

Verbal disputes about the content of experience

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Abstract

A verbal dispute is one in which the disputants agree on all of the facts about the intended subject matter of the dispute and disagree only about how to use certain terms. This paper explores the possibility that the dispute between particularists and generalists about the contents of perceptual experience is a verbal dispute. The aim is less to provide a knockdown argument for the conclusion that this dispute is merely verbal than to show how difficult it is to uncover a substantive dispute between the two sides. A concluding section asks whether the argument generalizes beyond the particularism/generalism dispute to other prominent disputes in contemporary philosophy of mind.

1 PARTICULARISM, GENERALISM, AND THE METHOD OF ELIMINATION

A verbal dispute is one in which the disputants agree on all of the facts about the intended subject matter of the dispute and disagree only about how to use certain terms. The possibility of falling into verbal disputes is an occupational hazard of philosophy. Whenever a philosophical dispute is framed using a philosophical term of art, it is worth asking whether the dispute is genuinely substantive or whether,

instead, it is (wholly or in part) a dispute about how to use the relevant term of art. This paper explores the pessimistic thought that some prominent recent debates in the philosophy of mind are verbal disputes centering on the term of art ‘the content of experience.’

The dispute on which I will focus is the dispute between particularists and generalists about the contents of experience. Take a simple case: a veridical visual experience of a particular lime L . According to the particularist, the content of my visual experience is a singular proposition which attributes greenness (among other properties) to L . According to the generalist, the content of the experience is a purely general proposition which has no external particulars among its constituents. On one attractively simple version of the view, the content is the existential proposition that something is green (and has a certain shape, orientation, etc.).

This way of framing the dispute assumes a particular way of thinking about contents — one according to which contents are structured propositions which have objects and properties among their constituents. But the basic dispute could be restated using unstructured views of contents, or Fregean structured views according to which the constituents of contents are modes of presentation of objects and properties. I’ll stick with the Russellian way of putting the issue in what follows — but this is just a simplifying assumption on which nothing substantive hangs.

Why might one think that the disagreement between the particularist and the generalist is merely verbal?¹ To answer this question, I’m going to adopt some useful machinery from David Chalmers (2011). In particular, I will employ what Chalmers calls the ‘method of elimination.’ When one is wondering whether some dispute involving some term t is merely verbal, one eliminates t (and cognates) from the discussion, and asks whether the parties to the dispute can, without using t , find something to substantively disagree about.

Employing the method of elimination does not require assuming the correctness of Chalmers’ particular theory of verbal disputes. The purpose of the method of elimination is just to divide the substantive disputes into two classes: (i) those which are such that the method of elimination with respect to the key term reveals an underlying substantive dispute, and (ii) those where the substantive dispute is not statable without using the key term (or a cognate). One can then argue that a dispute is verbal by arguing that it falls into neither class (i) nor class (ii). This basic thought is compatible with a variety of different theories of verbal disputes.

Pursuant to employing the method of elimination, we can employ what Chalmers calls ‘the subscript gambit.’ The idea here is that, in addition to eliminating the disputed term t , we introduce two new terms into our language which are stipulated to correspond, respectively, to the two disputed uses of t .

The particularist says that the content of the above experience is the singular proposition that L is green. The generalist disagrees. But given a description of a

¹A view which is closely related to the view that this dispute is verbal is the ‘content pluralism’ defended in Chalmers (2006), according to which there are different ‘content relations’ such that the subject of a single experience might stand in distinct content relations to distinct contents. While it is not the focus of his paper, Chalmers (51) considers the view that subjects may stand in one content relation to singular propositions and in a different relation to existential propositions, which is closely related to the view developed in what follows. Another view closely related to the view defended here is the view of Siegel (2010), according to which at least some experiences have both object-involving and purely general contents.

possible experience, the generalist will be able to say which proposition the particularist will assign as the content of that experience.² The generalist, then, grasps the relation between experiences and (in the good case) singular propositions with which the particularist identifies the ‘has the content’ relation.³ Let’s call this relation R . We can then stipulatively define a new predicate ‘experiences _{p} ’ as follows:

A experiences _{p} p iff A ’s experience stands in R to p

Given this stipulative definition, both the generalist and the particularist should agree that, in our example, the subject experiences _{p} the singular proposition that L is green.

