it seems to me preferable to take the notion of *being in an informational state with such-and-such content* as a primitive notion for philosophy, rather than to attempt to characterize it in terms of belief. In the first place, such a characterization could not be simple, because of a fundamental (almost defining) property of the states in the informational system, which I shall call their 'belief-independence': the subject's *being* in an informational state is independent of whether or not he believes that the state is veridical” (Evans 1982:123, original emphasis). See Crane 1988 for a similar view. For a criticism of Crane’s position, see Mellor 1988.

subject comes to believe that things are not as they look. Evans concludes that beliefs, as well as judgments, are notions that should be understood as operating in a more sophisticated cognitive space, where a subject is able to actively control and shape her cognitive states; in McDowell's terms, a place “understood only in the context of the idea of spontaneity, the idea of an active undertaking in which a subject takes rational control of the shape of her thinking” (*MAW*, 60).

Note that Evans's position can be treated as a non-conceptualist version of Representationalism[75]:

- *Objectivity*: non-conceptual content p-represents worldly items as truth-makers;
- *Face Value*: non-conceptual p-representational content “can be taken or declined” in beliefs or judgments;
- *Givenness*: belief-independent non-conceptual p-representations are cases of allorepresentation;
- *Availability*: experiences are p-representational states in which “the world is represented a certain way”.

For those reasons, one could take Evans's account as a way to avoid a fall into the Myth of The Given, since he offers a Representationalist view of experience as being capable of maintaining rational relations with empirical thought.

[75] As Travis notes, “Evans seems to want the best (for him) of both worlds: representation, but representation with non-conceptual content” (Travis 2013e:150).

Nonetheless, McDowell takes Evans's non-conceptualist position as a version of the Myth of the Given, regardless of its "innocent look" (*MAW*, 54). Next, I will show how McDowell tries to defeat Evans's arguments.

First, is McDowell's response to Evans's "belief-independent" argument. McDowell accepts Evans's phenomenological points regarding the idea that the content of experience is independent of belief. But as stated by his version of *Givenness*, McDowell thinks that he can still provide a conceptualist description of the belief-independent characterization of the contents of experience through the suggestion that conceptual capacities are passively drawn in operation in perceptual states. From my perspective, McDowell's idea is not clearly convincing in its quick conclusion that an embrace of Evans's *non-conceptualist* position intrinsically leads one to a fall into the Myth of the Given. I will discuss in more detail in the next sections.

The second is the "color argument". In *MAW*, McDowell calls attention to the idea that we must not restrict conceptual capacities - in that case, the capacity to embrace color concepts - to concepts that can be expressed by words such as "red". McDowell's point is that although most people do not have in their linguistic repertoire words for the determinacy detail of the contents of experience they are still able to acquire a less determinate concept, for example, one that can be expressed by a demonstrative expression such as "that shade of color". If that is the case, McDowell suggests that a subject is sufficiently able to represent in thought the same fineness of grain p-represented in experience. In that sense, the transition from the p-representation in question to a perceptual judgment should not be considered as having a difference in

the kind of *content* exhibited, but rather as having a difference only in the *determination* of the same conceptual content. McDowell believes, then, that he can reject (2).

Nevertheless, McDowell faces an important objection here: the idea that a subject's capacity to apply demonstratives must not be limited to the presence of the original sample in experience. Kelly (2001) formulates it as "the re-identification condition", which states that "in order to possess a demonstrative concept for x, a subject must be able consistently to re-identify a given object or property as falling under the concept if it does"[76]. In *MAW*, McDowell himself acknowledges this constraint: "what ensures that it is a concept - what ensures that thoughts that exploit it have the necessary distance from what would determine them to be true - is that the associated capacity can persist into the future" (...) (*MAW*, 57).

MAW's response to this objection suggests that the capacity to apply demonstratives has a special character, namely that of a *short-term* recognitional capacity (*MAW*, 57-8). For McDowell, we would not need to reject the idea that the capacity for employing demonstratives is properly conceptual, insofar as one could give linguistic expression to it both in the perceptual presence of the corresponding sample and as long as this capacity lasts. In those cases, the capacity, according to McDowell, would still be exercisable in memory-based thoughts.

Even so, the objection remains: Jacob and Jeannerod (2003), for example, claim that in order for a demonstrative to be considered genuinely a concept it must behave exactly like any other concepts do[77]. Hence Jacob and Jeannerod:

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[76] Kelly 2001:403.
[77] For a similar approach, see Dokic and Pacherie 2001.

> "Color concepts and shape concepts stored in a creature's memory must allow recognition and re-identification of colors and shapes over long periods of time. Although pure demonstrative color concepts may allow comparison of simultaneously presented samples of color, it is unlikely that they can be used to reliably reidentify one and the same sample over time"[78].

Despite these difficulties regarding McDowell's response, Chuard (2006) argues that one can reject the re-identification constraint regarding demonstratives. Chuard's point is that even if a subject cannot re-identify what she perceived in the past this does not "undermine the fact that she did earlier think of [it] demonstratively"[79]. According to Chuard, an objection such as Jacob's and Jeannerod's is not that self-evident: from the fact that demonstratives single out properties as other concepts do, it does not follow that they should play exactly the same role, since demonstratives are perception-dependent[80].

It is noteworthy that, in Chapter 6, I will be somewhat inspired by Chuard's suggestion that the actualization of conceptual capacities *in* perception ends up playing a different role. Roughly, I will argue that as long as the actualization of conceptual capacities are, as Chuard argues, "perception-dependent", one need not expect that, in sensory awareness, concepts will behave in exactly the same way they do in judgments, for example.

Back to the demonstratives, Chuard also contends that the possession of a demonstrative concept is actually a matter of being able to form thoughts about what is perceived, and consequently being capable of giving linguistic expression to it. In

[78] Jacob and Jeannerod 2003:25.
[79] Chuard 2006:185.
[80] Chuard 2003:186.

McDowell's more recent writings, a matter of being able to "*truly say things*" about the world[81]. McDowell, in fact, stresses that although demonstratives cannot offer fine grained determinations they can still determine "what it is that is being said" (*RWD*, 322). In that sense, to give linguistic expression to a demonstrative would still be considered as a case of speaking something *truly*: "(...) on a sufficiently liberal conception of capacity to say things, that is no threat to the idea that the world is exhausted by what can be truly said" (*RWD*, 322).

From all that has been said, McDowell believes that positions such as that of Davidson and Evans are not capable of providing a suitable account of the role played by perceptual experiences in empirical thought:

> "If one fails to see that conceptual capacities can be operative in sensibility itself, one has two options: either, like Davidson, to insist that experience is only causally related to empirical thinking, not rationally; or else, like Evans, to fall into the Myth of the Given, and try to credit experience, conceived as extraconceptual, with rational relations to empirical thinking. Davidson holds that the Myth of the Given can be avoided only by denying that experience is epistemologically significant. Evans, for good reasons, cannot stomach that denial, and he shows that he shares Davidson's view of the possibilities by accordingly embracing a form of the Myth of the Given" (*MAW*, 62-3).

But why can't non-conceptual p-representations be "truly/veridically, or falsely/non-veridically" evaluated, as stated by *Objectivity*? In other words, why can't we simply assume that it is enough for the world to be objectively evaluated in thought so a properly rational relation between perceptual judgments and experience obtains? Well,

[81] E.g. *RJH*. I will discuss McDowell's argument on that matter in length in section 4.4.

it seems reasonable to suppose that a non-conceptual p-representation of a red rose can rationally warrant the truth of a perceptual judgment such as “This rose is red”, if things in the world objectively are the way they are judged. However, McDowell will criticize such non-conceptualist views for failing to recognize the following demand for rationally based perceptual judgments: the idea that reasons must be available to the subject of the experience *from a first-person perspective*, as *per Availability*. As it will become clear in the next section, he will contend that a subject must be able to appreciate the reasons responsible for forming her perceptual judgments.

2.3 REASONS AS SUCH

McDowell brings the notion of “reason *as such*” to distinguish between two ways in which something can be taken as a reason for judgments, beliefs or actions: on the one hand, something that serves as reason merely from the standpoint of rationality; on the other, something that serves as a reason from the subject's point of view. A good way to make sense of McDowell's demands for reasons is to contrast his position with Peacocke's, who in *A Study of Concepts* recommends, like Evans, a Representationalist view that takes non-conceptual contents of perceptual experience as being able to provide reasons for beliefs and judgments[82].

Peacocke presents his arguments through the notion of “*scenario contents*” (SC), whose function is to fix the most basic modes of p-representation in a subject's sensory awareness. He argues that SC explains how the space filled around a subject - for

[82] From Peacocke’s claims such as “A perceptual experience represents the world as being a certain way” and “What is the nature of the content it represents as holding?” (Peacocke 1992:61), Travis suggests that Peacock holds Representalism. See Travis 2004:58.

example, through surfaces, textures, light, etc. - is consistent with the correctness conditions of the experience. According to Peacocke, a scenario is a spatial type that has its origins in the human body, more specifically from axes given by directions such as up/down, front/back, right/left. A subject's experience would be true if the way the world appears around her, fixed by the axes presented above, is p-represented as one of the basic modes of location that are part of the scenario in question. Contrary to McDowell's version of Representationalism, the correction of the p-representation would be a matter of instantiation, rather than based on the comparison between conceptual contents. For that reason, SC could be taken as having only non-conceptual contents, since there would be no requirement for experience to involve conceptual capacities in order to establish its correction[83].

For clarity's sake Peacocke asks us what would be an experiential rational basis for us to judge, for example, that an object is square. In Peacocke's words, “[i]f the thinker's perceptual systems are functioning properly, so that the non-conceptual representational content of his experience is correct, then when such experiences occur, the object thought about will really be square”[84]. Peacocke's point is that a subject's experience can possess only non-conceptual content and still serve as reasons for her judgment or belief that there is a square in front of her. He summarizes the rational character of the relation between non-conceptual contents and perceptual judgments as follows:

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[83] Note that Peacocke's view on non-conceptualism endorses “content non-conceptualism” - the thesis that non-conceptual contents are constitutive of experiences - instead of “state non-conceptualism” - the thesis that perceptual states do not depend on concepts to be the states they are. For an overview of the distinction, see Heck 2000. For the distinction between state and content conceptualism, see Speaks 2005, and Bengson, Grube, and Korman 2011.

[84] Peacocke 1992:80.

> "In this description of why the linkages are rational linkages, I make essential use of the fact that the non-conceptual content employed in the possession condition has a correctness condition that concerns the world. The account of the rationality of this particular linkage turns on the point that when the correctness condition of the relevant non-conceptual contents is fulfilled, the object will really be square"[85].

McDowell considers Peacocke's argument unconvincing[86]. He understands that we even could, in the specific sense presented by Peacocke, take the correctness condition of experience from the standpoint of rationality: the correctness condition of a judgment such as "I see a square object" would be the fact that the object was really square. However, McDowell argues that it only makes sense to speak of reasons for a subject's judgment if she recognizes these reasons as *her own* reasons. He brings the following example in order to clarify the idea:

> "Consider, for instance, the bodily adjustments that a skilled cyclist makes in rounding curves. A satisfying explanation might show how it is that the movements are as they should be from the standpoint of rationality: suited to the end of staying balanced while making progress on the desired trajectory. But this is not to give the cyclist's reasons for making those movements. The connection between a movement and the goal is the sort of thing that could be a reason for making the movement, but a skilled cyclist makes such movements without needing reasons for doing so. Why would it not be similar with experience and judgment, if experiences had the non-conceptual content that Peacocke says they have?" (*MAW*, 163).

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[85] Peacocke 1992:80.
[86] For another criticism of Peacocke's notion of "scenario contents", see Brewer 1999.

McDowell's point is that the fact that the skilled cyclist's adjustments are examined from her balance does not give the subject her reasons for the movements: she rides her bicycle in an unreflective way and, presumably, without any reason to do so from a first-person perspective. He indicates that Peacocke's example proves to be analogous: at best, it could only explain why the fact that there is something square in front of the subject is appropriate to the SC in question, not that the subject has her *own* reasons for the judgments about the corresponding experience. At most, the example would show that the subject simply made a statement adequate to the experience, but not in the sense of a correction and without any reason whatsoever.

McDowell seems to address a very demanding notion of reason, and one could be willing to reject his requirements for reasons for perceptual judgments. In fact, an account such as that of Peacocke seems to offer a reasonable explanation in suggesting that there can be a rational connection between the way the world is conceptually represented in thought and the way the world is p-represented by something possessing another content, even if this content has a non-conceptual character. Nevertheless, I also think that we can take McDowell's demanding notion of reason as a natural result of his view on sensory awareness: if the rational relations between mind and world are to be properly normative, the subject of the experience must be able to evaluate the rational credentials of her perceptual judgments.

My goal now is to provide a clear formulation of McDowell's demands for reasons *as such*. In the wake of the way Peacocke understands the nature of the contents of sensory awareness, let me stress, first, what is *not* a reason *as such* in McDowell's sense. Call this less demanding notion "$Reason_{OB}$":

(Def) *Reason*$_{OB}$: a p-representational content *C* that gives reasons *R* for judgment, belief, or action.

Note that a *Reason*$_{OB}$ does not require that which objectively warrants a perceptual judgment is available to a subject to be evaluated from a first-person perspective. As the "square" example indicates, a *Reason*$_{OB}$ is sufficiently rational from a third-person perspective, since *Reasons*$_{OB}$ are meant to be just objective reasons for perceptual judgments. But for McDowell, it is not enough that reasons are suitable only from the point of view of objectivity. It is essential that the subject of the experience is able to self-assess what rationally provides the basis for her judgment. I, therefore, define the notion of reasons *as such*:

(Def) *Reason*$_{AS}$: a p-representation appreciated as a *Reason R* by a subject *s* from a first-person perspective. To be able to treat *R* as *Reason*$_{AS}$ is for *s* to have the capacity to critically evaluate whether what is given as *R* is a sufficient reason for judgment, belief, or action.

To clarify what is at stake in the distinction between *Reason*$_{OB}$ and *Reason*$_{AS}$, consider a situation in which a subject is able to step back in the face of an inclination to escape an apparent danger, say, a predator, and who is capable of evaluating if the presence of the predator is in fact a motif for fleeing. According to McDowell, such a capacity to step back characterizes the individual's ability to raise the question of whether or not the danger presents itself as a reason to flee. Here, McDowell intends to identify a subject who is able to evaluate by herself what guides her rationality. In McDowell's terms, the action of a subject capable of a step back is "determined by the agent herself" (*CCP*,

138). Pinkard illuminates this Hegel-inspired thesis of *Reason*$_{AS}$[87]: “Animals *may* have reasons for actions (such as fleeing from a predator) but only self-conscious agents have the capacity to understand the reason as a reason”[88]. Likely, for McDowell, although one expects that the cyclist better behaves in accordance with what will keep her staying in balance, this does not imply that she acts in light of the reasons to behave that way. Golob helpfully illustrates the point: “racehorses do not act in the light of the rules of gambling, although one might hope they will behave in accordance with them”[89].

Now, we can better understand what McDowell takes by *Reason*$_{AS}$: a subject's ability to critically assess whether a given reason credits her judgments, beliefs or actions. According to McDowell, reasons must be in the space of concepts, in so far as the reasons a subject *can* give are articulable, and therefore discursive[90]. As indicated above, this is coherent with McDowell's version of the *Availability* condition: a subject must recognize *that* and *how* she is thus p-represented to, in the sense of being able to appreciate *from a first person-perspective* what it is that is thus represented to her as so.

[87] As Sanguinetti and Abath notes, “the view according to which freedom and autonomy should be understood in terms of responsiveness to reasons (...) is common to both McDowell and Hegel (...)” (2018:15). For discussions on the relations between McDowell and Hegel with regard to action, see Pippin 2018, Perini-Santos 2018, and Stekeler-Weithofer 2018. See also *TRHA*.
[88] Pinkard 2010:145, original emphasis.
[89] Golob 2014:195.
[90] See *MAW*, 165.

As I stated above, McDowell has a demanding understanding of reasons[91]. And I believe that this limits the possibilities of finding an interlocutor who shares the assumption that reasons must be reasons as such. In Chapter 5 I will argue that McDowell presupposes that his opponents will agree that any "theory" about content must hold *Reason*$_{AS}$, in order to avoid the Myth of the given[92]. I will frame this supposition as follows:

> **S0** One can avoid the Myth of the Given if and only if one supposes that the contents of perceptual judgments can only make rational connections with other *thinkable* or judgeable contents.

I will discuss the implications of that supposition in detail in Chapters 5 e 6. For now, note how McDowell somewhat demands it directly from Peacocke in *MAW*: "We can bring into view the rational relations between the contents (...) only by comprehending the putatively grounding content in conceptual terms, even if our theory is that the item that has that content does not do its representing in a conceptual way" (*MAW*, 166). If

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[91] Brandom's reliabilism is also critical of McDowell's notion of reasons as such. A legendary epistemological example helps us understand what is at stake for Brandom. Chicken sexers are experts at separating chicks into males and females. What is interesting about the story is that they are assumed to be able, if sufficiently trained, to reliably do this without having the slightest idea how they do it. According to research, although they believe that the process takes place visually, the reality is that discrimination is olfact based. Brandom claims that chicken sexers are "reliable noninferential reporters of male and female chicks, even though they know nothing about how they can make this discrimination, and so are quite unable to offer reasons (concerning how the chick looks or, a fortiori, smells) for believing a particular chick to be male" (Brandom 2000:103)". Reliabilism, in these terms, holds that chicken sexers are justified despite not being able to provide their justification themselves. In Brandom's reliabilist view, the chicken sexer knows that P, as he meets the requirements to be considered as taking a normative position in the space of reasons: the chicken sexer's commitment to the claim that P is normatively authorized (entitled) by others who give credibility to their reports. In his response to Brandom, McDowell argues that the chicken sexers cannot be in the space of reason, if their reason comes from an external point, that is to say, if they not give reasons from themselves, as *per Reason*$_{AS}$. For McDowell, these are just accidents as far as the chicken sexer sensitive consciousness is concerned. See *BOO*, 131.

[92] Here, I am in line with Gersel that some approaches to experience - for example, those that hold something close to *Reason*$_{OB}$ - won't "get much traction in a debate with McDowell" (2018:78).

my reading is correct, even those that argue for non-conceptual content in experience, according to McDowell, should treat reason as *Reason*$_{AS}$.

As I stated above, it is my aim in this chapter to set some objections to conceptual Representationalism that come from what I take to be non-conceptual Representationalist accounts that are more careful in their readings and interpretations of the arguments offered by those who defend a *Cognitive Capacities View* on perceptual experience. One philosopher who is willing to offer a non-conceptualist/Representationalist version of *Reason*$_{AS}$ is Cussins. His strategy is to provide an account of non-conceptual content that provides reasons that are supposed to be "persuasive", "based on much knowledge", and "subject to critical assessment and revision"[93]. As will become clear in the next section, one significant motivation for this lies in Cussins's suggestion that the contents of perceptual experience are not guided by the normative concept of *truth*, but by a completely different normative concept.

2.4 WHAT NORMATIVE CONCEPT OF PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE?

Cussins (2002, 2003) also provides an argument for the non-conceptual content of perceptual experience. Like Peacocke, he argues that we do not need to appeal to conceptual capacities for experiences to serve as reasons for perceptual judgments. But we must keep in mind that Cussins's argument differs from Peacocke's in one crucial aspect: according to Cussins, we must characterize the non-conceptual contents of experience as constituting a mode of cognitive access to the world which is not

[93] See Cussins 2002:53.

guided by truth conditions, that is to say, by what can figure in the propositional contents of judgments. Based on the idea that the contents of thought - which encompasses judgments - are completely distinct from the contents of experience, Cussins will argue against *Cognitive Capacities View*. According to him, this distinction should be understood as a difference between the normative and correctness conditions that govern each of these contents. If a judgment presents itself as the kind of commitment which is suitable for thought, the task of the defender of the notion of non-conceptual content would be to characterize what is the appropriate commitment to experience. According to Cussins, if one wants to block conceptualist arguments one must proceed as follows. First, one should provide a non-conceptual account that presents another normative concept of experience; to put the point another way, insofar as the contents of judgments are responsible for the the normative concept of truth, one should search for a distinct normative concept for the contents of experience. Second, one should meet the demands for $Reason_{AS}$.

A caveat before I begin. Although Cussins (2002) directly addresses his objections to McDowell, the latter, at least as far as I know, never engaged in an exchange with Cussins. For our concerns, then, I rather treat Cussins's objections as being addressed to "[t]hose influenced by an argument of McDowell's"[94].

By presenting a similar example to that of McDowell's skilled cyclist, Cussins seeks to characterize which would be the normative concept of experience. To do so, he brings us a description of how he used to ride his motorcycle - sometimes at high speed - through the streets of London. Cussins describes it as an unreflective and skillful action, involving built-in micro-adjustments such as braking in front of traffic lights,

[94] Cussins 2002:37.

looking in the rear view mirror, increasing speed at the right moments, passing between cars in front of him and so on. Cussins says that on one of those occasions he was suddenly stopped by a traffic policeman, who asked him “Do you know how fast you are driving?”. Cussins then suggests that the policeman's question could have two ways of being answered, insofar as we could take our cognitive access to the speed in two different ways:

> “On the one hand, I did know, and know very well, how fast I was traveling. I was knowingly making micro-adjustments of my speed all the time in response to changing road conditions. These micro-adjustments weren't simply behaviors, the outputs of some unknown causal process. They were, instead, epistemically sensitive adjustments made by me, and for which I was as epistemically responsible as I was for my judgments. On the other hand, I did not know how fast I was traveling in the sense of the question intended by the policeman. I was unable to state my speed, in an epistemically responsible way, as some number of miles per hour. I knew what my speed was, but not as a speed”[95].

Cussins's point is that a subject could have a knowledge of the speed limit exceeded through two modes: on the one hand, she could have a propositionally structured knowledge that she is riding a motorcycle at 50 mph, which allowed her, from reading the speedometer, to establish inferential relations such as “50 mph is enough to exceed the speed limit, which is 30 mph”; on the other, even without looking at the speedometer she could know that she was driving extremely fast from the way she was riding the motorcycle, that is, from the way she experiences her skillful action of driving at high speed. Thus, according to Cussins, here we have two distinct cases of cognitive

[95] Cussins 2003:150.

significance: one characteristic of judgments and another characteristic of an *experience-guided activity*.

It is noteworthy that Cussins brings the term “guidance” in order to connect it with the notion of normativity. Guidance, in that sense, accounts for a given *form* of normativity. He brings us those that would be two forms of normativity: on the one hand, the form of judgment; on the other, the form of activity. Cussins calls this latter form of guidance through the environment “*Activity Trails*”. With that in hand, he establishes two distinct modes of cognitive access to the world: one of them, conceptual, would be normatively guided by the truth of a proposition; the other, non-conceptual, guided by what Cussins calls a “*mundane normativity*”.

To give a clearer formulation of what guides *mundane normativity* in Cussins's sense, consider a street skateboarder riding her skate on an unfamiliar and somewhat rough road. In order to complete the route from the beginning to the end, she must overcome road conditions filled with holes, rocks, ups and downs, and so on. To do so, she performs skateboard tricks such as leaping into the air, as well as bodily adjustments to maintain her balance on the skateboard. The way the road is materially structured should be viewed as guiding her actions. These “materialities” - as Cussins puts it - of the road should be understood as forms of guidance that manifest not norms of true judgments, but norms of activity instead.

In terms of contents, Cussins connects the distinction between forms of normativity with different “modes of presentation of the world”: the conceptual mode of presentation would display a structure that presents the world as a truth-maker. Now, it makes sense to speak of the concept of truth as having its origin in the space of

judgments. And this is the way that not only McDowell, but Evans and Peacocke too, proceed. Recall, *Objectivity* as I detailed it applies to both conceptualist as well as non-conceptualist views on sensory awareness. That means that for authors such as McDowell, Evans, and Peacocke experiences are p-represented as truth-makers. In a broad sense what is at stake for them is that experiences have truth conditions specified by their contents, regardless of the way they understand the nature of these contents: for the three authors, a subject's visual awareness of, say, a square object is veridical if and only if there is in fact a square object in the subject's visual field. So the truth of a perceptual judgment is answerable to how things are in the world. That said, I would like to follow Cussins in that he takes this responsiveness as having a *normative* character, since for these Representationalist authors the contents of sensory awareness must play a role in guiding the truth conditions of our perceptual judgments. Thus, one can say that truth sets out the normative conditions of the contents of judgments. Consequently, for each of them sensory awareness must be able to inhabit the space of reasons, a normative space in which something can be correct or incorrect in the sense of being true or false. Recall, once again, McDowell's claim: “I can see no good reason not to call this correctness 'truth'” (*MAW*, 162). As we saw above, both $Reason_{AS}$ and $Reason_{OB}$ are taken by these authors as being answerable to the concept of truth. In a wide sense, I would like, then, to connect these authors as endorsing the following view:

> *Normative Concept of Truth View*: In terms of $Reason_{AS}$ and/or $Reason_{OB}$, the contents of sensory awareness are answerable to the normative concept of the contents of judgments, namely *truth*.

The ideia, then, is that conceptual and non-conceptual modes of presentation exhibit different ways of articulating content. Borrowing Golob's (2014) notion of *grammar*, I will take these supposedly different contents as having different grammars. According to Golob, grammar, in this sense, can be identified with a mechanism responsible for the presentation (or "deliverance") of a given content[96]. It is noteworthy that for my purposes, to treat content as something which bears a kind of articulation will be very useful in clarifying what is at stake not only for authors like Cussins, but also for other authors discussed here, namely McDowell, Kant, and Hegel. As we will see in detail in the following chapters, each and one of them will describe a type of articulation supposedly possessed by the content of experience. For the moment, how can we approach Golob's notion of grammar? For clarity sake, he gives us the following example:

> "I can tell you in English that the school is by the lake. I can also do so using another natural or artificial language which might lack, say, subject–predicate structure. I can also do so by drawing a crude map. There is a good sense in which in each case you are receiving the same information; but the grammar, the delivery mechanisms, by which that information is conveyed and articulated, clearly differ"[97].

Golob's example can be taken, similarly, as the skateboarder's one; insofar as the subject moves in a space where his movements are correct or incorrect depending on the way she might respond to the obstacles, we could comprehend the linguistically mute materialities of the environment as if they nonetheless speak to the skateboarder: "This is the right movement!"; "This is the wrong movement!"; "Go there!"; "Don't go

[96] See Golob 2014:68.
[97] Golob 2014:103.

there”[98]. Notwithstanding the fact that a norm can be propositionally articulated, the point is that there would be other modes of guidance that do not have a propositional character. And what I want to suggest is that the “materialities” of the environment, as Cussins put it, can be understood as presenting the same information - “go this way!” - through different mechanisms, and, therefore, through distinct grammars, just as Golob's notion of grammar indicates.

In taking both judgment as well as experience as being commitments in relation to the way the world is represented to a subject, Cussins invites us to recognize those that would be two distinct kinds of *content*, since any description of the notion of content should be analyzed on the following kinds of normativity: in the case of thought, from norms of judgment; in the case of experience, from norms of activity. These two kinds of normativity, then, would also correspond to two kinds of commitment: accordingly, one characteristic of judgment and another characteristic of activity.

As the case of the motorcyclist is meant to show, a subject could assume two attitudes towards the world, depending on the appropriate norm for each of the corresponding commitments. So Cussins's idea is that even though the activity of piloting does not characterize the kind of responsibility involved in the policeman's question it still has its own kind of responsibility. Thus, conceptual and non-conceptual contents should be taken as different modes of commitment, whereas the norms of judgment differ from the norms of activity. In Cussins's words,

> “(...) activity stands to experience as judgment stands to thought. Judgment (or belief) is the characteristic form of commitment for thoughts: if I am committed with respect to a

[98] Cussins 2002:24.

> thought then I judge that it is true (I believe it). Activity is the characteristic form of commitment for experiences: if I am committed with respect to an experience then I act on it or through it. Kinds of content and kinds of commitment are explanatorily inseparable from each other. When we think of thoughts as reasons we think of thoughts as situated within a space of commitments which is characteristic of thought-contents; a space which is structured by inferential connections between judgments. So when we think of experiences as reasons we, likewise, should think of the experiences as situated within a space of commitments which is characteristic of experiential content; that is, within an activity-space"[99].

What is vital for us is as follows. Unlike Peacocke, Cussins seeks to provide a description of what would be a non-conceptual representation of the world as not a truth-maker. And in contrast to McDowell, the account is an attempt to establish a clear distinction between the contents of experience and the contents of judgments. Also, we can see in Cussins's explanation an effort to give McDowell what he asks for: epistemic responsibility proper to a subject who is able to evaluate reasons as $Reasons_{AS}$. In order to give a better understanding of what is at stake, I will present how Cussins intends to establish the rational connections between judgments and non-conceptual contents.

For him, if we want to appeal to experiences as providing $Reasons_{AS}$ we must take them as situated within a space that is proper to the content of *experiences*, in his own view, the space of activity. Cussins's point is that our cognitive access to the world through experience would be able to give $Reason_{AS}$ through activity *itself* and without any involvement of conceptual capacities. For clarity's sake, Cussins brings us another example of activity in experience - now, a musical one[100]. Consider someone who, upon

[99] Cussins 2002:51.
[100] Cussins 2002:53-4.

returning from a Schubert concert, chats with her teacher, a maestro also present at that concert. The topic of the conversation is precisely the interpretation performed by the musicians, and regarding it the maestro claims: “This is not Schubert!”. Now think of the maestro sitting at her own piano while playing the same Schubert piece in question and saying to her apprentice: “This is Schubert”. In this case, it is noteworthy that the maestro didn't mean that the musicians did not suitably follow the score written by Schubert; nor that the score played by the musicians at the concert was not written by Schubert. Instead, the maestro's performance would be intended to provide perceptual grounds for the judgment “that wasn't Schubert” made at the concert. But the contents of such perceptual experience should not be viewed as involving any conceptual capacities: the *Reasons*$_{AS}$ provided by the maestro to her apprentice might be taken as involving only the contents of a visual and auditory experience. Also, the structure of this experiential content may not be specified by a conceptually structured p-representation, but through a non-conceptual p-representation of the musical activity-based performance that serves as *Reason*$_{AS}$ for the perceptual judgment “This is not Schubert”. As we saw above, for Cussins, when experiences serve as *Reasons*$_{AS}$ for perceptual judgments we might understand them as inhabiting a space where their correctness conditions are guided not by the normative concept of truth but by the concept of activity. That is exactly how Cussins understands *Reasons*$_{AS}$:

> “When she played at the piano the maestro provided (…) a reason for her judgment. A reason that — for one with sufficient skill to appreciate it — was persuasive, was based on much knowledge, was subject to critical assessment and revision, and was part of an ongoing discussion about music. Her playing opens the content music by Schubert to

> reflective exploration. She shows by her skilled manifestation of music by Schubert her reason for pronouncing at the concert 'that wasn't Schubert'"[101].

In fact, this brief passage summarizes important aspects of how Cussins understands notions such as "content" and "reasons", as I discussed them in this chapter. His non-conceptualist use of "content" seems to endorse the four conditions for p-representation: *Objectivity*, since the non-conceptual content of experience enables the subject to form thoughts assessable for truth conditions; *Face Value*, as the reason given was "subject to critical assessment and revision"; *Givenness*, as perceptual experience is described as an unreflective activity; and *Availability*, as reasons are available to "reflective exploration". That said, I take Cussins as holding the following view:

> *Normative Concept of Activity View*: In terms of *Reason*$_{AS}$ the correctness conditions of the contents of perceptual experiences are answerable to the normative concept of activity rather than the normative concept of truth[102].

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[101] Cussins 2002:53.

