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Triple Disjunctivism, Naive Realism, and Anti-Representationalism

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Abstract Contemporary defenders of non-disjunctivism take a representationalist philosophy of mind for granted; all kinds of conscious intentional states/acts/events are automatically regarded as being representations. The paper presents an alternative anti-representationalist view of the mind. It differs from other present-day anti-representationalisms in arguing that all conscious phenomena contains a this-worldly something called ‘from-pole’, and it denies that an intentional content and the corresponding intentional object always are distinct entities. The view is set in contrast to both a transcendental ego tradition and a no from-pole tradition. Hereby, the paper defends the common sense-like view that we are persons who *directly* perceive, act in, and talk about things in a common world.

Keywords Disjunctivism · Representationalism · Intentional Content · Consciousness

1. Introduction

I would like to distinguish between three kinds of metaphysical disjunctivism; epistemological disjunctivism will not be discussed at all. Using the expression ‘no highest common factor’, which is often used in discussions of disjunctivism, they can be stated thus:

- veridical perceptions and completely illusory ones have no such factor
- actions and mere behavior have no such factor
- true and false assertions have no such factor.

The first kind is the rather well known disjunctivism with respect to perceptions (Byrne and Logue 2009), (Soteriou 2009); the second is a sort of the less well known disjunctivism with

respect to actions (Haddock and Macpherson 2011).¹ The third one, assertion disjunctivism, might be said to exist only in an embryonic form (Johansson 2010: 98–101) (Candlish and Damjanovic 2011: sect.3.3), but I think it is a natural outgrowth of the other two.

As far as I can see, all three disjunctivisms, each in their own specific way, come closer to my and most people's unreflective everyday conceptions than the corresponding non-disjunctivisms do. Therefore, a defense of such a triple disjunctivism is a necessary condition for any naïve realism-like view that regards human beings as persons who *directly* perceive, act in, and talk about things in a common world. Put conversely, naïve realism, as I understand it, implies triple disjunctivism. And, in my opinion, all these three forms of disjunctivism need for their defense anti-representationalism, i.e., a denial of the view that representation is a highest common factor for all kinds of intentionality or “aboutness.”

In contemporary philosophy, famous defenses of naïve realism-like views can be found in philosophers as different as Ludwig Wittgenstein (1967), Peter Strawson (1965), and John McDowell (1996); Strawson labeled his views ‘descriptive metaphysics’. In contradistinction to them, however, I think that in order to defend naïve realism-like views and disjunctivism some revisionary metaphysics is needed. The so to speak rock-bottom claim of my paper is stated in the next paragraph:

Contemporary mainstream philosophy of mind has not analyzed with sufficient care what it means to be conscious, or to be aware of something, i.e., being conscious in the sense in which one is not conscious in dreamless sleep.

Often, the terms ‘disjunctivism’ and ‘intentionalism’ are used to represent two contrary opposite positions (Crane 2011: sect.3.3–4), but the disjunctivism I shall argue for might well deserve the label ‘intentionalist disjunctivism’. It denies that all kinds of intentionalism are kinds of representationalism and that “presentations are a special subclass of representations” (Searle 1983: 46).

Furthermore, the view that all kinds of intentional states/acts/events can be subsumed under the notion of representation is an error which, I also claim, runs parallel with the false view that an intentional content and its corresponding intentional object always are distinct entities.² Central to my argumentation is the introduction of what I will call ‘from-poles’, and I think there are both experiential and theoretical reasons in favor of this kind of entity. I have not

¹ Sometimes action disjunctivism, as I have characterized it, is defended without any use of the label ‘disjunctivism’. To my mind, two such interesting cases are (Steward 2012) and (Sundström 1999: ch. 2).

² For a succinct presentation of this “being distinct” view, see (Smith 2004: 2, 9). As far as I know, no philosopher of mind has claimed that it is an analytic and non-contestable truth that intentional content and object are distinct entities.

found this or a corresponding notion among other present-day anti-representationalists. For instance, neither Bill Brewer's (2013) "object view of perception" nor John Campbell's (2002) "relational view of experience" contains the kind of relation between from-pole and experienced object that I will make a plea for.

I shall use 'intentional object' in such a wide sense that both objects as such and states of affairs can be called 'objects'.

My revisionary view of consciousness will be presented in the next section, related to some other philosophers' views in sections three and four, connected to the notion of experiential reasons in section five, and then in section six applied to the content-object distinction.

2. Consciousness as Directed Connection at a Distance

Wikipedia contains (in 2013) in its entry "Naïve realism" a picture of a head and a burning candle, called 'Perceiver' and 'Object', respectively; and underneath the picture, in the distance between the head and the candle, there is an arrow going from the perceiver to the object. The picture is meant to represent naïve realism with respect to perception; and I think it succeeds in doing so. Four things should be noted:

- (a) the perceiving subject and the perceived object are two distinct entities where none is part of the other;
- (b) there is a distance between the subject and the object, but the subject and the object are nonetheless in some sense connected;
- (c) the distance between the subject and the object is empty;
- (d) there is a relation of directedness (the arrow) from the subject to the object.

I claim that these four descriptions – with 'subject' exchanged for 'from-pole', and with some qualifications concerning the term 'distance' soon to be spelled out – are true of *all* forms of intentionality; be it veridical or non-veridical perceptions, true or false assertions, or intentionality explicitly directed at fictions. The term 'distance' adds something important to the view that, necessarily, consciousness is consciousness *of* something. The conjunction of the statements (a) and (d) says that perception is always perception *of* something, but it does not bring in any notion of distance; this is done in (b) and (c).

When arguing for my views, I will mostly use the term ‘from-pole’ instead of the other possibilities, ‘conscious subject’ and ‘subject with awareness’, and ‘to-pole’ instead of ‘object’. This is done in order to make it clear that my paper wants to bracket the questions whether the subject (from-pole) and the object (to-pole) can be, or have to be, enduring entities of some sort. Some of my examples of intentional phenomena can be granted only a momentary existence, and should be called ‘intentional events’ rather than ‘intentional states’ or ‘intentional acts’. In other words, the terms ‘from-pole’ and ‘to-pole’ are used in such a wide sense that their referents may have any possible kind of temporal extension. According to Galen Strawson, also an explicitly revisionist metaphysician, consciousness consists of a number of interrupted “experientially unitary periods of experience” of some seconds (Strawson 2009: 4). If this is true, then I claim that even in such experiences there are both a from-pole and a to-pole.

The Wikipedia picture depicts a veridical perception of a material object, but I will start by asking the reader to consider three situations where purely mental objects are experienced.