The generalist says that the content of the above experience is the general proposition that something is green. The particularist disagrees. But given a description of a possible experience, the particularist will be able to say which proposition the generalist will assign as the content of that experience. The particularist, then, grasps the relation between experiences and general propositions with which the generalist identifies the ‘has the content’ relation. Let’s call this relation R^* . We can then stipulatively define a new predicate ‘experiences _{g} ’ as follows:

A experiences _{g} p iff A ’s experience stands in R^* to p

Given this stipulative definition, both the generalist and the particularist should agree that, in our example, the subject experiences _{g} the general proposition that something is green.

There is of course room for the generalist to doubt whether R is a genuine propositional attitude relation, and room for the particularist to doubt the same about R^* . But simply stopping there would threaten to trade in a verbal dispute about ‘the content of experience’ for a verbal dispute about ‘propositional attitude relation.’ What the generalist or particularist must do to substantiate their charge is to explain the theoretical role of the particular propositional attitude relation distinctive of perceptual experience in such a way as to decide the question of whether R and R^* , respectively, qualify as such. (Below I consider some attempts to do just that.)

If we eliminate talk about ‘the content of experience’ and replace it with discourse using ‘experiences _{p} ’ and ‘experiences _{g} ,’ can we find anything for the particularist and generalist to disagree about? It is not, as we’ll see, obvious that we can. Further, if we can find no statement expressible in our new language about which the particularist and the generalist have a substantive disagreement, it seems plausible that the dispute between the particularist and the generalist was just a verbal dispute about the use of the phrase ‘content of experience.’

This line of thought suggests the following simple argument that the dispute between the particularist and the generalist is merely verbal:

²To be sure, there are subtleties here. For example, different particularists will handle hallucinatory experiences in different ways. I set these difficulties to the side for the moment — I don’t think that they affect the argument to follow.

³Or, at least, grasps some relation equivalent to it. That would be enough for the purposes of the argument to follow.

- (1) If we eliminate ‘content of experience’ (and cognates) and replace it with ‘experiences_p’ and ‘experiences_g,’ there are no claims statable in our language about which the particularist and the generalist have a substantive disagreement.
 - (2) If (1) is true, then the dispute between the particularist and the generalist is merely verbal.
-
- (C) The dispute between the particularist and the generalist is merely verbal.

One who wishes to defend the idea that the particularism/generalism debate is substantive must reject at least one of the premises. In the next section, I briefly consider the possibility that (2) is false. The rest of the paper considers ways in which one might try to find a remaining substantive dispute between the particularist and the generalist, by so doing falsifying (1).⁴

2 BEDROCK DISPUTES

Suppose for now that premise (1) of our simple argument is true, and there is no statement expressible in our new language about which the particularist and the generalist disagree. Could the dispute between the particularist and the generalist still be substantive?

It could. As Chalmers points out, it is plausible that there are some terms which are such that a dispute with respect to that term is both substantive and such that no underlying dispute can be uncovered via the method of elimination and the subscript gambit. A plausible example (as Chalmers says) is a dispute between a consequentialist and a Kantian about what one morally ought to do. It is not obvious that if we removed ‘morally ought’ (and its cognates) and replaced that expression with a pair of terms stipulatively defined to correspond to the consequentialist’s and the Kantian’s view of what one morally ought to do there would be any residual dispute which could plausibly be claimed to underlie the original disagreement. And yet, despite the absence of an underlying dispute of this sort, the original disagreement seems to be a substantive one.

⁴This is not the only way in which one might try to show that this dispute is merely verbal. A different approach might make use of a test for verbal disputes proposed in Hirsch (2009). Roughly, the idea is that a disagreement between *A* and *B* involving some term *t* is verbal if, were there two communities which, respectively, used *t* in the way that *A* and *B* do, each community would agree that the other speaks the truth in their own language.

Now imagine two distinct communities of philosophers. One of them uses ‘content of experience’ as particularists use it. So every philosopher in this community thinks that, in the good case, the contents of experience are singular propositions; this is taken to be obvious. The other community uses ‘content of experience’ as generalists use it; they all agree that the contents of experience are purely general propositions.

We can then imagine that the two communities come into contact for the first time. Initially, they might be puzzled by each others’ claims about the contents of experience. But it is at least somewhat plausible that the right view for them to take of the other community is just that the other community is using ‘content of experience’ in a different way than they are. The members of the generalist community, after all, will agree with the members of the particularist community that when one has a visual experience of a lime one stands in a certain special experience-involving relation to the singular proposition that that particular lime is green; and the generalist community should interpret the particularist community as using ‘content of experience’ to stand for that relation. And vice versa for the members of the particularist community.