[102] Cussins's account is often said to be influenced by Gibson's 1977 notion of *affordances*, roughly, a class of experiences in which possibilities to act in a certain way affords - or solicits - an action of a creature. Also, Merleau-Ponty 1962 is well known for his emphasis on the body as a fundamental element in our relation to the world. Authors influenced by Merleau-Ponty, like Dreyfus 2005, Kelly 2010, and Carman 2008, among others, also have paid much attention to the role of affordances in embodied experience. Surely, Cussins's thinking also praises embodiment as a fundamental mode of experience, as his emphasis on action makes clear. One should note, however, that my appeal to Cussins's notion of "normative concept" does not compel me to hold the same normative concept of experience picked by him, let alone to exhaustively discuss the role of the body in experience. What we search in Cussins is the helpful *way* in which he frames a non-conceptualist objection to *Cognitive Capacities View*; also, his suggestion that experience and cognitive capacities can have a different normative concept. A non-conceptualist, in fact, may offer a different normative concept for experience. Peacocke, for example, criticizes Cussins's emphasis on action:

> "There are places presented in the scenario content of experience that are places to which no active movement of the subject would take him, nor need he be under any experiential illusion that some such movement would take him there. You perceive such a place when, standing on its floor, you see the join of two vaults in the ceiling of a Gothic cathedral, more than fifty feet above you. No active movement of yours will take you there, nor does it seem to you as if any will. The join is nevertheless presented as being a certain distance and direction from you. (...) We can [also] consider two unfortunate individuals. The first

I believe that Cussins's account is telling of some argumentative weaknesses regarding both McDowell's conceptualist as well as Evans's and Peacocke's non-conceptualist view. On the one hand, I consider Cussins's view more adequate to those who want to provide a non-conceptualist account of perceptual experience which aims to be a candidate to avoid the Myth of the Given in the way McDowell understands it. Accounts such as that of Evans and Peacocke, despite holding the *Normative Concept of Truth View*, seem to be not as complete as that of Cussins, since they are not committed to *Reason*$_{AS}$. Well, as I have said it is true that one can simply reject *Reason*$_{AS}$. But why should one do so, since authors like Cussins try to offer a non-conceptualist account that seeks to meet the demands of *Reason*$_{AS}$? In my view, for any interesting debate with McDowell, one should take reasons for perceptual judgments as *Reason*$_{AS}$. Cussins is aware of what is involved in "McDowell's challenge", as he labels it: "explain to me how there can be contents which are not conceptual but which can stand in relations of warrant to the conceptual contents of judgement"[103]. He is also aware that the search for "warrant", according to McDowell, comes from a discomfort with Myth of the Given, and that it demands a way of avoiding such Myth which asks for *Reason*$_{AS}$: "Sellars, Davidson, McDowell, amongst others, are effective in

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> is a person congenitally paralyzed from below the waist, and who moves in a wheelchair, while the second person is congenitally paralyzed from the waist up. It seems to me that they can both, when seated, on different occasions see a mark on the wall as the same particular distance and direction from them. For each of them, there are movements of which he is aware that they would take him to that mark. But the set of movements for which one of them has such an awareness is totally disjoint from the set for which the other has such an awareness" (Peacocke 2003:315).

What I want to stress is that the notion of "normative concept" does not depend on or is explained by Cussins's choice of "action" as the normative concept of experience. As we will see, in Chapter 6 I will pick "significance" as a candidate for the normative concept of experience. Moreover, although Cussins's conclusion that the contents of experience cannot be discursive results from his own understanding of the nature of these contents, any other non-conceptualist story will end up having the same conclusion. Then, one shall see the significance of Cussins for our concerns in terms of his methodological route that puts normativity in the center of the debate.

[103] Cussins 2002:38.

showing that notions of the Given, or mere 'impressions' with varying degrees of force or vivacity, or Quinean 'sensory impingements' or other varieties of 'brute impacts at the exterior' are hopeless as candidate warrants for judgement. I agree with them"[104]. Moreover, Cussins holds *Availability* in the same way McDowell does: "The notion of nonconceptual content is a notion which must ultimately be explained in terms of what is available in experience. If the content is canonically characterized as a complex disposition of some specified sort, then the claim is that this disposition is directly available to the person in his or her experience, and that the content of the experience consists in this availability"[105]. On the other hand, despite agreeing with McDowell that perceptual experiences do not involve the exercise of capacities related to judgments, Cussins seems to offer a more plausible explanation of how perceptual experiences display a non-discursive/non-propositional nature. At least at first sight, Cussins's account seems to be more intuitive than McDowell's, insofar as the non-conceptual contents described by the former do not need to appeal to the less intuitive apparatus involved in the description of a passive operation of conceptual capacities in sensory awareness suggested by the latter. Indeed, it seems less complicated to take a non-discursive grammar as naturally having a non-conceptual content.

But if Cussins's account is persuasive, a defender of the *Cognitive Capacities View* cannot meet one of its core criteria: insofar as Cussins endorses *Normative Concept of Activity View* in detriment of *Normative Concept of Truth View*, the cognitive capacity for judgment cannot be actualized in sensory awareness. In face of these types of difficulties, proponents of a *Cognitive Capacities View* often try to offer a conceptual

[104] Cussins 2002:38.
[105] Cussins 2002:145

based account of the non-discursive structure of the grammar of sensory awareness. And in effect, McDowell's so-called new position reflects his search for a non-discursive-based, but still conceptual account of sensory awareness. Crucial to it is McDowell's appeal to Kant and Hegel in order to find a basis for a non-propositional but conceptual account. I will discuss McDowell's Kantian and Hegelian inheritance at length in Chapters 3 and 4. Anyhow, I will conclude Chapter 2 by giving a first approximation of what is at stake in McDowell's reading of Kant and Hegel and its relation to his former and new positions. With that, I hope to pave our path to the Kantian and Hegelian roots of McDowell's philosophy.

2.5 TOWARD KANT AND HEGEL

In this section, I aim to briefly contextualize some of the issues concerning McDowell's reading of Kant and Hegel.

McDowell's new position tries to provide a non-discursive grammar of sensory awareness that can be accommodated in a *Cognitive Capacities View*. One way to do so is to argue that the perceptual contents described by Cussins although non-propositional are still conceptual. In fact, non-conceptualist authors such as Cussins generally conclude that if our perceptual engagement with the world is non-propositional it would therefore be non-conceptual. This conclusion, at first glance, is quite natural, as propositional contents invariably involve conceptual content. However, people such as McDowell (*AMG*), Golob (2014), and Land (2015) highlight

that although propositions are sufficient for conceptual content they are not necessary. Hence:

> *Non-propositionalism*: Propositions are sufficient but not necessary for conceptual content.

It should be noted that McDowell's endorsement of *Non-propositionalism* is a crucial aspect of his new position on the conceptual nature of sensory awareness. And in its specificity, it presents relevant Kantian roots that point towards a conceptualist reading of the *CPR*.

The paradigmatic textual evidence for such a Kantian conceptualist reading - the one indicated under the label “Kant’s slogan” - recall, is expressed in the following passage: “The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding” (*CPR*: A79/B104-5). Due to its relevance to our discussions, I will condensate it in the following thesis:

> *Same Function Thesis*: The function which gives unity to an intuition is the same function which gives unity to a judgment.

Also, one should note that *Same Function Thesis* presents itself as the ancestor of a highly influential aspect on McDowell's *Cognitive Capacities View*, namely Hegel's way of understanding the conditions of objective experience. As Houlgate summarizes it, “[According to Hegel's position] if perceptual experience depends on understanding and

its categories, therefore, it must also be inseparable from the making of judgments (…). These judgments (...) are (...) the irreducible conditions of objective experience"[106].

Although *Same Function Thesis* is held by many readers of Kant and Hegel, there are important differences in the way they interpret it. On the one hand, McDowell's conceptualist interpretation of *Same Function Thesis*, for example, broadly refers to what Land (2015) calls a *Non-judgmentalist Reading of Kant*, which, according to the latter, endorses the conjunction of the following claims:

"(i) An act of sensible synthesis is not identical to an act of judgment";

"(ii) The capacity for sensible synthesis depends on the capacity for judgment"[107].

On the other hand, authors such as Houlgate (2006) take *Same Function Thesis* in a *Judgmentalist* framework, since for him judgments are actually exercised in experience: "Experience is thus at one and the same time a conceptually structured seeing and a judging-that. (…) Indeed, it is the former only in being the latter. Strictly speaking, (…) in seeing we judge that things are thus and so"[108].

As we can see, there are a number of significant philosophical issues regarding *Same Function Thesis*, and especially for my purposes, it is crucial to provide a clear framework of what is at stake for authors such as McDowell in his reading of Kant and Hegel. In effect, I am clearly indebted to McDowell's overall *Cognitive Capacities View*, which is decisively influenced by those authors. Moreover, it is the purpose of many proponents of different versions of the *Cognitive Capacities View* to give arguments for a non-propositionalist account of the contents of sensory awareness.

[106] Houlgate 2006:245.
[107] Land 2015:478.
[108] Houlgate 2006:245-6.

Now that we have a clearer understanding of McDowell's fundamental notions regarding his philosophical perspective on sensory awareness, it is about time to discuss in detail McDowell's former and new positions in light of his reading of Kant and Hegel.

2.6 CONCLUSION

I have argued that McDowell's concern with the Myth of the Given pushes him to a notion of reasons as *reasons as such*, which, according to him, is conceptual in nature, insofar as one could only give reasons in a discursive manner. I have shown, however, that an author such as Cussins argues that perceptual experience cannot have a discursive character, since its contents are non-propositional due to a normative concept that differs from the normative concept of truth. In response to that objection, I have suggested that some philosophers contend that propositions are sufficient but not necessary for conceptual content - McDowell, now, is one of those. Finally, I highlighted that McDowell's new version of a *Cognitive Capacities View* intends to give expression to the idea that the contents of perceptual experience are non-propositional but still conceptual. I have stressed that what McDowell now labels "intuitional contents" appeals to his reading of Kant and Hegel. From that perspective, I have claimed that we need to have a clearer understanding of McDowell's interpretation of these two philosophers. I promised to discuss *how* McDowell expresses the thought that cognitive capacities must be involved in sensory awareness. That's the goal of Chapters 3 and 4.

3.0 MCDOWELL ON KANT

Kant, through *Same Functions Thesis*, inaugurates a highly influential way to give sense to the thought implicit in *Cognitive Capacities View*. For those who want to argue for it, *Same Functions Thesis* offers a cue for how one should set off a way of framing the hypothesis that cognitive capacities must be involved in our cognitive access to the world. Well, in remarking that the concept of the understanding must be in play in intuition Kant gives a basis for the thought that every rational subject's perceptual access to the world must involve cognitive capacities, in order for the objective purport of experience to obtain. McDowell surely takes himself as following Kant's steps: “what we find in Kant is precisely the picture I have been recommending: a picture in which reality is not located outside a boundary that encloses the conceptual sphere” (*MAW*, 41).

Call McDowell's type of reading of Kant “conceptualist”. This conceptualist reading, in effect, has exerted a significant influence on McDowell's thought. It has its roots, for example, in another influential author for McDowell, namely Sellars: “Sellars's deeply Kantian account of perceptual experience [states that] [i]n the experience of rational subjects, things are given to them to be known, in knowledge of a kind only rational subjects can have, knowledge that is a standing in the space of reasons” (*HWV*, vii)[109].

[109] McDowell also cites Strawson’s account: “I have been more strongly influenced than footnotes can indicate by P. F. Strawson, especially by his peerless book on Kant's First Critique. I am not sure that Srrawson's Kant is really Kant, but I am convinced that Strawson's Kant comes close to achieving what Kant wanted to achieve. In these lectures I follow Strawson directly when I exploit Kam in the context of considering the first person (Lecture V); and my use of Kant in saying how we should conceive experience the main thing I try to do here-is Strawsonian in spirit and often in detail” (*MAW*, viii). See Strawson 1996.

Nevertheless, these conceptualist readings of Kant are nothing but controversial. So-called non-conceptualist Kantian readings, such as that of Hanna (2006), Allais (2009), and McLear (2016), to name a few, contend, broadly, that despite intuitions and concepts co-operate at the level of objectively valid judgments, intuitions, at the level of perceptual experiences, are independent of concepts[110]. Just as Hanna stresses, "to the extent that intuitions are cognitively and semantically independent of concepts, they are *non-conceptual cognitive contents*"[111].

Within that context, I propose an approach to McDowell's Kantian and Hegelian roots in the light of the debate between conceptualist and non-conceptualist interpreters of Kant and Hegel. In this framework, I intend to clarify McDowell's former and new positions regarding the contents of perception experience.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. In sections 3.1 and 3.2, I focus on McDowell's reading of Kant. I present McDowell's former propositionalist position in relation to his interpretation of passages such as (*CPR* A51/B75), where Kant says that "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind". With the help of authors such as Hanna, Allais, and de Sá Pereira, I show why McDowell's propositionalism fails not only in relation to his own former view on perceptual experience but also in relation to Kant's text. In section 3.3, I introduce McDowell's reading of the Transcendental Deduction. I explain how such a reading is meant to rehabilitate McDowell's conceptualist reading, in that it interprets Kant as suggesting that the understanding is needed for intuitions to have synthetic unity. In section 3.4, I discuss the issues regarding *Same Function Thesis*. I show why McDowell reads Kant

[110] See Schulting 2016 for more non-conceptualists approaches to the matter.
[111] Hanna 2006:100, emphasis added.

as holding that the functions of the understanding gives unity to intuitions in a non-propositional manner, which is the basis for McDowell's new position.

3.1 MCDOWELL'S KANT

It is not my aim to provide a detailed account of non-conceptualist and conceptualist readings of Kant's account of intuitions[112]. Also, it is not my goal to argue that a conceptualist reading of *Kant* is preferred over a non-conceptualist one. What I am interested is in some insights that could help one to offer more elements to a given account of the philosophical nature of sensory awareness. And Kant has offered a lot of these insights for non-conceptualist as well as conceptualist readers. In fact, we can find support for both views in a variety of Kant's works: the "*Wilder's*" passage ("*Wilder*," *JL*, Introd, V. AA 9: 33, p. 544-545) and the "incongruent counterparts" discussion (*UG*, p. 370) seem to give grounds for non-conceptualist readings; (*CPR* A89-91/B122-3) and (*CPR* A51/B75) are read by both sides as supporting their views; *Same Function Thesis*'s passage, in its turn, appears to favor conceptualist readers (*CPR* A79/B104-5). Therefore, I will not enter into any exegetical dispute. Not that I think this is not an interesting and important matter, but the fact is, as we saw above, that there is textual evidence for non-conceptualist as well as conceptualist positions in the debate. It is true that one can argue that it is crucial to try to give a decisive answer to questions such as "was Kant a non-conceptualist or a conceptualist?", but even if these kinds of questions are liable to be answered, it should be noted that my general argument for a *Cognitive*

[112] See McLear 2021 for an excellent exposition of the debate.

Capacities View does not *depend* on that[113]. Actually, I believe that I need, first of all, to evaluate Kant's insights from their philosophical plausibility and persuasiveness. For even if a non-conceptualist reading of Kant ends up being convincing it would not be necessarily detrimental to my own arguments for a *Cognitive Capacities View* of perceptual experience. Accordingly, I don't think that Kant's insights, although helpful, would be decisive for one to hold a *Cognitive Capacities View*.

Within that context - that is, the context of McDowell's reading of Kant - I will discuss in detail three of these passages mentioned above. First, (*CPR* A51/B75) where Kant claims that “Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind”; second, (*CPR* A89-91/B122-3), where he indicates that intuitions could represent objects independently of the understanding; finally, (*CRP* A79/B104-5), the one concerning *Same Function Thesis*.

3.2 *COOPERATION THESIS* AND *MIND AND WORLD* ON INTUITIONS

McDowell states that one of his aims in *MAW* is “to accommodate the point of Kant's remark 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind'” (*MAW*, 87). Kant's famous passage gives expression to two important aspects: first, it marks out the distinction between two cognitive capacities, namely sensibility, and understanding; second, it sets out that in order for empirical cognition to obtain these two capacities must interplay in their cognitive roles. Through sensibility, objects are given to us; through understanding, we can think about them (*CRP* A15/B29). Kant relates the difference between sensibility and understanding to the distinction between

[113] For a helpful discussion on this debate, see Ginsborg 2008.

receptivity and spontaneity. As a capacity in which an object can be given to a subject, sensibility enables representations to be received; in contrast, the understanding is a spontaneous capacity, since it is capable of bringing representations of objects by itself. Further, sensibility/understanding and receptivity/spontaneity distinctions are taken by Kant as aligned to one more distinction, the one between intuition and concept. Intuitions are singular and immediate representations, as they contain the form under which an object is intuited; in turn, concepts are taken as mediated and general representations, since their contents have only the form of objects thought in general ways (*CRP* A51/B75).

The aforementioned passage is used as textual support for many Kantian conceptualist readings[114]. Generally speaking, conceptualists take it as indicating that intuitions cannot be intelligible without the involvement of concepts. And as shown in Chapter 3, McDowell's way to make sense of Kant's passage is also to take experience as involving conceptual capacities. In fact, according to him for experiences to have cognitive significance – in the sense of not being "blind" – intuitions must work together with concepts: "We should understand what Kant calls 'intuition' - experiential intake - not as a bare getting of an extra-conceptual Given, but as a kind of occurrence or state that already has conceptual content. In experience one takes in, for instance sees, *that things are thus and so*. That is the sort of thing one can also, for instance, judge" (*MAW*, 9, original emphasis).

[114] See also Falkenstein 1995 and Pippin 2005. Cf. Bird 2006.

However, non-conceptualists take the very same passage as endorsing their own view. According to them, this must be the case if we make sense of the passage in the context in which it takes place:

> "Neither of these properties is to be preferred to the other. Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. *Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind*. It is thus just as necessary to make the mind's concepts sensible (i.e., to add an object to them in intuition) as it is to make its intuitions understandable (i.e., to bring them under concepts). Further, these two faculties or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding is not capable of intuiting anything, and the senses are not capable of thinking anything. Only from their unification can cognition arise. But on this account one must not mix up their roles, rather one has great cause to separate them carefully from each other and distinguish them" (*CRP* A 51-2/B 75-6, emphasis added).

Regardless of these different readings, I would like to suggest that conceptualists and non-conceptualists share the attribution of the following thesis to Kant:

> *Cooperation Thesis*: The cooperation of intuitions and concepts is a necessary condition for empirical cognition to obtain[115].

Nevertheless, they seem to disagree not only on the representational nature of intuitions but also on the *sort* of empirical cognition obtained through *Cooperation Thesis*. Whilst an author such as McDowell sees *Cooperation Thesis* as an endorsement of his own view - which states that sensory awareness (or intuitions) must have cognitive

[115] I would like to thank Patricia Kauark for the reminder that Hanna 2006 has called this thesis "*Togetherness Principle*". Surely, here I borrow Hanna's way of framing the issue. Nonetheless, insofar as I will use the term "togetherness thesis" in Chapter 6 to express McDowell's appropriation of *Same Function Thesis* I have preferred to use "cooperation" instead of "togetherness", so one can avoid conflating these two uses of the term.

significance in order to properly be in the space of reasons - non-conceptualist Kantians, in contrast, argue for the cognitive independence of intuitions and concepts.

Non-conceptualists say that Kant is not claiming that concepts must be operative in intuition *per se*. On that reading, Kant's point is not that intuition depends on concepts to be the representational state it *is*: on the contrary, the cooperation between the faculties of sensibility and understanding is presented here as drawing attention to the fact that they are completely distinct regarding their functions[116]. As De Sá Pereira points out,

> "Without general concepts, sensible intuitions are blind not in [the] sense of referring to nothing (conceptualism), but rather in the sense of providing no knowledge of the objects to which sensible intuitions refer. For one thing, without the general concepts involved in the specification of what (…) is represented, the subject cannot understand or know what her sensible intuitions actually represent. Thus blindness does not reflect a lack of reference, but rather a lack of understanding and of propositional knowledge about what is represented"[117].

Likewise, Allais claims that Kant establishes a distinction between two kinds of representations: on the one hand, one that involves the perceiving of an objective particular (intuition); on the other, a representation of an objective particular "*as an object* in the full-blown-sense"[118]. In the same spirit, Hanna states that "[i]ntuitions and concepts together 'constitute the elements of all our cognition,' in the sense that intuitions and concepts are combined together by the non-basic 'faculty of judging' (…) (*CPR* A69/B94) in order to form judgments, which are the central cognitive acts of the

[116] See Hanna 2005, Allais 2015, and McLear 2020.
[117] De Sá Pereira 2013:234.
[118] Allais 2009:45, original emphasis.

rational personal mind”[119]. Indeed, according to Hanna, Kant endorses *Cooperation Thesis* “only for the specific purpose of constituting objectively valid judgments”[120], and not for *any* context involving kinds of intelligibility other than empirical judgments.

As a matter of a description of the way concept-independent intuitions show cognitive significance, some non-conceptualist Kantian readings interestingly resemble important aspects of Evans's as well as Peacocke's arguments on the non-conceptual character of the contents of sensory awareness. For example, some authors suggest that the more primitive operations of the informational system - in Kantian terms the faculty responsible for the objects of sensible intuition - are shared by rational and non-rational creatures. Allais claims that “creatures that are not capable of representing objects [*as* objects] are capable of perceiving particulars, in the sense of spatially continuous and unified individuals existing outside the subject and located in space”[121]. Hanna equally indicates that “for Kant all rational animals also have sub-rational or lower-level cognitive powers that they share with non-rational animals”[122]. He also points out that Kant's insights in the Transcendental Aesthetic could be interpreted as very similar to “Peacocke's Evans-inspired theory of 'scenario content'”[123]. For Hanna, just as Peacocke (1992) and Evans (1982:153-4) have suggested, concept-independent intuitions would be representational states “consisting of the 3-D rectilinear axes of the cognizing subject's own body: up/down, right/left, in front/behind”[124].

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[119] Hanna 2006:86.
[120] Hanna 2006:99.
[121] Allais 2009:45.
[122] Hanna 2006:87. See Allais 2009, McLear 2011, Tolley 2016, Golob 2020. McLear 2021 highlights that the Kantian debate over animal consciousness is very controversial. Cf. Paton 1936, Naragon 1990, Ameriks 2000. See also Land 2018.
[123] Hanna 2006:115.
[124] Hanna 2006:73.

Bringing these points together, non-conceptualists contend that McDowell's type of interpretation of *Cooperation Thesis*, although acceptable regarding the context in which empirical judgments occur, cannot do justice to the concept-independence of intuition. According to an influential reading proposed by Hanna (2004, 2006), what Kant actually wants to say is that despite *Cooperation Thesis* accounts for the objective validity of empirical judgments, intuitions could also be objectively valid without the involvement of concepts. In Hanna's words, concept-independent intuitions would have "*non-conceptual cognitive contents*"[125]. The suggestion that intuitions still be objective cognitions is stressed by him through the idea that intuitions would have *"priority-to-thought"*[126], since for Kant himself the very "representation that can be given prior to all thinking is called intuition" (*CPR* B132). Hanna concludes that since Kant equates intuitional and non-conceptual cognitive contents he provides grounds for the cognitive significance of intuitions despite their concept-independent nature.

At first sight, I believe that the non-conceptualist readings mentioned above seem to be the right manner not only to make sense of the way McDowell misreads *Cooperation Thesis* in *MAW*; also, they are helpful in clarifying why McDowell's reading is philosophically problematic. As we will see in more detail below, even McDowell came to recognize that in his new position. I will discuss McDowell's new position and its relation to Kant in detail soon. But to have a clearer understanding of McDowell's changing of mind we need first to take a closer look at how his early thoughts about perceptual experience are related to Kant, and how it is especially criticized by authors

[125] Hanna 2006:100, original emphasis.
[126] Hanna 2006:102. Note that this idea of priority-to-thought resembles Travis's claim that judgment is explanatory subsequent to experience.

such as Hanna (2004, 2006) in one specific point, namely the idea the sensory awareness - or intuitions - involve propositional contents.

As I have sketched above, McDowell takes *Cooperation Thesis* as somewhat reflecting his own position defended in *MAW*. More specifically, McDowell sees *Cooperation Thesis* as a parallel to the idea that, recall, "'intuition' - experiential intake [is] a kind of occurrence or state [in which] one takes in (...) *that things are thus and so*" (*MAW*, 9, original emphasis).

That the content of sensory awareness would be *propositional* (something "given by a 'that' clause" (*MAW*, 3)) is a core idea of *MAW*. Indeed, the propositional nature of the contents of experience has crucial implications on McDowell's systematic thought presented in the book, insofar as it has important consequences on many of his insights: to name a few, the conceptual character of the contents of sensory awareness, the notions of *Objectivity*, *Face Value*, *Givenness*, and *Availability*, and the notion of *Reason*$_{AS}$. The following excerpt reunites all of these ideas in a condensate manner:

> "*That things are thus and so* is the content of the experience, and it can also be the content of a judgment: it becomes the content of a judgment if the subject decides to take the experience at face value. So it is conceptual content. But *that things are thus and so* is also, if one is not misled, an aspect of the layout of the world: it is how things are. (...) Although reality is independent of our thinking, it is not to be pictured as outside an outer boundary that encloses the conceptual sphere. *That things are thus and so* is the conceptual content of an experience, but if the subject of the experience is not misled, that very same thing, *that things are thus and so*, is also a perceptible fact, an aspect of the perceptible world" (*MAW*, 26; original emphasis).

From that perspective, in *MAW* McDowell has supposed that to comprehend experiences as involving conceptual capacities we must credit "experiential intakes" - or intuitions - with propositional content, i.e., the same kind of content judgments bear. He used to assume that the relation between the contents of perceptual experience and judgments should be conceived as being one of *endorsement*: the subject of the experience judges *that things are thus and so* based on her perceiving *that things are thus and so*[127].

As discussed in the Introduction, Travis's objections have persuaded McDowell to change his way of ascribing conceptual content to experience. In his current view, he no longer takes the contents of sensory awareness as being propositional. And in the context of the different Kantian readings of *Cooperation Thesis*, I think that McDowell's conceptualist reading also faces a related problem. And to be more clear about it I need to say a little about Kant's account of judgments.

Following Hanna (2004, 2006), it should be noted that for Kant an empirical judgment has the semantic content of a proposition, in the sense that it can be held true or false; its cognitive significance, then, is equivalent to its objective validity. But as Kant stresses, "no general sign of the truth of the *matter* of cognition can be demanded" (*CPR* A58/B83, emphasis added). What Kant means is that judgments cannot figure in intuitions *per se*, since propositional-like representations cannot be presented as sensible features of objects: "truth and illusion are not in the object, in so far as it is intuited, but in the judgment about it, in so far as it is thought" (*CPR* A293/B350)[128].

[127] See *MAW*, 48-9.

[128] McLear (2021) notes that as long as Kant says that truth and illusion are not in the object, intuitions would not have p-representational content. In our terms, then Kant would be an Anti-representationalist. For McLear, what is striking about it is that, if so, "much of the contemporary debate concerning Kant's conception of the content of intuition has presupposed a notion of 'content' that Kant rejects". In fact, that would be a problem: as McLear stresses, "there is a danger that the dispute between Conceptualism and Nonconceptualism has simply failed to

Unlike judgments, intuitions should be taken as sensory representations of objects without any involvement of propositional thought, as Kant's remark in (*CPR* A 51-2/B 75-60) made clear: "[t]he senses are not capable of thinking anything". As we can see, these claims seem to be in opposition to the propositionalist insight presented in *MAM*, insofar as according to Kant propositional contents cannot display a sensible character, which is another way to say, borrowing McDowell's terminology, that intuitions could not represent *that things are thus and so*.

In line with what has been said so far about *Cooperation Thesis*, non-conceptualist Kantians offer further and related textual evidence to give what would be a definitive answer to the debate. More specifically, they appeal to Kant's claims in (*CPR* A90–1/B122–3), which opens the possibility that intuitions can represent objects

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connect with Kant's views". For those reasons, he recommends an alternative frame for the debate which is not centered on the idea of content. Instead, one should frame the debate in terms of the involvement or not of intellectual capacities. In his words, on the hand, what he labels "Intellectualism" would see intuitions as dependent on some intellectual capacity; "Sensibilism", on the other hand, would take at least a part of intuitions as independent of intellectual capacities. For McLear, the debate framed in these terms has the advantage of avoiding the "problematic" *assumption* that intuitions are p-representational. He also states that even if one of the implications of "Intellectualism" is that intuitions must have p-representational content, "such a position would be an outcome of the Intellectualist's argument, rather than as an assumption thereof". Be that as it may, note that it is the non-conceptualist (or the Sensibilist) who ends up having a problem in facing these issues. According to McLear's point, if non-conceptualism is right, p-representational content cannot obtain. Compare this to Travis. For him, if conceptual capacities are not involved in sensory awareness, perceptual experiences must be not p-representational. In other words, he believes that p-representation implies conceptual content. In discussing Evans's non-conceptualist version of Representationalism, he concludes: "Representation necessarily reaches beyond the particular case which it represents as a certain way. So it belongs to the conceptual. If we draw a conceptual–non-conceptual distinction as above, 'non-conceptual representational content' is senseless" (Travis 2013e). What Travis means is that the p-representational of something "being a certain way" is a p-representation of something taken in a general manner. I will discuss Travis' stance on the difference between sensory awareness and judgments in terms of the categorial distinction between the particular and the general in Chapter 5. For now, what I want to stress is that McLear's conclusion should be interpreted as similar to Travis's. But if it is so, the conceptualist (or Intellectualist) is free to still take intuitions as having p-representational content, as Intellectual capacities may imply content, even if the debate starts without the preposition that intuitions are contentful. Beyond that, McLear seems not taking into account the several options for p-representation we have discussed so far. Why can't a Kantian take the commitment to intuitions in terms of the normative concept of, for instance, activity instead of truth, as Cussins recommends? As I understand him, Hanna, for example, would have sympathy for something along these lines according to his Evansian influence: finding one's way through space plausibly involves action in terms of accuracy. But as I have said, at least *inside the context of* Kant's account of intuitions, searching a way to ascribe content to intuitions is a problem only for the non-conceptualist. So despite McLear's skepticism with regard to intuitions as a p-representational state, we should move on in this chapter having in mind that if intuitions are said to involve conceptual capacities, perception would have p-representational content.

without any cooperation of the understanding. Hence Kant: “Appearances can certainly be given in intuition without functions of the understanding [and also] would (...) offer objects to our intuition, for intuition by no means requires the functions of thinking”. That remark, in fact, seems to strengthen non-conceptualist readings. For example, De Sá Pereira (2013:236) concludes from (*CPR* A90–1/B122–3) that “the non-conceptualist reading of Kant's position is no longer questioned”. Hanna, as Griffith (2012) indicates, also believes that (*CPR* A90–1/B122–3) conclusively shows “that appearances given in intuition really do not have to be related to the functions of the understanding [and that this is] clear textual evidence that 'blind intuitions' are possible”[129].

Nevertheless, authors such as Ginsborg (2006, 2008) and Griffith (2012) (among others[130]) take Kant's remark only as preamble to what will be discussed in the Deduction, instead as Kant's own definitive position on the matter. For them, Transcendental Aesthetic should be read as a preliminary to the fact that “the manifold in a given intuition is necessarily subject to the categories” (*CPR* B143), or, as Ginsborg suggests, that it expresses “the kind of possibility that the Deduction is supposed to rule out”[131].

McDowell (*RWD*) has the same kind of interpretation in mind. In fact, he takes Kant's talk of the possibility of a “blind” intuition “as the mere appearance of a possibility” that is supposed to be ruled out insofar as for Kant, according to the second part of the Deduction, there would be “only one unity, the synthetic unity that is intelligible only in terms of the unifying power of the spontaneous intellect” (*RWD*, 318).

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[129] Griffith 2012:199.
[130] See also Allison 2004, Longuenesse 1998 and Schafer 2016 for similar readings.
[131] Ginsborg 2006:66.