First, think of a phantom pain in an amputated foot, i.e., a pain that is experienced as being exactly where a foot was earlier seen to be located. Furthermore, let us assume that the perceiving subject has become so accustomed to it, that there is no astonishment about the fact that the pain is seen as existing outside of the body. Through (= per-) some kind of intentionality the subject gets hold of (= ceives) a pain; the subject perceives a pain. The four descriptions (a) to (d) are as easily applicable to this situation as they are to veridical perceptions of material objects. Within the mental-intentional state described there is (a) a distinction between a from-pole and a to-pole. The pain (the to-pole) is experienced outside of the body, but the perceiving subject (the from-pole) has its center somewhere within. Also, (b) there is a perceptual spatial distance between the from-pole and the connected to-pole, (c) the distance between them is experienced as empty, and (d) the from-pole is directed at the to-pole.

Second, consider a headache. This pain is experienced inside the subject’s body; moreover, in the place where, if anywhere, mental phenomena (in particular self-awareness) are normally said to be caused and/or exist. There is nonetheless here a distinction to be made between a from-pole and a to-pole, which conforms to the descriptions (a) to (d). Here comes a brief argument; more will be said in sections four and five.

The fact that people spontaneously say ‘I have a headache’ indicates, that they equally spontaneously make a distinction between a self-conscious ego and something that is only temporarily attached to it, the headache. I am of the opinion that the sentence can be understood as a description. The ego and the pain (a) are distinct entities, even though the pain is attached

to the ego. Also, (d) there is directedness from the ego to the pain, but no directedness in the other direction.

Before bringing in the statements (b) and (c), I have to unpack my term ‘distance’. In both the earlier examples, the candle and the phantom pain, there is in the perceptual space an *experienced* spatial distance between the from-pole and the to-pole, but this need not be true when the to-pole is placed within the body, and, in particular, not in the headache case. What can then be meant by ‘distance’, if not spatial distance? If the from-pole and the to-pole of an intentional state/act/event are in the same place in perceptual space, e.g. in the head, is there then any reasonable sense in which it can be said that there is a distance between them?

Let us take it for granted that the primary semantic home of the term ‘distance’ is spatial distance. In a natural way the sense of the term can be widened so as to allow also entities that can be represented along a line as having some kind of distance relations. Time, for instance, is represented on a line, and we often speak of the more or less distant past and future. In relation to quantified determinable properties such as mass and electric charge, the distance between two determinate masses or two determinate charges is the distance between them on the scale on which they are represented. When it comes to a non-quantified determinable such as experienced color, one may speak of a distance between two determinate hues as being informally measured by the number of in-between hues discerned.

If a distinction between formal logic (where logical constants and quantifiers are the central terms) and material logic (where something with substantial content is ascribed a logic as in temporal logic and deontic logic) is made (Johansson 2004: 129), then the kind of distances now talked about may be called ‘material-logical distances’.

Such distance talk, however, is out of the question when it comes to relations between a from-pole and a to-pole. These poles are not two determinates on a pole-determinable that has other determinate kinds of poles in-between them. But other extensions of the sense of ‘distance’ come naturally, too.

The usual non-conceptual symbolic representation of the directed connection between a from-pole and its to-pole is, as in the Wikipedia picture, the arrow; and I find this a good representation. Using the Subject-Object terminology it can be formalized as $S \implies O$. An arrow, however, cannot possibly be reduced to a single point; there must be a distance between the beginning of it and the head. This means that a *conceptual* symbolic representation of intentionality ought also to contain some kind of distance concept in order to be a good representation.

The relation between a to-pole and its from-pole is of quite another character than that between a thing and its inhering monadic properties, or that between the color and the extension in a perceived color area. And I am widening the distance-concept in order to stress this difference. A thing and its properties are distinct and *partly* co-located, and the color and the extension of a color area are distinct and *wholly* co-located, but in neither case is there a distance between the entities. Now, in the headache case the from-pole and the to-pole are also distinct and co-located, but they do nonetheless not seem to coincide in the way a thing and its properties do, or the way the color and the area extension do.

I will, in analogy with the notion ‘material-logical distance’, call the distance between the from-pole and the to-pole ‘intentional-logical distance’; and when the context so allows, only ‘distance’. It is this distance concept that is presupposed in the statements (b) and (c), and which make them true just as much of the headache case as of the candle and the phantom pain cases. In the latter cases, however, the intentional-logical distance also shows itself as a spatial distance in the perceptual field.

So much for the second situation; I will now approach the third one. Musicians now and then say things such as ‘Tonight, when playing, I was simply one with the music’; novel readers say ‘I completely forgot myself when reading the book’; and sports people say ‘What a good performance; I really had flow, I never thought about what to do, I simply was my actions’. Many conscious experiences are in this way in retrospect described as being ego-less; there is consciousness but no self-awareness. If someone says ‘I *am* one with the music’, then this person is not one with the music.

Similarly, people can also have ego-less pain experiences. In retrospect they can say ‘The pain was so intense that I was completely lost in it’. That is, there is consciousness of pain, but no state, act, or event that deserves to be called self-awareness.

In the third situation that I want the reader to consider, there is a person with such an intense headache that she becomes one with the pain. She is *ego-less* in the sense that she has no reflective self-awareness, but – that is my claim – she is nonetheless not *from-pole-less*.

There must be an explanation of the fact that people afterwards can spontaneously say ‘I was lost in the pain’. At face value, their statement sounds epistemically paradoxical: they claim to remember something that they say they have not experienced (it might be called ‘the paradox of ego-less states’). As far as I can see, the best and simplest explanation is to assume the existence of a from-pole that later on can be remembered and talked about. If I am right, then even in ego-less intentional acts/states/events there is a from-pole with a distance to the to-pole.

The three situations presented (phantom pain, normal headache, extreme headache) can very well also be viewed as only being three specific stages of a single pain that is continuously changing, first place and then intensity. To begin with, the pain that is experienced as existing outside of the body (and therefore called ‘phantom pain’) is soon experienced as continuously moving into the leg (and then called ‘pain in the leg’); then it moves inside the body up into the head (where it is re-labeled into ‘headache’). All the time, in this change of experienced perceptual-spatial location, the pain is experienced as being the same pain, and there is a clear I-am-in-pain awareness. Secondly, the pain in the head becomes more and more intense. The I-am-in-pain awareness thus fades away into an ego-less awful pain. From what I have earlier said, it follows that at every point of time in this experiential continuity, there is a from-pole and a to-pole that make the four statements (a) to (d) true.

Conclusion of Section 2: Discussions of disjunctivism should start from the fact that even momentary experiences of purely mental phenomena have the structure of a from-pole directed at, and directly connected to, a to-pole at a distance. All states, acts, and events of consciousness contain directed connection at a distance.