Following Chalmers, let's call terms like 'morally ought' *bedrock terms*. These are terms such that there can be substantive disputes with respect to that term despite the method of elimination and the subscript gambit revealing no further substantive underlying dispute. The denial of premise (2) of our simple argument is then equivalent to the claim that 'the content of experience' is a bedrock term.

Chalmers thinks that bedrock disputes are pretty rare. (As he says, 'The 'bedrock' card can be played only rarely.') I am less sure of this. Further, I think that it's hard to see how to come up with an informative criterion which, for any given case, could tell us whether the relevant dispute is plausibly a bedrock dispute, or not.

But, even in the absence of such a general criterion, I think that we can see that the idea that the dispute between the particularist and the generalist is a bedrock dispute is very implausible. The term 'the content of experience' is a philosophical term of art of comparatively late vintage. If two theorists disagree *only* about claims which can be stated using this phrase (or its cognates) then it is just hard to believe that they are disagreeing about anything of substance.

This argument relies on something like the following principle:

No Philosophical Bedrock

No philosophical terms of art are bedrock terms.

Philosophical terms of art are, by definition, terms (or uses of terms) which philosophers have added to ordinary language. They are theoretical terms. So, in some way or other, their meaning must be at least partly explicable in terms of the language used to introduce them. Borrowing terminology from Lewis (1970), we can distinguish between T-terms – theoretical terms – and O-terms — the 'old terms' which pre-date the introduction of the relevant T-term.

In the case of a disagreement involving a T-term, there are two possibilities to consider. The first is one in which eliminating the T-term (and perhaps replacing it with stipulatively defined subscripted descendants) leaves behind one or more disagreements involving the O-terms. In that case the T-term is not a bedrock term.

The second possibility is that eliminating the T-term leaves no disagreements with respect to the O-terms. But that seems like the very paradigm of a verbal dispute. If we introduce a theoretical term and then have disagreements about its extension which involve no disagreements involving other vocabulary, isn't it obvious that we are *just* disagreeing about how to use the new term?

Are there any plausible counterexamples to No Philosophical Bedrock? One might think that our primary example of a bedrock term is such an example. Isn't 'morally ought', after all, a philosophical term of art? I think that it is. But disagreements about what one morally ought to do involve disagreements about what one ought to do — and 'ought' is not a philosophical term of art.⁵

A second possible counterexample might be the term 'phenomenally conscious.' It is plausible that disputes about whether, for example, certain insects are phenomenally conscious are substantive. Despite this, such a dispute needn't entail any further

⁵One might deny that 'morally ought' has any systematic connection to 'ought' simpliciter. But then, exactly for that reason, it would seem plausible to say that differences *just* about 'morally ought' are verbal disagreements. This is at least in the ballpark of the complaints about 'modern moral philosophy' in Anscombe (1958). For an interesting theory of the relation between 'ought' and 'morally ought,' see Setiya (2021).

debates couched in a language from which ‘phenomenally conscious’ and paraphrases of this expression are barred. For example, the disputants might well agree on the neural and functional facts about the insects. Does this suggest that ‘phenomenally conscious’ is a counterexample to No Philosophical Bedrock?

I don’t think so. After all, some of the paraphrases of ‘phenomenally conscious’ involve no philosophical terms of art. There will be, for example, a disagreement about whether there is something it is like to be such an insect, or whether there is a way things seem or feel from the perspective of the insects. These locutions involve no philosophical terms of art. Further, if one did hold that disputes about the extension of ‘phenomenally conscious’ need involve no dispute about, for example, whether there is something that it is like to be some thing, it seems plausible that in that case the dispute *would* be merely verbal. For in that case ‘phenomenally conscious’ would be unmoored from the O-terms in a way which, for reasons already discussed, seems especially likely to give rise to merely verbal disputes.

A third possible counterexample would be a term like ‘grounding,’ which is often introduced by something like ostension rather than explicit definition.⁶ One is presented with certain paradigmatic examples of grounding relations, and then invited to zero in on the relation which explains the similarity of the cases. But even here there are clear connections with bits of non-philosophical vocabulary, like ‘because’ and ‘in virtue of.’ If we had a dispute about grounding which involved no disagreement about what is true in virtue of what, it seems plausible that this would be a verbal dispute.