One more point to note is that this kind of interpretation of (*CPR* A90–1/B122–3) has important relations to a *Non-propositionalist View* of *Same Function Thesis* and consequently to McDowell's new position. Griffith (2012) helps us to get grips with this kind of Kantian conceptualist reading[132]:

> "An important motivation for my reading is Kant's claim in the Metaphysical Deduction that 'The same function which gives unity to the various representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition' (A79/B104–105). My view is that for Kant, the categories have an indispensable role (that of providing unity) not only in making judgments about what we perceive (higher-level spontaneous cognitive activity), but also in the mere perceptual presentation of particulars in empirical intuition (lower-level spontaneous cognitive activity)"[133].

McDowell will take similar conclusions about Kant's insight on the relationship between judgments and intuitions. Before proceeding, though, I will show how the conceptualist reading of (*CPR* A90–1/B122–3) paves the path towards McDowell's defense of *Same Function Thesis*.

3.3 INTUITIONAL UNITY

Recall, it is not my aim to argue for a conceptualist reading of Kant. Instead, my goal is to offer a clearer understanding of the Kantian roots of McDowell's thought. From that reminder, one caveat before I move on. Suppose that the conceptualist reading of (*CPR*

[132] Cf. Pippin 1992 and Longuenesse 1998.
[133] Griffith 2012:199.

A90–1/B122–3) ends up being persuasive. I would like to make it clear that I think that one could perfectly find it unsound. More than that, I believe that in a broader context of the exchange between conceptualists and non-conceptualists one can retain the Transcendental Aesthetic insights as sounding and reject the Deduction arguments as unsounding and vice-versa. Evans, as we saw above, is read by Hanna as describing perceptual experiences just like Kant would have done in the Aesthetic; McDowell, in its turn, brings the Deduction as an "ally" *contra* Evans. In sum, what I want to emphasize is that my current purpose is to *evaluate* Kant's arguments rather than establish textual evidence for them.

In general, the conceptualist interpretations of (*CPR* A90–1/B122–3) as being only a preamble start from the idea that, according to Kant's later conclusions in the Deduction, intuitions are necessarily subject to the categories. Griffith, once again, contends that insofar as Kant himself claims that "everything that may ever come before our senses must stand under the laws that arise *a priori* from the understanding alone" (*CRP* B160)[134], "[t]he Deduction has no hope of success if Hanna is right that appearances/intuitions can be given in sensibility without standing under the categories"[135].

McDowell also thinks, above all, that Kant seeks in the Deduction to make clear the idea that the understanding is needed for intuition to present objects for a subject, despite this idea having a "not so easily seen" character. Just as (*CPR* A90–1/B122–3) indicates,

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[134] Similarly: "Consequently all synthesis, though which even perception itself becomes possible, stands under the categories, and since experience is cognition through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid a priori of all objects of experience" (*CPR* B161).
[135] Griffith 2012:200.

> "[T]hat objects of sensible intuition must accord with the formal conditions of sensibility that lie in the mind a priori is clear from the fact that otherwise they would not be objects for us; but that they must also accord with the conditions that the understanding requires for the synthetic unity of thinking is a conclusion that is not so easily seen. For appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity" (*CPR* A90/B122-3).

With that in mind, McDowell (*RWD*) will offer his own interpretation of how the Deduction is meant to play a twofold role in explaining the nature of empirical intuitions: on the one hand, the first part of the Transcendental Deduction would intend to show that it is *analytic* that the objects sensibly present to subjects require a synthetic unity characteristic of the understanding; on the other, the Deduction's second part would seek to rule out the seeming possibility that sensibility alone could provide for the presence of objects to subjects.

This "not so easy to grasp idea" indicated by the Deduction can be presented in the form of a question: if objects must conform to conditions that are independent of the sensibility, i.e. those that originated from the understanding alone, how can we know *a priori* that the pure concepts of the understanding can possess objective validity? To address this question, Kant starts from the idea that empirical intuitions are determined by the functions of judgment: "all manifold, insofar as it is given in *one* empirical intuition, is *determined* in regard to one of the logical functions for judgment, by means of which, namely, it is brought to a consciousness in general" (*CPR* B143, original emphasis).

To make sense of this passage we need, first, to clarify this idea of a "manifold given in an intuition". For Kant, an empirical intuition accounts for something given in

sensibility not as a mere aggregate of representations; instead, it would be something given as having a unity self-consciously represented. This is exactly the idea behind Kant's famous remark in (*CPR* B131-2), where he claims that “[t]he I think must be able to accompany all my representations”. According to McDowell, what Kant wants to emphasize is that for intuitions to be self-consciously experienced as a unity they must be *mine together*; in other words, only if it is possible for the “I think” to accompany multiple sensibly representations they can, as Kant says, *be brought to a consciousness in general*.

This possibility, then, would require that the manifold given in an intuition must conform to one of the units characteristic of thought - in Kant's account, one of the functions of judgment. For McDowell, that should be taken as an analytic formulation in the part of Kant along the following lines: “objects can be sensibly present to subjects, sensibly present for knowledge, only in intuitions, understood as sensory manifolds unified by modes of synthetic unity whose source as requirements lies in the understanding” (*RWD*, 316); or to put the point another way, that it would be analytic in the sense that “the 'I *think*' [only] makes it explicit that the representations belong to one consciousness” (*RWD*, 314; original emphasis)[136]. One consequence of this analytic character found in the first part of the Deduction would be that if intuitions were not in conformity to the synthetic unity of apperception they could not represent objects *to me*; in McDowell's words, that “[t]hey will not be cases of my being sensible conscious of objects” (*RWD*, 316).

[136] Compare McDowell on *Objectivity*: “A judgment of experience does not introduce a new kind of content, but simply endorses the conceptual content, or some of it, that is already possessed by the experience on which it is grounded.” (*MAW*, 48-9).

However, McDowell highlights that the Transcendental Aesthetic, in fact, seems to leave open the possibility that sensibility alone would be able to give objects to one's senses without the involvement of a synthetic unity of consciousness. Whilst the first part of the Deduction would only demonstrate that it is analytic that sensibility requires a synthetic unity originated from the understanding, McDowell suggests that the second part of the Deduction is meant to properly rule out the possibility left open by the Aesthetic. This would be exactly what Kant meant in (*CPR* B144-5): “In the sequel (§ 26) it will be shown from the way in which the empirical intuition is given in sensibility that its unity can be none other than the one the category prescribes to the manifold of a given intuition in general”.

McDowell thinks that what Kant wants to clarify in the second part of the Deduction is that despite the Aesthetic might suggest that the forms of space and time themselves could provide for a self-standing unity, synthesis is an act of the spontaneity, and, therefore, that there is only *one* type of unity, namely the synthetic unity that exemplifies the unity of thought. So Kant, after all, would actually rule out the possibility that sensible intuition is able to combine its manifold on its own:

> “[T]he *combination* (*conjunctio*) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition; for it is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination, whether we are conscious of it or not, whether it is a combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts, and in the first case either of sensible or non-sensible intuition, is an action of the

understanding, which we would designate with the general title *synthesis*" (*CPR* B130).

I believe that such interpretation of (*CPR* A90–1/B122–3) opens up the possibility of reestablishing a conceptualist position regarding *Cooperation Thesis*, in so far as it seems that, after reading the Deduction, one can hold that not only judgments, but also intuitions, would require the involvement of the understanding[137].

But if that is so, the conceptualist still faces the challenge of making sense of *how* the functions of judgments are implicated in intuitions. Recall, intuitions, for Kant, cannot have propositional contents; to put the point another way, experiences cannot actually represent *that things are thus and so*.

Be that as it may, McDowell has appealed once again to the conceptualist insights found in the First Critique. To circumvent the objections raised against the propositionalist position defended in *MAW*, McDowell went on to embrace a *Non-propositionalist View* of *Same Function Thesis*, as sketched in the end of Chapter 1. It means, as we will see in detail in a moment, that McDowell, in abandoning the propositionalist view of *MAW*, will need to search for another way to give expression of the thought that conceptual capacities must still be involved in perceptual experiences, if one wants to take them as having cognitive significance.

An author such as Hanna, however, will object to the idea that, for Kant, a concept can have a use outside the context of judgments: "according to Kant (...) in order to have a use a concept must be taken up into a judgment: 'the only use (*Gebrauch*) that the understanding can make of these concepts is to judge by means of

[137] For similar reading, see Engstrom 2006. Cf. De Sa Pereira 2013 and McLear 2016.

them' (*CPR* A68/B93)"[138]. He also takes conceptual representation as a "cognitively encounter [with "the targets of our intentionality", as he puts it] within the framework of discursive rationality"[139]. In the context of Kant's thinking, Hanna identifies the *conceptual* with the *discursive* articulation of content. Hanna's point, then, is that since intuitions cannot exhibit discursive contents they are therefore non-conceptual.

So we finally arrive at our central issue regarding *Same Function Thesis*: is it possible for the conceptual capacities responsible for the unity-providing function of judgment to operate in a non-propositional, and therefore non-discursive, manner in intuitions?

Tracing back to Cussins's objections to McDowell, we can take them as showing a somewhat similar character to those of Hanna's reading of Kant. Well, Cussins's suggestion is exactly that perceptual experiences display a non-discursive grammar, and therefore a non-conceptual content. But a position such as that of Cussins, despite its attempt to meet the requirements for *Reason*$_{AS}$, would be seen by McDowell as a version of the Myth of The Given, since the logical space of reasons - a space "of justifying and being able to justify what one says" - must involve capacities that belong to the faculty of reason. According to McDowell's new position, even if it is right to take perceptual experiences as having a non-discursive nature we must still presuppose that they somehow draw on conceptual capacities if we want to avoid the incoherence expressed in the idea of the Myth of the Given:

> "Givenness in the sense of the Myth would be an availability for cognition to subjects whose getting what is supposedly Given to them does not draw on capacities required

[138] Hanna 2004:59. For similar reading, see Kern 2017:18-9.
[139] Hanna 2011:326.

> for the sort of cognition in question. (...) Having something Given to one would be being given something for knowledge without needing to have capacities that would be necessary for one to be able to get to know it. And that is incoherent" (*AMG*, 1).

One of the aims of the next chapter is to find possible ways to accommodate a non-discursive grammar in a conceptual framework. This is just what McDowell will try to provide through his new position: from *Same Function Thesis*, he will argue for a non-discursive but still conceptual account of intuitions, something that I have described at the end of Chapter 2 as an effort to provide a non-discursive description of a type of grammar that can be accommodated in a *Cognitive Capacities View* on perceptual experience.

4.0 KANTIAN AND HEGELIAN ROOTS

McDowell's influence on the part of Kant can also be seen in Hegel. And this is relevant for us insofar as McDowell is also highly influenced by Hegel's philosophy[140]. McDowell discusses different themes within his inheritance of Hegelian philosophy, such as philosophy of action, intentionality, and perceptual experience. In accordance with my main purposes, I will focus on the issues regarding perceptual experience[141]. In this context, it should be noted that McDowell's thought on perceptual experience has the status of something like a recapitulation of Hegel's criticism of the idea that our access to empirical reality would not be permeated by concepts. In other words, McDowell can

[140] For discussions on McDowell's reading of Kant and Hegel, see Bird 1996, Sedgwick 1997, Allison 1997, and Friedman 2002. For McDowell's texts on Kant and Hegel, see *HWV*.
[141] For a detailed and helpful examination of the relationship between the thoughts of McDowell and Hegel, see Sanguinetti and Abath 2018.

be seen as recapturing, within the context of problems typically discussed by the analytic tradition in philosophy, Hegel's idea that empirical knowledge of the world can only operate inside the realm of the conceptual. In this Chapter, I deal with McDowell's conceptualist reading of Hegel and its relation to Kant. As Corti (2018) claims “similarly to McDowell, Hegel develops a (...) basically conceptualist theory of our empirical access to the world, starting from human sensation”[142]. But as I already indicated, there are objections to such a reading. I will discuss these objections with a focus on the exchange between McDowell and Houlgate. Houlgate, as we will see, will defend that Hegel - as well as Kant - restricts the use of concepts within the scope of the act of judgments, which is a problem for McDowell's new non-propositionalist position. In section 4.3, I bring Land's non-judgmentalist reading of Same *Function Thesis*. Building on an account offered by Land, I aim to offer more grounds to McDowell's thought that in sensory awareness - or intuitions - concepts can behave in a non-propositional manner. In section 4.4, I come back to some non-conceptualist objections. With the Kantian and Hegelian apparatus, I discuss whether a McDowell'-inspired *Cognitive Capacities View* may respond to them.

4.1 WHAT USE OF CONCEPTS?

To retake a point brought in the Introduction, recall:

> *Query*: How should one elaborate the thought that our cognitive capacities are actualized in perceptual experience itself, not only in the judgments in which a subject responds to her perceptual experience?

[142] Corti 2018:147.

As we have seen, McDowell's answer to *Query* in *MAW* appeals to the thought that the p-representational contents of sensory awareness might be understood as being propositional. But as Travis has objected, propositional contents cannot exhibit a sensible character. Even Kant - someone who McDowell picked as an ally - seems to share the same line of thought.

The idea implicit in Travis's objections surely has made McDowell abandon his propositionalist position formerly defended in *MAW*. Nonetheless, one must bear in mind that it doesn't mean that he consequently gave up a *Cognitive Capacities View* on perceptual experience. As noted, *AMG* is McDowell's first attempt to offer an alternative way to express the thought that cognitive capacities must be involved in perceptual experience. The following passages summarize what is at stake for McDowell in trying to elaborate on a new way of making sense of a *Cognitive Capacities View*:

> "Avoiding the Myth requires capacities that belong to reason to be operative in experiencing itself, not just in judgments in which we respond to experience. *How should we elaborate this picture?* I used to assume that to conceive experiences as actualizations of conceptual capacities, we would need to credit experiences with propositional content, the sort of content judgments have. But [this] now strike[s] me as wrong" (*AMG*, 3, emphasis added).

And he continues, once again, through an appeal to Kant: "What we need is an idea of content that is not propositional but intuitional, in what I take to be a Kantian sense" (*AMG*, 4). With this new call upon Kant, McDowell intends to argue for the thought that intuitional contents are non-discursive but still conceptual. In a sense, this suggests a middle ground between the "novel" conclusion that sensory awareness cannot have

propositional contents and the supposed condition expressed by the idea that sensibility alone could not provide for the epistemological significance of experiences. Well, the search for this middle ground is indeed justified, if what McDowell wants is to argue that sensory awareness has non-propositional content but that, at the same time, they are not Given in the sense of the myth; in a Kantian sense, that intuitional contents are not provided by sensibility alone, but with the contribution of the understanding in a way in which conceptual capacities do not operate in a discursive manner.

In section 3.2 we saw that McDowell's interpretation of the synthetic unity of intuitions comprises a conceptualist reading, and it is natural to think that he consequently takes Kant as suggesting that intuitional contents are not Given. However, McDowell draws attention to the fact that there is textual evidence in which Kant occasionally indicates that the understanding provides content for intuitions in the same manner as it does for judgments; recall: “all combination, whether we are conscious of it or not, (...) is an *action* of the understanding” (*CPR* B130, emphasis added). The problem with that, as McDowell himself stresses, is that it “goes badly with my claim that intuitional content is not discursive” (*AMG*, 7). To some extent, this is one of the reasons why McDowell appeals to the idea implicit in the passage regarding *Same Function Thesis*: “The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding” (*CPR*: A79/B104-5). Recall:

> *Same Function Thesis*: The function which gives unity to an intuition is the same function which gives unity to a judgment.

For clarity's sake, McDowell says that intuitional contents are still conceptual, according to (*CPR*: A79/B104-5),

> "Because every aspect of the content of an intuition is present in a form in which it is already suitable to be the content associated with a discursive capacity. (...) That is part of the force of saying, with Kant, that what gives unity to intuitions is the same function that gives unity to judgments" (*AMG*, 7), [or, likewise, for] "the unity of intuitional content reflects an operation of the same unifying function that is operative in the unity of judgments, in that case actively exercised" (*AMG*, 7).

Yet, what is *new* in this conceptualist reading? To put the point another way, what does it mean to say that intuitional contents are non-discursive but still conceptual, according to McDowell's Kant? McDowell tries to address the issue as follows:

> "In an intuition, an object is present to one whether or not one exploits this potential for discursive activity. Kant says the 'I think' of apperception must be able to accompany all *Vorstellungen* that are mine, in a sense that is related to the idea of operations of the function that gives unity both to judgments and to intuitions. An object is present to a subject in an intuition whether or not the 'I think' accompanies any of the intuition's content. But any of the content of an intuition must be able to be accompanied by the 'I think'. And for the 'I think' to accompany some of the content of an intuition, say a visual intuition, of mine is for me to judge that I am visually confronted by an object with such-and-such features. Since the intuition makes the object visually present to me through those features, such a judgment would be knowledgeable" (*AMG*, 8).

McDowell here takes the "I think" as analogous to the *exercise of conceptual capacities in a judgment*, and the item intuited as something that must be suitable available to be

discursively exploited in a judgment. To be suitably available for judgment is for the content of intuition to draw on the same functions that give unity to judgments. But McDowell's point is that this availability doesn't depend on the *exploitation* of a discursive capacity to be considered properly conceptual: “[a]n object is present to a subject in an intuition whether or not the 'I think' accompanies any of the intuition's content”. In sum, his idea is that the conceptual functions of judgments operate in a non-discursive (or non-propositional) manner in intuitions. Therefore, there could be other uses for concepts than in judgments; in the case of intuitions, a non-discursive one. After all, McDowell believes that he can hold the thought that intuitional contents can be both conceptual and non-discursive, which is the basis for his new answer to *Query*.

However, it seems difficult for one to take from (*CPR*: A79/B104-5) a clear indication on the part of Kant that intuitional contents might be interpreted as having a conceptual but non-discursive character. More than that, such a reading of Kant is contentious. As Land (2015) highlights, there are both non-conceptualist and conceptualist Kantian commentators who take judgment as the only way for using concepts. Hanna's interpretation is a case of this reading. According to him, this must be what Kant holds, since, for example, he introduces the notion of space as “not a discursive or (...) a general concept of relations of things in general, but a pure intuition” (*CPR* A24–5/B39) and also the notion of time as a “not a discursive, (...) but a pure form of sensible intuition” (*CPR* A31/B47). It is noteworthy, though, that there are also conceptualist readings committed to it. Strawson, for example, stresses that “the combination of representations in accordance with the categories is their combination in

judgments”[143]. Houlgate also says something along the same lines:

> “[T]he understanding can conceive of intuitions as a synthetic unity (...) only insofar as, at the same time, it judges the object to be this or that. (...) This is because categories, as well as being thoughts of synthetic unity, are also *concepts* and thus 'predicates of possible judgments' and so must be employed in judgments”[144].

In Land's terms, we can take such positions as holding the following thesis:

> “*Judgmentalism*: Every act of using a concept is an act of making a judgment”[145].

These different interpretations lead us to a related objection to McDowell's reading of *Same Function Thesis*: in this case, some consequences of his interpretation of Hegel on perceptual experience. In line with Kant, Hegel also holds *Same Function Thesis*. In fact, as Houlgate stresses “in this respect Hegel is close to Kant”[146]. But in his exchange with McDowell, Houlgate contends that “[*p*]*ace* McDowell, [for Hegel] it is not just that 'the ability to enjoy intuitions is inseparable from the ability to make judgments,' but enjoying synthesised intuitions requires actually making judgments: the distinct activities of categorising and judging must occur together”[147]. Houlgate's objections have serious implications. If this kind of judgmentalist interpretation ends up being persuasive, it only makes sense to speak of an objective experience if the *act* of judgment is in play, since according to Houlgate's Hegel “[the] content of sensation itself contains no element of 'being an object'”[148]. In other words, *Givenness* and

[143] Strawson 1966:94.
[144] Houlgate 2018:90, original emphasis.
[145] Land 2015:462.
[146] Houlgate 2018:90.
[147] Houlgate 2018:90.
[148] Houlgate 2018:86. In the same spirit: “For Hegel, by contrast, active judgement and understanding are constitutive of experience, for without them we would not experience a world of objects at all. They are the ‘conceptual capacities’ at work in all experience. We experience what we see as a world of objects only because we

Non-propositionalism cannot account for conceptual content. Recall:

> *Givenness*: “It is not autorepresentation [representation-by the subject]. (It is allorepresentation [representation-to the subject], though here, not crucially.)” (Wilson 2018:201).
>
> *Non-propositionalism*: Propositions are sufficient but not necessary for conceptual content.

If the judgmentalist reading is correct, these are our options: on the one hand, Hanna's type of non-conceptualism, as concept use would only take the form of judgments; on the other hand, a propositionalist view, if the act of judgments are necessary for conceptual content.

As with respect to Kant, my interest in McDowell's reading of Hegel does not have an exegetical focus. Anyway, Hegel, just as Kant, exerted an important influence on McDowell's *Cognitive Capacities View*. So I propose, in the next section, to discuss, mainly in the context of the exchange between McDowell and Houlgate, if cognitive capacities in perception implicate the act of judgments.

4.2 HOULGATE'S HEGEL: AN OBJECTION TO MCDOWELL

McDowell claims that his thought on sensory awareness is “analogue to the Hegelian idea that reason is in the world” (*RH1*, 233). In fact, in stressing that rationality “permeates every relationship of man to nature, his sensation, intuition, desire, need,

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employ categories such as ‘something’, ‘thing’, ‘property’ and ‘cause’; and we employ such categories, as we employ all concepts, in acts of judgement. Judgement and understanding, therefore, make experience possible” (Houlgate 2006:253).

instinct" (*SLM*, 32). Hegel, as Houlgate points out, "anticipates McDowell's idea that conceptual capacities are operative not only in explicit acts of judgment but also in perceptual experience"[149]. However, as I have sketched above Houlgate's judgmentalist view contends that McDowell's position is different from Hegel's in one crucial aspect: whereas McDowell, in a wider sense, suggests that in experience we *see* that things are thus and so, Houlgate's Hegel, in its turn, holds that in seeing we actually *judge* that things are thus and so[150].

In terms of our examination of *Same Function Thesis*, Houlgate stresses that despite McDowell and Hegel indeed sharing the thought that the understanding has a constitutive role in perceptual experience, Hegel takes the same function of judgments as not only endowing intuition with synthetic unity, but also as playing the same *action* that it does in explicit judgment. In that case, Houlgate suggests that Hegel takes seriously (and somewhat literally) what Kant says in the sentence which follows from *Same Function Thesis*'s key passage. "The same understanding, therefore, and *indeed by means of the very same actions* through which it brings the logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general" (*CPR* B104–5, emphasis added). But more important than Kant's text and its exegesis, is *why* Houlgate's Hegel holds *Judgmentalism*. To address this question, let's see how Hegel describes human perception[151].

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[149] Houlgate 2006:242.

[150] See Houlgate 2006:246. It is worth of note that Houlgate's account is mostly based on Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Spirit* and some accompanying lectures. See Houlgate 2018:79.

[151] It should be noted that I will not go into a detailed exposition of the faculties that are in play in Hegel's account of perception. For my purposes, it is enough to make sense of Hegel as committed to a kind of *Cognitive Capacities View*, in which conceptual capacities (such as that of judgment) are involved in experience itself. For a detailed exposition of these faculties, see Houlgate 2006 and 2018.

Hegel takes mature human perception, in fact, as involving conceptual capacities. In this respect, Hegel thinks that "*seeing*, and so on, is the concrete habit which *immediately* unites in one simple act the many determinations of sensation, consciousness, intuition, intellect , etc." (*ES,* § 410*R*). As the passage makes clear, sensation is only one part of a set of components involved in perception; we can also observe that consciousness and intuition, for example, are other components. Houlgate highlights that it would imply that each and one of these components have distinctive contributions to perception: "Hegel insists in his philosophy of subjective spirit that sensation, intuition and thought each make a 'notionally separable contribution' to their cooperation"[152]. For Hegel, sensation accounts for the awareness of coloured shapes, sounds, and so on. But sensation itself is not capable of providing "the form of *being* there, and of being *something*, over against the knowing subject"[153]. In this regard, a component such as consciousness, for Hegel, is needed for a subject to take what she perceives to be an object: "the soul, in so far as it only senses, does not yet apprehend itself as a subjective confronting an objective" (*ES*, § 400A). The role of intuition, in its turn, is to actively "produce (...) a transformation of what is sensed into an object existing outside of us" (Hegel 1971:197), although intuition, according to Hegel, is not a mode of receptivity. Indeed, as Houlgate stresses one could not "receive conceptual

[152] Houlgate 2006:242.

[153] Houlgate 2018:82. Cf. Corti 2018. Corti suggests another reading, which he labels "reconstructivist reading". According to it, there would be no non-conceptual content to be conceptualized, in contrast to the "descriptivist reading" Houlgate holds, which claims that non-conceptual contents have to be conceptualized in order to form our perceptual experience of the world (Pippin 2005 also holds a descriptivist reading. See also Sanguinetti and Abath 2018:21-2). I understand that I need not enter into this debate. First, because it concerns the accuracy of McDowell's reading of Hegel that is beyond the scope of this Thesis. Second, because both readings hold *Cognitive Capacities View*, i.e., a view in which cognitive capacities are *somehow* in play in sensory awareness. Besides that, the point is that even according to Houlgate's Hegel "in its activity of 'positing,' [consciousness] thinks things to be what they *are*" (Houlgate 2018:84, original emphasis). So for our concerns, I will be neutral on the very structure of sensation (*Empfindung*). See *VSG I*, 431.

content from the outside world"[154].

From this brief exposition of Hegel's view on perceptual experience, we can identify two unwanted consequences for McDowell's reading of *Same Function Thesis*. First, the idea that sensibility (or sensation), in having this distinct role, does not provide for the objective purport of perceptual experience. Houlgate frames it as follows:

> "our thinking of what we see as being an object is not founded on and justified by what we see, because the content of sensation itself contains no element of 'being an object'. Our conceiving of what we see as an object, and as an object that *is there*, is justified by *thought's* knowing that there are objects (and how such objects are structured)"[155].

Second, if sensibility *itself* lacks empirical significance a subject might need to *actively* appeal to the functions of judgment, if one - like Hegel - holds to the thought that conceptual capacities must be involved in human perception. It would be exactly the role of consciousness in Hegel's account: "Distinguishing an object from itself is itself an act of 'original division' or *Ur-teilen*, and that act in turn involves identifying the object (...) *as* such and such and judging it to be, for example, a red rose"[156]. In sum, the unwished result of the combination of these two consequences, for McDowell, would be as follows: "Hegel (...) holds both that conceptual capacities are operative in receptivity and that our understanding works on the non-conceptual deliverances of sensibility"[157].

Although, in this case, sensibility has non-conceptual content, it is important to note that Houlgate's Hegel must be understood as proposing a version of a *Cognitive Capacities View*. This is so insofar as what Hegel wants with his account of the role of

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[154] Houlgate 2006:249.
[155] Houlgate 2018:86, original emphasis.
[156] Houlgate 2018:83, original emphasis.
[157] Houlgate 2018:252.

consciousness is to incorporate the receptivity of perception into reason. As Houlgate suggests, we might understand this act of consciousness as not self-conscious: “it regards objects as simply *given* to it”[158]. Furthermore, we might take this act of objectification as occurring *at the same time* as we receive sensory content. So in the end, the contribution of sensation and consciousness should be understood as inseparable, as we are aware of sensations *in so far* as we take them as objective. The following metaphor intends to give intelligibility to this thought: “if we see white light through blue glass and the glass turns the light blue, there is just one event as far as we are concerned - seeing blue light - even though two different things make contributions to it”[159]. Therefore, according to Houlgate's Hegel the subject of the experience acts on sensory content as she receives it.

From what has been said so far, I think that both McDowell's and Houlgate's Hegel provide useful insights. From them, one can reunite elements to a basis of a *Cognitive Capacities View*. Regarding the disagreement between them, however, I would like to suggest the following approach.

Setting exegetical matters aside, I propose a focus on the issue regarding the *use* of concepts in experience. To some extent, I believe that the exchange between them is mainly a concern about concept use in experience and its consequences on the matter of how one should understand the nature of the contents of intuitions and its receptive character. That goes somewhat as follows. On the one hand, if one picks *Judgmentalism* one need *not* explain how concept use can take another form than that of judgment. But if Houlgate's Hegelian *Judgmentalism* is right, Hegel, then, would

[158] Houlgate 2006:244.
[159] Houlgate 2018:93.

conceive sensations as playing an isolable contribution on the part of sensibility to the units which are perceivings of objects. As McDowell states, the problem is that "Houlgate went so far as to say that for Hegel we do not, strictly speaking, see objects" (*RH1*, 238). Surely, that would be a fall into the Myth of The Given. Besides that, Houlgate's *Judgmentalism* also faces Travis's kind of objections. And even if Houlgate's Hegel regards perception as having non-conceptual content, how can such a content be both non-conceptual and propositional, insofar as Houlgate, after all, claims that these two components operate *at the same time* in experience?[160] On the other hand, it is true that *Non-propositionalists* need not face Travis's kind of objections. But whoever chooses such an approach needs to offer a story about how concepts can display a non-discursive operation in intuitions.

For those reasons, I think that one needs to go deeper in explaining why (*CPR*: A79/B104-5) could be read in the way McDowell wants, just as I sketched the issue in section 3.3.

4.3 A NON-JUDGMENTALIST READING OF KANT AND HEGEL

In fact, (*CPR*: A79/B104-5) is a complex passage. And I believe that a good way to gain a clearer understanding of it is to have a look at Land's suggestion of a non-judgmentalist reading of sensible synthesis. With the help of Land, I hope to provide a more solid basis for one who wants to read Kant as possibly indicating that intuitional contents could be non-discursive but still conceptual.

[160] Note that this is the case if the approach to content takes the *standpoint of phenomenology*, which, recalls, treats one's experience in the context of the access to content that is analyzed from a first-person perspective. So the question is: for Houlgate's Hegel, what is the nature of the resulting content in a first-person perspective?

Land (2015) shows both textual evidence and philosophical grounds for a non-judgmentalist reading of Kant. For my purposes, I will focus on two issues discussed by Land: first, the proposal of a non-judgmentalist reading that arises from the consequences of Kant's defense of both the logical distinction between the functions of understanding and sensibility and the thesis that sensible synthesis is an act of the understanding; second, that according to Kant a consciousness of categorial unity - an act of sensible synthesis that can occur independently of the act of a judgment - can be, in McDowellian terms, content of perceptual experience.

Consider the following Kant's theses. On the one hand, the thesis stressed in (*CRP* A 51-2/B 75-6), in which he establishes that understanding and sensibility are fundamentally distinct. On the other hand, the one presented in (*CPR* B130), in which he claims that sensible synthesis is an act of the understanding. Now, consider the consequences of the conjunction of these theses in the form of an argument:

> **P1** The functions of sensibility and understanding are different in kind [“these two faculties or capacities cannot exchange their functions” (*CRP* A 51-2/B 75-6)].
>
> **C1** Intuitions cannot have the kind of logical structure characteristic of judgments [“the senses are not capable of thinking anything” (*CRP* A 51-2/B 75-6)].
>
> **P2** Sensible synthesis can only be an act of the understanding, and therefore must involve the use of concepts [“a combination of the manifold of intuition (...) is an action of the understanding, which we would designate with the general title *synthesis*” (*CPR* B130, original emphasis).

C2 (*From C1 and P2*) The use of concepts in sensible synthesis cannot take the form of making a judgment.

C3 (*From C1 through C2*) Concept use in sensible synthesis exhibits a non-judgmental form.

Along the same lines, this is what Land takes as an argument for many proponents of a non-judgmentalist reading of Kant: “since Kant insists that the representations of understanding and sensibility are different in kind, sensible synthesis must confer categorial unity on intuitions in a way that preserves this difference”[161]. From that, one could take *Judgmentalism* as false: it could be the case that *not* “every act of using a concept is an act of making a judgment”. And with regard to McDowell's interpretation of *Same Function Thesis*, this is surely welcome. First, because the argument opens the possibility of a different use of concepts in intuitions, something that can confer conceptual but non-discursive - because non-judgmental - contents to intuitions. Second, because the argument gives a stronger basis for positions such as McDowell's, since we can infer from Kant himself, and not just from McDowell's looser conclusion that Kant “wouldn't need” to embrace *Judgmentalism*. If so, one can offer a clearer reason why one can hold a non-judgmentalist interpretation of the thought that the same function of judgments gives unity to intuitions.