3. The No From-pole Tradition and the Transcendental Ego Tradition

The directed-connection-at-a-distance view put forward in Section 2, with its positing of a from-pole, contradicts (i) Hume’s view of impressions, (ii) all early twentieth century talk about sensations, sense data, or elementary experiences that are neither mental nor material, (Mach 1957), (Russell 1961), and (Carnap 1969), respectively, (iii) much late twentieth century talk about consciousness of qualia, and (iv) much contemporary philosophy of mind; for instance, (Bayne 2010), (Chalmers 1996, 2010), (Dainton 2000, 2008), and (Searle 1983, 1992). Let me call this tradition ‘the no from-pole tradition’.

Whether or not the relevant basic entities posited by these philosophers are regarded as mental entities (Hume, Bayne, Chalmers, Dainton, Searle) or as neither physical nor mental (Mach, Russell, Carnap), they are not regarded as something that is there *for some entity at a distance*. When an enduring subject or ego is admitted, either the subject is (as in Hume) regarded as a fiction composed of the basic no from-pole entities, or the subject is by means of a relation of direct “distance-less” acquaintance connected to the object.

Most classification labels contain some application problems, and I will mention one seeming such problem for the term ‘the no from-pole tradition’. G. Strawson (2009) stresses the existence of a *subject of experience* in such a way that his view might not immediately seem to fit my label, but in my opinion it does. He talks about “the lived present [conscious] experience,” and he claims that each such experience contains a self-experience. This self-experience, however, contains nothing like a from-pole. He calls such experiences ‘SESMETs’. According to Strawson, in ordinary self-awareness the self appears – watch out for the capital letters – as a *Subject of Experience*, as something at each moment synchronically *Single*, as something *MEntal*, as a *Thing*, as *persisting* (being a diachronically single thing), as an *agent*, as something with *personality*, and as *distinct* from the organism. He argues that the last four features (persistence, agency, personality, distinctness) are, even though mostly there, not essential to the existence of self-experience, but that the first four are. In order for there to be a self-experience, there has to be a state/act/event of consciousness that contains at least all the four features of SE, S, ME, T. None of these, however, is a from-pole in the sense that I am advocating.

The directed-connection-at-a-distance view is also in opposition to a kind of thinking that runs from Kant to transcendental phenomenology, and which posits some kind of basic transcendental or *pure ego* (not to be conflated with what is sometimes called the empirical ego); let’s call it ‘the transcendental ego tradition’. The posited transcendental ego contains a from-pole in my sense, but the existence of an intentional-logical distance between the ego and the apprehended phenomena is never stressed. I think this is one important reason why the philosophers in this tradition so easily regard all seeming non-ego phenomena as parts of an ego.

In opposition to Hume’s inability to find any non-fictional ego, Kant famously claims: “It *must be possible* [italics added] for the ‘I think’ to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me” (Kant 1968: 152–3). Perhaps one of Kant’s reasons for writing ‘must be possible’ instead of ‘must be necessary’ is to take into account the kind of ego-less situations that I have mentioned. In everyday discourse, to think of something means to be directed at something that is outside of the act of thinking itself. That is, there is some kind of distance between the thinker and what is thought of. This fact, however, Kant never seems to take seriously enough. Since he turns the from-pole of ‘I think’ into a transcendental ego with transcendental faculties (in his

own words: a “*transcendental* unity of self-consciousness,” *ibid.*), it is natural for him to let his representations become essentially constituted by the faculties of the transcendental ego.

In an oft-quoted passage of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein says:

Where *in* the world is a metaphysical subject to be found?

You will say that this is exactly like the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you do *not* see the eye.

And nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye.

(Wittgenstein 1961: 5.633)

In a kind of inference to the best explanation of what exists in the world (in the visual field), Wittgenstein, like Kant with his transcendental deduction, comes to the conclusion that there must nonetheless be a “metaphysical subject” (an eye). I think Wittgenstein could just as well have talked about a transcendental ego, even though his “metaphysical subject” in many respects differs from the transcendental ego of Kant.

Mostly, my thoughts on consciousness and intentionality have some relation to something Edmund Husserl has said somewhere; his transcendental turn, with which I disagree, notwithstanding. He posits both a from-pole and a to-pole; his name of the from-pole is ‘the pure Ego’. In his *Ideas*, he quotes approvingly the Kant sentence I just quoted (Husserl 1982: §57), and later in the book he writes (<> inserted by the translator):

no excluding [by means of epoché] can annul the form of *cogito* and cancel out the “pure” subject of the act: the “being directed to” [...] *necessarily* includes in its essence this: that it is precisely <a ray> “emanating from the Ego” or, in a reverse direction of the ray, “toward the Ego” — and this Ego is the *pure* Ego; no reduction can do anything to it. [---] the <Ego> is completely empty of essence-components, has no explicable content, is undescrivable in and for itself: it is pure Ego and nothing more. [---] there is a certain, extraordinarily important two-sidedness in the essence of the sphere of mental processes, of which we can also say that in mental processes there is to be distinguished a *subjectively oriented* side and an *objectively oriented* side. (Husserl 1982: §80)

Husserl posits two poles, but, despite using the metaphor of a ray (in German: “Richtungsstrahl”), he never truly posits and discusses a distance of some kind between the two

poles. Also, he seems to take it for granted that the pure Ego must be some kind of enduring entity.³

To those who like formalizations, the contrast between the no from-pole tradition and the transcendental ego tradition can be made visible as the difference between the forms:

A(O) and A(S ==> O), respectively.

A(O) is short-hand for Awareness-of-Object, and A(S ==> O) is short-hand for Awareness-of-(Subject-directed-at-Object). In the next section I will argue for a third representational form.

The Essence of Section 3: Hume, post-Humean empiricists, and most contemporary analytic metaphysicians are blind to from-poles in experience. Kant and later transcendental-minded philosophers posit in all our experiences both a from-pole and a to-pole, but, unfortunately, they never do justice to the fact that there is some kind of distance between the poles. Therefore, they submerge the to-pole in the from-pole.⁴

4. Consciousness as Double Awareness

In his 1903-paper “The Refutation of Idealism,” George Edward Moore said farewell to British idealism (Moore 1960). In his brief 1936–7 work *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Jean-Paul Sartre said good-bye to Husserl’s transcendental idealism (Sartre 1957). In this section I shall relate my views to these two repudiations of idealism. I think it is important to see both the similarity (positing double awareness) and the difference between them (not positing and positing a from-pole, respectively) in order to understand the notion of from-pole.