3 HOW TO SALVAGE THE DISPUTE

If we concede that premise (2) of the simple argument is true, then one who wants to maintain that the dispute between the particularist and the generalist is substantive must reject premise (1). So let’s turn to that premise. Here it is worth distinguishing three possibilities:

- (i) Once we eliminate ‘content of experience’ in favor of ‘experiences_g’ and ‘experiences_p’, there are no statements about which the particularist and the generalist disagree.
- (ii) Once we eliminate ‘content of experience’ in favor of ‘experiences_g’ and ‘experiences_p’, there are statements about which the particularist and the generalist disagree, but all of these disagreements are verbal disagreements.
- (iii) Once we eliminate ‘content of experience’ in favor of ‘experiences_g’ and ‘experiences_p’, there are statements about which the particularist and the generalist disagree, and at least some of these disagreements are substantive disagreements.

If either (i) or (ii) is true, then premise (1) of our simple argument is true. So, if one wants to maintain that the dispute between the generalist and the particularist is substantive, one must hold that (iii) is true: there is at least one sentence in our restricted language about which the particularist and the generalist have a substantive disagreement.

⁶Thanks to an anonymous referee for discussion here.

Where might one look for such a sentence? A natural strategy is to look at features of the theoretical role of ‘the content of experience’ about which these parties agree. In many cases statement of the theoretical role of ‘the content of experience’ might take the form

A ’s experience has content p iff A is F ⁷

One then obtains a pair of replacement sentences by replacing the left hand side of the biconditional with (respectively) ‘ A experiences _{p} p ’ and ‘ A experiences _{g} p ’. If the former is true and the latter false, particularism is true. If the latter is true and the former false, generalism is true. So, the substantive dispute between the particularist and the generalist will then amount (at least in part) to a dispute about which of these two sentences is true.

In advance of looking in depth at particular proposals of this kind, we can see that this way of salvaging the particularist/generalist debate might fail in two ways.

First, the dispute about whether experiencing _{p} or experiencing _{g} better plays the theoretical role might turn out to be a verbal dispute involving some of the terms used to formulate the predicate which replaces F in the above schema. (This would be option (ii) in the list above.) Perhaps the particularist and the generalist will disagree about which subjects are F . In that case, we test for whether the dispute is verbal or substantive by re-applying the subscript gambit, replacing the disputed term ‘ F ’ with ‘ F_p ’ and ‘ F_g .’ If we find no dispute statable in our new doubly restricted language, we can ask whether the dispute about ‘ F ’ is a bedrock dispute. If it is not, then our attempt to give substance to the original dispute about the contents of experience would simply have traded one verbal dispute for another. I’ll call this a ‘bump in the rug’ failure.

But there is a second, perhaps less obvious way in which an attempt of this sort might fail. There might in some cases be no disagreement about the extension of any of the terms used to the statement of the relevant theoretical role, but there might be a dispute about how, exactly, the theoretical role should be stated. To pick one example to which we will turn shortly, the particularist and the generalist might agree that there is *some* tight connection between the content of an experience and the accuracy conditions of that experience, but might disagree about what, exactly, that tight connection is. Here we would again have failed to make our original dispute substantive, since we would have failed to find any claim statable in our restricted language about which the particularist and the generalist disagree. (This would be option (i) in the list above.) I’ll call failures of this sort ‘competing role’ failures.

In practice, as we’ll see, the line between bump in the rug failures and competing role failures can be a little hazy. But the two outcomes are conceptually distinct, and it will be worth keeping them separate in what follows.

In the next two sections, I consider two initially promising attempts to find a substantive dispute between the particularist and the generalist by specifying the theoretical role of ‘the content of experience.’ These attempts, respectively, connect the content of experience to the veridicality, or accuracy, conditions of experience (§4) and to the phenomenal character of experience (§5). I’ll argue that in each case, we fail to find a substantive disagreement between the generalist and the particularist. In

⁷Of course, the relevant theoretical role might not take the form of a biconditional — for simplicity, I set this aside for now.

a concluding section, I ask what this result implies about some other related disputes in recent philosophy of perception.

4 CONTENT AND VERIDICALITY CONDITIONS

Let's look at our first candidate way of making this debate substantive — the attempt to link claims about content to claims about the conditions under which an experience is accurate, or veridical.