But one point is still missing: once we can entertain this possibility of a different use of concept rather than in judgment, *how*, according to Kant, can the pure concept of

[161] Land 2015:473.

understanding be non-discursively involved in sensible synthesis?

Kant identifies the pure concept of the understanding with the *categories* (*CPR* A80-B105). More specifically, he states that categories would be “concepts of an object in general, by means of which its intuition is regarded as determined with regard to one of the logical functions for judgments” (*CPR* B-128). For Kant, the function of the categories is to unify - or synthesize - a sensible manifold according to a rule. And only through this rule-governed act of synthesis intuitions could represent objects. According to Land, sensible synthesis, in this sense, would be Kant's doctrine in the *Critique* which indicates that “[i]ntuitions depend on category-guided acts of sensible synthesis”[162]. One implication of this doctrine is as follows: since categories, in experience, have objective validity, and an item intuited is a sensible representation of an object, such an item intuited as an object would instantiate a given category. So the idea is that to be a representation of an object, a given manifold might exhibit a unity categorically articulated by the concept of an object. Hence Land's formulation of a condition implied in the notion of categorial unity:

> “*Categorial Unity*: A representation *r* is a representation of an object only if *r* exhibits
> categorial unity”[163].

Accordingly, the pure concept of the understanding would have, in fact, a use in the sensible synthesis of intuitions. However, Land draws attention to the following basis for a non-judgmentalist interpretation of sensible synthesis:

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[162] Land 2015:466.
[163] Land 2015:466.

> "Sensible synthesis is required for having a sensible representation of an object, that is, an intuition. But the mere having of an intuition does not by itself amount to cognition in the [judgmentalist] sense (...). Cognition in this sense requires at least that one judge (...) the intuited object to be such-and-such; that is, it requires the application of concepts in judgment"[164].

Nevertheless, Land points out that despite the use of concepts in intuitions would have a non-judgmental character, the way concepts are applied in sensible synthesis is not supplementary to how they are applied in judgment; furthermore, he stresses that there is, according to Kant, a *dependence* of sensible synthesis on judgment. Recall, this is the idea behind the way I sketched Land's *Non-judgmentalist Reading of Kant* in the end of Chapter 2:

> "(i) An act of sensible synthesis is not identical to an act of judgment";

> "(ii) The capacity for sensible synthesis depends on the capacity for judgment"[165].

Land neatly summarizes the conjunction of these ideas as follows: "this dependence lies at the level of the capacities, not at the level of their acts or exercises. (...) But the capacity to apply concepts in sensible synthesis depends on the capacity to apply concepts in judgment. One cannot possess the former without the latter"[166].

It can be noted by now that Land's reading of Kant reflects McDowell's, once the latter claims that,

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[164] Land 2015:477.
[165] Land 2015:478.
[166] Land 2015:477.

> "We could not have intuitions, with their specific forms of unity, if we could not make judgments, with their corresponding forms of unity. We can even say that the unity providing function is essentially a faculty for discursive activity, a power to judge. But its operation in providing for the unity of intuitions is not itself a case of discursive activity" (*AMG*, 7).

But unlike McDowell, Land gives us more details on how exactly this dependence works. He states that it amounts to the following remark of Kant: "[A] synthetic unity can be none other than that of the combination of the manifold of a given *intuition in general* in an original consciousness, in agreement with the categories, only applied to our *sensible intuition*" (*CRP* B161, original emphasis). This agreement between sensible synthesis and the categories is what accounts for the categorical unity on sensible manifolds. This procedure, then, provides the unity needed for sensible manifolds to be representations of objects. For Land, this categorical unity, though, is closely connected to our capacity for judgment. As we saw, a representation of an object in intuitions instantiates a category; this is another way to say that the categories account for the way an object falls under a concept. An object that instantiates, say, the category "substance-accident", characterizes something that would be represented in a judgment which expresses such a categorical logical form. Since judgments are acts of unifying representations, their logical form reflects a mode of *unity*, which, according to Kant, is said to be a *categorial unity*. To say that "intuitions and judgments have corresponding forms of unity", as McDowell does, is to say, accordingly, that intuitions display a categorial unity that corresponds to the unities of judgments.

For clarity's sake, consider the apprehension of a house as a single object. According to a conceptualist reading, not only space and time are constitutive of

appearances: the categories of quantity must be also in operation. Connolly (2014) is illustrative on the matter:

> "Concepts play a role in the very perceptual apprehension of the house itself. Specifically, the categories of quantity are operative. Consider the example of a melody. Plausibly, when you perceive a melody, you do not just perceive the individual notes. You perceive the notes as being part of a unified whole. Similarly, on Kant's view, when you perceive a house, you perceive the parts of the house as parts of a unified whole. A melody consists of notes, which, over time, make up a temporal whole. A house consists of parts, which, over space, make up a spatial whole. In both cases, the perception of the parts makes the perception of the whole possible (see CPR, B203). As with a melody, the house is a unified whole composed of a totality of parts. The concepts of quantity (unity, plurality, and totality) are operative in its perception"[167].

In the same vein, Land concludes that "intuition is thereby regarded as the sensible representation of an object that *would be* represented discursively in a judgment of categorical form"[168]. In McDowell's terms, "the power to judge", in providing the unity of intuitions, make worldly items suitably available to be exploited in discursive activity.

Then, regarding *Same Function Thesis* I propose the scrutiny of (*CPR*: A79/B104-5) through the clarification of the following terms, which appear in italics: "The *same function* [i.e., the same 'faculty for discursive activity'] that gives *unity* [a categorical unity] to the different representations in a *judgment* [the act of unifying representations] also *gives unity* [*pace* judgmentalists, what gives unity is the function, not judgments *per se*] to the mere *synthesis* [necessarily an act of the understanding] of

[167] Connolly 2014:329-30.
[168] Land 2015:478, emphasis added.

different *representations* [representations of objects] to be in an *intuition* [the sensible correlate representation of a categorical form of the judgment], which, expressed generally, is called the *pure concept of understanding* [categories]".

It is noteworthy that Land's non-judgmentalist interpretation of *Same Function Thesis* helps respond not only to Kantian *Judgmentalism* but also Houlgate's Hegelian *Judgmentalism*. Well, if Hegel follows Kant in the thought that *Same Function Thesis* expresses a condition for sensible synthesis, and if non-judgmentalism fits Kant's account of intuitions, why can't it also work the same way for Hegel's? Here, I agree with McDowell's claim that Hegel's talk of "positing what we see to be an object" can be understood simply as "a way of giving vivid expression to [the thought that] what we perceptually take in is categorially structured, and taking it in - taking anything in - is possible only because the power of thought is in act in our perceptual experience" (*RH3*, 239). Furthermore, if we can maintain Kant's insight that only the understanding can provide for sensible synthesis, as well as the idea that sensibility and understanding "cannot exchange their functions", Hegel's talk of an "act of thought" may admit non-judgmentalism, for the same argumentative reasons as it does for Kant. To that extent, McDowell's discussions on Kant's talk of "an action of the understanding" invites us to consider exactly such a possibility: "Kant does not need to hold that the unity of intuitional content is not given [here, in agreement with Houlgate's claims that 'intuition does not (...) alter the given content of sensation']. What he really wants to insist is that it is not Given: that it is not provided by sensibility alone [whilst here in contrast to Houlgate's Hegel]" (*AMG*, 7). In this sense, although one can deny that sensibility alone makes a distinct contribution - such as that of a sensory impression of sensible features

independently obtained regardless of the understanding - one can still maintain the fundamental distinction between sensibility and understanding.

Beyond that, I suggest that McDowell's distinction between the notions of “Given” and “given”, in the context of his reading of Kant, can be seen as analogous to the distinctive roles played by the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Deduction in the *Critique*. What I mean is that it is possible for one to interpret the Aesthetic as a part of a whole, instead of a self-standing section in the book. In this sense, Hanna can be taken as embracing the latter option, that is, the so-called *pre-deduction* reading[169]. In contrast, one can adopt a *post-deduction* interpretation and suggest that it would have been harder for Kant to cover up the necessary contribution between sensibility and understanding all at once. A *post-deduction* interpretation, in this sense, would be exactly the reading advanced by people such as McDowell, Griffith, and Ginsborg, when they suggest that the possibility opened in the Aesthetic is supposed to be ruled out in the Deduction. So according to a *post-deduction* reading, there is, in fact, a sense in which sensibility is given and that it is a distinctive faculty - as stated in the Aesthetic; but what one must bear in mind is that, after all, it is the understanding that provides sensible synthesis with objective intelligibility.

I also think that McDowell's *post-deduction* reading reflects the same strategy implicit in his response to Houlgate:

> “In describing [the idea that perceiving is a unity], one has to begin by saying something about the elements in the unity, one by one. One cannot describe the whole all at once. And one cannot make it fully clear that the elements are only moments in the whole until the account approaches completeness. That means that a preliminary account of

[169] I credit Griffith 2012:200 for the terminology.

> something one means to be introducing only as a moment in the whole can seem to be a self-standing description of something that will figure, even when the account is complete, as an isolable contribution. That would be a misunderstanding, and I think Houlgate falls into such a misunderstanding about the position of sensation in Hegel's conception of perceiving" (*RH3*, 237).

He goes on to conclude: "We can conceive the unifying of perceivings as an act of the power of thought without needing to suppose that in the unities that the act produces, sensory material is isolable otherwise than by abstraction from the whole" (*RH3*, 239).

In light of McDowell's new attempt to address *Query*, I believe that *Same Function Thesis* is also helpful in the following sense. Kant's doctrine, according to a non-judgmentalist reading, provides a means to avoid the Myth of the Given in the way McDowell wants to, that is, through the search for a middle ground between the assurance of the cognitive significance of experiences and the thought that the contents of experience must be non-propositional/non-discursive.

So I conclude with the following remark on the part of McDowell, which to some extent summarizes what we have seen about McDowell's particular reading of Kant and Hegel, and the implication of those readings in McDowell's own thought on perceptual experience:

> "If experience comprises intuitions, there is a way between these positions. Intuitions bring our surroundings into view, but not in an operation of mere sensibility, so we avoid Travis's form of the Myth of the Given. But the conceptual content that allows us to avoid the Myth is intuitional, not propositional, so experiencing is not taking things to be so. In bringing our surroundings into view, experiences entitle us to take things to be so (...)" (*AMG*, 11).

4.4. DISCURSIVE CAPACITIES AND THE WORLD

At the end of Chapter 2, I promised to make an appeal to McDowell's readings of Kant and Hegel in order to find a means for a conceptual-based account of the non-discursive structure of perceptual experiences, especially in response to non-conceptualist objections such as that framed by Cussins. In other words, I said that one of the aims of Chapters 3 and 4 was to find a basis for a *Non-propositionalist* view on conceptual content.

Through a non-judgmentalist reading of *Same Function Thesis*, I have tried to give intelligibility to the thought that the conceptual contents of experience could exhibit a non-propositional character. But one point is still missing: how can one make use of this thought to respond to objections such as that of Cussins?

Cussins, as we saw, argues for the idea that since perceptual experience has a non-discursive/non-propositional character it must have non-conceptual content. In being non-propositional, the non-conceptual content of experience, in terms of *Reason*$_{AS}$., would respond to the normative concept of *activity* rather than the normative concept of *truth*. Recall:

> *Normative Concept of Activity View*: In terms of *Reason*$_{AS}$, the contents of perceptual experiences are answerable to the normative concept of *activity* rather than the normative concept of truth.

Regarding the “Schubert case”, the *Reason*$_{AS}$ for the judgment “that wasn't Schubert” was the maestro's *performance* at the piano. As Cussins has stressed, “her playing opens the content music by Schubert to reflective exploration”. And although this

content is taken to be non-conceptual, Cussins believes that it can, in McDowell's terms, *be suitably available for judgment*. The difference between the two views can be framed as follows. For Cussins, what makes a perceptual non-propositional content suitably available to be $Reason_{AS}$ for judgment is *activity*; for McDowell, what makes a perceptual non-propositional content suitably available for judgment, according to his new position, is the involvement of the conceptual *faculty for discursive activity*[170]. To put the point another way, Cussins thinks that *activity* is sufficient for $Reason_{AS}$, whereas McDowell holds that conceptual capacities are necessary for $Reason_{AS}$.

This is just another way to say that even McDowell's new position, *contra* Cussins, still holds the *Normative Concept of Truth View*. In accordance with McDowell's new position, we can reformulate such a view as follows:

> *Normative Concept of Truth View*[2]: In terms of $Reason_{AS}$ and/or $Reason_{OB}$, *content-awareness* is answerable to the normative concept of the contents of judgments, namely *truth*[171].

In fact, although McDowell now thinks that the contents of perceptual experience are non-propositional the involvement of capacities for *judgment* in experience entail *Normative Concept of Truth View*. But if one takes Cussins's account as persuasive, how can one give intelligibility to the thought that, say, the maestro's performance might express something true through the *action* itself?

I believe that McDowell's comments on John Haugeland's criticism of "positivism", as the latter understands it, are illuminative. First, because McDowell, as

[170] Or, "the same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgement".
[171] Recall: *content-awareness:* thinkables are contents but not objects of sensory awareness.

well as Haugeland, analyzes similar examples like that of Cussins. Second, because in his exchange with Haugeland McDowell brings exactly his interpretation of the Deduction and of Hegel as an inspiration for the thought that there is a sense in which (non-propositional) action can also be understood as a meaningful expression of truth.

As McDowell indicates, Haugeland takes “positivism” as “the idea that reality, or the world, is exhausted by what can be truly said to be the case”, or “that reality can be completely captured by true propositions” (*RDW*, 311)[172]. Within the context of the obvious allusion to the first sentence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, Haugeland highlights that McDowell's thought on perceptual experience is a developed version of this type of “positivism”:

> “Remarkably, it was several decades before Sellars brought the issue into focus and pointed the way out. If experience is to provide rational grounds for empirical knowledge, then it must itself already be in 'the logical space of reasons'; that is, it must already be conceptually articulated with the logical form of the factual. That left it to McDowell to extend the argument beyond experience to the entire world, insofar as it is knowable at all. 'The realm of the conceptual,' McDowell says, 'is unbounded on the outside' - a self-conscious reformulation of Wittgenstein's positivist slogan[173].

In that sense, we can also take “positivism” as the thought that there must be an equation of what is the case with the world. Call it the “positivist equation”. Against that, Haugeland points out that there are instances of knowledge about the world that “cannot be entirely verbal”[174]. In using scientific know-how as a paradigmatic example,

[172] Here is Haugeland himself on “positivism”: “Picturesquely, it is the view that reality is 'exhausted' by the facts - that is, by the true propositions. (Note that 'positive' and 'propose' stem from the same root.)” (Haugeland 2016:293).
[173] Haugeland 2016:295.
[174] Haugeland 2016:297.

Haugeland contends that the knowledge acquisition of some scientific practices is not solely factual. For instance, he states that the hand-down of a skillful know-how of an empirical technique may not be "expressed in words or formulas"[175]. As he suggests, tutors, for example, in most of the time motivate the students to *practice*, that is, to perform practical exercises as they learn them: "First they watch while the tutor *demonstrates*, and then they try it themselves, repeatedly, under critical supervision"[176]. For Haugeland, what is being displayed as the tutor hands-down the know-how to the novice may not "be reduced to a text"[177], or articulated discursively. From that, Haugeland concludes that "positivism" could only comprehend propositions - or discursive capacities - as *independent* of the idea of the world/reality. Haugeland's point is that if a piece of know-how is knowledge about the world, and if "positivism" conceives the world as what can be captured by true propositions - or as an equation between reality and discursive capacity - scientific know-how, as being non-verbal, would end up not being a knowledge about the world, which is inconceivable.

Nonetheless, McDowell will try to show that discursive capacities and reality should be understood *interdependently*. And within this context of the exchange between McDowell and Haugeland, I would like to return to Cussins's view. One can take Cussins's view on non-conceptual content as suggesting a similar approach to that of Haugeland's view on know-how. Take a look, for instance, at how Cussins describes the contents of the $Reason_{AS}$ for a judgment such as "that wasn't Schubert":

> "What was the content of this reason? If we were to express it in words then we should talk about a distinctive way, exhibited by the pianist, in which the activity of piano playing

[175] Haugeland 2016:298.
[176] Haugeland 2016:297, emphasis added.
[177] Haugeland 2016:297.

> might be structured. It's easier to *show* what this way is than to state it in words, but it's not ineffable: after years of talking about music together we have our ways of describing the different styles and authorities with which hands fly across keyboards"[178].

In saying that it is "easier to show what this way is than to state it in words", Cussins suggests that experience can for itself account for knowledge about the world, without any involvement of discursive capacities. To that extent, positions such as that of Cussins and Haugeland seem to propose that there is a role for experience in our knowledge about the world that does not lie in, or does not depend on, discursive capacities. In fact, in holding *Normative Concept of Activity View*, Cussins can be seen as denying the idea implicit in Haugeland's notion of "positivism", which states that reality is exhausted by what can be said to be the case; Haugeland, in its turn, can also be understood as holding a version of a *Normative Concept of Activity View*, as he claims that the *normative concept* (in Cussins's terms) which guides know-how about the world is *practice* rather than truth, just like the following passage clearly indicates: "in learning [in actual practice] what will and won't work, or what will work *better* - that is, in acquiring the relevant know-how - scientists are learning something about the world"[179].

McDowell acknowledges, in fact, that "one can know how to work with a material without having explicit concepts", and that the knowledge of the actual practice is nonetheless "a function of the world" (*RWD*, 321). However, he will contend that the fact that a given experience may not be expressible in words (or formulas, symbols, and so on) does not imply that there cannot be other expressive capacities capable of

[178] Cussins 2002:53, emphasis added.
[179] Haugeland 2016:297, emphasis added. Recall that what is important for us is not the normative concept of activity *per se* but the idea of the possibility of giving experience another normative concept than truth.

displaying a know-how - say, a scientific knowledge or a knowledge about Schubert - as being a case of speaking something true about the world.

As instances of these other expressive capacities McDowell presents those that, although not able to fully specify a given practice or action, sufficiently say true things about the world. Then, linguistic expressions such as “this is Shubert”, or, in the case of scientific know-how, like “here is a way one can work with this material”[180], can be seen, according to McDowell, as cases of speaking something truly:

> “(...) why should that debar rationalists from counting them as cases of speaking the truth? We can agree with Haugeland that there is more to the world than what can be expressed in exploitations of finitely specifiable formal systems. But on a sufficiently liberal conception of capacities to say things, that is no threat to the idea that the world is exhausted by what can be truly said” (*RWD*, 322).

It is noteworthy that at least in the “Schubert case” there is a linguistic expression involved in the action. As Cussins himself says, the maestro provides the *Reason*$_{AS}$ while “sitting down at her piano and playing as she pronounces, 'Now, *zis* is Schubert!'”[181]. One can contend that there is a sense in which linguistic expressions are needed to at least contextualize what the performance intends. For example, as McDowell would understand the “Schubert case” the maestro, in using a demonstrative expression such as “this is Schubert”, intends to say something true about the “skilled manifestation of music by Schubert”, as she gives *Reason*$_{AS}$ for the judgment in question. McDowell's point is that although it is correct to say that less specifiable linguistic expressions such as “this is Schubert” are not capable of giving explicit

[180] See *RWD*, 322.
[181] Cussins 2002:53. Here, Cussins plays with the maestro's Russian accent.

meaning as action and practice do, one can count a demonstrative expression as still capturing something true about that action and practice.

In this sense, McDowell believes that Haugeland's mistake is to conceive “what can be truly said as restricted to what can be made explicit by words (or other symbols) without the help from anything besides themselves” (*RWD*, 322). McDowell thinks that such “things besides explicit words”, for instance demonstrative expressions, are sufficient for holding an image of the world as being “exhausted by what can be truly said”. What McDowell wants to emphasize is that there is no gap between discursive capacities and the world: “[t]hose are two angles on a single kind of thing, each intelligible only in the context of the other” (*RWD*, 326), insofar as there would be nothing outside the realm of the conceptual.

In his exchange with Haugeland, McDowell appeals to Kant and Hegel to provide intelligibility to this idea that discursive capacities and reality might be understood together. One of the reasons for this call upon them is the fact that Haugeland ascribes “positivism” to Kant: “the transcendental deduction of the categories is nothing other than an attempt to prove that there can be nothing to the empirical world except such as can be the content of a judgment”[182]. In the face of it, McDowell (*RWD*) will explore how Kant and Hegel can be helpful in understanding why Haugeland's interpretation of “positivism” does not hold. To do so, McDowell will explain why the Deduction, in contrast to Haugeland's reading, is not meant to argue for any substantive thesis concerning empirical reality.

As we saw, McDowell's Kant stresses that “it is analytic that empirical reality would be thinkable if we could make sense of the idea of empirical reality” (*RWD*, 319).

[182] Haugeland 2016:295.

But McDowell notes, however, that Kant cannot directly establish an identity between empirical reality and reality itself. That would be so since Kant states that sensibility plays a distinctive role in a subject's access to reality: “It is thus just as necessary to make the mind's concepts sensible (i.e., to add an object to them in intuition) as it is to make its intuitions understandable (i.e., to bring them under concepts)” (*CRP* A 51-2/B 75-6). To that extent, Haugeland's notion of the “positivist equation”, in Kant's sense, would need to make sense of the idea that the understanding needs sensibility in order to have a subject matter.

In this respect, McDowell will try to show that Kant's issue in the Deduction is not, despite Haugeland's suggestion, the quest for any proof for something like “positivism”, but actually a search for a way to guarantee that empirical concepts have objective validity. To account for Kant's issue in the Deduction, McDowell believes that what one needs is to “stop supposing that the formal character of the power of thought can be understood in abstraction from something that plays the role of sensibility” (*RWD*, 320), so one can make proper sense of Kant's idea that empirical reality is not out of reach of the categories. For McDowell, the best way to dissolve this kind of worry is to appeal, now, to Hegel's conception of *logic*.

According to McDowell, in fact, this would be a somewhat natural step, since Hegel's thinking can be seen as a development from Kant's. Such a development is framed by McDowell as Hegel's appropriation of the categories to his notion of “the Concept”. For clarity's sake, here is Sanguinetti on the Concept:

> “[T]he Concept represents an ontological mode of self-determination of reality as a whole. (...) In the Concept, the determinations of reality manifest themselves as an

> immanent development, in which determinate concepts are conceived of as internal articulations of the universal structure of the Concept itself. They are 'posited' by it, but not as something other with respect to the Concept itself. Rather they are internal particularizations of the Concept" (...)[183].

According to this conception, reality itself, in contrast to Kant, *is* the Concept. More than an actualization of conceptual capacities, the Concept, in Hegel's sense, would be self-actualizing: "the categories fall short of the Concept, properly understood, in that they do not contain, but stand over against, their own actualization in reality. That reflects Kant's dualistic conception of how the understanding relates to sensibility" (*RWD*, 243). As reality, in Hegel, would not be in opposition to the conceptual, he would offer, according to McDowell, a less problematic equation of the forms of reality with the forms of thought, to the extent that Hegel, unlike Kant, would not need to explain how sensibility - something that stands *over against* the understanding - is not external to the realm of the conceptual.

For McDowell, then, once we suppose that reality (or in a sense, intuition) should not be taken as being independent of the realm of the conceptual (or in a sense, the understanding or the Concept), the world could be seen as exhausted by what can be truly expressed, even if an expressive capacity, such a demonstrative, would not be able to *completely* capture the world through discursive capacities.

Cussins stresses, however, that regarding non-conceptual content one should not be misled by demonstrative expressions:

[183] Sanguinetti 2018:141.

> “The bearer of the content, here, is the activity; the demonstrative functions to direct our attention towards the activity – it does not itself say what the content is. (...) That the linguistic demonstrative word often expresses a concept tells us nothing, in this context, about the nature of the content expressed (...). The demonstrative functions here as a pointer towards the expressive item (which is then allowed to 'speak' for itself), and so nothing can be deduced about the content of the (...) the demonstrative” (Cussins 2002:n.15).

Cussins seems to suggest that although the demonstrative expression involves concepts, experience itself falls short of the realm of the conceptual. So what is relevant for the “expressive item”, i.e. the activity itself, has nothing to do, at least in principle, with the demonstrative expression. In other words, the demonstrative would not be necessary to determine the content of the experience. In this sense, what is displayed - i.e. the maestro's performance - although not having a verbal character, determines *for itself* - i.e., without any help from concepts - what the maestro means by saying “this is not Schubert”[184]. At first sight, Cussins seems right about that. For instance, consider a situation in which, after the teacher claims that “this is not Schubert”, the pupil asks something like “what do you mean?”, and only then the maestro plays the piano in response to the question. In such a case, the action is even “farther” from the maestro's demonstrative linguistic expression. It is also plausible that there are many contexts in which one does not even actually need to say anything while displaying - in a successful communicative way - a reason. Think of a musical course - say, “Introduction to Schubert” - in which a teacher, while playing along the same piece with her pupil, shows

[184] In McDowell's terms, what people like Haugeland and Cussins mean is that activity or practice “enters into determining what it is that being said” (*RWD*, 322).

how to correctly play a part wrongly played by her pupil an instant ago. An eye contact may suffice for direct one's attention towards an activity that displays, say, “this is the right way to play the piece”, which might be understood as a candidate for reasons for what the teacher communicates with her eye contact. For those reasons, I believe that, at least for now, one might focus on action itself, instead of what surrounds it. It is true that one could argue that, through the lenses of a *Cognitive Capacities View*, an expressive capacity such as an eye contact may be taken as involving conceptual capacities. Surely, that can even be understood, in a conceptualist framework, in the same spirit of Cussins's suggestion that what is linguistically mute can nonetheless “speak”. Be that as it may, my point is that what is at stake for both McDowell and Cussins is whether action - and only action, e.g. only the performance at the piano, in the “Schubert case” - is capable of giving *Reason*$_{AS}$, in spite of how one might understand the involvement of demonstratives or any other expressive capacities. So I think that our question should be about the *nature* of what perceptually grounds a judgment. In Cussins's terms, a question with the form “what is the content?” of perception that gives reason to perceptual judgments.

McDowell's new position, as we saw, states that intuitional contents are not discursive. That does not mean, however, that intuitional contents are non-conceptual:

> “If intuitional content is not discursive, why go on insisting it is conceptual? Because every aspect of the content of an intuition is present in a form in which it is already suitable to be the content associated with a discursive capacity, if it is not - at least not yet - actually so associated. That is part of the force of saying, with Kant, that what gives unity to intuitions is the same function that gives unity to judgments” (*AMG*, 7).

For our current purposes, what is remarkable about this passage is that what matters for McDowell's new position is the thought that the unity of the content of intuitions is endowed by the functions of the understanding. It is in that sense that intuitional contents are still conceptual. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the contents of intuitions are not articulated in nature, that does not mean that they are not articul*able*. In being so, the content of intuition is potentially the content of a judgment. For McDowell, in line with his reading of Kant and Hegel, perceptual experiences have conceptual content not only because demonstratives or other expressive capacities are cases of "speaking" the truth, but also because what is presented in experience is potentially articulable in judgments:

> "With much of the content of an ordinary visual intuition, the capacities that are in play in one's having it as part of the content of one's intuition are not even susceptible of discursive exercise. One can make use of content's being given in an intuition to acquire a new discursive capacity, but with much of the content of an ordinary intuition, one never does that. (Think of the finely discriminable shapes and shades of colour that visual experience presents to one.) Nevertheless an intuition's content is all conceptual, in this sense: it is in the intuition in a form in which one could make it, that very content, figure in discursive activity. That would be to exploit a potential for discursive activity that is already there in the capacities actualized in having an intuition with that content" (*AMG*, 8).

Nevertheless, it seems that, for Cussins, it is not a problem for his argument that all the content of experience would be articulable, as positions as McDowell's suggests. In effect, Cussins himself admits that the reason for the judgment "this is Schubert" "it's not ineffable [insofar as] after years of talking about music together we have our ways of

describing the different styles and authorities with which hands fly across keyboards"[185]. Cussins's point, then, seems to be whether or not one can provide an account of a mode of presentation of the world that is radically distinct from the mode of presentation characteristic of propositional thoughts. And as we saw, such an account would be possible, according to Cussins, not *because* experience, in most of the cases, exhibits a richer or fine-grained perceptual content, but because there would be a mode of experience that makes the world available *not as a truth-maker*. Nonetheless, this type of availability of the world, for Cussins, could perfectly account for *Reason*$_{AS}$. What is at stake, then, is whether the normative condition that governs experiential presentations of the world can be taken as not being guided by truth.

As this debate seems to be not yet resolved, I think that McDowell's appeal to Kant and Hegel only partially explains why non-discursive/non-propositional contents could still be considered as being conceptual, insofar as in the specific context of the normative conditions for *Reason*$_{AS}$ there is more to say about why the normative concept of truth is necessary for taking a reason as a *Reason*$_{AS}$.

I believe that it is enough for a chapter concerning Kant and Hegel. At this point, the issues regarding the contrast between McDowell's and Cussins's positions risk going too far away from what is involved in McDowell's reading of these German philosophers. In Chapter 6, though, another appeal to Cussins will be pertinent: in defending my own argument, I will offer what I think is a possible candidate to be the normative concept of perceptual experience.

In this chapter, I have discussed McDowell's reading and the objections to it exclusively in the context of *Representationalist* accounts, be they conceptualist or

[185] Cussins 2002:53, emphasis added.

non-conceptualist. But Representationalism in a broad sense faces serious objections. Travis's *Argument from Looks* is one of them. Chapter 5 is dedicated to discussing in detail the Anti-representationalist objections to McDowell's *Cognitive Capacities View* as well as his responses to them.

4.5 CONCLUSION

McDowell has argued that for Kant intuitions are determined by the functions of judgment. I have suggested that *Same Function Function Thesis* - Kant's dictum that says that the same function that gives unity to judgments also gives unity to intuitions - is crucial to understanding what is in play in McDowell's new position. I have also highlighted that *Same Function Function Thesis* helps us make sense of McDowell's reading of Hegel on perceptual experience. But I have presented several objections to McDowell's conceptualist reading of Kant and Hegel. One of them holds that the unity of intuitions is independent of conceptual capacities. Another, says that if *Same Function Function Thesis* is the right reading, the subject of intuitions actually makes judgments in experiential intake. This is called a *Judgmentalist* reading. Nevertheless, McDowell holds a *Non-Judgmentalist* one. I have discussed the implications of both readings. With the help of Thomas Land, I have gone deeper into the arguments in favor of a *Non-Judgmentalist* reading. I have suggested that despite McDowell being pressed by these objections, Land's interpretation helps one to find ways to avoid them. In this context, I suggested that McDowell's reading of Kant and Hegel must be analyzed in terms of their persuasiveness and philosophical plausibility rather than in an exegetical

way. Finally, I have discussed Haugeland and Cussins's criticism of McDowell in light of his reading of Kant and Hegel.