Moore comes close to making a distinction between a from-pole and a to-pole, but he distinguishes only between two kinds of consciousness: *object-of-consciousness* (hyphenation added) and *consciousness* (or, rather, consciousness-of-consciousness). This might, in contemporary terminology, also be expressed as a distinction between the object-of-experience

³ Husserl’s observations are made after his transcendental turn, but I regard the ones that I have presented as being independent of this turn. In the *first* edition of *Logische Untersuchungen (Logical Investigations)* 1900–1, which has not been translated, his views fit the no from-pole tradition.

⁴ Note that my distinction between the two traditions is not – as Broad’s between non-centre and centre theories of the unity of mind (Broad 1925: ch. XIII) – meant to distinguish between two ways of explaining the *unity* of consciousness. I am not claiming that the existence of from-poles supply such an explanation; I am only arguing that *there are* from-poles in consciousness unities.

and experience. The distinction must by no means be conflated with a distinction between a mere object-aspect and a mere awareness-aspect of intentional states/acts/events. The latter distinction contains only one kind of consciousness/awareness/experience, and Moore's criticism of the idealists is that they falsely think there is only one kind of consciousness/awareness/experience. Thus, he claims, they falsely turn all objects-of-consciousness into parts of consciousness.

His own view is that in order to reach a conclusion about what kind of object an object is, one has to discuss each and every object-of-consciousness separately. Material objects may just as well as mental objects be objects-of-consciousness, but consciousness is always mental. Here are some quotations where he is discussing the experience [sensation] of something blue:

We have then in every sensation two distinct elements, one which I call consciousness, and another which I call the object of consciousness. (Moore 1960: 17)

the most striking results of both of Idealism and of Agnosticism are only obtained by identifying blue with the sensation of blue: that *esse* is held to be *percipi*, solely because what *is experienced* is held to be identical with *the experience of it*. (ibid.: 19)

that which makes the sensation of blue a mental fact seems to escape us: it seems, if I may use a metaphor, to be transparent—we look through it and see nothing but the blue ; we may be convinced that there *is something*, but *what* it is no philosopher, I think, has yet clearly recognised. (ibid.: 20)

To be aware of the sensation of blue [...] is to be aware of an awareness of blue ; awareness being used, in both cases, in exactly the same sense. (ibid.: 25)

I take the last quotation to say that awareness-of-blue entails awareness-of-(awareness-of-blue). Using the formal symbolism I have introduced, it says that A(O) entails A(A(O)). Every first-order kind of awareness (object-of-consciousness) entails a second-order kind of awareness (consciousness).

Moore's view, it must be noted, differs from one that says that every intentional act has both a primary and a secondary object, where the secondary object is the act itself. Such a view

invites the criticism that it implicitly contains a vicious infinite regress.⁵ If directedness at an object, i.e., ($\implies O_1$), is claimed to require also directedness at the act, i.e., $\implies (\implies O_1)$, which can be shortened to ($\implies O_2$), then the structure seems to require that there is also a tertiary object, i.e., $\implies (\implies O_2)$ or ($\implies O_3$); and so on. That is, one will never find an actually existing starting point.

Moore does not bring in anything like the from-pole I have argued for, and he should be reckoned as belonging to the no from-pole tradition. However, his view that the two A's in $A(A(O))$ "have exactly the same sense" creates a problem, which he does not seem to notice. If there is nothing apart from the object, $A(O)$, that makes the second-order awareness differ from the first-order awareness, does not then $A(A(O))$ collapse into $A(O)$?⁶ Let me argue by analogy. Let T be short-hand for 'true', N short-hand for 'necessarily', and p be an arbitrary proposition. Usually, then, $T(T(p))$ is taken to be equivalent to $T(p)$, and $N(N(p))$ equivalent to $N(p)$. Having noted this problem, which I think Moore cannot solve on his own premises, let me turn to Sartre.

Sartre never retracted his criticism of Husserl's transcendental idealism, and this dismissal is a crucial presupposition for his famous *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre 1966). As Moore thinks the British idealists go wrong because they do not notice that there are two kinds of consciousness, first-order and second-order awareness, Sartre thinks Husserl goes wrong because he does not notice that there are two kinds of consciousness, positional and non-positional.

According to the early Sartre (1957, 1966), every entity containing consciousness (his "Being-for-itself") contains a directedness towards a to-pole of which it is aware, but it also contains a kind of self-awareness of this very directedness and its starting point. This second awareness, however, does not and cannot have a to-pole in the ordinary sense; that would imply, he rightly says, an infinite regress of the kind described three paragraphs ago (Sartre 1966: 12). A to-pole is something posited (or "thetic," placed, set forth) but the self-awareness Sartre speaks of is meant to be a non-positional ("non-thetic") awareness. He says: "every positional consciousness [of a to-pole] is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself" (Sartre 1966: 13). Conversely, every non-positional consciousness requires beside itself an awareness

⁵ Sometimes, this view is falsely ascribed to Franz Brentano, who writes: "In the same mental phenomenon in which the sound is present to our minds we simultaneously apprehend the mental phenomenon itself. [...] We can say that the sound is the *primary object* of the *act* of hearing, and that the act of hearing itself is the *secondary object*" (Brentano 1973: 127). The infinite regress mentioned presupposes that both the objects are intentionally given in the same way, which is not Brentano's opinion. For Brentano's views see (Zahavi 1999, 2005) and (Mulligan 2004).

⁶ It can be noted that Dainton argues against Moore that $A(O)$ in fact reduces to O (Dainton 2000: ch. 2.4). He doesn't notice that Moore also advocates $A(A(O))$.

of a posited to-pole. Therefore, necessarily, every consciousness entity contains two “of” or two kinds of awareness, one positional and one non-positional.⁷ Moore has only one kind of “of,” that contained in object-of-consciousness. When Sartre’s view is applied to simple impressions of the kind Hume posited, it says that a mental state containing an impression is positionally “of” the impression, and non-positionally “of” a from-pole and its directedness. He summarizes his view by saying (note his use of the term ‘distance’ and his italicization):

The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist *at a distance from itself* as a presence to itself. (Sartre 1966: 125)

Since, unfortunately, Sartre likes to indulge in seemingly self-contradictory sentences, he also says that a consciousness entity can be defined “as being what it is not and not being what it is” (Sartre 1966: 68), but I put such phrasings aside. In Sartre’s view, as I interpret it, all consciousness entities – be they momentary events, temporally extended acts, or enduring states – are complex three-term entities containing two different kinds of awareness. The three entities are:

- a *from-pole* (which, famously, he calls a ‘nothingness’, since in one sense it is non-substantial)
- a *to-pole* (consisting of an object or a state of affairs)
- a *bare directedness* (or bare intentionality) that connects the poles but keeps a distance between them;

and the two kinds of awareness are:

- a *non-positional awareness* of the from-pole and the bare directedness
- a *positional awareness* of the to-pole.