It is very natural to suggest the following link between the content of experience and the conditions under which an experience is veridical:

[V] A 's experience is veridical iff the proposition which is the content of A 's experience is true

As suggested above, we might then eliminate the disputed term 'content of experience' and replace [V] with the following two claims:

[V_g] A 's experience is veridical iff the proposition which A 's experiences_g is true

[V_p] A 's experience is veridical iff the proposition which A 's experiences_p is true

We then ask whether [V_p] or [V_g] is true. If we find that there is a substantive disagreement about which one of these claims is true, that would, given agreement on [V], substantiate the original dispute between the generalist and the particularist. Further, an argument for one of these claims and against the other would amount to an argument either for particularism or for generalism.

4.1 *Cases of non-local match*

With this framework in place, we can now consider some attempts to decide this issue by arguing for or against [V_g] or [V_p]. Here's an example of a kind of experience which would seem to provide a ready argument against [V_g], and hence against generalism:

Suppose that a subject has an experience as of a green lime, but there is in fact no green lime before her. The content which the subject experiences_g is that there is a green lime with such and such shape, etc. Suppose further that while there is no green lime before the subject, there is a green lime (with the relevant shape, etc.) in some distant part of the world.

Let's call experiences of this sort cases of 'non-local match.' These are cases in which one's experience represents certain properties as instantiated, those properties are not instantiated in one's immediate environment, but are instantiated, just by coincidence, at some other location. It seems plain that cases of non-local match are not veridical experiences. But [V_g] entails that they are; after all, the relevant existential proposition is true. This seems to show that generalism is false. Of course, the generalist could try to block this result by holding that the contents of

experiences include the particular place in which the subject is situated. But that would be to abandon a generalist view of experience for a particularist one which includes individual places among the constituents of the contents of experience.⁸

It is of course a matter of controversy how the particularist should think about what a subject like the one just described experiences_{*p*}. But presumably, however the particularist thinks about the contents of experiences which misfire by not containing an object, the contents which such a theorist takes to experience_{*p*} will not be true.⁹ So cases of non-local match provide no challenge to the truth of V_p ; the particularist, unlike the generalist, is not forced to say that experiences like the one above are veridical.

Do cases of non-local match provide a swift way to both substantiate the dispute between the particularist and the generalist and, in the same fell swoop, decide the matter in favor of the particularist? I doubt it. The generalist, after all, will readily agree that the experience described above is non-veridical. And that is because, while the generalist will agree with the particularist that there is a tight connection between the content of experience and accuracy conditions, she is likely to construe that connection somewhat differently, and deny $[V]$ in favor of some principle like the following:

$[V^*]$ *A*'s experience is veridical iff the proposition which is the content of *A*'s experience is true of *A*'s immediate environment.

If we, as above, employ the subscript gambit, the generalist version of this principle is

$[V_g^*]$ *A*'s experience is veridical iff the proposition which *A* experiences_{*g*} is true of *A*'s immediate environment.

The generalist, like the particularist, should reject $[V_g]$. Instead, she should accept $[V_g^*]$. The problem is that, for all we have said, the particularist should *also* accept $[V_g^*]$. After all, for all we have said, $[V_g^*]$ and $[V_p]$ agree on which experiences are veridical. So we have failed to find a claim, statable in our restricted language, about which the particularist and the generalist disagree. So far this looks like a 'competing role' type of verbal disagreement.¹⁰

4.2 Veridical misperception

But the proponent of the idea that the disagreement between the generalist and the particularist is (at least in part) a dispute about accuracy conditions is not out of moves. The problems in the preceding section stemmed from the fact that $[V_p]$ and

⁸For a version of this argument, see Caplan and Schroeder (2007).

⁹One view, held by many Russellians, would be that the contents of these experiences contain a 'gap.' See Braun (1993) for a discussion of how this might work in the case of belief. Fregeans might take the contents to involve a *de re* mode of presentation which fails to single out an object; see Schellenberg (2018) (§3.3) for a development of a view of this kind.

¹⁰Against this, Tye (2007) objects that this involves treating the veridicality conditions of experiences differently than the truth conditions of beliefs. But the generalist might reasonably wonder why this is such a bad thing; after all, we use different terms for accurate beliefs than for accurate experiences.

$[V_g^*]$ seem to agree about which experiences are veridical, so that anyone who accepts one of these principles should accept the other. But, as it turns out, $[V_p]$ and $[V_g^*]$ do not always agree about which experiences are veridical and which not. And if there are experiences about which our two principles disagree, it seems that the question which of these principles gets the cases right might well be a substantive one.