5.0 THE TRAVIS-MCDOWELL DEBATE

For our purposes, the exchange between McDowell and Travis concerns two principal issues. First, the one regarding the status of the so-called “particular cases” of perceptual experience and their rational relation to perceptual judgments. For example, how can a given particular case, say, the sun setting over Berlin today, relate to a judgment such as *that the sun has set*? We can also put the point as being an issue regarding how cognitive capacities are responsive to particular cases of perceptual experience. What is at stake is the relation in which a particular case falls under the representation of a generality. According to Travis, “generality” should be understood, in this context, as the “way for things to be (...) under which a thought presents the particular case as falling”[186]. As we saw, according to McDowell a way for a thing to be - say, to be a red light run - is something not only intrinsic to cognitive capacities, but also the way a subject’s “experience makes it available to her how things are” - as stated by *Truism*. In effect, this would be, for him, just another way to claim that *thinkables* can be contents of perceptual experience. Nevertheless, Travis will object to the idea that what can raise the question of truth can, somehow, be a perceivable thing. In the wake of Frege’s remarks on the matter, Travis will claim that there is actually a logical distinction between what is visible, audible, and so on, and things such as *that things are thus and so*. Travis concludes that perceptual experience could not be a matter of p-representation. This concerns our second issue. *Contra* McDowell and other

[186] Travis 2013c:236.

Representationalists, Travis brings what Wilson (2018) has called "*The Argument from Looks*", which tries to undermine any possible version of the idea that perceptual experiences have content. Regarding McDowell's version of Representationalism, "*The Argument from Looks*", as we will see, seems to debar the notion of *p-representational-awareness*. In the face of it, McDowell, through the notion of *content-awareness*, will try to reject one of the premises of Travis's argument against Representationalism.

I will deal, first, with Travis's *Argument from Looks*, present in *The Silence of the Senses*, as well as with how McDowell responds to both in *TFKG*. Second, I will treat the issues regarding the "particular cases" through *Reason's Reach*, *Unlocking the Outer World, and The Move, the Divide, the Myth, and its Dogma*, where Travis is directly in conversation with McDowell. Finally, I will sketch the alternative way to avoid Travis's objections that I will present in detail in Chapter 6.

5.1 TRAVIS'S *ARGUMENT FROM LOOKS*

Wilson (2018) takes Travis's Anti-representationalist objections as concerning two main challenges to the Representationalist. On the one hand, what Wilson labels "the individuation question", which asks for an explanation on how the contents of experience obtain. On the other hand, "the availability question", which, in its turn, asks for an explanation on how the contents of experience are involved in a subject's personal-level cognitive state[187].

[187] See Wilson 2018:217.

According to Wilson, to deal with these questions, one should focus on two of the four conditions for p-representation, namely *Face Value* and *Availability*. Recall:

> (ii) *Face Value*: "It has, or gives perceptual experience, a face value, at which it can be taken or declined (or discounted)."
>
> (iv) *Availability*: "When we are thus represented to, we can recognize that and how, this is so; most pertinently, we can appreciate what it is that is thus represented to us as so"[188].

Regarding *Face Value*, what is at stake is the thought that perceptual experiences exhibit a content that has a univocal face-value, in the sense that Representationalist positions often take experience as p-representing worldly things in some *particular* way. In the case of *p-representational-awareness*, for example, it has a propositional character that *determines* or *singles out* the face-value of the experience - that is to say, sensory awareness is supposed to p-represents that *o* is *F*.

According to Wilson (2018:203), one of the ways Travis rejects *Face Value* is in saying that perceptual judgments are ulterior to perceptual experience. The idea here is that the Anti-representationalist need not withhold that propositional contents are intrinsically related to perceptual experiences, since for them there would be nothing wrong in supposing that non-representational sensory awareness token representational contents that occur only downstream from experience, as in the case of judgments. The contents of perceptual judgments, then, would not be dependent or derived upon experiences[189].

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[188] Wilson 2018:201.

[189] Travis also objects to positions such as content pluralism or those which hold the idea of "disjunctive contents" (cf. Chalmers 2006; Crane 2013). In order to reject *Face Value*, the former suggests that experiences may be taken as

Concerning *Availability*, Wilson highlights that this condition for p-representation is closely related to *Face Value* and *Givenness*. As noted in Chapter 1, this is so since what is given in sensory awareness must be available to the subject in a manner that she must be in a position to accept or decline the p-representational contents of her experience. In that sense, to be able to form any judgments a subject must have means of accessing the contents of sensory awareness. Such p-representational content, then, could not be explained, for example, as a form of sub-personal representation[190]. As Travis stresses, one "cannot represent things to people as so in a way that they simply cannot recognize as doing that"[191]. Nonetheless, as *per Givenness* p-representational contents cannot be a case of autorepresentation. In other words, these contents must be given *to* the subject in sensory awareness. As Wilson says, "perceivers must be capable of grasping *how* that experience represents the world as being—or, to put it another way, *what* it would take for their experience to be accurate or veridical"[192]. So p-representational contents, according to Wilson's reading of Travis, have a face-value that must be cognitively available to the subject, as well as it must be understood not as a representation *by* the subject, but as a p-representation *for* the subject. That said, *Availability* has two main characteristics. On the one hand, the content of experience must be available to the subject solely in virtue of her sensory awareness, and not through any non-perceptual state. The Representationalist, then, must be capable of providing an account that explains how p-representational contents are available to the

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having not only one but many contents; the latter, that experiences may p-represent a disjunct of contents that captures each particular way a worldly item might be taken - e.g. as a book or a rectangular object or (...). Travis's argument, however, is also supposed to target such views, insofar as they are compatible with what *Face Value* states: the Anti-representationalist can argue, for example, that the face-value of such an experience is this disjunction in its entirety.

[190] For a rejection of *Availability*, see Burge 2010.

[191] Travis 2004:61.

[192] Wilson 2018:204; emphasis added.

subject independently of non-perceptual states, such as judgments. On the other hand, the Representationalist must show how one is able to recognize what makes experience to be veridical on the basis of what is given through the p-representational content.

One more important point regarding *Availability* is the idea that one need not always be aware of one's p-representational states. That surely would be to over intellectualize perceptual experience. In effect, a Representationalist such as McDowell stresses that the involvement of conceptual capacities in experience occurs in a passive manner. Houlgate's Hegel also indicates something similar, in saying that perceptual experience involves conceptual capacities that, recall, are "tacit and implicit, not explicit"[193]. Moreover, and relatedly, *Availability* does not require that a subject must be capable of being reliably aware of the accuracy conditions of her experience, as she may be ignorant of some epistemic issues regarding, for example, illusion or hallucination. As we saw in the Müller-Lyer example, one may not be aware that it is an illusion. P-representation, in this sense, amounts to one's ability to grasp the face value of experience, regardless of the fact that, as McDowell himself suggests, one may refrain from an initial inclination and judge it to be otherwise.

With that in mind, Travis presents what Wilson labels "*The Argument from Looks*", to show that Representationalism is false[194]. As Wilson suggests, "Travis's argumentative strategy is relatively straightforward"[195]: p-representation does not hold, and so Representationalism is false, according to Travis, in so far as *Face Value* and

[193] Houlgate 2006:245.
[194] For other objections to Representationalism, see Breckenridge 2007, Fish 2009, and Locatelli and Wilson 2017.
[195] Wilson 2018:205.

Availability cannot be conciliated, for reasons that will become clear soon. Wilson frames the argument as follows:

> "**P1** If visual experiences were p-representational then their content would be recognizable in virtue of how, in experience, things perceptually appear, or look [to the subject]. (*Looks-indexing*)
>
> **P2** Visual looks are incapable of making p-representational content recognizable since they are comparative and so equivocal between multiple contents.
>
> **P3** Thinkable looks are incapable of making p-representational content recognizable since they are not wholly perceptual.
>
> **P4** There is no further notion of looks that is both wholly perceptual and capable of making p-representational content recognizable.
>
> **C1** (*From P2 through P4*) The content of visual experiences cannot be recognizable on the basis of how things look [to the subject].
>
> **C2** (*From P1 and C1*) Visual experiences are not p-representational"[196].

In (P1), Travis supposes that, for the Representationalist, the best way to hold *Availability* is to take p-representational contents as being "recognizable", or *looks-indexing*: "[i]f perception is representational, then, for any perceptual experience, there must be a way things are according to it. If such content is looks-indexed, then things looking as they do on a given occasion must fix what representational content

[196] Wilson 2018:206.

experience then has"[197]. Well, this seems plausible insofar as the way a subject describes the face-value of her experience is dependent upon how things appear in sensory awareness. So for a *look* to be indexed, according to Wilson, is for it to be recognizable in light of how things look or appear. Travis's point is that *looks* entitle the subject to recognize the p-representational contents of her experience, not that looks determine or fix p-representational contents. "Looks", then, is an aspect of experience that enables one to make p-representational contents available to her consciousness from an appearance that is recognizable to her. (P2) through (P4) is meant to list the candidates of *looks* putatively capable of satisfying such indexing. Central to "*The Argument from Looks*" is the thought that there is no sense of *looks* appropriate to the recognizability of p-representational contents; in other words, that there is no sense of *looks* appropriate to visual experience. As we will see in detail, the supposedly only two possible senses of *looks* - namely *visual looks* and *thinkable looks*, according to Travis - will fail: on the one hand, *Face Value* - as per (P2) - is contradicted by *visual looks*; on the other hand, *Availability* - as per (P3) - is contradicted by *thinkable looks*[198]. (P4), then, is supposed to reject the candidates of *looks* that are meant to satisfy *looks-indexing*. Finally, (C1) is an implication of (P4); (C2) concludes by stating that Representationalism is false.

Wilson highlights that, according to the *Argument from Looks*", Representationalists face the following "dilemma":

> "In order to defend their view, they must either (a) elucidate some notion of looks that is capable of making the relevant content available - something that Travis argues is

[197] Travis 2004:71.
[198] For discussions on other senses of looks, see Chisholm 1957and Jackson 1997.

> impossible - by rejecting one of P2 through P4, or (b) reject *Looks-indexing*, or one of Travis's other conditions for p-representation, substantially weakening and potentially undermining their view"[199].

Wilson's point is that the Representationalist must be capable of giving an account of p-representational contents that either provides another sense of *looks* other than *thinkable* or *visual looks* or a rejection of *Looks-indexing* that does not deflate her position[200]. Next, let's have a look at the notions of *thinkable* and *visual* looks, so we can have a better understanding of Travis's objections.

In the case of *visual looks*, an object or scene presents itself as having a look that is comparable to the *looks* of other objects or scenes. As Wilson claims, "visual looks relate to resemblances between objects"[201]. Consider the visual awareness of a red rose. It is crucial to note, first, that *for the Representationalist* the object *of* visual awareness is *what looks to be a red rose* - the *visual look* of a red rose - not the relevant object that looks to be a red rose. The problem with *visual looks*, according to Travis, is its equivocal character: a plastic red rose may look like a red rose as much as a real red rose does. If this is the case, it is not clear which content is associated with the *visual look*. Furthermore, it would not make much sense to speak of correctness conditions here, as the plastic red rose is not actually a real red rose. The plastic red rose looks like a real red rose not because one's experience p-represents that *o* is *F* - in the present case, the supposed p-representation of the plastic red rose *as being* a red rose. What experience reveals to the subject is a plastic imitation of a real red rose

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[199] Wilson 2018:207.
[200] For other objections to the *Argument from Looks*, see Byrne 2009, Siegel 2010 and Schellenberg 2011. Cf. Burge 2010.
[201] Wilson 2018:209.

which is comparable to a real red rose in the way it looks to be. In other words, Travis contends that the object of visual awareness must be the relevant object, i.e., a plastic imitation of a real red rose which is comparable to a real red rose. As *per* (P2), then, Travis argues that *visual looks* fail to meet *Looks-indexing*, in so far as what visually looks to be something cannot fix the content of visual awareness.

In the case of *thinkable looks*, the way in which an object or a scene appears can be taken as evidence for a propositional content: it can look, say, *that the rose is red*, something which can also suggest a perceptual judgment with the same content. In Travis's words, a *thinkable look* is "a matter of what can be gathered from, or what is suggested by, the facts at hand, or those visibly (audibly, etc.) on hand"[202]. In that sense, to be indexed is the same as to have the same content to that of the judgments a given p-representation may incline one to make. Suppose that John has in view an object that looks to be a red rose. Now, think of him as taking the same object as being a plastic rose, as he just bought one minutes ago. Travis's point is that as long as the two experiences are supposed to be qualitatively indistinguishable, whatever way John takes the relevant object to be - as a real or a plastic red rose - cannot be explained by sensory awareness alone. However, if one argues that the *thinkable look* is what indexes the p-representational content of the experience, what is left for the Representationalist is to explain *thinkable looks* as subsequent from sensory awareness, in this case, as being the result from non-perceptual states, such as a judgment. Therefore, insofar as the information available in experience, in a Representationalist framework, must determine p-representational content solely in virtue of how things perceptually appear or look, *thinkable looks* cannot be wholly

[202] Travis 2004:76.

perceptual. Another way to express it is to say that *thinkable looks* could not be considered typically visual, since, according to Travis, "*that things are thus and so*" is not an object of sensory awareness. Therefore, *thinkable looks* cannot support the notion of p-representation. As *per* (P3), then, *thinkable looks* would also fail to meet *Looks-indexing*.

But why, according to these definitions of *visual* and *thinkable* looks, *Availability* and *Face Value* end up being incompatible with one another? For Travis, on the one hand, *Availability* induces the Representationalist to embrace the notion of *visual looks*; on the other hand, *Face Value* inclines the Representationalist toward *thinkable looks*. There are two problems here. First, if appearances are wholly perceptual, they are not capable of showing the world in any particular way, as *per* (P2): *visual looks* are equivocal between multiple p-representational contents. Second, if appearances are indexed, experiences could not be wholly perceptual, since perception alone would not be capable of indexing *thinkable looks*. As Wilson neatly puts it,

> "[P]erceptual appearances themselves are incapable of making p-representational content available. Appearances, or looks, are (according to Travis) either equivocal or non-perceptual, neither of which can explain the availability of perceptual content to the subject"[203].

On the face of it, one can argue that the Representationalist should reject (P4), in trying to offer a notion of looks that is not *thinkable* or *visual* and still be capable of satisfying *Availability* and *Face Value*. However, since these conditions, at least according to Travis, are incompatible, it is not possible for one to hold *Face Value*

[203] Wilson 2018:212.

without rejecting (P1), i.e, without rejecting *Looks-indexing*. One difficulty in trying to reject (P1) is to do it without weakening the very idea of p-representation. As Wilson says, “the representationalist faces the difficulty of specifying how, if not in virtue of appearances, *Availability* might be satisfied”[204]. Nevertheless, I suspect that this is exactly what McDowell wants with his defense of a *content-awareness* view on perceptual experience. So now it is time to go deeper into McDowell’s notion of conceptual content discussed in the previous chapters, especially regarding his new position.

5.2 OBJECTS AND CONTENTS OF PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE

McDowell’s new position can be understood as a search for a rejection of *Looks-indexing*. In fact, he seems to be trying to find ways to offer a notion of content that is both “wholly perceptual” - contents are no longer *objects* of sensory awareness - and “capable of making p-representational content recognizable” - which concerns his insistence that *thinkables* must be involved in sensory awareness (as *per content-awareness*).

If my reading is correct, in order to defend a position such as that of McDowell one needs to show, as Wilson highlights, how “perceptual content is consciously available to the subject, but not in virtue of how things appear or look, and so *Looks-indexing* is false” (Wilson 2018:217). That is to say, one needs to offer a way of satisfying the notion of *Availability* other than through *Looks-indexing*. In that respect, Wilson asks the Representationalist the following question:

[204] Wilson 2018:211.

> "*Availability question*: What makes p-representational content recognizable, or cognitively available, to the subject?"[205].

I understand that *TFKG* is McDowell's attempt to give his own answer to something along the lines of the *Availability question*. So my aim now is to unpack McDowell's thoughts on the issue, in the context of his debate with Travis.

As McDowell's *Travis on Frege, Kant, and the Given* (*TFKG*) title obviously suggests, the text aims to approach the issues involved in his exchange with Travis in light of Frege, Kant, and the Myth of the Given. A good way to make sense of what is at stake in the debate is to start from the different readings of Travis and McDowell of the following remark of Frege:

> "Sense impressions are certainly a necessary ingredient of sensory observation, and these are part of the inner world (…). These by themselves do not open the outer world for us. Perhaps there is a being that only has sense impressions, without seeing or feeling things. Having sense impressions is not yet seeing things (...). Having sense impressions is, to be sure, necessary for seeing things, but not sufficient. What must still be added is not something sensory. And it is just this which unlocks the outer world for us; for without this non-sensory thing each of us remains shut up in his inner world"[206].

McDowell and Travis dispute this passage as endorsing their own views. My task is to explain how each and one of them interpret what Frege means here, and then clarify how this relates to Travis's *Argument from Looks* as well as to McDowell's rejection of *Looks-indexing*.

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[205] Wilson 2018:217.
[206] Cited at *TFKG*, 30.

Frege establishes a notional difference between *sense impressions* and *seeing*. On the one hand, “sense impressions” should be understood as the sensory awareness of objects, say, a red flower. On the other hand, Frege takes “seeing” as a result of the entering of conceptual capacities that enable one to intelligibly grasp a fact such as *that this flower is red*. So the “non-sensory ingredient” - i.e. the actualization of cognitive capacities - would be what enables one not to be “blind” to such facts, as it would happen with the imagined subject who may lack the capacity to properly “see,” and not just “sense” things.

As Travis reads Frege, the *only* objects of sensory awareness would be sense impressions, such as that of a red flower. As we already saw, that is surely compatible with Travis’s idea that conceptual capacities operate only downstream from perceptual experience. That means for him, in the present context, that related representational contents of judgments are not available to the subject *in* experience. In the wake of Frege, Travis makes a distinction between what would be two senses of seeing: namely “O-seeing” and “T-seeing”. O-seeing is seeing objects - something that one can be sensorily aware of; T-seeing is seeing in the sense of one seeing *that things are thus and so* - what one does when exercising conceptual capacities.

In the same spirit of the “sunset” example, Frege remarks: “But don’t I see that this flower has five petals? One can say that, but then uses the word ‘see’ not in the sense of mere sensing things via light, but one means a thought or judgement connected with that”[207]. As Travis stresses, what Frege means here is that “what is operative in seeing-T” - what distinguishes it from O-seeing as non-perceptual

[207] Cited at Travis 2018c:239.

accomplishment - is a non-sensory (*nichtsinnliche*) ingredient, just the sort of ingredient which, he tells us, 'unlocks an outer world for us'"[208].

McDowell agrees with Travis's Frege that contents cannot be objects of sensory awareness: "Travis says, correctly, that the thing to think, the thinkable, specified in the 'that'-clause that is the complement of an expression of T-seeing (...) is not related to sensory awareness in the way things like flowers can be" (*TFKG*, 34). In effect, as we saw, this is part of McDowell's new position: the propositional content - what can be expressed by a "that"-clause - no longer figures as an object of sensory awareness. However, McDowell thinks that his interlocutor mistakenly reads Frege in considering that his distinction between O-seeing and T-seeing would not admit *any* involvement of *thinkables* in perceptual experience. To put it another way, Travis's Frege would think that the *only* way thinkables may be involved in perceptual experience would be by being objects of sensory awareness, which, in fact, would be unacceptable. In Wilson's terms, Travis's point would be that T-seeing (in the present sense, what can be the content of sensory awareness) cannot satisfy *Availability*, insofar as what might satisfy *Looks-indexing* could not be something with a non-sensory character. Nonetheless, what McDowell wants is exactly to give expression to the idea that despite the fact that *thinkables* could not be *objects* of sensory awareness they could still be *contents* of sensory awareness.

From that perspective, McDowell sees himself as able to offer a way of rejecting *Looks-indexing* without rejecting *Availability*[209]. But if that is the case, in what sense do contents, with their non-perceptual character, be available to the subject in perceptual

[208] Travis 2018c240, original emphasis.
[209] For a similar view, see Byrne 2009.

experience itself, if not in virtue of *looks*? Well, McDowell thinks that *Availability* is a condition for avoiding the Myth of the Given. And if it is so, he argues that it is a requirement for one's "judgments [to] be rational in the light of our sensory awareness [that] one [must] recognizes a seen object as being [so] on the basis of ways it is presented as being in one's visual experience of it" (*TFKG*, 34). McDowell's bet is that avoiding the Myth presupposes *Availability*, in spite of Travis's demand that p-representational contents must have a non-perceptual character. That can be stated in the form of an argument:

Argument from McDowell's Frege

(0) One can avoid the Myth of the Given if and only if one supposes that the contents of perceptual judgments can only make rational connections with other *thinkable* or judgeable contents.

(1) The object of sensory awareness is expressible as a representational content *p* [via "a thought or judgement connected with that"].

(2) For the rational connection of the contents of perceptual judgments with the objects of sensory awareness to obtain, sensory awareness must exhibit contents with a *thinkable* or judgeable character [as *per* (S0)].

(3) *Thinkable* or judgeable contents cannot be objects of sensory awareness.

(C1) (*From P1 through P3*) *Thinkable* or judgeable contents must be contents and not objects of sensory awareness.

(C2) (*From C1*) *Thinkable* or judgeable contents can be contents of sensory awareness.

The *Argument from McDowell's Frege* is in line with McDowell's therapeutic stance on philosophical problems, in that specific case "the fundamental problem of perception" which is stated by Travis as follows: "how perception can make the world bear *for us* on the thing to think"[210]. McDowell's therapeutic way of dealing with philosophical problems is inspired by Wittgenstein's recommendation that they should be *dissolved* instead of solved, that is to say, that they "should *completely* disappear" (*PI* 133, original emphasis). Broadly speaking, Wittgenstein's idea is that philosophy can be, at best, a *description* of, not a theory about, its topics. Philosophy, then, should not be meant to give any foundations; for Wittgenstein, philosophy instead "leaves everything as it is" (*PI* 124). From that perspective, recall:

Truism: The way a subject *s* judges things to be is the way experience *E* makes things available to *s*.

Returning to the Introduction, for McDowell, the conclusion that one judges *that things are thus and so* because one perceives *that things are thus and so* reveals not a philosophical theory but a truism. McDowell's way of thinking about the nature of perceptual experience is meant to illuminate that the "fundamental problem of perception", once seen from such a Wittgeisntenian perspective, after all, manifests itself as actually not being a problem. His overall strategy to "bypass the anxieties of traditional epistemology" (*MAW*, 112) is to take off from this kind of a truism in any description of perceptual experience. Putting the point the other way round, McDowell

[210] Travis 2013c:242, original emphasis.

sees that the relations between mind and world appear as a philosophical problem only if one supposes that external reality "would have to break out through a boundary that encloses the sphere of thinkable content" (*MAW*, 39).

One may thus infer that McDowell considers this minimal necessity to avoid the Myth of the Given as a supposition on the part of his opponents, as *per* S0. As Thornton nicely puts it, McDowell's way of thinking,

> "(...) is primarily addressed to a particular philosophical audience: those who are subject to a particular philosophical discomfort as a result of subscribing to particular philosophical intuitions (...) [and that] [t]o that extent it does not articulate a freestanding context-independent philosophical theory but rather aims to dissolve a particular felt tension"[211].

With regard to the *Argument from McDowell's Frege*, then, S0 is meant to stress that to avoid the Myth, according to McDowell, one must take sensory awareness as somehow having a conceptual nature. If conceptual capacities imply *thinkable* or judgeable contents, and if *thinkable* or judgeable contents cannot be objects of sensory awareness, as *per* P3, *thinkable* or judgeable contents must, and therefore can, be contents of sensory awareness. McDowell's point is that conceptual capacities could be in operation in experience in a non-perceptual way. If so, there would be a way for the Representationalist to reject *Looks-indexing*: she should take p-representational contents to be recognizable (available) in virtue of the involvement of non-perceptual *thinkable* contents in sensory awareness. Accordingly, if P1 in the Argument from looks states that "if visual experiences were p-representational then their content would be

[211] Thornton 2004:211.

recognizable in virtue of how, in experience, things perceptually appear, or look", *Looks-indexing* is false.

Now, suppose that McDowell's way of rejecting *Looks-indexing* is sound. Even so, Travis contends that S0 in the *Argument from McDowell's Frege* incurs a categorial mistake. If conceptual capacities are involved in experience, it must present worldly items as, somehow, already falling under a generality. As Travis stresses:

> "[A] concept as such (...) has a certain kind of generality. (...) The key feature of the conceptual, on its present understanding, is that for anything conceptual there is a specific form of generality intrinsic to it. There is then a range which is the range of cases, or circumstances, which would be ones of something instancing that generality"[212].

According to Travis, what instances a certain generality is what Frege has called "the particular case": "A thought always contains something which reaches beyond the particular case, by means of which it presents this to consciousness as falling under some given generality"[213]. The difference between the particular case and generality is what Travis calls the "*Frege's Line*". For Travis, things that are perceivable, like a red light or a car, fall on the left side of the line. In its turn, those things such as *that I see a red light run* fall on the right side. Furthermore, Travis connects this distinction with a distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual things:

> "To the right of Frege's line is the conceptual. What is there to the left? What instances (first-order) conceptual generalities. Such as that piece of meat. A piece of meat is not in the business of being instanced. So treating it would be bad grammar. A fortiori there is

[212] Travis 2007:125.
[213] Cited at Travis 2018a:43.

> no range of cases which instance it. It is not conceptual. Of course, for any given piece of meat, there is a concept of being it. Being a concept, this does have its range of instances: the meat in the butcher's case, the meat in butcher paper, the meat on the rug, and so on"[214].

This distinction between generality and the particular case is central to the debate between McDowell and Travis. Next, I will discuss that issue in more detail.

5.3 GENERALITY, PARTICULARITY, AND THE INSTANCING RELATION

I believe that McDowell and Travis dispute what would be the best description of what Travis refers to as an "instancing relation". This is a relation between particular cases and general ways for things to be. An instancing relation obtains when it relates *ways for things to be* to *instances* of ways for things to be. In this relation, an instance is the same as to be a *particular case* of a way for things to be. What is instanced must be on the non-conceptual side of this relation. A way for things to be, in its turn, is on the conceptual side. In our terms, on the one hand, a worldly item instances a certain generality. For example, things may *be such that Maria runs the red light*; in the Travis-McDowell Debate's terms, this is *a way for a thing to be*, something that is in the conceptual side of the relation. A way for a thing to be can be instanced on several occasions: one may run the red light at London, while driving a car or a motorcycle, by day or by night, on Christmas or New year's day, and so on. On the other hand, *a* case of being such that one runs the red light instances - or exemplifies - a way for things to

[214] Travis 2007:126.

be. Such a case bears a particular character: Maria's red light run in a San Francisco intersection, witnessed by the SF Police, falls on the non-conceptual side of the relation.

As I understand McDowell, he means something along the same lines when he says that perceptual experience is a circumstance in which "a particular case of a general type of state of affairs" obtains. (*MAW*, 37-8). And I think that McDowell and Travis take *a* circumstance - or an instance, or a particular case, or a worldly item, etc. - as the object of sensory awareness. Nevertheless, McDowell and Travis have different understandings regarding the nature of the particular case as well as of sensory awareness taken as *the* relation in which a subject perceives an instance of a way for a thing to be.

In Chapter 1, I have presented three distinct views on perceptual experience. Recall:

(a) *object-awareness*: *thinkables* are neither contents nor objects of sensory awareness.

(b) *p-representational-awareness*: *thinkables* are both contents and objects of sensory awareness.

(c) *content-awareness*: *thinkables* are contents but not objects of sensory awareness.

We saw that McDowell's new position, on the one hand, holds *content-awareness*, and that, on the other hand, Travis holds *object-awareness*. In terms of an instancing relation, *content-awareness* describes the particular case as somehow involving generality. The way things are, in this sense, would be manifest in some *general ways*. As Gersel (2018) suggests, for McDowell "what is given to a subject in experience must

include the presentation of objects as falling under a generality"[215]. According to Gersel, this is something McDowell inherits from Kant, as the latter, in the context of *Same Function Thesis*, claims that the function of the understanding is "the unity of the act of bringing various representations under *one common* representation" (*CRP* A68/B93, emphasis added). Gersel also points out that Travis himself "agrees with my [Gersel's] interpretation that McDowell's conceptualism is concerned with the presence of generality in experience"[216]. I will also follow Gersell on his reading. In effect, I believe that this is coherent with McDowell's reading of *Same Function Thesis*. If the function which brings representations under one common representation is in play in intuition, a general aspect of a given particular case must somehow be available in the subject's experience. This is what McDowell suggests when he says that the involvement of rational capacities in sensory awareness results in an experience of "a particular case of a general type of state of affairs" which comprehends the "structure of awareness and object" (*MAW*, 37-8). Moreover, this is compatible with what is presupposed in S0. The p-representational content, say, *that I see a red light run* must somehow express the generality of being a red light run.

However, Travis contends that an instancing relation is a "transcategorial relation"[217]. In other words, an instancing relation would be the one between a non-conceptual object of sensory awareness and the conceptual object of awareness-that. Travis's reading of Frege identifies the particular case with *a thing*

[215] Gersel 2018:86. Similarly: "[According to McDowell] In experience we are passively given particulars as falling under generalities in specific ways. This allows for the passive element of cognition, experience, to provide reasons for the active element of cognition, judgement, in such a way that we can rationally and self-consciously scrutinize whether our judgements are adequately supported by how we passively encounter the world as being" (Gersel 2018:98).
[216] Gersel 2018:85-6.
[217] Travis 2018:46.

being as it is. McDowell agrees: “things being as they are (...) are the paradigmatic instances of what Frege means by ‘the particular case’, the non-conceptual” (*TFKG*, 32). But Travis’s talk of *a thing being as it is* is not something easy to make sense of. McDowell, according to Travis, took it wrongly. I will discuss McDowell’s understanding of *a thing being as it is* in a moment. For now, let’s see what Travis means by *something being as it is*.

Consider Maria’s red light run. In Travis’s terms this instances a certain generality: it’s being such as for a certain driver to have run a certain red light. Travis’s point is that this particular case, that is to say, Maria’s red light run, may have caused an accident, prevented a hit-and-run, or been a performance for a movie. Here is Travis on the matter:

> “A thought represents something as a way for things to be. What? Well, things. But suppose things are the way in question. Then for things to be as they are is, inter alia, of course, for things to be that way. It is thus, I suggested, things being as they are which is a case of this. Things may be such that Old Salopians waddle. But if so, it is for things to be as they are which is for Old Salopians to waddle”[218].

Note that Travis equates “things being as they are” with a “(particular) case of this”. For instance, in Travis’s terms a case of being such that Maria runs the light is *for things to be as they are*. Things being as they are, then, would be on the non-conceptual side of *Frege’s Line*. Nonetheless, Travis’s talk of *a thing being as it is* and its equation to the particular case can confuse one. McDowell, for instance, accuses Travis’s reading of Frege of being impossible on grammatical grounds. According to McDowell, if the

[218] Travis 2018:62.

episode of Maria's red light run in San Francisco is a *thing being as it is* - as Travis suggests - it *can't be* on the non-conceptual side of the instancing relation. In McDowell's terms, grammar could not allow *Maria's being as she is* and *Maria's running the red light* "to be on opposite sides of a distinction with thoughts on one side and non-conceptual items on the other" (*TFKG*, 33). That would be so insofar as, according to McDowell, despite the generality *Maria is running the red light* could be instanced by multiple distinct ways, any particular case of her *being as she is* would still count as her *being running the red light*. For those reasons, McDowell's conclusion is that even if Travis is right in saying that a particular case such as *Maria's being as she is* is not in the business of instancing multiple ways for things to be, it would not follow that it not have a thought- or judgment-like structure, on pain of grammatical infringement. In terms of McDowell's reading of Kant, if *Maria's being as she is* still counts as *Maria's being running the red light*, the particular case would still count as an instance that brings a particular p-representation "under one common representation" (*CRP* A68/B93). Also, one can note that it is exactly in this sense that Gersel suggests that "McDowell's conceptualism is concerned with the presence of generality in experience"[219].

So far, we have two opposing views. On the one hand, for McDowell *things being as they are* involve *thinkables* in the sense that it somehow reflects the generality of a thought - it would be a case of *content-awareness*. On the other hand, to the extent that *things being as they are* cannot instance other ways to be, Travis claims that they can't involve any kind of generality - it would be a case of *object-awareness*.