If ‘distance’ is understood as intentional-logical distance in the way I have explained in Section 2, then this is my position, whether or not it is exactly Sartre’s. Note, though, that I have not in any way tried to present Sartre’s general ontology with respect to mind and matter; I have only presented what I take to be his view on the structure of consciousness.

⁷ Sartre’s translator, Hazel E. Barnes, writes: “Sartre uses the words *conscience non-positionnelle (de) soi* and puts the *de* in parentheses to show that there is no separation, no positing of the self as an object of consciousness. Similarly he speaks of it as a non-thetic self-consciousness. Thetic or positional self-consciousness is *conscience de soi*” (Sartre 1966: xii).

I have earlier characterized the transcendental ego tradition's view of consciousness by means of the formula $A(S \implies O)$, where A represents ordinary positional awareness. I will let A^B represent Sartre's non-positional awareness, i.e., awareness of kind B (also to be discussed in the next section). My own view of consciousness can then be formalized thus:

$$A^B(S \implies) A(O).$$

In my opinion, consciousness is such that a non-positional awareness of a from-pole and its bare directedness, i.e. $A^B(S \implies)$, is fused with a positional awareness of the to-pole, $A(O)$. It is important to use the term 'fuse', since no referent of $A^B(S \implies)$ can exist without a to-pole. Nonetheless, the to-pole cannot adequately be said to inhere in the from-pole; this fact, among others, is the arrow meant to visualize.

Conclusion of Section 4: All states, acts, and events of consciousness contain not only a from-pole, a to-pole, and a directed connection at a distance between them, but two different kinds of awareness, too.

5. Phenomenality that Necessarily is Background Phenomenality

Nothing in contemporary perceptual and sensory psychology tells, as far as I can see, against the view below, which was stated in 1945 by Maurice Merleau-Ponty:

When Gestalt theory informs us that a figure on a background is the simplest sense-datum available to us, we reply that this is not a contingent characteristic of factual perception, which leaves us free, in an ideal analysis, to bring in the notion of impressions. It is the very definition of the phenomenon of perception, that without which a phenomenon cannot be said to be a perception at all. The perceptual 'something' is always in the middle of something else, it always forms part of a 'field'. A really [all-embracing] homogenous area offering nothing to perception cannot be given to any perception. (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 4)

One implication of this view is that entities such as simple impressions, sense data, and qualia cannot be but theoretical constructs; they can never as such be actually given in any

experience. In the light of my distinction between a from-pole and a to-pole, one might say that Merleau-Ponty's claim concerns only the to-pole. Now, the normal thing with respect to to-poles is that one can turn the background of a foreground into a foreground in another experience. However, I will argue that there are cases of phenomenality that cannot be anything other than backgrounds. In other words, there are backgrounds that cannot possibly become foregrounds. One conspicuous such case is attentiveness.

If you attend to something X, you can be aware of your attention as something surrounding X, but as soon as you try to focus on the attention as attention, it disappears altogether. I claim that the same is true of the from-pole with its directedness. In fact, I think that the impossibility of catching hold of attentiveness as such makes up only a special case of my general claim. To try to catch one's attentiveness is to try to turn into a foreground a from-pole and its bare directedness. Note that bringing in memory is of no help. You can only remember what you have perceived. That is, if something is background in a perception, then it is also background in the corresponding memories.

In Section 3 I quoted Wittgenstein saying that the eye cannot be found in the visual field. I think he had this view partly because he never seriously thought about the foreground-background duality. In particular, he did not consider the possibility that there may be phenomena that by necessity are background phenomena. (I think, by the way, that the same is true of Kant.) The Wittgenstein quotation can profitably be compared with the quotations below, where, so to speak, an eye (an ego) is found within the visual field (experience):

Then, behind the state, at the horizon, the ego appears. It is, therefore, never seen except "out of the corner of the eye." As soon as I turn my gaze toward it [...] it vanishes. [...] the ego is *by nature* fugitive. (Sartre 1957: 88–9)

And Husserl had earlier said something similar:

In these peculiar combinations with all of "its" mental processes, the Ego living in mental processes [*das erlebende Ich*] is not something taken *for itself* and which can be made into an Object *proper* of an investigation. (Husserl 1982: §80)

In Section 4 I highlighted a similarity between Sartre and Moore: both find two kinds of awareness in one single mental state. Unsurprisingly, also Moore makes a point similar to the one just presented, but of course presupposing his no from-pole view of consciousness:

The moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see *what*, distinctly, it is, it seems to vanish : it seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue : the other element is as if it were diaphanous. Yet it *can* be distinguished if we look attentively enough, and if we know there is something to look for. (Moore 1960: 25)

Obviously, several philosophers (I for one) think there are experiential reasons that tell in favor of the view that there is a from-pole whose phenomenality cannot be but background phenomenality. One only needs to know that, as Moore says, “there is something to look for.”

Empirical data, however, are fallible. In particular, a fallibilist attitude seems necessary in relation to empirical entities that necessarily are background entities. Up comes the question: how to stabilize the above “empirical confirmation” of the existence of a from-pole? Since what is background cannot in itself be seen clearly, some kind of reasoning ought to supplement one’s empirical observations. Sartre, for instance, speaks of an “analytical regression” from the to-pole to the from-pole (Sartre 1966: 84). The result of such reasoning, however, can be criticized, and I have already presented and rejected two such kinds of possible criticism; let me repeat.

If, as Moore claims, there is a double awareness structure, $A(A(O))$, then it can, rightly to my mind, be argued that it collapses into $A(O)$. And if there must in each conscious act be two instances of directedness, $\implies O_1$ and $\implies (\implies O_1)$, then there is a hidden vicious infinite regress waiting to be unfolded. However, I can find no similar problems with the structure I have proposed: $A^B(S \implies) A(O)$. The symbol A^B , earlier said to represent awareness of kind B, can now also be read as short-hand for ‘Background awareness’.

In my opinion, the three structures just mentioned – $A(A(O))$, $\implies (\implies O_1)$, and $A^B(S \implies) A(O)$ – can be seen as three proposed explanations of the seeming fact that experience contains an elusive I or from-pole. And, given my comments in the paragraph above, the best explanation is given by the third structure. Epistemologically, I find this perspective no more troublesome than that in physics and chemistry, where observable phenomena are sometimes given competing explanations in terms of different un-observables. Micro-entities are un-observable in one way, and phenomenality that is necessarily background is un-observable in another way, but this difference should not be allowed to hide the fact that from an empirical-epistemological point of view they are very much on a par.