The experiences about which our principles disagree are cases of what is sometimes called ‘veridical misperception’ (though the label is in the present context prejudicial).¹¹ In these cases, an environment is contrived so that some object o causes an experience (perhaps via reflection in a mirror) which represents some object as being F . As it turns out, o is not F . But there is some other object o^* in the subject’s environment which plays no causal role in the subject’s experience, but is F . In these cases, the proposition that the subject experiences _{p} will be false (because o is not F); but the proposition which the subject experiences _{g} will be true (because something in the subject’s immediate environment is F). So the generalist will hold that these experiences are veridical, while the particularist will deny this.

Alan Millar takes cases like this to count in favor of the generalist:

‘Suppose that when Tom has his experience of a cup he is actually looking through a hatch in a wall at a mirror whose edges he cannot see. Tom is unaware of the presence of the mirror and takes himself to be perceiving a cup located just where his experience suggests that a cup is. For the mirror is so angled that it reflects light from a scene involving a cup of the appropriate sort against the appropriate background. Suppose now that behind the mirror there is another scene involving a cup. This entire scene, if it were viewed from Tom’s position, with no intervening mirror, would be in appearance the mirror image of the first scene if the latter were to be viewed straight on . . . and not via the mirror. The arrangement results in Tom’s having an experience which is qualitatively identical to that which he would have were he to perceive the scene behind the mirror. Of course he does not perceive that scene for the requisite causal relation does not obtain. None the less it visually seems to Tom that there is a cup before him of a certain type against a certain background, and there is. So by the simple account of veridicality his experience is veridical.’¹²

According to Millar, the experience is veridical. But the proposition which the subject experiences _{p} is false. So, he concludes, particularism is false.

Strikingly, Matthew Soteriou uses an extremely similar case to make just the opposite point. Here’s his case:

‘We could place a red, round object in front of the subject, which exactly matches that aspect of the content of the experience for which the object of experience is causally responsible. The introduction of the new object onto the scene before the subject may make it now seem to the subject as if there is another red, round object to her right. This aspect of the content of the subject’s experience can also be matched by introducing a further red, round object onto the scene to the right of the subject an

¹¹The locus classicus for these sorts of cases is Grice (1961/1989), §5.

¹²Millar (1991), 16-17.

object that may be too far to the right of the subject to be perceived by her. Note that it does not seem to the subject as if there is no red object to her left, so although the subject will be misperceiving two red, round objects, the content of the subject's experience will be [on the generalist view] completely veridical.¹³

But, Soteriou thinks, this experience is a case of misperception and hence *not* veridical. But the proposition the subject experiences_g is true of her immediate environment; so, according to $[V_g^*]$, the experiences is veridical. So, he concludes, generalism is false.

What's going on here? It looks like Millar and Soteriou and disagree about which experiences are veridical. Given this, they will also disagree about the truth of claims — namely, $[V_g^*]$ and $[V_p]$ — statable in our restricted language. If this disagreement about whether cases of veridical misperception are genuinely veridical is substantive, this looks like good news for the status of the generalism vs. particularism debate. All we need to do is figure out whether cases of veridical misperception are genuinely veridical; once we have an answer to this question, one might think, we'll have an answer to the question of whether particularism or generalism is true.

The key question is whether a disagreement about whether cases of veridical misperception are genuinely veridical is a substantive one. An initial objection to the idea that it is substantive is that 'veridical' is a philosophical term of art. Given the plausibility of No Philosophical Bedrock, wouldn't that suggest that this dispute is merely verbal? But in reply, one might reasonably point out that we do have a pre-theoretic grasp on the idea of an experience being 'accurate' or 'inaccurate,' and 'veridical' in this context is plausibly just a term for 'accurate.'

Let us, then, set 'veridical' to the side and ask whether a disagreement about whether cases of veridical misperception are accurate or not is a substantive disagreement. I worry that to hold that this dispute is substantive puts more weight on the pre-theoretic notion of the accuracy of experiences than this notion can bear. It is hard to believe that the pre-theoretic notion in question delivers more than the result that these cases of veridical misperception are in one way accurate, but in another way not.¹⁴

Here it is useful to compare the present question to cases which are plausibly examples of verbal disagreement. We can agree that we have a pre-theoretic grasp of the concept of a sandwich. But now consider the question of whether hot dogs (or tacos, or burritos) are sandwiches. Here, I think, we feel pulled in both directions. On the one hand, it is some meat (at least partially) enclosed by some bread. On the other hand, it seems at least odd to answer an order for a sandwich tray by providing a tray of hot dogs. The correct view is surely that, despite the fact that we have a pre-theoretic grip on the concept of a sandwich, a disagreement about whether that concept applies to liminal cases like the hot dog is a verbal disagreement.