[219] Gersel 2018:85-6.

Although one can accept McDowell's objections on the basis of the internal structure of the argument concerning the grammar of the particular cases, Travis contends that McDowell misses the point here. Travis recognizes that, in a sense, (i) 'Maria's running the red light' and (ii) 'Maria's being as she is' are expressions of the same kind of thing. However, Travis stresses that this does not need to imply that the second expression must exhibit the generality of the first. According to Travis, what is relevant is that although (i) indeed expresses a generality, the function of (ii) is rather to identify "some historical episode - what *happened*, not something for an occurrence to be"[220]. Hence Travis: "There are, in any event, two factors in thought-expression: what the words used to achieve recognition speak of in their language (for example, in English), and what is spoken of in using them (as meaning what they do)"[221]. Travis then reformulates what is at stake in the distinction between the roles of generality and particularity in the instancing relation: on the one hand, what bears the relevant generality is the conceptual; on the other hand, what lacks generality is the *historical*[222]. He neatly frames his response to McDowell's objections as follows:

> "(...) though a pig before you may form images on your retinas, that the pig is before you cannot. The pig is before you. That the pig is before you is not before you. Nor is it anywhere else. There is a way it looked for that pig to be before you; no way that there is a pig before you looked, or would. Our senses afford us awareness of what can interact causally with them, thus of what, in some sense or other is locatable. Conversely, what is (roughly) locatable—what can form images on retinas or film, or vibrate eardrums, or be recorded, etc., is not the sort of thing to stand in such relations as being inferable from,

[220] Travis 2018:64.
[221] Travis 2018:63.
[222] Travis 2018:45.

> or implying. For it is not the sort of thing to be either true or so. *Grammatical coincidence in surface form can obscure the point*"[223].

Above, I have sketched what Travis labels "the fundamental problem of perception". Recall, it is the matter of "how perception can make the world bear *for us* on the thing to think"[224]. In the specific context of the Travis-McDowell Debate, however, I believe that Travis offers a clearer way to put the point:

> "If I had been asked what question McDowell and I had been (most centrally) debating, I would have said: it is the question how enjoying an experience of perceiving (e.g., of seeing) can make judging one thing or another intelligibly rational (that last term lifted from McDowell). (...) underlying this debate is an important difference in our ways of conceiving what representing (something as being something) is; and what there is in the world to make such representing correct or incorrect. Which difference can be captured by saying: we disagree on the nature of truth."[225].

According to the excerpt, four issues are worth of note: (i) how can sensory awareness provide perceptual reasons for perceptual judgments; (ii) what one means by the representation of something as being something; (iii) what is the role of sensory awareness regarding the question of truth; (iv) what is the nature of truth. With regard to their disagreement on these points, Travis appeals to Martijn Wallage's helpful way of framing it:

> "The problem is that on Travis's view we cannot make our seeing what we see - our intuition - available for discursive deliberation in the way in which we can make a thought

[223] Travis 201842, emphasis added
[224] Travis 2013c:242, original emphasis.
[225] Travis 2019:355.

> available for discursive deliberation. On Travis's view, whatever we put into words is a *response* to our intuition. But for McDowell this makes it impossible to see this response as being rationally motivated at all. For the response to be rational, it should be possible to discursively deliberate over whether this intuition warrants this response. And that requires putting the intuition itself into words—exactly what, on Travis's account, we cannot do"[226].

As I see it, their divergence lies in the very nature of sensory experience and its relation to thought contents. On the one hand, McDowell, in holding *content-awareness*, takes perceptual judgments as endorsing a content already involved in sensory awareness. For McDowell, when one thinks or judges "that p is true" one is not introducing a new content. That is to say, the same *thinkable* "that p is true" is shared by sensory awareness and perceptual judgment. That's the idea implicit in the following remark: "When one thinks truly, what one thinks is what is the case" (*MAW*, 27). As we saw, that is the purpose of the appeal to the term *thinkable*: "'Thought' can mean the *act* of thinking; but it can also mean the *content* of a piece of thinking: what someone thinks." (*MAW*, 28). McDowell's idea, then, is that (i) sensory awareness, (ii) true *thinkables*, and (iii) facts are somewhat equivalent. According to his new position, the objects of sensory awareness are not sufficient for one to recognize, say, *that Maria ran the red light*. In fact, he believes that involvement of *thinkable* contents in perceptual experience are necessary for one to recognize that the objects of one's sensory awareness plays a justificatory role in the judgment *that Maria ran the red light*. For McDowell, one cannot end up judging "that p is true" unless perceptual experience itself has something true to be transmitted. In other words, if sensory awareness has no truth to transmit, one

[226] Martijn Wallage, cited at Travis 2018:50, original emphasis.

cannot judge that something is true. On the other hand, Travis believes that in an instancing relation the particular case does not transmit, but *confers* truth instead[227]. For Travis, the role of the particular case in a perceptual judgment is to give the subject the opportunity to recognize solely on the basis of the objects of her sensory awareness that something is the case. In this case, there would be no need for "an extra help" on the part of cognitive capacities. Awareness-that and sensory awareness would have different natures. In Travis's words, in fact, they would be "two distinct forms of awareness: perceptual (sensory awareness) and propositional (awareness-that)[228]. So true *thinkables*, in bearing a general character, would not be in the business of offering one "access to that of which one judges". Instead, "that of which one judges" would be accessed by sensory awareness alone.

5.4 A WAY OF RESPONDING TO TRAVIS

As we saw, McDowell's strategy to block Travis's *Argument from looks* is to reject *Looks-indexing* without giving up *Availability*. However, Travis's response to McDowell's new position puts the following pressure on his *Cognitive Capacities View*: what sensory awareness affords is only its objects, not *thinkable* contents. Even if *thinkables*, in experience, are taken to be *what one thinks* rather than *an act of thinking*, *thinkables* cannot be equated to *things being as they are*. This is so since sensory awareness and awareness-that, according to Travis, would be irreducibly different types of awareness: "One is access to that of which one judges; the other is awareness *in* judging. The

[227] See Travis 2018:46.
[228] Travis 2018:42.

objects of the one are not the objects of the other; thus, two crucial distinguishing features of each"[229].

Travis's story takes awareness to be a kind of access. In sensory awareness we are able to access its objects. In awareness-that, in its turn, we can access the contents of propositional judgments. McDowell's mistake, then, would be to argue that sensory awareness is accessed through awareness-that.

In this context, though, I believe that the Representationalist has one way to avoid Travis's objections: one shall search for another type of contentful access to sensory awareness rather than through awareness-that.

Cussins, for instance, seems to be doing exactly that: he recommends that the normative concept of experience must be taken as radically different from the normative concept of propositional thought. Recall Cussins's stance on the motorcycle example: according to him, the speedometer gives access to the propositional content that one is driving, say, at 50mph; the activity of driving fastly gives one access to the non-conceptual content of experience. For Cussins, on the one hand, *truth* guides our access to propositional content; on the other hand, *activity* guides our access to the non-conceptual content characteristic of experience. But as we know, an author such as Cussins does not hold *Cognitive Capacities View*. According to the *Cognitive Capacities View*, the capacity for judgment and sensory awareness have a close relationship. Surely, Cussins would not agree with that. For him, the capacity for judgment - in the present terms, the capacity to access the contents of judgments - cannot be actualized in sensory awareness, since experience and judgment would be irreducibly different types of access to content. Nevertheless, I believe that we can take Travis's cue of

[229] Travis 2018:42, original emphasis.

awareness as a mode of access as well as Cussins's notion of "normative concept" to offer a response to the *Argument from Looks* - one that is both in line with *Cognitive Capacities View* and capable of providing an access to the content of experience that is not guided by the normative concept of truth. How could it be so?

My bet is that sensory awareness is wholly perceptual and yet also carries p-representational conceptual content because it reflects not empirical but categorial concepts, such as that of unity. Suppose that the elements involved in Maria's red light run - Maria, her car, the traffic light, the intersection, and so on - are not perceived by someone as a single event. This could be the case, for instance, of a foreign person who does not have the concept of a red light run. Now suppose that this foreign person gets her driver's license in San Francisco and becomes disposed to recognize something she sees as being a red light run. One can say that after she learns what is a red light run there is nothing new regarding the objects of her sensory awareness. For instance, *being a red light run* does not become an object of her sensory awareness of instances of red light runs. Nevertheless, one can say, on phenomenological grounds, that the elements of her sensory awareness appear as arranged in a different way. What she previously perceived as several distinct elements comes to be perceived as a single element - in this case, as a red light run. Some people call this perceptual phenomenon "unitization". Goldstone and Byrge (2015), for instance, offers the following examples of worldly items perceived as single units through unitization: "birds, words, grids of lines, random wire structures, fingerprints, artificial blobs, and three-dimensional creatures made from simple geometric components"[230]. From the insight brought by the notion of unitization, I will propose that, thanks to our cognitive

[230] Goldstone and Byrge 2015:823.

capacity to give unity to elements in a judgment, the objects of sensory awareness are accessed as single units rather than as *thinkables*.

Contra Cussins I will argue that a conceptualist framework can show that the access to single units in perception is guided by the normative concept of "significance" rather than the normative concept of "truth". My suggestion is that once some worldly item comes to be significant for someone it becomes to be perceived as a single unity. *Contra Travis*, I will contend that the sensory awareness of worldly items as single units is wholly perceptual: the way that the capacity of judgment is actualized in sensory awareness at best changes the way wordly elements are arranged in someone's perceptual experience.

In that sense, I will argue that *Looks-indexing* and *Availability* can be reconciled: from the actualization of cognitive capacities in experience what becomes available to the subject is not "unity" as a new constituent of one's p-representational content but worldly item in terms of a single units. Consider the visual awareness of a written word, say, "philosophy". As one becomes disposed to know that word the fact that the letters come to be perceived as a single unit does not imply that some new constituent like "unit" or "unity" begins to show up in experience. So the idea is that "unity" is not an object of sensory awareness, though wordly items perceived in terms of single units are.

One can contend, however, that *Availability* implies that the p-representational contents of sensory awareness and perceptual judgments must be the same. In fact, if the perceiving of worldly items reflects the unity characteristic of the contents of judgments this does not imply that it also reflects the contents of perceptual judgments. Recall Travis's stance on *thinkable looks*. He claims that it is "a matter of what can be

gathered from, or what is suggested by, the facts at hand, or those visibly (audibly, etc.) on hand"[231]. Recall also that according to McDowell's version of Representationalism, for the rationality of perceptual judgments to obtain sensory awareness must exhibit the same content of perceptual judgments. *Thinkables looks*, in this sense, are supposed to give expression to the idea, as McDowell stresses, that "[a] judgment of experience does not introduce a new kind of content, but simply endorses the conceptual content, or some of it, that is already possessed by the experience on which it is grounded." (*MAW*, 48-9).

Despite their divergence, one should note that Travis also takes perceptual experience as playing the role of providing non-inferential knowledge. Hence Travis:

> "Perception affords awareness of how things around us are. In a favourable case, the awareness thus afforded makes recognizable to us that such-and-such is so. It thus affords us awareness of what is so. To put the point another way, it (sometimes) affords us non-inferential knowledge-that: in seeing the pig we can sometimes come to know that a pig is present. If perception never did this, at the very least we would not be the thinkers we are. Thus far I think John McDowell and I agree"[232].

Beyond that, for perceptual knowledge to be non-inferential is also a worry on the part of McDowell's new position:

> "The intuition makes something perceptually present to the subject, and the subject recognizes that thing as an instance of a kind. Or as an individual; it seems reasonable to find a corresponding structure in a case in which an experience enables one to know noninferentially who it is that one is perceptually presented with" (*AMG*, 266).

[231] Travis 2004:76.
[232] Travis 2018:36.

To that extent, one may argue that worldly items perceived as single units cannot provide non-inferential knowledge. In other words, since they would not exhibit the same content, perceptual judgments would have to introduce a new kind of content. However, the idea behind unitization is that a subject would be capable of perceiving wordly items as single units without having to make inferences to get there. I will argue that here lies the rationality of the perceptual judgment: once unitization is in play, sensory awareness need not be mediated by inferential work[233]. So there would be a sense in which single units are p-representational contents of perceptual experience: the red light run perceived as a single unit is what is perceptually informed by experience. Perceptual unit, then, makes the relevant information available to the subject, and it makes the content of the perceptual judgment recognizable *in* perceptual experience. The idea is that unitization favors non-inferential knowledge. Sensory awareness, say, of a red light run could put one in a position to know non-inferentially that something in front of one is a red light run, even if sensory awareness and perceptual judgments do not share the very same content. It is here that I will borrow Golob's notion of *grammar*. I will suggest that one could take sensory awareness and perceptual judgments as having the same content - that is, conceptual content - but different grammar. One can have access to the same information - say, that Maria ran the red light - through two different grammars - in other words, by two different modes of articulation: one characteristic of sensory awareness and the other characteristic of awareness-that.

[233] As Goldstone 1998:602 puts it, "unitization involves the construction of single functional units that can be triggered when a complex configuration arises. Via unitization, a task that originally required detection of several parts can be accomplished by detecting a single unit. (...) [U]nitization integrates parts into single wholes".

In the face of it, my aim in Chapter 6 is to argue for a version of *Cognitive Capacities View* where there is a sense in which the actualization of cognitive capacities reflects the unity characteristic of judgments, just as *Same Function Thesis* indicates. And from these critical readings of McDowell and Travis, I hope to offer a contribution to those willing to hold *Cognitive Capacities View*.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Travis's objections have made McDowell change his mind about the nature of perceptual experience. In responding to Travis, McDowell now argues that p-representational contents are no longer objects of sensory awareness. However, in this chapter, I have argued that McDowell's response is not persuasive. On the one hand, the Anti-representationalist finds it problematic because McDowell's Representationalism implies generality in experience, something that cannot be the case insofar as sensory awareness and perceptual judgments are, according to the Anti-representationalist, irreducibly different. Also, I have claimed that McDowell's new position weakens his Representationalist view. On the other hand, McDowell's new position seems to come closer to Travis's Anti-representationalism. Finally, I have sketched an alternative way to avoid Travis's objections in a *Cognitive Capacities View* framework.

6.0 UNITY AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION

In this chapter, I will present my critical appropriation of McDowell's *Cognitive Capacities View*. Surely, it is an attempt to respond to Travis's objections. Nevertheless, I will also appropriate some of Travis's insights. In other words, I aim to offer a middle ground to the debate in question. I will proceed as follows. First, I will go deeper into McDowell's reading of *Same Function Thesis*, to clarify what would be a conceptualist reading of Kant in the specific context of the Travis-McDowell debate. Then, I will argue that McDowell's *content-awareness* account is not persuasive, since it has abandoned the idea that *thinkables* are objects of sensory awareness. Next, I will start arguing for my own version of *Cognitive Capacities View* in light of motivations and insights coming from the idea that perceptual experiences can show phenomenal differences. To do so, I will appeal to the *phenomenal contrast method* as elaborated by Siegel (2010, 2013) as well as to the ongoing debate over *hearing meanings* involving Brogaard (2010) and O'Callaghan (2014). That will lead me to a literature that suggests that experiences involve the perceptual phenomenon of "unitization", in which worldly items are perceived as single units[234]. Then, I will try to make sense of unitization in terms of *Same Function Thesis*. With these tools in hand, I will offer a reframing of McDowell's *Cognitive Capacities View*. I will then present some objections to the *Argument from Looks*. Finally, I will list some objections to my own version of *Cognitive Capacities View* as well as some ideas for avoiding them.

[234] See, for example, Goldstone and Byrge 2015 and Connolly 2019.

6.1 THE TOGETHERNESS OF JUDGMENTS

McDowell's appeal to Kant's talk of unity intends to give expression to the idea that judgments bear a certain kind of *togetherness*. Regarding *Same Function Thesis* (*TFKG*, 29), he recommends that the understanding - the capacity for judgment - is required for the elements (in Kantian terms, the manifold) of intuition to exhibit a specific kind of togetherness under a given relevant conceptual content.

In line with McDowell's reading of Kant, I propose, for the specific purposes of Chapter 6, a rephrasing of *Same Function Thesis* through the following and related thesis:

> *Togetherness Thesis*: Not only the elements in a judgment *P* but also the elements in an intuition *I* are understood through the same togetherness *T*. What gives *I* its *T* is the actualization of the capacity *C* for *P*.

My task now is to unpack *Togetherness Thesis*. I will deal with two crucial aspects: on the one hand, how do intuitions exhibit the same togetherness of judgments? On the other hand, what is the nature of such a togetherness? For the sake of logical order, let's see, first, McDowell's view on the togetherness of judgments. It seems natural since according to *Togetherness Thesis,* the togetherness of intuitions is the actualization of the capacity for judgment.

Consider someone's judgment (a) *that Sid is snoring and Pia is sleeping quietly* (to borrow McDowell's example (*TFKG*, 30)). McDowell stresses that the elements "Sid", "Pia", "snoring", and "sleeping quietly" are necessary but not sufficient for (a). For instance, someone could engage with the same elements if the judgment were (b) *that*

Sid is sleeping quietly and Pia is snoring. McDowell's point is that the judgment (a) "must join Sid and snoring with a kind of togetherness with which it does *not* join Pia and snoring, and correspondingly with Pia and sleeping quietly" (*TFKG*, 30, emphasis added). As I read McDowell, this "joint" is an actualization of the understanding's capacity to unify the elements of judgment according to its relevant propositional content; in the present sense, according to *what is judged*: (a), not (b). Hence,

> *The Normativity of* Togetherness: The togetherness *T* of a judgment *P* responds to a content *C*.

As we will see, McDowell holds that the elements of intuition are to be understood as exhibiting the same kind of togetherness under the same normative conditions. But before proceeding to the togetherness of intuitions I would like to say some things about Kant's notion of "function". This is important insofar as such terminology may give rise to misleading interpretations of what would be a *conceptualist* Kantian account of intuitions.

As I understand Kant, he is not appealing to the notion of function to recommend that judgments actually provide unity to intuitions. According to him, it is a function, not judgments, that gives unity to intuition. Moreover, nothing in the text itself suggests that intuitions and judgments exhibit an *identical* unity. Actually, what Kant seems to have in mind is that the understanding works as a "function" in the sense of a *means for an action*:

> "The *same* understanding, therefore, and indeed *by means of the very same actions* through which it brings the logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of

> the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of the understanding (...)" (*CRP* B105, emphasis added).

In similar fashion,

> "That action of the understanding (...) through which the manifold of given representations (whether they be intuitions or concepts) is brought under an apperception in general, is the logical function of judgments (§ I9). Therefore all manifold, insofar as it is given in *one* empirical intuition, is *determined* in regard to one of the logical functions for judgment (...). But now the *categories* are nothing other than these very functions for judging, insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined with regard to them (§ I 3). Thus the manifold in a given intuition also necessarily stands under categories" (*CRP* B143, original emphasis).

Note that according to the excerpts the same action (of the understanding) can give unity to two distinct representations: on the one hand, a concept; on the other hand, an intuition. I suggest that for Kant the understanding is a means that functions as a single capacity (*Fähigkeiten*) for giving a certain kind of unity to different representations. I condensate Kant's notion of a "function of unity" as follows:

> ***Function of Unity*:** The function of judgments is a capacity *C* for the unity *U* of a representation *R*. The actualization of *C* gives *R* its *U*.

Accordingly, a conceptualist reading of *Function of Unity* sees the function of judgments - the act of the understanding - as a single capacity that can be actualized both in judgments and in intuitions; in other words, such a capacity is in action not only in a judgment: the unity that reflects the logical form of a judgment, then, can somehow also be involved in intuition.

Now, it is time to discuss how a capacity for judgment could be actualized in intuitions. First, let's have a look at how McDowell gives his own interpretation of the *Function of Unity* at work in intuitions:

> "The presentations of visually sensible ways to be that are the elements of a visual intuition are not a mere multiplicity; in the intuition the ways to be are *understood together* - so in a unity for which the subject's understanding is responsible - as ways a single object is, and the object is thereby visually present to the subject" (*TFKG*, 30; original emphasis).

For the sake of clarification, McDowell offers the following example:

> "[Suppose that a subject] has in view (no doubt among much else) a yellow cube. That implies that she has in view an instance of yellowness, and she has in view an instance of cubic shape. Those havings in view are actualizations of capacities to have yellowness and cubic shape in view. And they are not merely aggregated in the subject's having the yellow cube in view. Those capacities are actualized with a togetherness of a specific kind, so that in what the subject has in view, there are not just yellowness and a cube, but yellowness as a property of a cube. Since on my account the capacities are in a certain sense conceptual (...), the state that is, among other things, their being actualized with the requisite togetherness has a conceptual content that can be expressed in part by the phrase 'a yellow cube,' where the grammatical structure of the phrase reflects the togetherness with which the two capacities are actualized" (*RBGS*, 395-6).

These are complex passages that deserve a more detailed examination. McDowell suggests that the visual intuition of, say, a yellow cube is an actualization of "a

togetherness of a specific kind". Moreover, note that the conceptual content of the experience is supposed to be intuitional, not propositional: it seems that McDowell's appeal to the talk of "yellowness as property of a cube" intends exactly to give expression to the way in which the togetherness of the relevant propositional content *that the cube is yellow* is reflected in a visual awareness of a yellow cube. According to *Togetherness Thesis*, the specific kind in question reflects the togetherness of a conceptual content; in other words, it has the same logical form or "grammatical structure" of it; in line with *The Normativity of Togetherness*, the content *that the cube is yellow*. In McDowell's sense, in fact, "being a yellow cube" specifies the judgment *that the cube is yellow*. Thanks to the actualization, in intuition, of the conceptual capacity to judge *that the cube is yellow*, the instances of yellowness and cubic shape in view in the intuition of a yellow cube are not taken by the subject of the experience as merely aggregated. In line with McDowell's proposal of intuitional contents, what is knowledgeably available by virtue of experiences is not a propositional content. Nonetheless, even in McDowell's new position, there is still a sense in which experience manifests to the subject *that things are as she may judge them to be*. As we saw in the previous chapters, what is available to be known by virtue of sensory awareness no longer has the character of a proposition - indeed, he now thinks that propositional contents are not objects of perceptual experience. Nevertheless, the way in which McDowell describes the nature of such intuitional content brings back the idea that things that have the logical form of a proposition are somehow involved in sensory awareness. According to McDowell, things like *that the bird is a cardinal* (*TFKG*, 34) might be part of sensory awareness; more specifically, he believes that thinkables - "the

thing to think (...) specified in the 'that'-clause" (*TFKG*, 34) - can still count as *contents* of sensory awareness. This is based on the idea that, on pain of grammatical infringement, *a way an object is* - e.g., being such that the cube is yellow (for short, being a yellow cube) - must somehow be given in perceptual experience. Accordingly, he thinks that grammar does not allow a difference in content between, say, the experience of something being a yellow cube and the judgment of something being a yellow cube, regardless of the fact that *thinkables* cannot be objects of perceptual experience.

Note that McDowell's new position takes sensory awareness as bearing two intertwined features: on the one hand, its *objects*; on the other hand, its *contents* (the p-representation of something being some way). When a subject sees a cardinal, though "*being a cardinal*" is not object of her experience she somehow entertains the content "*being a cardinal*" while having the experience. Sensory awareness, then, gives its subject both the objects and the way the objects are: in seeing a cardinal one enjoys the content "being a cardinal", although this content is not an object of sensory awareness.

However, I believe that McDowell's intuitional contents exhibit a twofold problem.

On the one hand, the way McDowell describes what it is for a rational subject to enjoy sensory awareness doesn't seem to show any advantage over Anti-representationalist accounts. Well, if now contents do not occur at the level of perception, what is the significant difference between Representationalist and Anti-representationalist accounts? Note that McDowell's new position, in fact, seems to take a step closer to Travis's Anti-Representationalism: the objects of sensory

awareness, as Travis also indicates, are exhausted by items in the environment, such as cardinals, and not by things such as *being a cardinal*. Moreover, I think that it seems hard to simply suppose that this kind of operation of concepts in sensory awareness does not have the very character of a judgment. It is true that McDowell takes care to say that it is the "Understanding", not us, who puts concepts into work in experiential intakes. But if it is so, once again, what is the significant difference between McDowell and, say, Houlgate? Surely, Houlgate's Hegel indicates something very similar: concepts come into the picture only in response to experience, although this process would have an unconscious character. As a consequence, it seems uncertain if for McDowell the role played by concepts amounts to a judgment-like *action*, insofar as perceptual awareness *per se* no longer has content. McDowell, in fact, oscillates between a view in which the contents of sensory awareness are taken to be non-propositional and one in which he "did not mean to be renouncing the idea that experiences have the sort of content judgments have" (*RTT*, 260). One may plausibly say, for instance, that judgments occur so fast that, in a first-person perspective, it seems that they occur as long as we take the world in. As Connolly illustrates, "[r]acecar drivers frequently look at gauges, and they learn to make very quick inferences about what those gauges monitor"[235]. The point here is that although the racecar driver infers a judgment, say, that she is out of gas, it may seem to her *as if* the judgment occurs instantaneously, i.e. it may seem that such content is non-inferentially given in experience. One may even say that, in a sense, in looking at the gauge the driver sees that she is out of gas, even though she actually made a judgment based on her visual awareness of the gauge. On the other hand, the fact that the objects of sensory

[235] Connolly 2019:33-4.

awareness no longer bear contents seems to weaken McDowell's insistence on the idea that experiences still have p-representational content; at last, McDowell now shares Travis's conclusion that the "objects of judgement are not to be found before our eyes"[236]. The problem here is that McDowell may hold an Anti-representationalist view after all. As long as both Travis and McDowell consider contents as being responses *to* what is being experienced, the matter of "when" this happens - *downstream* from or *as we take* in experience - seems to be insignificant from a first-person perspective, as the racecar driver example suggests. If so, I believe that it would be possible for the Anti-representationalist to co-opt McDowell's Representationalist account insofar as the very objects of sensory awareness would not play any proper significant rational role in perceptual judgments anymore. In my own view, this is exactly the case, since p-representational contents would not have any p-effect on sensory awareness.

What I want to emphasize is that if one wishes to credit experiences with rational significance, the actualization of conceptual capacities should be described as having a p-effect, not (merely) a c-effect on sensory awareness. Recall *Query*:

> *Query*: How should one elaborate the thought that our cognitive capacities are actualized in perceptual experience itself, not only in the judgments in which a subject responds to her perceptual experience?

Although I believe that McDowell's reading of Kant offers a useful insight to those who want to answer *Query*, I think that a story about the involvement of rational capacities in sensory awareness must be able to rehabilitate the rational role played by the objects of

[236] Travis 2018:38.

experience. In a *Mind and World* spirit, I think that one should search for a path that helps the objects of sensory awareness regain the realm of thought and judgment.

One of these paths goes through a look at the phenomenal differences in experience. The phenomenology of hearing a speech in a fluent language is telling of the suggestion that the actualization of conceptual capacities has a properly p-effect on sensory awareness. Some think that there is a clear difference in what it is like for a subject to hear a given language depending on her being a nonspeaker or a fluent speaker. According to authors such as Siegel, the best explanation of the phenomenal difference between a pair of experiences is that they have a difference in content[237]. For Siegel, in fact, if experiences have content, then these contents "shape the phenomenal character of [one's] perception"[238]. In line with Siegel, I also believe that the appeal to an analysis of the phenomenal differences in experience may help one express some notion of p-representational content. For that reason, in the next section, I will present in more detail what Siegel calls "the method of phenomenal contrast", in order to appropriate some of her insights with regard to why phenomenal differences in experience may motivate Representationalism[239].

6.2 PHENOMENAL DIFFERENCES AND THE ROLE OF CONTENTS

First of all, a caveat. Siegel notes that the method of phenomenal contrast is meant to *detect* phenomenal differences in experience, as the foreign language example is

[237] Siegel 2010:99.
[238] Siegel 2019:408.
[239] Siegel stresses that the method of phenomenal contrast is used in several accounts of perceptual experience. She cites Peacocke 1983 as an example. See Siegel 2010:88.

intended to show[240]. Now, suppose that this method is persuasive in showing that there are really phenomenal differences in how a nonspeaker and a fluent speaker hear the same speech. Although this conclusion may obtain, one should note that this would not imply that experiences have p-representational content. What I want to stress is that an appeal to the method of phenomenal contrast is not meant to prove that Representationalism is true. As Siegel herself states, "[t]he method need not take a stand on the source of the phenomenal contrast (...) [and] on the underlying structure of the phenomenal states in general"[241]. Indeed, not only Representationalists use the method to make their point in favor of the idea that there are phenomenal differences in experience. For instance, Casey O'Callaghan (2011), who is not a Representationalist regarding (at least) auditory perceptual experience, also thinks that there are phenomenal differences in cases such as the foreign language example. In this sense, what is at stake is actually *how* Siegel, O'Callaghan, and others explain such a phenomenon once one takes it to actually occur.

That said, Siegel's argument starts with a premise that should be supposedly unproblematic as long as cases such as the foreign language example are convincing: more specifically, the intuition that a given "target experience differs in its phenomenology from the contrasting experience"[242]. In the method of phenomenal contrast, the contrast experience is, for instance, a subject's auditory experience of Portuguese before she is disposed to understand that language - call it E1; in its turn, the target experience - E2 - is the one in which the subject, after a learning process, becomes disposed to understand Portuguese. Siegel's point is that if E1 and E2 share

[240] See Siegel 2010:96.
[241] Siegel 2010:96.
[242] Siegel 2010:101.

the same sensible features and sound different after the subject learns the language, then there is a difference in the sensory phenomenology between E1 and E2. For Siegel, the best explanation for this difference in sensory phenomenology is that E1 and E2 differ in what they represent. And as long as they have the same sensible features, E2 is supposed to represent to its subject a new property - what Siegel calls a "K-property" - of, say, *being such a word* in Portuguese. Therefore, they would have a difference in content, i.e. in what is being p-represented. The argument runs as follows:

> "(0) The target experience differs in its phenomenology from the contrasting experience.
>
> (1) If the target experience differs in its phenomenology from the contrasting experience, then there is a phenomenological difference between El and E2.
>
> (2) If there is a phenomenological difference between E1 and E2, then El and E2 differ in content.
>
> (3) If there is a difference in content between El and E2, it is a difference with respect to K-properties represented in El and E2"[243].

For our purposes, what is vital here is Siegel's philosophical conclusion that items like *being such and such* somehow show up in experience. *Pace* McDowell's new position, what I want to stress is that from the method of phenomenal contrast one may suggest that as long as for an object *o* to look *F* is for the subject to represent *o* as being *F*, "K-properties" (*being a cardinal*, *being a word in Portuguese*, *being a red light*

[243] Siegel 2010:101.

run, etc.) are not only contents but also objects of experience. For clarity's sake, compare these remarks of McDowell:

(a) "Consider an experience had, in matching circumstances, by someone who cannot immediately identify what she sees as a cardinal. Perhaps she does not even have the concept of a cardinal. Her experience might be just like mine in how it makes the bird visually present to her. It is true that in an obvious sense things look different to me and to her. To me what I see looks like (looks to be) a cardinal, and to her it does not. But that is just to say that my experience inclines me, and her similar experience does not incline her, to say it is a cardinal. There is no ground here for insisting that the concept of a cardinal must figure in the content of my experience itself" (*AMG*, 259).

(b) "[T]he content of visual experience itself does not include even that something seen is a face, let alone that it has an approving expression. But as before, this does not deprive us of an understanding of the idea that a face that one sees can look approving to one, through the operation of a capacity to read facial expressions that is external to what one's visual experience itself delivers to one" (*CBGS*, 345).

(c) "[S]ome people are sometimes in a position to judge knowledgeably, thanks to visual awareness of a bird, that it is a greater bittern, and (being) a greater bittern is not a visually sensible way for something to be" (*TFKG*, 25).