So far, I have discussed only perception, but I think that – when once accepted – the postulation of a from-pole immediately carries over to actions.⁸ The difference of course being that, to borrow terms from Searle (1983), perceptions have a mind-to-world and actions a world-to-mind direction of fit. In action experiences there are, I claim, as much a non-positional from-pole in the background as there are in perceptions. Let me sketch the argument.

In the Wikipedia picture of naïve realism with respect to perception, there is a perceiver, an empty space, and a perceived object. Many actions can also be ascribed a tripartite structure: actor, tool, and the object acted on (e.g. a person painting a wall). Many actions, however, are described as consisting only of actor and object acted on (e.g. a person throwing a ball), and many also consisting only of the actor (e.g. a person walking). In my opinion there is a from-pole (= action-pole) even in the last kind of cases. Some such actions rely mainly on proprioception.

Proprioception is the sense of, or knowledge of, the relative positions of neighboring parts of the body, as well as the strength of effort being employed in movement. For instance, we know (or “proprioceive”) the spatial position and orientation of our body and its limbs in such a way that with our eyes closed we can touch different parts of our body.

Let’s think of dancing a dance one can for brief periods dance with one’s eyes shut. One may dance it either with the self-awareness I-am-dancing, or so intensely that one becomes ego-less, and later can say ‘Tonight, when dancing, I was simply one with my dancing’. As far as I can see, the kind of arguments I used in order to show the existence of a from-pole in all kinds of perceptions, are just as applicable in the action cases, too. And, remember, that on my understanding the from-pole (action-pole) cannot show itself in any other way than in the background in a first-person perspective. From a third-person perspective, it does not show itself at all.

Conclusion of Section 5: The existence of non-positional awareness of a from-pole and its directedness can be supported both by experiential reasons and by an inference to the best explanation. There is such a from-pole in both perception and action.

⁸ For a general overview of perception-action analogies and their problems, see (Jensen 2008).

6. Disjunctivism and the From-poles

The existence of from-poles makes a difference to how to view the common contemporary content-object distinctions and the possibility of disjunctivism; and in this section I will show in what way.

A distinction between content and object runs through most of both phenomenological and analytic-philosophical analyses of consciousness and intentionality. Both traditions subscribe, one might say, to an axiom to the effect that, necessarily, all states/acts/events with intentionality contain as a central part some kind of content. There are many specific terms around – ‘intentional content’, ‘representational content’, ‘experiential content’, ‘Fregean content’, ‘Russellian content’, and even ‘Edenic content’ (for the last three see (Chalmers 2010)), but all contain the crucial term ‘content’. Susanna Siegel (2010) uses in her defense of representationalism the simple term ‘content’, and calls her form of representationalism ‘the content view’.

I subscribe to the mentioned content axiom, too. I am of the opinion that all to-poles contain something that deserves to be called ‘content’; I will oscillate between the terms ‘intentional content’ and ‘content’. What will be discussed is the *relation* between contents and their referents or intentional objects.

Let me again bring in the Wikipedia picture of naïve realism. The picture can be used also to present what a hallucination of a candle looks like. The perception disjunctivism of naïve realism has as a presupposition that *parts of* ontologically different kinds of objects such as a material candle (veridical perception) and a mental candle (hallucination) can *directly appear* in the same way to a perceiver. That explains why a hallucination can be taken to be a veridical perception. It also explains the possible converse case. People suffering from pseudohallucinations (i.e., people who take their hallucinations to be hallucinations) may in principle make the mistake of taking a veridical perception of a candle to be just a hallucination. But it is important to say ‘parts of’. If all logically possible perceptions of the real and the hallucinated candle look the same, then it is epistemically impossible to come to know the difference between the two kinds of candles; and if Leibniz’ ontological principle of the identity of indiscernibles is brought in, they have to be deemed identical.

In the transcendental ego tradition there is no need to discuss whether ontologically different kinds of objects can appear in the same way to a perceiver. Perception disjunctivism is no issue,

since all structured content, be it in the form of veridical perceptions or hallucinations, is regarded as having its essential ground in a transcendental ego.⁹

In the no from-pole tradition, on the other hand, the problem of perception disjunctivism is quite an issue. The external world realists in the tradition deny that fundamentally different kinds of objects can *directly* appear in the same way to a perceiver, but claim that *indirectly* they can. Different kinds of perceptual-intentional objects, they say, can be connected to the same intentional content because of different kinds of external relations between object and content (e.g. different causal relations, hallucinations having *all* their causes in the brain). But the content itself cannot possibly appear in more than one way. In other words, there can be many-to-one relations between kinds of intentional objects and a certain kind of intentional content, but only one-to-one relations between a certain kind of content and how it is given to a subject; and the latter means non-disjunctivism.

Since the no from-pole philosophers do not accept any from-pole at all, be it a transcendental one or the kind I have defended, they must let the intentional content itself function as a from-pole. The intentional content is regarded as simply in some sense given; it is not something that *appears to* a from-pole. All intentionality becomes the directedness from a given intentional content to an intentional object. Therefore, content and object are regarded as always being distinct for the same reason that I regard from-pole and to-pole as necessarily being distinct. Hume is a classic example, all intentionality takes in his explicit ontology departure from what he calls ideas, and such ideas are simply non-intentionally given (Johansson 2012).

When in the no from-pole tradition the content terminology is not used, thoughts and propositions are made to function the same way. They are not regarded as entities that appear to a from-pole of any sort. Instead, all directedness or “aboutness” is tacitly assumed to start from a thought or a proposition. Therefore, when the no from-pole tradition takes on a realist fashion and dismisses all kinds of idealism and neutral monism, it regards all directedness towards the world as representational intentionality; the representations being the intentional content (ideas, thoughts, propositions). Such a view entails non-disjunctivism; all proposed disjunctivist cases end up as containing a specific intentional content (idea, thought, proposition) as a highest common factor. The intentional content of a veridical perception and a hallucination must in the no from-pole tradition be of the same kind. It is their external relations to the intentional objects that differ.

⁹ One has to say ‘*structured* content’, since Kant allows non-structured content to have its origin outside of the transcendental ego.

Let now a from-pole cut loose from transcendental egos enter the picture. Both the intentional content of a veridical candle perception and the intentional content of a hallucinated candle can on this assumption have an appearance relation to a from-pole. This makes it possible to bring in the view that parts of ontologically different kinds of entities can directly appear in the same way to a from-pole. Next I will show what this possibility looks like in more detail. The first step consists in introducing a distinction between three kinds of intentionality: *purely presentational*, *semi-presentational*, and *representational* intentionality.