The same, I think, goes for a disagreement about whether cases of veridical misperception are genuinely accurate. On the one hand, your environment does genuinely contain the properties that your experiences represents it as having. On the other hand, one of the objects you see does not have any of the properties your experiences

¹³Soteriou (2000), 179-80. For a similar view, see Tye (2007).

¹⁴For a related discussion, see the distinction between strong and weak veridicality conditions in Siegel (2010), §6.1.

represents. It is presumably precisely because we are pulled in both directions that the equivocal label ‘veridical misperception’ seems apt. Even granted that we have a pre-theoretic grip on the notion of an accurate experience, disagreement about whether that concept applies to liminal cases like cases of veridical misperception is verbal in very much the same sense as a sandwich/hot dog disagreement.

We could, of course, simply *stipulate* that cases of veridical misperception are accurate (or not). But that would be to introduce a new, technical notion of accuracy which cleanly decides cases which our pre-theoretic notion does not. And that would be of no use, since the particularist and the generalist will simply agree about whether cases of veridical misperception are accurate in this new, stipulated sense.

Both the particularist and the generalist should agree that in cases of veridical misperception the proposition which the subject experiences_p is false whereas what they experience_g is true. Once we have agreement on these facts, any further disagreement about whether the experiences are really accurate or veridical is a verbal disagreement. I conclude that the attempt to substantiate the dispute between the particularist and the generalist using cases of veridical misperception is a bump in the rug failure. It trades in a verbal dispute about ‘the content of experience’ for a verbal dispute about ‘veridical’ or ‘accurate.’¹⁵

5 CONTENT AND PHENOMENAL CHARACTER

Let’s turn to a more promising way to make our debate substantive. This way focuses, not on the connection between content and veridicality conditions, but on the connection between content and phenomenal character.

It is worth noting at the outset that this move somewhat limits our ambitions. For we are now exploring the possibility, not that the dispute between the particularist and the generalist is substantive simpliciter, but that it is substantive when the disputants agree to a further thesis linking content and phenomenal character. This was a safe assumption when our focus was on the accuracy conditions of experience, as the view that experiences have contents which bear no connection to their accuracy conditions is sufficiently bizarre to be ignored. By contrast, the view that the contents and phenomenal characters of experiences can vary independently of the other is a view worth taking seriously.¹⁶

That said, many particularists and generalists *do* agree that there is a close, even necessary, connection between content and phenomenal character. So the possibility that we can use the notion of phenomenal character to substantiate the debate between particularists and generalists who share this theoretical commitment is well worth exploring.¹⁷

¹⁵It is natural to wonder whether an account of the distinction between perception and cognition might help the generalist here, as the generalist might argue that experiencing_p is really a cognitive rather than perceptual attitude. But the most promising accounts of the perception/cognition border of which I am aware seem agnostic on the question of whether particularism or generalism is true. See for example Phillips (2019) and Green (2020). Green’s remarks (§2.3) on the rich content thesis seem to me to apply as well to the particularism/generalism debate.

¹⁶See, among many other places, the view of Block (1990).

¹⁷This is so even if those who theorize about perceptual content do not always make this commitment explicit. An example of someone who is admirably explicit about this commitment is Pautz (2009).

This might seem to be a promising route because, in general, debates about phenomenal consciousness — paradigmatically, disputes about whether some thing is phenomenally conscious — appear substantive. As noted above, disputes about whether a creature is phenomenally conscious are even plausible candidates for bedrock disputes. So one might think more generally that disputes about whether the phenomenal characters of two experiences are the same are always substantive disputes. If so, a link between the content of experience and phenomenal character might suffice to make our original dispute substantive.

What sort of link? One possibility is the weak intentionalist principle that phenomenal character supervenes on content:

[WI] Necessarily, if A and B have experiences with the same content, then A and B have experiences with the same phenomenal character.

But a moment's reflection shows that [WI] is unlikely to be much help. For consider pairs of experiences such that the particularist and the generalist disagree about whether those two experiences have the same content — say, a pair of experiences alike but for the fact that they are experiences of distinct limes. Such pairs of experiences will, it seems, always be indiscriminable. So, for all we have said, the particularist and the generalist might simply agree that such pairs of experiences will always have the same phenomenal character. And that means that, for all we have said, the particularist and the generalist can simply agree that both of the following claims are true:

[WI_p] Necessarily, if A and B experience_p the same content, then A and B have experiences with the same phenomenal character.