As it is now familiar to us, (a), (b), and (c) express McDowell's insistence on the idea that items like *being such and such* are not objects of sensory awareness. If what Siegel has in mind is that K-properties are objects of sensory awareness, I agree with McDowell that this can't be the case in line with Travis's Argument from looks. However, I believe that Siegel still has a point worth noting: if the intuition of the

existence of phenomenal difference in experience is convincing, it is plausible that *some* change occurs in the awareness of the objects of perception once one becomes disposed to recognize different aspects in experience. In the face of it, my bet is that there can be a middle ground between McDowell's and Siegel's positions. More specifically, I'd like to borrow the following insights from each one of them: from Siegel, the idea that concept possession may have an influence on the objects of sensory awareness; from McDowell, his reading of Kant regarding *Same Function thesis*. With that in hand, I hope to put forward an account of sensory awareness in which its conceptual nature reflects not empirical but categorial concepts, such as that of unity. In other words, I think that the concept-dependent *togetherness* characteristic of judgments can have, in contrast to *empirical* concepts of judgments, a p-effect on sensory awareness.

6.3 THE COGNITIVE ACCESS TO MEANINGS IN SPOKEN LANGUAGE

I propose a start from the phenomenology of auditory perceptual experience. It has a double reason. First, the examples of auditory experience present themselves more intelligibly. Consider the visual awareness of a red light run. That there is a phenomenal difference in, say, how a foreign and an American citizen see a red light run seems less convincing than saying that there is a phenomenal difference in how a nonspeaker and a fluent speaker hear the same speech. As Kern neatly puts it (on psychological grounds) "[w]hen I hear someone uttering sentences in a language I have mastered, it is not open to me to simply not understand them"[244]. In fact, this seems to favor the

[244] Kern 2017:165.

intuition that there really are phenomenal differences in at least one of the sensory modalities, namely audition. Second, there is a well-established debate over the phenomenology of spoken language. The exchange between Berit Brogaard and O'Callaghan is a relevant example. Brogaard (2016) defends that phenomenal differences in spoken language are best explained through the idea that once a subject masters a language she comes to audibly perceive meanings. Therefore, as long as meanings show up in spoken language they would be contents of audible sensory awareness. O'Callaghan (2011), however, is skeptical: according to him, what explains these differences in what it is like to hear spoken language are actually non-semantic factors, not the putative sensory awareness of meanings. For those reasons, in the this section, I will take a close look at the phenomenology of auditory perceptual experience, especially with regard to the debate over hearing meanings.

The debate over hearing meanings is an exchange between two contrasting views on how fluent speakers of a language understand each other. In this sense, understanding one another's utterances is the same as understanding what they mean. Brogaard (2018) helpfully frames the debate as follows. On the one hand, those who defend what she calls a "perceptual view of language comprehension" (in short, perceptual view) argue that the capacity to understand the meaning of the utterances is non-inferential. In her words, according to the perceptual view "we can come to know what was said merely based on hearing the utterance"[245]. On the other hand, those who hold the so-called "inferential view of language comprehension" (in short, inferential view) argue that when we hear utterances we need to infer the meaning of what was said.

[245] Brogaard 2018:2968.

Interestingly, McDowell (*IDM*, *APM*) used to have a perceptual view on the matter. When I say that he used to, I mean that he once championed that "cognitive access to meaning (...) is perceptual in a *richer sense*" than, for instance, in his more recent view on the contents of sensory awareness (*APM*, 118, emphasis added). In line with his new position, one can suppose that McDowell holds something in between perceptual and inferential views on hearing meanings, insofar as now meaning has a non-inferential p-representational content that is not object of sensory awareness (as *per Givenness)*. I will retake the Brogaard-O'Callaghan debate in a moment. For now, as long as McDowell's former position is an ancestor of the debate on hearing meanings, I would like to take this cue and start from it.

The backdrop of McDowell's approach to the cognitive access to meaning in spoken language amounts to his discussions on Davidson's program regarding a theory of meaning. More specifically, what is at stake is the theoretical effort to offer an account of meaning through meaning-free terms[246]. As expected, McDowell thinks that a meaning-free theory of meaning is impossible. To put the point another way, McDowell - especially for our purposes - believes that language understanding should be analyzed in meaningful terms already. As McDowell sees it, understanding a language is a perceptual capacity: mastering a given language is the same as accessing the meanings expressed in that language. According to McDowell (*IDM*, *APM*), it might be the case, insofar as expressing as well as understanding meaning is the same as showing, respectively, "one's mind, in one's words (...) to those who understand one's language" (*IDM*, 100). The idea here is that in a conversation between two fluent speakers, thoughts become objects of auditory perception; in McDowell's terms,

[246] For a detailed discussion on this topic, see Thornton 102-39.

“thoughts [or ‘though-expressions’] are in view (in the sense in which we can speak of ‘expressing (the thought) that . . .’)” (*APM*, 123).

Thus, McDowell used to be close to those who defend that once one masters a language, it is not up to one to access something like a bare sound. For him, although not all subjects will indeed have relevant, meaningful access to a speech - say, in the case of those who do not master a given language - those who understand the language get direct access to the contents of the sentences:

> “Our attention is indeed drawn to the contents of the used sentences, rather than the mere words (which are possible objects of attention even for someone who does not understand the language they are in): but not as something ‘beneath’ the words, to which we are to penetrate by stripping off the linguistic clothing; rather, as something present in the words - something capable of being heard (...) in the words by those who understand the language. (...) [W]e need not think of it as amounting to more than this: the thought (say) that some table-tops are square can be heard (...) in the words ‘Some table-tops are square’, by people who would be able to put their own minds into those words if they had occasion to do so” (*IDM*, 99).

In saying that content is “present in” and not “beneath” spoken language, McDowell approaches Siegel’s idea that p-representational contents are objects of sensory awareness, i.e., that they have a p-effect on one’s auditory awareness once one masters a language. Also, his former account can be seen as a perceptual view on hearing meanings, as Brogaard (2018) elaborates it. Indeed, to the extent that McDowell describes meaning apprehension in spoken language in direct-access terms, inferences from meaning-free (or non-semantic) auditory sensory impressions are unnecessary to understand what one says. For those reasons, the contents of meaning

are not only represented in thought; also, they are p-represented, that is to say, available to the fluent speaker in her sensory awareness itself.

However, O'Callaghan (2011) has an objection to the perceptual view, more specifically to its supposed too fast conclusion that the method of phenomenal contrast works for all linguistic phenomena. For instance, he contends that the phenomenal contrast method does not work for *homophones*. Homophones are words that sound the same but differ in meaning. Examples are the heterographs "rain" (drops of water from clouds), "reign" (the act of ruling as a queen or king), and "rein" (a strap used to control a horse), and homonyms like "book" (an object for reading) or "book" (the act of making a reservation). According to O'Callaghan, if the perceptual view is correct, homophones must show a difference in auditory sensation due to a difference in meaning. Consider, for instance, the occurrences of the homophone "book" in the utterances "She wrote that book" and "Book me a single room". O'Callaghan stresses, plausibly, that there is no phenomenal difference between them, although they differ in meaning. To the perceptual view, differences in meaning do have a p-effect on what it is like to hear spoken language. But if it is so, O'Callaghan concludes, perceptual view is false, as the case of homophones is supposed to show.

For O'Callaghan, understanding the meanings of sentences amounts to a perceptual capacity to segment and group the sounds uttered. More specifically, fluent speakers would hear the sentences segmented into words as if they were composed of single units separated by gaps. Nonspeakers, in contrast, hear the words not as units but as something like a continuous sound stream due to a lack of identifying where words start and end. Also, O'Callaghan highlights that phonological matters influence

what it is like for non- and fluent speakers to hear the same language. In support of this, he presents examples like the phonemes “l” and “r” as they occur in Japanese and English. O’Callaghan’s point is that, say, as Japanese monoglots become more disposed to understand English, they become more sensitive to the differences in sound between “l” and “r,” something that the Japanese idiom does not differ.

Nevertheless, Brogaard (2018) comes up with a reply to O’Callaghan. Recall, she distinguishes two opposing views. On the one hand, the inferential view holds that to understand a given language, one needs to infer what the speech means. That is O’Callaghan’s view. On the other hand, the perceptual view defends that one directly perceives meanings in speech. In her defense of the perceptual view, Brogaard points out that the inferential view offers a mistaken description of the role of background information in language learning. According to her, understanding a language is not a process in which one combines non-semantic aspects with background knowledge. In fact, Brogaard contends that background knowledge has a direct influence on the sounds one hears through speech: “fluent speakers of a language have a non-inferential capacity to auditorily perceive not just the sounds of speech but also its content”[247]. One can see that Brogaard has a Representationalist view on auditory awareness; in fact, she argues that p-representational contents are objects of auditory awareness. And to make her point, Brogaard appeals to a visual example that is elucidative of the so-called “perceptual learning process”.

Eleanor Gibson, in his seminal work on perceptual learning, describes it as “[a]ny relatively permanent and consistent change in the perception of a stimulus array,

[247] Brogard 2018:2968.

following practice or experience with this array" (...)[248]. Robert Goldstone, in its turn, says that "[p]erceptual learning involves relatively long-lasting changes to an organism's perceptual system that improve its ability to respond to its environment" (...)[249]. To put it in our terms, perceptual learning cases are those in which there is a change in what it is like for a subject to be sensory aware of worldly items. For instance, some say that once expert chess players acquire the capacity to chunk configurations of pieces in long-term memory, background knowledge can have a p-effect on visual awareness[250]. The idea is that these configurations are p-represented into chunks to expert chess players, where these become visual objects to them, that is to say, they become objects of their visual awareness.

Along the same lines, with regard to the visual awareness of words in a text, Brogaard's bet is that learning to read a new language is also a case of perceptual learning. According to her, "[w]hen learning to read a new language, the brain transitions from a process of recognizing words as random strings of letters to a process of visually representing them in chunks, where a 'chunk' can be considered a kind of visual object"[251]. She does not provide a detailed explanation of why the supposed process of chunking in reading implies that chunking also occurs when we hear words or speech fragments. Be that as it may, she clearly indicates that chunking happens in both reading and hearing: "language comprehension proceeds via processing in the auditory or visual system aided by top-down influences"[252]. So, for our purposes, one

[248] Gibson 1963:29.
[249] Goldstone 1998:587.
[250] See Brogaard 2018 (2977–8).
[251] Brogaard 2018:2977.
[252] Brogaard 2018:2981.

should keep in mind that, broadly speaking, Brogaard holds a perceptual view on hearing meanings in which contents have a p-effect on auditory awareness of speech.

Although Brogaard's conclusion lies on empirical evidence that chunking occurs when a subject becomes disposed to know the meaning of words, this need not imply that one hears meanings. As Connolly notes, chunking, in a perceptual learning account, indicates "at best that we represent perceptually that certain words are significant for us, not that we represent the meanings of those words *in* perception"[253]. Connolly also says that in the context of perceptual learning empirical research, "all we know (...) is that chunking can occur through repeated exposure [to stimuli]"[254]. Moreover, it seems that the process of chunking need not be in opposition to O'Callaghan's inferential view. At least in principle, chunking random strings of letters into words or speech fragments could be described as being content-independent. For example, chunking could be explained as bearing only a c-effect on auditory awareness; to put the point another way, our cognitive capacity for chunking in long-term memory could influence the objects of sensory awareness in a merely non-semantic way[255].

Furthermore, Connolly (2019) claims that even if we suppose that what Brogaard means is that one learns that a word is significant, there is a more plausible alternative in explaining phenomenal difference. According to Connolly, the explanation in line with the literature on perceptual learning rather suggests that repeated exposure is sufficient for perceptual learning, even if the subject did not know the meaning of the word[256].

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[253] Connolly 2019:173, emphasis added.
[254] Connoly 2019:174.
[255] All this suggests that a perceptual view needs to say more about the relation between the capacities for chunking and hearing meanings - more specifically, why p-representational contents might be necessary for the process of chunking in sensory awareness.
[256] See Connolly 2019:174. See also Goldstone 1998:601–2.

So here we are. On the one hand, it seems plausible to hold that there really are phenomenal differences when the subject becomes disposed to know the meaning of words. To put it another way, phenomenal differences seem to be related to the concepts a subject possesses. However, as Brogaard appeals to evidence from empirical studies, she may be pressed by alternative explanations that are skeptical about hearing meanings.

As I have said in Chapter 1, my focus will be on the *standpoint of phenomenology*. Nevertheless, although it is not my aim to use empirical literature in support of my arguments for a *Cognitive Capacities View*, I believe that people like Brogaard and Connolly can help me anyway. What I want is to give philosophical significance to some insights offered by them. One of these insights is the notion of "unitization". Unitization is a kind of perceptual learning that has been studied by psychologists such as Robert Goldstone and Lisa Byrge, as well as philosophers like Connolly[257]. The idea behind unitization is very simple and, I guess, philosophically applicable. This process is said to be one in which perceptual single units are created in perceptual experience. Goldstone and Byrge offer a list of items in which unitization is in play: "birds, words, grids of lines, random wire structures, fingerprints, artificial blobs, and three-dimensional creatures made from simple geometric components"[258]. Also, Connolly (2019) cites unitization in cases involving more than one sense modality - for instance, in perceiving drums playing: "The drummer begins a solo. You see the cymbal jolt and you hear the clang. (...) [W]hen you experience the jolt and the clang as part of the same event, this is the result of an associative learning process"[259]. Connolly

[257] See Goldstone 1998 and 2003. See also Goldstone and Byrge 2015.
[258] Goldstone and Byrge 2015: 823.
[259] Connolly 2019:127-9.

suggests that in this perceptual learning process “we come to ‘chunk’ the world into multisensory units”[260]. He also indicates that unitization is in the service of offload perceptual tasks: “We get the same information - that the jolt and the clang are part of the same event - without having to make inferences to get there. This frees up cognition to make other, more sophisticated inferences”[261] [262].

By now, as one can suspect, my bet is that unitization can illuminate philosophical notions such as that of Kant’s unifying function of judgments that are supposed to be in play in intuitions as well as McDowell’s idea of the *togetherness* of sensory awareness that reflects the unity of judgments. In fact, I believe that unitization can help illustrate my defense of the idea that the actualization of cognitive capacities in sensory awareness can somehow have a p-effect; for example, through the suggestion that the unit characteristic of judgments can somehow show up in sensory awareness, once it is actualized in perceptual experience. Maria’s red light run could be an example. The idea is that this worldly item can be apprehended in sensory awareness *itself* in terms of a single unit.

However, Connolly highlights that some argue that it is debatable if chunking really is a kind of visual object (to use Brogaard’s terminology). In fact, people such as Spence and Bayne “think it is debatable whether the ‘unity of the event’ really is internal to one’s experience in these cases, or whether it involves a certain amount of post-perceptual processing (or inference)”[263]. Connolly’s way to avoid these issues is to recommend that we should have a look not at the conscious level but at the

[260] Connolly 2019:129. For more on intermodal unitization, see O’Callaghan 2014. He discusses it in terms of “intermodal binding awareness”.
[261] Connolly 2019:151.
[262] Recall, Brogaard also mentions chunking as a perceptual learning process, in the cases of the expert chess players and written words.
[263] Spence and Bayne 2015:117-9.

subpersonal process that produces it. Well, as *per standpoint of phenomenology* we should not take Connolly's path. But suppose that, say, Houlgate is right in saying that the inferences made as we experience the world have an unconscious character. This is akin to subpersonal processes that are also responsible for inferences. Note, however, that if inferences have an unconscious nature, it does not imply that they can't also have an impact on sensory awareness. For clarity's sake, consider the following string of letters:

M ON T U E W E D F B I C I A K G B C B S N B C A B C

Once I inform you that this sequence is composed of acronyms of (i) three days of the week (MON…), (ii) three secretive government organizations (FBI…), (iii) and three television broadcast channels (CBS…), it is plausible to say that you become more disposed to create new perceptual units based on this semantic information. Probably, the next time you see this example background information can unreflectively influence your sensory awareness of this specific string of letters. As Goldstone and Byrge says, "perceptual units are formed because they can be seen [now] as coherent perceptual objects[264]". My point is that background information can influence the objects of sensory awareness through the creation of *single units*.

Note, however, that this does not mean that the sensory awareness of single units imply that these are contents of experience, let alone that single units are sensorily p-represented in perception. More than that, from the simple conclusion that we are able to chunk sensory information it does not follow that the capacity to perceive worldly items as single units is a cognitive capacity, let alone that the act of this capacity is

[264] Goldstone and Byrge 2015:821.

explained by the capacity for judgment, as *per* "Judgment as a Cognitive Capacity"[265]. So far, what we have is just the illustration of the idea that we have a capacity to perceive worldly items in terms of single units and that this capacity is somehow dependent on the background knowledge of the subject. Be that as it may, we also have some insights that favor the thought implicit in *Cognitive Capacities View*. One of them is the first-person character of the sensory awareness of worldly items in terms of single units. In fact, chunking seems to be a perceptual phenomenon in a strong sense. It has a phenomenal character and can change the way one perceives the world as one becomes disposed to create novel single units. Also, single units can be seen as playing a justificatory role. If unitization helps building perceptual chunks, and if single units offloads the subject of the necessity of making inferences - as Connolly suggests - the sensory awareness of a worldly item in terms of single units may permit, in a certain sense, a non-inferential step to perceptual judgments. Beyond that, this non-inferential step could be understood as based not on propositional contents, but on the basis of a non-propositional content that preserves a proper sensory character. In other words, a worldly item experienced in terms of a single unit may be an object of sensory awareness. Note that I am being careful in expressing the experience of a worldly item *in terms* of a single unit, not *as* single unity, so even Travis may be charitable on some level about at least this description. What I want to highlight is that the perception of chunking does not imply p-representational content. However, a *Cognitive Capacities View* implies conceptual content. The task, then, is to find means for arguing that the non-propositional character of the phenomenon of perceiving single units is not only

[265] See section 1.1.

perceptual but also conceptual. And here I borrow the following excerpt of McDowell's *AMG*:

> If intuitional content is not discursive, why go on insisting it is conceptual? Because every aspect of the content of an intuition is present in a form in which it is already suitable to be the content associated with a discursive capacity, if it is not - at least not yet - actually so associated. That is part of the force of saying, with Kant, that what gives unity to intuitions is the same function that gives unity to judgments" (*AMG*, 264).

I guess that McDowell is right in supposing that, as *per Same Function Thesis* and *Togetherness Thesis*, "every aspect of the content of an intuition is present in a form in which it is already suitable to be the content associated with a discursive capacity". Maybe, to perceive worldly items in terms of single units offers a cue to find the nature of this "suitable form". However, I think that one needs to take this "suitable form" not only as content but also as an object of sensory awareness, so one does not weaken one's Representationalist view. I believe that the unity of judgments, then, must have a p-effect on sensory awareness. What follows is an attempt to give sense and expression to this idea.

6.4 UNITIZATION AND THE UNITY OF JUDGMENTS

I have said that I want to give philosophical significance to the phenomenon of unitization. For simplicity, I condensate unitization in the form of the following definition:

> (Def) "unitization" = A functional term for the capacity that makes it possible to perceive worldly items in terms of single units.

My aim is to find a way to offer a philosophical sense of the nature of these single units. I start with the character of unitization as a capacity.

In line with Kern's account, if unitization is a capacity, the capacity for unitization explains the act of unitization. However, for all we know unitization is a *perceptual* capacity, not necessarily a cognitive one. Nonetheless, Goldstone and Byrge give us an indication that the capacity for unitization is closely related to concepts:

> "By unitization, originally separated parts of an object are combined into unified and coherent perceptual wholes. (...) Under this conception, learning a perceptual organization consists in learning how to carve a stimulus into useful components. These empirical phenomena, and their associated computational models, strongly suggest that perceptual learning is affected by our concepts. To be sure, our perceptions also ground our concepts, but interestingly, they provide a better grounding for our concepts because they are flexibly altered by these concepts. Like a mattress that provides support by conforming to the sleeping body that lies on it, our perceptions support our concepts by conforming to them[266].

Setting aside empirical matters, it is plausible to suggest that if unitization is in fact an existing phenomenon, it is influenced by concepts, as the previous examples of section 6.3 have illustrated. For instance, if one learns the concept of being a red light run one becomes more disposed to see the parts involved in a red light run as a single unit.

At least in the debate between McDowell and Travis it is common ground to take sensory awareness to be informative in a relevant sense, that is to say, informative in the sense of *sensory awareness* presented in Chapter 1[267]. Sensory awareness of a red

[266] Goldstone and Byrge 2015:827.
[267] See Chapter 1:.

light run can inform one about the occurrence of a red light run. Charles Siewert nicely illustrates the point: “There is a way it seems to us to see sunflowers not just as some more shaped and colored things, but as what has a distinctively sunflowery look”[268]. But I am also in line with Siewert with regard to one more thing: for sensory awareness to be informative it better also be integrative. As Siewert indicates, when one becomes disposed to recognize, say, sunflowers, the objects of sensory awareness “‘stand out for us as significant’, and ‘go together’”[269]. Or in a vivid expression of Anil Seth, when one sees a flock of birds, “the flock seems to be more than the sum of the birds that make it up – it seems to have a ‘life of its own’”[270]. In the same sense, through unitization, the policeman can more easily be aware of Maria's red light run. Unitization, likewise, seems to be at least a useful “tool”: it helps one perceive worldly items in terms of single units. And within this context, I would like to suggest that unitization can be taken as a cognitive capacity.

It is reasonable to take unitization as being related with the concept of unity. In Kant’s terms, unity is a pure concept of the understanding, or a *category*. Kant sets his list of categories insofar as he enumerates what would be the possible forms of judgment. Consider judgments such as “the car is blue”, “the car is large”, “the car is near the house”, and so on. “Blue” determines how the thing is qualified, in this case, with regard to color. Here, a general characteristic - quality - is said about the thing. In affirming that the car is “large”, the thing is quantified with regard to its extension or

[268] Siewert 1998:256.
[269] Siewert 1998:256.
[270] Seth 2021:157.

magnitude. In this case, the thing is predicated with regard to quantity. Likewise, “near the house” says something about the car with regard to its relation with other things[271].

What I want to highlight is the idea that in empirical judgments, categories are somehow co-participative in them. Quality, quantity, relation, and modality are four classes of pure concepts of the understanding, along with their corresponding categories. Unity is one of the three corresponding categories of quantity, alongside with plurality and totality. When something - say, a worldly item - is taken with regard to unity in an empirical judgment, one is judging something in the general sense of it being united, being composed, being combined, being integrated, being together, etc. To that extent, I will take unitization as playing an equivalent role to those other modes of unification, in the sense of it giving expression to something that is being “unitized”.

Now, recall *Same Function Thesis* passage: “The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding” (*CPR*: A79/B104-5). If these modes of unification correspond to the category of unity, they can also correspond to the pure concept of understanding. According to *Same Function Thesis*, the pure concept of understanding corresponds to synthesis in a general sense. Here is Kant on synthesis: “By *synthesis* in the most general sense (...) I understand the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition” (*CPR* B103, original emphasis). If unitization can be one of these modes of unification, it could correspond to both the unity of different representations in a judgment and the synthesis

[271] Here, I am totally influenced by Heidegger’s way of explaining the categories in his lectures on Kant published as *The Question Concerning the Thing: On Kant’s Doctrine of the Transcendental Principles*. See Heidegger 2018:42.

of different representations in an intuition, as *per Same Function Thesis*. As Kern indicates, “the concept of judging, as it were, essentially divides itself into the description of a capacity and the description of an act”[272]. If, according to Kant, the logical form of judgments is characterized by the act of combining representations in a form that is suitable to be the content of a judgment, one can say that the category of unity, as a capacity for this combination, explains that act of this combination as a mode of unification. Naturally, one can apply this conclusion to unitization. On these grounds, from now on I will take unity and unitization interchangeably.

But if unitization is a cognitive capacity, I retake an issue presented in Chapter 1: if, according to *Cognitive Capacities View*, the cognitive capacity for judgment can be actualized in sensory awareness, how can this be? In the next section, my aim is to suggest a possible way to address it.

6.5 COGNITIVE CAPACITIES AND UNITY

Land’s (2015) conceptualist reading of Kant indicates that the unity of a given intuition is the *sensible correlate* of the unity of a judgment. Along the same lines, one can say that judgment is the cognitive mode for the capacity for unitization to be actualized. Now, suppose that the sensory awareness of worldly items in terms of single units results from the actualization of the capacity for unitization in a perceptual mode. So here we have two modes of actualization: one cognitive, the other perceptual. If there are two modes of actualization of unitization, there must be differences in how it is actualized in each one of these modes. It is about time to recall Chuard’s suggestion presented in

[272] Kern 2020:74.

Chapter 2, which states that insofar as demonstrative concepts are perception-dependent they do not play the exact same role as other concepts do. To be more clear, what I want from Chuard's insight is the idea that general concepts can act in distinct ways. With that in hand, I aim to suggest that cognitive capacities can also be actualized in distinct ways. Recall *Function of Unity*.

> *Function of Unity*: The function of judgments is a capacity *C* for the unity *U* of a representation *R*. The actualization of *C* gives *R* its *U*.

In line with a conceptualist reading of Kant, one can say that the same capacity gives unity to judgment taken as a representation as well as sensory awareness taken as a p-representation. But it is reasonable to claim that the apprehension of synthetic unity in a judgment is different from the apprehension of synthetic unity in intuition. Consider the judgment "the car is blue". The synthetic unity of these representations in a judgment gives expression to the concept "blue car". It can be described as the passage from two representations - "car, blue" - to a single one: a "blue car". According to *Cognitive Capacities View*, I want to suggest that synthetic unity in sensory awareness describes, in its turn, the passage from a manifold to a worldly item. In terms of *what* is apprehended - a blue car - it is plausible to say that this apprehension has a different character depending on the mode of actualization. Accordingly, I propose that unitization is a mechanism by which worldly items show themselves in sensory awareness. The idea is that, for instance, a worldly item like a red light run becomes visible in terms of a perceptual mode of unitization, that is to say, in terms of the same concept which has the function of giving unity to different representations in a judgment. I condensate this perceptual mode of actualization as follows:

Perceptual Mode of Actualization of Unitization: The act of the capacity for unitization in sensory awareness enables a subject *s* to experience a manifold, “n>1”, in terms of a single one worldly item, “1”.

The motivation for the notion of *Perceptual Mode of Actualization of Unitization* (in short, “perceptual mode”) comes from the relations between synthesis, the categories of quantity and unity, and the concepts of understanding to the concept of *number*, as set by Kant: “the pure schema of magnitude (*quantitatis*), as a concept of the understanding, is number, a representation which compounds the successive addition of homogeneous units. Number is therefore simply the unity of the synthesis of the manifold of a homogeneous intuition in general (...)” (*CRP* A142–3/B182)”.

In the next section, I aim to establish, within a Kantian framework, a relation between “single unit” and “number”.

6.6 KANT ON THE UNITY OF APPEARANCES

The elements involved in, say, a red light run are not intrinsically related to each other. In fact, a foreign person could be able to recognize cars, intersections, lighting, etc., and still be ignorant of what a red light run is. If so, how can one be sensorily aware of these elements as combined in terms of a red light run?

As Golob (2011:9) suggests, this is, in fact, an important issue for Kant: “since every appearance contains a manifold, thus different perceptions by themselves are encountered dispersed and separate in the mind, a combination of them, which they cannot have in sense itself, is therefore necessary” (*CRP* A120). Kant’s solution is that

appearances are combined by a “rule of apprehension” that determines the “intuition in accordance with some universal concept” (*CRP* A141/B180). What Kant has in mind is that the way appearances show themselves is intrinsically related to the pure understanding:

> “since this relation of appearances to possible experience is likewise necessary (since without it we could not obtain any cognition at all through them, and they would thus not concern us at all), it follows that the pure understanding, by means of the categories, is a formal and synthetic principle of all experiences, and that appearances have a *necessary relation to the understanding*” (*CRP* A 119, original emphasis).

In this respect, I read McDowell’s *Togetherness Thesis* and *The Normativity of Togetherness* as pointing out a very similar idea to that of Kant: “reproduction [of representations] must thus have a rule in accordance with which a representation enters *into combination* (...) *with one representation rather than with any others*” (*CRP* A121, emphasis added). So although for Kant such a combination is not constitutive, it is nonetheless guided by one *rule* that determines how its elements will be combined. But as we will see, this rule does not refer to empirical concepts such as “yellow cube”. Instead, it refers to the pure concept of the understanding, more specifically, the category of unity.

According to Golob, this rule of apprehension is analogous to the *Critique’s* “schema of magnitude”, a second-order capacity to form “representations of our representations” (*CRP* A68/B94). This capacity amounts to the schema of magnitude as equivalent to the pure concept of “number”, which functions as capacity for the unity of

the synthesis of a manifold[273]. In Golob's terms, to hold the pure schema "number" is to hold the capacity for an awareness of the manifold "*as* homogenous units, an awareness which is in turn both necessary and sufficient, at least for Kant, to allow the representation of their combination or composition through summing them"[274].

With this type of reading on Kant's account of the unity of appearances, I offer one more reformulation of the notion of "unitization". In line with *Perceptual Mode of Actualization of Unitization*, sensory awareness involves a mode of relation:

Unitization's Mode of Relation: "N>1 => 1".

"N>1" is meant to represent the elements involved in the relation; "1" is supposed to represent the sensory awareness of "N>1" in terms of one worldly item; the arrow represents the process of actualization of the capacity to be aware of multiple elements in terms of a worldly item, a capacity that enables worldly items to become visible/audible/and so on in terms of single units.

As I am working with the notion of unitization, it indeed exhibits this mode of relation. From that, I suggest a fourth type of sensory awareness:

(d) *unity-awareness*: *thinkables* are neither contents nor objects of sensory awareness, though N>1 => 1 is content and object of sensory awareness.

Let's take *unity-awareness* as our appropriation of the idea of unitization. As one can note, *unity-awareness* somewhat offers a middle ground to McDowell's and Travis's positions. On the one hand, in accordance with McDowell, states that sensory awareness is a conceptual awareness, as Kant's appeal to the concept of "number"

[273] See *CRP* A142–3/B182.
[274] Golob 2011:12, original emphasis.

suggests. On the other hand, it is in line with Travis's condition that *thinkables* cannot be involved in sensory awareness. I will discuss the relation between *unity-awareness* and Travis's position in a moment. First, I would like to discuss it with regard to McDowell's *Cognitive Capacities View*.

6.7 REFRAMING MCDOWELL'S COGNITIVE CAPACITIES VIEW

To use the notion of *unity-awareness* as an alternative reading of McDowell's *Cognitive Capacities View* in response to Travis's objections, I believe that I need to address the following issues: (i) what is the nature of the actualization in sensory awareness of pure concepts of the understanding instead of empirical concepts; (ii) why *unity-awareness* has a p-representational character; (iii) how could *unity-awareness* give reasons to empirical judgments; (iv) what would the normative concept of perceptual experience be.

To be fair, McDowell, more recently, has recommended that one should better bring the role of categories instead of empirical concepts to describe a conception in which empirical reality is not outside the realm of the conceptual. Indeed, he even admitted that what he "should have considered (...) is that empirical reality is not external to the categories [and that] only thereby it is the case the empirical reality is not external to the realm of empirical concepts" (*RTS*, 243). However, McDowell also has recognized that he "made nothing of how for Kant the categories (...) figure in its being so much possible to have objects present to one in intuition, so that one can bring them under ordinary empirical concepts" (*RTS*, 243). It is my aim, in fact, to follow McDowell's

suggestion to take a closer look at the role of categories in sensory awareness. In this sense, one should note that I am in agreement with McDowell's overall *Cognitive Capacities View*. Nevertheless, I will take a different path, one in which the categories have a p-effect on sensory awareness, as sketched by the notion of *unity-awareness*.