Again, I will use my example with the phantom pain. Because of its similarity with the candle perception, i.e., an object is perceived outside of the perceived body, the pain must just like the candle be reckoned an intentional object.

The pain is experienced as being outside of the body, and experienced as having no insides or backsides, i.e., the distinction between an experienced side and other but hidden sides (so-called presences in absences) is not (as in ordinary external perception) applicable. Furthermore, the pain is not experienced as necessarily enduring; there is no surprise if it disappears (only relief!). Neither can it be misplaced in perceptual space. In other words, a person who experiences such a pain cannot because of the nature of the perceptual object in any sense be mistaken about the object and its properties. In Husserl's terminology, the person has *adequate* evidence of the pain. Let me call such intentional objects 'adequate (intentional) objects'. Adequate objects allow no distinction between appearance and reality.

In the situation described, there is a from-pole, a to-pole (the pain), and a directed connection at a distance between them; and the to-pole is an intentional *object*. Where, then, is here the postulated intentional *content*? I answer: it is exactly where the intentional object is. In the situation at hand, as in all intentional states/acts/events with a Husserlian adequate object, *content and object are identical*. They are one and the same entity at a distance from the from-pole.

Let us next think of a person who once every day hears outside her body a phantom voice saying something that is true about her life yesterday, e.g. 'Yesterday you were quite happy'. Since she experiences the voice as a phantom voice, even this phantom speech act is (in isolation from the state of affairs talked about) an adequate object. It is impossible to re-identify the speech act and check what was really said. What was said is what was heard. Reality and appearance come together. There is, though, an obvious difference between the two phantom cases. The phantom pain *only presents* itself to the from-pole, but the phantom speech act not only presents itself, it *also represents* a past state of affairs. Here, *content and object are temporally separated entities*, even though there is a connection between them; the content is

presented and the intentional object is represented by the content. The speech act as such contains the intentional content, and the represented past state of affairs is the intentional object. The to-pole becomes split into two parts, its content and its object, where the content functions as a mediator between the from-pole and the object.

Cases of intentionality that have an adequate object that does not represent anything, make up what I call '*purely presentational* intentional states/acts/events'. In such intentionality, every feature of the intentional object is presented without any mediation, which means that content and object cannot even in thought be separated. The terms 'content' and 'object' are here merely different words for the same entity.

The phantom speech act case, and all intentional states/acts/events whose intentional object is spatially or temporally clearly separated from the state/act/event itself, but represented by it, I label '*representational* intentional states/acts/events'.

However, a veridical perception of an external object (e.g. a candle) is neither purely presentational nor representational. It is not purely presentational, since it does not have an adequate object. The object contains backsides and insides that are not directly presented but nonetheless in some sense apprehended, which means that the evidence at hand is not able (is not adequate enough) to secure that nothing in the intentional object is wrongly apprehended; a seeming candle may be a hallucination and a pseudohallucination may be a real candle. Nor is it representational, since the represented object does not appear as being spatially or temporally separated from the presented side (the content); instead, the presented side appears as being part of the object. This is the kind of cases I call '*semi-presentational* intentionality'. In intentionality of this kind, the intentional content (the perceived side of the candle) must be reckoned as being part of the intentional object (the candle).

On the analysis above, a from-pole can figure in at least three distinct kinds of intentionality. Let me repeat, there exists:

- purely presentational intentionality: the content and the object are identical
- semi-presentational intentionality: the content is part of the object
- representational intentionality: the content and the object are separated.¹⁰

¹⁰ I think, by the way, that this tri-partition is of interest also for the interpretation of Husserl's concept "noema." Normally, interpreters seem to try to catch the concept in a way that covers all possible kinds of intentionality, but I think such an approach is wrong. Instead, one should, in parallel with my tri-partition, distinguish between three kinds of noema. In purely presentational intentionality, the noema is the same as the intentional object; in semi-presentational intentionality, it is the same as the way the intentional object is presented; and in representational intentionality it is the same as the meaning/sense of the representation. In D.W. Smith's great Husserl book "my"

With respect to purely presentational intentionality there is no problem of illusions and no possibility of perception disjunctivism; by definition, such intentionality contains no distinction between appearance and reality.

In the semi-presentational intentional acts of veridical and hallucinatory perceptions of a candle, things look from my point of view as follows. In the veridical case, the perceived side is the intentional content and the whole candle is the intentional object; then two cases have to be distinguished. If *direct realism* is assumed, the intentional content is straightforwardly a surface part of a material candle; and if *indirect realism* is assumed, the intentional content is in some way intimately related to a surface part of the candle. In the hallucinatory case, likewise, the perceived side is the intentional content and the whole candle the intentional object. In this case, however, no distinction between assumptions of direct and indirect realism has to be commented on. Now the intentional content is a purely mental entity, and it can without further ado be regarded as being directly apprehended. The difference in kinds of intentional content (i.e., material or material-like and mental, respectively) is of course more clearly displayed in the case of direct realism, but any indirect realism that rejects representationalism has to posit a difference in kind of content, too.

The two intentional contents discussed do on the presuppositions stated not exist in themselves. They appear to a from-pole at a distance. Therefore, it is possible to claim that the different kinds of intentional contents can, despite their difference, appear in the same way to the from-pole. The different contents are different in kind and contain no highest common factor, because they are parts of different kinds of objects. Since the intentional-logical distance between the from-pole and the intentional contents (the directly perceived parts of the intentional objects) is empty, there is no possibility of turning the appearing into a specific mediating non-intentional “appearance entity.” There is a *bare directedness at a distance*, which must not be conflated with the *direct* (“*distance-less*”) *acquaintance* talked about in the no from-pole tradition. The analysis made allows for the possibility of many-to-one relations between different kinds of perceptual-intentional contents and a specific kind of appearance-to-a-from-pole. It allows for perception disjunctivism.

Next some words on action disjunctivism. It has always been a commonplace that we experience ourselves as acting both when dreaming and when really acting; and modern neuroscience has made a number of experiments where there are illusions of agency. According

three kinds of noema come out as “alternative models of noema”; called “the intentional object model,” “the neo-phenomenalist model,” and “the mediating-sense model,” respectively (Smith 2007: 304–7).

to the views I have put forward, it follows that there is a from-pole just as much in illusory agency as in real agency. Of course, if there is no other kind of agency than illusory agency, then action disjunctivism is no possibility at all. However, on the assumption that sometimes there is real agency, one can approach action disjunctivism in the way I have just analyzed perception disjunctivism. Both true and illusory kinds of action experiences can appear in the same way to a from-pole.

Finally, some words about disjunctivism with respect to assertions, more precisely to assertions about spatiotemporal reality, i.e. to factual assertions. In the tri-partition of intentionality that I have introduced, assertions belong to representational intentionality. Here we find the kind of spatial or temporal separation of intentional content (proposition) and intentional object (what the proposition is about) that representationalists wrongly think they have to impose on perceptions. They impose on perception what only belongs to language and other symbolic enterprises. Let it at once be said, that when I present my views about assertion disjunctivism, I will of course not deny the undeniable. I will not deny that when apprehending an assertion we can take a false assertion to be true, and take a true to be false. This may seem enough to make non-disjunctivism with respect to assertions true, but it is not.

A non-disjunctivist analysis of assertions must in one respect differ from the non-disjunctivist representationalist analysis of perception. In the latter there is an *external relation* (mostly a causal one) between the object and the content, but in cases of assertions there is a certain kind of *internal relation* between content (proposition) and object (what the proposition is about). In an external relation the identity of the relata are the same whether or not they are relata of the relation, but in the kind of internal relation now at issue they are not.¹¹ It belongs to the identity of a certain kind of content (a certain proposition) to direct the directedness from the from-pole to a specific intentional object (what the proposition is about). That is, the content (the proposition) is not merely an entity that occupies an intermediate position between the from-pole and the utmost part of the to-pole, the intentional object (what the proposition is about). It is an entity that *mediates* between these poles in the sense of creating an agreement or coming together of them. In case of true factual assertions, the from-pole becomes by means

¹¹ Since there are different notions of internal relations around, I want to stress that it is a specific kind of internal relation I am now talking about. The common contemporary notion says that a relation R is internal with respect to the relata *a* and *b* iff *given* both *a* and *b*, the relation R necessarily holds between them. The notion I am at the moment using can be found in Moore, and it is more precisely a definition of internal *relational properties*; ‘longer than’ refers to a relation, but ‘longer than *b*’ refers to a relational property. He says: “To say of a given relational property P that it modifies or is internal to a given term A which possesses it, is to say that from the proposition that a thing has not got P it follows that that thing is different from A” (Moore 1960: 285). A certain intentional content or proposition (= term A) has its specific directedness or “aboutness” as an internal relational property. For more views about relations, see (Johansson 2011).

of the content (the proposition) directed towards something in the world. In case of false assertions, the from-pole becomes directed towards something that cannot be found in the world. In my opinion, it becomes directed towards a fiction.¹² Both fictional and factual entities can by means of assertions appear in the same way to a from-pole. I think as follows with respect to the existence of fictions.

When one looks at a descriptive text, one can either look at it as a text without “aboutness,” or one can so to speak look through the text to what it is about, its intentional objects. In the latter case, one experiences more than the text even when the statements are false. Therefore, there must from a first-person perspective always in serious reading be something more than the text; whatever this something is. Second, since (*pace* Frege) all false statements are not about the same entity, the posited something must have some kind of existence; if only of a subjective kind. Third, if it is not a complete illusion that we can talk about and discuss even false statements, then the something in question must have some kind of inter-subjective existence, if only as fictional objects (Johansson 2010).

The rules ‘same meaning implies same referent’ and ‘intension determines extension’ do not apply across the fact-fiction divide. From a linguistic point of view, the dictionary meanings of words are the same independently of whether the words appear in factual or fictional contexts. Similarly, sentences that represent language acts such as orders, promises, exclamations, and declarations have a lexical meaning that is independent of the fact-fiction divide. These observations explain why no re-reading is necessary if one has read a story as being factually true, but later is told that it is a complete fiction; the most famous case perhaps being the forged so-called “Hitler Diaries” published in 1983. Also, conversely, we can read something as if it is a fictional novel, but later be told that it is a true story.

On this account of mine, true factual assertions do like veridical perceptions bring us in contact with the world, whereas false factual assertions do like illusory perceptions bring us in contact with fictions. There is both assertion disjunctivism and perception disjunctivism.

At the beginning of this section, I said that I subscribe to the view that all intentional states/acts/events whatsoever have an intentional content. From what I have later on said, it follows that I also subscribe to this view: *all intentional states/acts/events whatsoever have an intentional object.*

¹² I am consciously bypassing the question whether it makes sense to speak of “degrees of fictionality.” That is, whether or not false factual assertions can be regarded as being more or less “truthlike” (to use an expression of Popper’s). I think it does make sense, see (Johansson and Lynøe 2008: 75–86).

With respect to assertions, the last view contradicts both the view that false factual assertions lack an intentional object, and that in true factual assertions there is no distinction to be made between intentional content and object. With some comments on these two claims I will end the paper; I start with the last-mentioned.

If one is of the opinion that all factual assertions contain an intentional object that is separated from the intentional content, then a correspondence theory of truth comes naturally. The intentional content (the proposition) is regarded as truthbearer and things and facts in the world are regarded as truthmakers. In true factual propositions the intentional object is a fact in the world. For quite a time, however, many philosophers have made statements such as “A fact, as I shall use the term, is a *true proposition*” (Stanley 2011: vii). That is, they subscribe to an identity theory of truth. Such a truth theory can perhaps make some sense within an idealist framework, but this whole paper is written on the assumption that there is a mind-independent external material world that contains facts; and on this assumption, as noted by an idealist defender of the identity theory, it “is unable to leave room for a proposition’s being false” (Dodd 2000: 113). If true factual propositions simply are facts, then false factual propositions ought to be non-facts; but the external world contains no non-facts.¹³

The view that false assertions lack intentional objects is among external world realists, as far as I can see, based on the wrong presupposition that fictions cannot be ascribed any existence status at all. Because of this, they take it for granted that whereas true factual propositions have spatiotemporal truthmakers, false factual propositions not only lack truthmakers but lack even intentional objects. On the analysis I have made, one should not take the lack of truthmakers to imply lack of intentional objects.

Conclusion of Section 6: The rejection of the no from-pole and the transcendental ego traditions, combined with the acceptance of non-transcendental from-poles, opens up new ways to think about perception, action, and assertion disjunctivisms.

7. Conclusion

¹³ According to Dodd’s own theory: “Both propositions and facts are thoughts: there is no role left for states of affairs to play” (Dodd 2000: 114). He calls his own view ‘the modest identity theory’, and the materialist identity theory he finds impossible ‘the robust identity theory’.

Perhaps, after all, it is the case that in veridical perceptions and in hallucinations different kinds of objects are presented. Perhaps, after all, some so-called actions are in a special way fused with a from-pole, whereas some other so-called actions are merely behavior. Perhaps, after all, true factual assertions directly represent the world and false assertions fictions. Perhaps, and I think even probably, we are persons who *directly* perceive, act in, and talk about things in a common world.

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