I am indicating that in a *Cognitive Capacities View* framework one must suggest that the actualization of cognitive capacities in sensory awareness must take place in terms of the capacity to employ concepts such as "unity", "number", "quantity" etc. I am motivated by two conclusions. First, that empirical concepts such as, say, *being a flower*, cannot have a p-effect on sensory awareness, as *per* Travis's *Argument from Looks*. As he claims, empirical concepts have the character of a generality, whereas sensory awareness has a particular nature. In other words, Travis believes that sensory awareness is irreducible to awareness-that. Second, McDowell's Representationalist notion of *content-awareness* ends up being too close to Travis's Anti-representationalism. In this context, the following question arises: why do the pure concepts of the understanding - that is to say, the categories - behave differently from empirical concepts?

Suppose that the capacity for "unity" is actualized in sensory awareness. One should note that the concept "unity" does not behave as, say, the empirical concept "red light run". In contrast to empirical concepts such as "red light run", according to Kant *a priori* concepts, in fact, are not derived from experience: "There are, namely, such pure concepts of the understanding [,] which have their origin not from experience but merely from pure reason (*Log.*: 118)"[275]. If categories cannot be derived from experience, it

[275] Houlgate highlights the point as follows: "Categories, such as 'reality,' 'quantity,' 'substance,'and 'cause' are thus not abstracted from what is given to the senses in the manner of empirical concepts: we do not first encounter a variety of colors and sounds, gradually notice that they all have in common the quality of being 'real,' and then

cannot, therefore, be instanced in experience, in contrast to McDowell's idea that *thinkables* can be contents of experience. Nonetheless, although the category of unity cannot be instanced in sensory awareness, it still has the character of a generality: if *unity-awareness* does hold, every instance of, say, red light runs involve the general concept of unity, so one can perceive such a worldly item in terms of a single unit.

Note, however, that things like "single units" *need not be* either contents nor objects of sensory awareness. To put the point another way, in a sensory awareness of a red light run there is no new element - sensory or contentful - such as a "single unit" resulting from the "N>1 => 1" structure[276]. One then must note, on the one hand, that "1" is not equal to "single unit"; on the other hand, that "single unit" does not add to the variable "N>1".

This leads us to our second issue. If *unity-awareness* is not awareness of "single units", why does the category of unity is said to have a p-effect on sensory awareness?

I believe that there is a sense in which although "single unit" is not object of perceptual experience, "N>1 => 1" can be. First, because on phenomenological grounds such relations become salient in experience, as "the days of the week/secretive government organizations/television broadcast channels example", for instance, strongly suggests. In this case, as long as a relation (N>1) between the letters is established (1), there is a change in how they show themselves with regard to their

formulate the general concept 'reality' as we formulate the empirical concept 'red' by comparing and contrasting the various shades of red that we see. Rather, the category of 'reality' is produced spontaneously and independently by thought and then employed to understand as real the red that is given to us" (Houlgate 2006b:13).

[276] The use of the term "structure" here is not meant to give any strong metaphysical explanation of "N>1 => 1". Rather, it is meant to be understood as analogous to, for instance, the term "composition". So my aim is to give expression to a relation that involves worldly items perceived in terms of single units. In that sense, it is only a way to illustrate, in a condensed manner, how the unity of judgments may be involved in sensory awareness.

arrangement. And if unitization is a cognitive capacity, then there is a sense in which the way the letters are perceptually unified reflects a cognitive mode of unification.

Moreover, one can take *unity-awareness* as somewhat close to forms of "response-dependent realism", such as that of *composition*. In this respect, Kriegel (2008) is helpful:

> "Composition is not construed here as a relation among our ideas. It is a relation among items in the external world. It is just that the instantiation conditions of this relation involve subjects. (...) Response-dependent realism construes its target as a real, in some sense objective, feature of (and in) the external world. It is just that it construes its target as a response-dependent property (or relation). In one legitimate sense, response-dependent realism is something of a rubber duck – it is no more a kind of realism than a rubber duck is a kind of duck"[277].

Note that according to Kriegel, this response to the external world does not introduce in it something like the concept "composition". Rather, it allows the subject of the experience to perceive a *given relation among items*. Along the same lines, Houlgate (2006b), in a Kantian framework, points out that "our consciousness of the immediacy of a thing (...) is made possible by sensation and the pure forms of intuition (space and time), [whereas] our consciousness of the objectivity of that thing (...) is made possible by understanding and its categories"[278]. The response-dependent character of *unity-awareness*, then, regards a categorial structure which is not an object of sensory awareness *per se*, but an understanding of external reality in terms of categories - in the case of sensory awareness of worldly items, by the category of unity, which enables one

[277] Kriegel 2018:372.
[278] Houlgate 2006b:126, passage slightly modified.

to perceive a given arrangement of worldly items[279]. In line with Houlgate, I think that the involvement of the categories in experience is response-dependent in the following respect: “Experience is openness to, and takes in directly, the look and shape of, say, this tree, but it does not take in its being ‘something’, its being an ‘object’. That aspect of the tree (along with its belonging to a spatio-temporal continuum and being causally connected to other things) is posited by the mind”[280].

In a relevant sense, one should note that it gives voice to Kant’s Copernican Revolution. The idea is that categories define what counts as an object for us: a worldly item such as a red light run might be apprehended in experience only insofar it conforms to fundamental concepts such as that of unity. As Connolly puts it,

> “Kant’s account of the categories of quantity is an important feature of his Copernican shift. One thesis behind the shift was the claim that concepts do not conform to objects, but rather objects conform to our basic concepts. On Kant’s view, the concepts of quantity (unity, plurality, and totality) provide a case in point. His claim is that the categories of quantity do not conform to objects. Rather, objects conform to them. Those concepts are particular instances of Kant’s Copernican shift. They are concepts to which objects of experience conform” (Connolly 2014:330).

In this context, I believe that McDowell would be in accordance with the role of categories in sensory awareness as described by the aforementioned authors. Here, one should be attentive to McDowell’s oscillation between Kant and Hegel’s different accounts of external reality. On the one hand, McDowell takes from Kant the idea that the understanding must be in play in our apprehension of the external reality. In fact,

[279] Cf. Houlgate 2006a.
[280] Houlgate 2006a:250. Note that the same applies to the category of unity.

this is why he holds, for instance, *Same Function Thesis*. On the other hand, however, McDowell criticizes Kant for taking sensibility as being in contrast to the understanding. This is one of the reasons why McDowell, *inter alia*, appeals to Hegel's understanding of the role of categories in experience. Note that according to Hegel, "*[e]verything is in sensation*, and, if you like, everything that emerges in the conscious mind and in reason has its source and *origin* in sensation; for source and origin just mean the first, most immediate manner in which something appears" (*ES*, § 400R). That means, as Houlgate points out, that for Hegel "consciousness thinks what it sees to be the object *it is*" and "presents us with the object itself"[281]. To that extent, McDowell thinks that Hegel's account is better than Kant's in that it takes external reality as not being opposed to the understanding; that is to say, Hegel would be correct in identifying "empirical accessible reality, the only reality that is within the understanding's reach, with reality itself" (*RS*, 243).

It is in this sense that I think McDowell would agree with the idea that *unity-awareness* could be taken as analogous to a response-dependent realism. This seems to be in line, for instance, with McDowell's analogy between secondary qualities and moral and aesthetic properties. Secondary qualities are properties such that attributions to an object would be properly understood only in terms of which there would be a disposition of an object to present a certain type of perceptual appearance. One can understand that such properties, on the one hand, are subjective, insofar as they are intelligible only in terms of the way they affect the subject of the experience. McDowell's point, however, is that secondary qualities, on the other hand, are not merely subjective. In this way, McDowell believes that there is a sense in which a

[281] Houlgate 2018:86, original emphasis.

property such as “look red” would be objective regardless of whether a subject is seeing red. What he means is that an object’s *disposition* to look red is not dependent on a given particular experience of red. And for McDowell, moral and aesthetic properties would concern a disposition of an object to present a certain type of appearance; such properties, then, would also have an objective character.

It is noteworthy that this is in line with Kriegel’s stance on “composition”. As he puts it, he “construes composition along the lines of the traditional secondary qualities, and to that extent [he] casts composition as in some sense mind-dependent”; he also emphasizes that with this analogy with secondary qualities he is willing to highlight that “composition occurs [not] ‘only in the mind’”[282]. This is not the place to discuss the metaphysical implications of theses such as “response-dependent realism” or realism about values and aesthetics properties. Instead, my appeal to Kriegel and McDowell’s analogies has a more modest aim: in this case, illustrating that *unity-awareness* neither falls short of the world nor adds any ingredient - to use Frege’s terminology - to external reality. Just as Houlgate’s Hegel also suggests, “[c]onsciousness (...) does not add to the content of our awareness”[283]. To put the point another way, what I want to stress is that the objects of *unity-awareness*, although mind-dependent, are also objective in a relevant sense. As “the days of the week/secretive government organizations/television broadcast channels example” shows, although there is a sense in which the arrangement of the letters is mind-dependent there is also a sense in which it is still an arrangement among items in the external world.

[282] Kriegel 2008:372.
[283] Houlgate 2018:82.

In sum, for our purposes, what matters is that, in a sense, *Contra* Travis, this relation is not a downstream construction of ideas; and *Contra* McDowell's new position, this is not a phenomenon that occurs only in "the interface between experience and judgment [that leaves] experiences themselves unaffected" (*RBGS*, 345). Therefore, I think that the objective character of this relation favors the insight that unitization can be a perceptual phenomenon. In other words, I believe that it favors the idea that the N>1 => 1 structure can have a p-effect on sensory awareness.

That said, I aim now to address the following issue: how could *unity-awareness* give reasons to empirical judgments?

I agree with McDowell that Campbell's image of an "experience of the world that puts us in a position to think about it"[284] must be approached in normative terms. In Chapter 1, recall, I have highlighted that for McDowell a normative responsiveness to the world could be considered properly normative and relevantly rational only insofar as it is understood as a relation in which not only perceptual judgments but also perceptual experiences are taken to involve cognitive capacities. In fact, McDowell claims that "we cannot really understand the relations in virtue of which a judgment is warranted except as relations within the space of concepts (...), which hold between potential exercises of conceptual capacities" (*MAW*, 7). However, McDowell's former and new positions face several objections, as we saw in the previous chapters. One of them contends that p-representational contents must be taken as objects of sensory awareness, so one can avoid *Cognitive Capacities View* to be co-opted by the Anti-representationalist. In a Kantian-inspired framework, I have suggested that one way to block Travis's *Argument from Looks* is to take sensory awareness as a form of *unity-awareness* in which

[284] Campbell 2002:1.

perceptual experience reflects not empirical but categorial concepts. But if so, I need to describe how the *rational relation* between *unity-awareness* and perceptual judgments is supposed to obtain.

One may argue that *unity-awareness* cannot provide non-inferential knowledge. It would be so insofar it does not exhibit the same content as that of judgments. One should note that McDowell's intuitional contents are supposed to face a similar skepticism, insofar as intuitional contents have a non-discursive character. But McDowell tries to avoid an objection like this in crediting sensory awareness with *thinkable* content. As we saw, *thinkables* are meant to give expression to the idea that experience and perceptual judgments have the same type of content - conceptual content - that is accessed by two distinctive forms. In contrast to judgments, in experience *thinkables* are not acts of thinking, but *what* can be thought in active judgment. So the idea is that although a discursive capacity could only be actualized in judgments, experience, involving *thinkable* contents, may be said to afford non-inferential perceptual knowledge. In perceptual judgments, then, a subject would only need to discursively articulate the same content already possessed by sensory awareness. It is in that sense that judgments only endorse the content of perceptual experience. At this point, we can recall once again the following remark of McDowell:

> "If intuitional content is not discursive, why go on insisting it is conceptual? Because every aspect of the content of an intuition is present in a form in which it is already suitable to be the content associated with a discursive capacity, if it is not - at least not yet - actually so associated. That is part of the force of saying, with Kant, that what gives unity to intuitions is the same function that gives unity to judgments" (*AMG*, 264).

For McDowell, then, for this suitable form to offer non-inferential perceptual knowledge is for intuition to reflect, in a non-propositional way, the unity of judgments. According to him, the actualization, in experience, of the capacity to give unity to the elements in a judgment takes the form of *thinkable* content.

But as I have indicated, I believe that *unity-awareness* could also afford non-inferential perceptual knowledge. More specifically, I like to take my cue from Kant's claim "that concepts of objects in general lie at the ground of all experiential cognition as *a priori* conditions" (*CRP* B126). In fact, for Kant "only by means of [the categories] can any object of experience be thought at all" (*CRP* B126). So according to him, categories are at least necessary for perceptual judgments. Kant's idea would be that categories are a condition for empirical knowledge. Recall the example "the car is large". In this case, the role of categories would be to determine *a priori* that the thing is predicated with regard to quantity. Only then can one specify what is being predicated.

One can contend, however, that insofar as the involvement of the categories in sensory awareness, in a conceptualist framework, does not reflect empirical concepts, it will be necessary for one to take an inferential move to acquire perceptual knowledge since categorial concepts do not mirror *what* is being judged but only the form of the judgment. At least, at first sight, intuitional contents, for instance, do not face this issue, since they reflect empirical concepts such as *being a blue car*. However, I believe that *unity-awareness* can also exhibit a character that sufficiently affords non-inferential knowledge.

Consider the sensory awareness of a red light run. And suppose that *unity-awareness* is a perceptual as well as a conceptual awareness, as suggested by

the notion of unitization. According to the version of *Cognitive Capacities View* I am recommending, when one is visually confronted with a red light run the capacity to judge *that I see a red light run* is actualized in a perceptual mode in experience, once one becomes disposed to recognize instances of red light runs. In line with *Same Function Thesis* and *Togetherness Thesis* what is common between sensory awareness and perceptual judgment would be the unity of certain elements according to a relevant content. In the case of a perceptual judgment with a content such as *that I see a red light run* one relates what is visually graspable - that is to say, cars, traffic lights, intersections, etc. - in order to determine that what one sees is a red light run, whereas, in the case of *unity-awareness*, the same elements "N>1" relate to one another in a perceptual manner. Although these elements are held together in a judgment of perception, this perceptual judgment reflects *how* "N>1" appears to one. The idea is that the way things are related in sensory awareness can indicate how they will be judged. If I am right in saying that this relation reflects something along the lines of "N>1 => 1" structure, *unity-awareness* can at least give evidence for perceptual judgments: a red light run perceived as a single unit would somehow reflect the way it will be judged in a perceptual judgment. In a visual awareness of red light run, the elements (N>1) are posited as (1). Here, I follow Heidegger on the function of the understanding: "The execution and arrangement, the preparation of the concept is called 'function'"[285]. Then, my own understanding of the "form in which it is already suitable to be the content associated with a discursive capacity" is as follows: as long as the same function of the understanding gives unity to a manifold in intuitions - at least according to a Kantian conceptualist framework - it gives unity to "N>1" not in a random but in a cohesive way

[285] Heidegger 2018:100.

which is informative about about a red light run because it reflects the unity of the concept of a "red light run"[286].

Beyond that, recall that one of the ideas behind unitization is that perceptual learning is in the business of helping the subject perceive worldly items without the need of inferential work. I believe that here lies the rational relation between *unity-awareness* and perceptual knowledge.

Suppose that (1) visually informs you about a red light run. Plausibly, *unity-awareness* of (1) gives you reasons for the related perceptual judgment. If so, (1) can put you in a position to know that it is a red light run. (1), then, can be said to make the information about a red light run available to you, which makes the content of the perceptual judgment recognizable to you in virtue of (1). Suppose, now, that unitization is capable of affording non-inferential access to (1). If *unity-awareness* gives you non-inferential access to (1), and if (1) reflects the unity of the concept "red light run", the same unity *U* gives access to (1) and to the concept "red light run". If *unity-awareness* affords non-inferential access to (1) in terms of *U*, and if the concept "red light run" has the same unity *U*, the unity *U* of the *unity-awareness* can afford non-inferential access to the perceptual knowledge that (1) is a red light run.

Setting aside the form of an argument along these lines, the point is that even if sensory awareness and perceptual judgments do not share the very same articulation of content, both share a conceptual content. In this respect, Golob's notion of *grammar* is very helpful. Recall, according to Golob, sensory awareness and perceptual judgments can have the same content - i.e., conceptual content - but different

[286] Recall, in line with Kern I am using "capacity for concepts" and "capacity for judgment" interchangeably.

grammars, "different way[s] of articulating conceptual content"[287]. As his example discussed in Chapter 2 indicates, one can have access to the same information - "that the school is by the lake" - through two different grammars; in other words, by two different modes of articulation: one characteristic of sensory awareness and the other characteristic of awareness-that.

Now, suppose that a map visually informs you that the school is by the lake. Also, consider (1) as the information accessed by the *unity-awareness* of the map. From the map, you can come to know that the school is by the lake. Golob's point, I guess, is indeed plausible: "There is a good sense in which in each case you are receiving the same information; but the grammar, the delivery mechanisms, by which that information is conveyed and articulated, clearly differ"[288]. In our terms, Golob's example is illustrative of the following idea: although (1) and the perceptual judgment that the school is by the lake have different grammars, both afford access to the same information. If the information is the same, there is no reason to think that an inferential step from (1) to the judgment *p* is needed.

Finally, I wish to discuss the normative nature of *unity-awareness* - if it really needs to have one. Surelly, Travis's Anti-representationalism discards the need for a normative concept of experience. The reason for it is that insofar as sensory awareness and awareness-that are irreducible forms of awareness - the first non-conceptual, the latter conceptual - perceptual experiences would make no room for misinformation. According to Travis, in fact, only a conceptual awareness can raise the question of truth. As we saw in Chapter 5, Travis stresses that the particular case does not transmit, but *confers*

[287] Golob 2014:71.
[288] Golob 2014:103.

truth instead[289]. In this sense, he is in line with Kant's claim that "truth and illusion are not in the object, in so far as it is intuited, but in the judgment about it, in so far as it is thought" (*CPR* A293/B350). For Travis, even non-conceptualist versions of Representationalism - such as that of Evans and Peacocke, for example - are committed to conceptualism. In his discussions on Evans, for instance, he stresses that any form of "representation necessarily reaches beyond the particular case which it represents as a certain way"[290]. In Travis's view, that which represents something as a *certain way* necessarily belongs to the conceptual, as long as it is representation, not experience, which is responsible for evaluating if something is really that way. Travis, then, concludes with this striking remark: "If we draw a conceptual–non-conceptual distinction (...), 'non-conceptual representational content' is senseless"[291]. Cussins's Representationalism, however, is careful in taking perceptual experience as having a completely different nature than thought. And this is exactly one of the reasons why he brings us the notion of normative concept. As we saw in Chapter 2, according to Cussins, experience must have another kind of commitment: we experience the world in the light of action, not truth. Be that as it may, I believe that a conceptualist account may, at least, be capable of offering a normative concept, if needed.

Especially for a response to Travis, I could not take for granted that *unity-awareness*, in having the same unity of judgments, can bring the question of truth to experience. Beyond that, I agree with Travis that sensory awareness and awareness-that are irreducible. In a certain sense, I think that sensory awareness is concept-independent, if the concepts in play are empirical ones.

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[289] See Travis 2018:46.
[290] Travis 2013e:151.
[291] Travis 2013e:151.

Consider McDowell's *content-awareness* view. According to it, *being a red rose* can be content of experience. If sensory awareness p-represents something as *being a red rose* when one is actually confronted with a plastic red rose, one's *content-awareness* is a misinformation. Sensory awareness incorrectly p-represents that it is a real red rose when it is in fact a plastic red rose. But suppose that sensory awareness has a *unity-awareness* character. If *unity-awareness* does not p-represent empirical concepts, p-representation cannot misinform one. That is to say, although one can be in error in taking it as a real red rose, this is something that can occur only downstream from perceptual experience (through a false belief, for example). In this case, sensory awareness is not informing one that something is *that way*. One has visual awareness of an arrangement of the world, not that the world is p-represented that way. The role of categories here is not determining what is being taken. Instead, it is providing form to what is apprehended. As categories, in a judgment, determine only the form of the judgment and not what is being judged, in experience the category of unity does not play the role to determine in empirical terms what is being apprehended. In this sense, judgment is in play only in responses to experience, as Travis wants to.

In the *unity-awareness* account, then, "truth" does not need to be the normative concept of experience. But if so, what would be a good candidate for the normative concept of *unity- awareness*? I take my cue from Connolly's suggestion that Brogaard's perceptual view on language comprehension can show "that we represent perceptually that certain words are significant for us, not that we represent the meanings of those words *in* perception"[292]. But here I want to take a different path to that of Connolly. Recall that Connolly's account rather focuses on the subpersonal level mechanisms that

[292] Connolly 2019:173, emphasis added.

enable unitization in perception. In fact, he does not work on the basis of anything that resembles something along the lines of a normative concept. More than that, he discusses a difference in meaning and significance in terms of them being or not objects of sensory awareness, as his talk of a perceptual representation "that certain words are significant for us" suggests.

Consider the Greek word *Φιλοσοφία*. According to Connolly's account, once one becomes disposed to chunk "Φιλοσοφία" in a single unity it can suggest that it became significant for one, not actually that something like "significance" became p-represented in one's sensory awareness of "Φιλοσοφία". In the *unity-awareness* account, however, "significance" could be taken as a normative concept. For instance, a red light run may become significant for a foreign person once she starts driving in San Francisco. What I mean is something along these lines: to p-represent is not to represent "significance" or to represent that some particular worldly item is significant; my suggestion, instead, is that for experience to have p-representational content is for it to already have significance. In this sense, the normative conditions that would govern the contents of experience would be answerable to the normative concept of significance. Significance, then, would be a standard to how things would be related to each other in experience, so they could be perceived in terms of single units that reflect conceptual contents. In other words, the idea would be that which is significant tends to show itself in experience in terms of a single unit.

With these ideas on (i) the nature of the actualization in sensory awareness of pure concepts of the understanding (ii) the p-representational character of *unity-awareness*, (iii) the rational relation between *unity-awareness* and empirical

judgments, and (iv) the normative concept of *unity-awareness*, I want now to discuss them in the light of the *Argument from Looks*.

6.8 OBJECTIONS TO THE ARGUMENT FROM LOOKS

Looks-indexing

On the one hand, I believe that it is hard for *unity-awareness* to accept *Looks-indexing* in the way Travis elaborates it. If *Looks-indexing* is supposed to fix the same content that will be judged in the correspondent perceptual judgment, *unity-awareness* cannot play this role, as it does not have a content that reflects an empirical concept. However, if I am right that *unity-awareness* is wholly perceptual, it can be supposed to at least be capable of "suggesting", from experience itself, what form the related perceptual judgment would have. Moreover, a phenomenon such as unitization, if both contentful and non-inferential, may be said to offer extra help to experience, in its informative role about the external world. So I think that there is a sense in which *unity-awareness* at least provides a middle ground between *object-awareness* and *content-awareness*. Roughly, the point seems to be that *unity-awareness* is "more perceptual" than *content-awareness* and "more contentful" than *object-awareness*. If rejecting *Looks-indexing* weakens Representationalism, *unity-awareness* at least offers an alternative notion of p-representational content that raises the possibility of a reformulation - not properly a rejection - of *Looks-indexing* in favor of the Representationalist.

Rejecting P2

To the extent that *unity-awareness* is not meant to reflect the empirical content of *what* will be judged, it is supposedly freed from capturing equivocal contents. *Unity-awareness* is not in the business of p-representing some perceptual content that could be comparable to other contents. Instead, the role of *unity-awareness* is to p-represent the unity of worldly items in, let's say, a categorical way.

Rejecting P3

According to *unity-awareness*, the cognitive capacity for judgment may be actualized in a wholly perceptual manner, if empirical concepts are out of the game. In Kantian terms, unity is supposed to be a "rule of apprehension", not a judgment. In the case of Maria's red light run, unitization may or may not be determined by a subject's conceptual capacities, which thus may or may not function as the relevant "rule for apprehension' - as *per The Normativity of Togetherness*. And in line with Travis, there is no problem for *unity-awareness* to hold that perceptual judgment occurs only downstream of experience.

Rejecting P4

Even if the Anti-representationalist rejects the objections above, I believe that one can still hold that there is a sense in which *unity-awareness* offers a "further notion of looks that is both wholly perceptual and capable of making p-representational content recognizable". Note that the premise talks about what is *capable* of making p-representational content recognizable, not that the contents of perceptual judgments and sensory awareness must be identical. In our terms, if the grammar of the (non-empirical) contents of experience gives non-inferential reasons for (empirical)

perceptual judgments that have different grammar, I think that there is a sense in which *unity-awareness* at least indicates a path to another notion of *looks* that preserves the *conceptual* character of p-representational contents.

6.9 OBJECTIONS TO THE UNITY-AWARENESS VIEW

After all, one can say that a *Cognitive Capacities View* must meet four criteria:

> (a) An experience *E* must have content, in the sense that *E* must be a case either of (a) Representationalism or of (b) some form of hybrid view which argues for the idea that Representational and Non-representational features play a fundamental role in an account of *E*.
>
> (b) The contents of *E* must somehow reflect the propositional contents of judgments.
>
> (c) *E* must somehow involve a synthetic unity that reflects the unity of judgments.
>
> (d) An aspect of generality must somehow be contained in *E*.

I would like to present some objections to *unity-awareness* in light of these criteria.

Concerning (a), I believe that both *content-awareness* and *unity-awareness* offer a hybrid view. Hence:

> *Hybrid View on the Content of Perceptual Experience*: At least one of the four conditions for p-representation plays a constitutive role in an account of experience *E*.

Content-awareness seems to be incapable of meeting *Availability*, as McDowell thinks that *thinkables* are no longer objects of sensory awareness. I have argued that it weakens McDowell's Representationalism, insofar as it inclines him toward Anti-representationalism. *Unity-awareness*, in rejecting *Objectivity*, was meant to recommend that p-representation reflects not empirical but categorial concepts, such as that of unity. On the one hand, *content-awareness* better explains how perceptual judgments are only meant to endorse a content already possessed by sensory awareness, though it cannot hold that contents are objects of sensory awareness; on the other hand, *unity-awareness* is supposed to hold that contents are objects of sensory awareness, but finds it harder to explain how non-inferential perceptual knowledge obtains, since categorial and empirical contents are not equivalent regarding their grammar. If so, one can contend that *unity-awareness* also weakens Representationalism. For instance, one can say that since *unity-awareness* rejects *Objectivity* it also comes too close to Anti-representationalism. To that extent, (b) raises the following issue: is categorial concept really an interesting notion of concept? Maybe what is really at stake are concepts in the sense of empirical concepts, since categorial concepts concerns general concepts, supposedly making it easier for one to holding a *Cognitive Capacities View*[293]. However, empirical knowledge is not the only "problem of perception", to use Travis's term. What I mean is that if one agrees with Travis - or even with Cussins - that truth is not in experience, I believe that there must be a change in the way we talk about perception. In that sense, why can't the form of judgments be important? If categories are conditions for empirical knowledge or judgment, I guess that they should deserve attention. For instance, consider Sedivy's (2019) stance on

[293] Cf. Smith 2002a:110-1.

aesthetic properties. According to her, aesthetic properties have a p-effect on sensory awareness. For clarity's sake, she gives us this illustrative example:

> "consider two monochromatic canvases with the same paint and colour, where one is a paint sample and the other an artwork. A large stretched canvas that is painted all over with a certain shade of grey colour would have one range of aesthetic properties if it is a decorative sample in a fancy paint shop—for example, drab, gloomy or elegant. But a canvas of the same size, painted all over with the same shade of grey colour, would have a different range of aesthetic properties if it is a painting made by a specific artist at a particular time, such as Gerhard Richter's Grau 1970 . A work's aesthetic properties would be connected to 'what' it conveys or 'what' it is about—a feeling, a mood, a content. One might find the same grey colour gloomy for example, but in the case of the artwork it would be gloominess intentionally conveyed, rather than the gloomy effect of a certain colour. Perhaps an all-over-grey painting might seem not to convey anything—it might seem strangely neutral or ambiguous, lacking in a forceful effect or content. But then this would be precisely its content and aesthetic impact—ambivalence or absence, or a withholding of message. This example illustrates that aesthetic response depends on the high-level kind to which an object belongs, here artefact versus artwork; and it suggests that the response at issue may be perceptual, since it is a response to the object's colour (and shape, size, texture)"[294].

For our concerns, what is remarkable in Sedivy's example is that aesthetic response cannot obtain unless one is aware of how the monochromatic canvas is qualified - in a *Cognitive Capacities View* framework, one can say that the category of quality is somehow co-participating in the sensory awareness in question. Analogously, there is

[294] Sedivy 2019:165.

no reason to think that the category of unity in the phenomenon of unitization does not have relevance in empirical knowledge.

However, regarding (c), one may object that perceptual unity is concept-independent. I agree that *unity-awareness* need not be necessary to perceptual unity. For example, it can be the case that the foreign person may randomly have sensory awareness of Maria's red light run or of a language that she does not master as a single unit. This need not imply, however, that *unity-awareness* is not sufficient for perceptual unity, as the examples of unitization suggest.

Concerning (d), *unity-awareness*, in having a conceptual nature, implies generality. In fact, if one accepts Travis's objections *unity-awareness* may be a case in which generality is in play in sensory awareness. I believe that one difficulty thus arises: is sensory awareness irreducible to *unity-awareness*? The proponent of *unity-awareness* may argue that unity, in contrast to empirical concepts, is part of the external world in the sense of a disposition to present a certain type of perceptual appearance. So unity, in experience, would still reflect a categorial concept without being in the business of an instancing relation. In other words, there would be nothing that could instance the unity of something *being as it is*, insofar as unity is not an empirical concept. Nevertheless, I rather remain silent about these more metaphysical issues.

FINAL REMARKS

I have framed *Cognitive Capacities View* as an attempt to provide a way of expressing the *thought* that cognitive capacities must somehow be involved in perceptual experience. This expression can take different forms. In this Thesis, I have presented three of them:

(i) *p-representational-awareness*: *thinkables* are both contents and objects of sensory awareness.

(ii) *content-awareness*: *thinkables* are contents but not objects of sensory awareness.

(iii) *unity-awareness*: *thinkables* are neither contents nor objects of sensory awareness, though N>1 => 1 is content and object of sensory awareness.

In Andrea Kern's (2006:156) neat terms, (i), (ii), and (iii) take "seriously" the following remark of Kant:

> "The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding" (*CPR*: A79/B104-5).

John McDowell's influential work has offered us (i) and (ii). As *Cognitive Capacities View* implies that perceptual experience has representational content, at least in a certain sense, positions such as McDowell's are committed to Representationalism:

Representationalism: The thesis that sensory awareness has content.

However, Charles Travis contends that the so-called “Kant’s Slogan” incurs a categorial mistake. According to Travis, concepts and experience (intuitions) are irreducible forms of awareness. In contrast to (i) and (ii), he has offered the following theses:

> (iv) *object-awareness*: *thinkables* are neither contents nor objects of sensory awareness.
>
> *Anti-representationalism*: The thesis that Representationalism is false.

In trying a response to Travis’s objections, (iii) is my critical appropriation of (i) and (ii). It is meant to offer a middle ground to Travis’s and McDowell’s positions. In line with Travis, I believe that empirical concepts cannot be objects of sensory awareness. But in line with McDowell, I think that categories - as Kant and Hegel understand them - could be contents of sensory awareness, so one can establish normative and rational relations between perceptual experience and perceptual judgments.

After all, I see (ii) and (iii) as committed to the following thesis:

> *Hybrid View on the Content of Perceptual Experience*: At least one of the four conditions for p-representation plays a constitutive role in an account of experience *E*.

It was not my aim in this Thesis to show that *unity-awareness* is the best version of *Cognitive Capacities View*, or that the conceptualist readings of Kant and Hegel are the right ones. What I wanted was to offer a contribution to the debate on the philosophical nature of perceptual experience. To conclude, I borrow Sachs’s illuminative remarks on philosophical debates: “No one can hope to be right; the most

anyone can hope for is to be wrong in an interesting way. I hope that, if I have been wrong, at least I have been wrong in interesting ways”[295].

[295] Sachs 2014:156.

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