[WI_g] Necessarily, if A and B experience_g the same content, then A and B have experiences with the same phenomenal character.

So, even if we assume agreement on the thesis of weak intentionalism, we have found no claim statable in our restricted language about which the particularist and the generalist disagree.

But perhaps we can make some progress by strengthening our assumption about the relationship between perceptual content and phenomenal character. Suppose, for example, that we are convinced that the phenomenal properties of subjects don't merely supervene on the representational properties of those subjects, but also are simply identical to such representational properties. This would entail a biconditional thesis which is sometimes called 'strong intentionalism':

[SI] Necessarily, A and B have experiences with the same content iff A and B have experiences with the same phenomenal character.

We can then state, in our restricted language, two versions of [SI]:

[SI_p] Necessarily, A and B experience_p same content iff A and B have experiences with the same phenomenal character.

[SI_g] Necessarily, *A* and *B* experience_g same content iff *A* and *B* have experiences with the same phenomenal character.

How might this help? Well, we know that there are pairs of experiences which are alike with respect to what the subjects experience_g but differ with respect to what the subjects experience_p. It follows that the proponent of [SI_p] will sometimes disagree with the proponent of [SI_g] about whether a pair of experiences have the same phenomenal character. So, if disputes about whether two experiences have the same phenomenal character are always substantive, this would seem to be a straightforward way of making the dispute between the particularist and the generalist substantive.

Further, one might think that this provides a way of deciding the issue in favor of the generalist. For consider a pair of experiences of indiscriminable limes. Surely the experiences will also be indiscriminable on the basis of introspection. So, one might think, it is plausible that these experiences have the same phenomenal character. But that falsifies [SI_p], since the subjects of the two experiences do not experience_p the same contents. By contrast, this poses no threat to [SI_g]. So this seems to show that generalism is true and particularism false.

There are two different ways in which the dialectic might proceed from here. First, the particularist might concede that our two lime experiences have the same phenomenal character; let's call this *moderate particularism*. Second, the particularist might deny this assumption about sameness of phenomenal character; let's call this *radical particularism*. I'll consider these two paths in turn, to see whether there is a substantive disagreement between the generalist and either breed of particularist.

5.1 Moderate particularism

The moderate particularist may agree that there is a very tight connection between content and phenomenal character, but deny that this connection should be construed as [SI_p] recommends. This is of course parallel to the move recommended for the generalist in §4.1 in response to the problem posed by cases of non-local match. In that case, we said that the generalist can preserve a tight connection between contents and veridicality conditions, but construe that connection according to [V_g^{*}] rather than [V_g]. Just so, the particularist can agree that there is a tight connection between contents and phenomenal characters, but deny that this should be stated as [SI_p].

This is a move once recommended by Michael Tye, who combined particularism about the contents of experience with what he called 'second-order intentionalism.'¹⁸ Here's one way to put the view. Let's say that two contents are of the same *qualitative type* iff they are alike but for differences in what external particulars they involve. Then the second-order intentionalist endorses:

[SOI] Necessarily, *A* and *B* have experiences with contents of the same qualitative type iff *A* and *B* have experiences with the same phenomenal character.

The particularist version of this principle is:

¹⁸Tye (2007), §IX. For a structurally similar view developed within a Fregean framework, see Schellenberg (2018).

[SOI_p] Necessarily, *A* and *B* experience_p contents of the same qualitative type iff *A* and *B* have experiences with the same phenomenal character.

But now the problem is clear. [SOI_p] yields precisely the same predictions about sameness and difference of phenomenal character as [SI_g]. So the generalist will think that both [SI_g] and [SOI_p] are true – and so will the particularist. We have again failed to find, in our restricted language, any claim about which the particularist and the generalist disagree.¹⁹ Our attempt to find a substantial disagreement between the generalist and the moderate intentionalist turns out to be a competing role failure.

So far, the links between content and phenomenal character we’ve explored have been supervenience theses — one-direction supervenience theses in the case of weak intentionalism, and two-direction theses in the case of strong intentionalism. But many philosophers of perception endorse stronger theses linking perception and phenomenal character, including the view that the representational and phenomenal aspects of experience are simply identical. Might such an identity thesis be way to make the dispute between the generalist and the moderate particularist substantive?²⁰

Following the model for stating property identities discussed in Dorr (2016), the generalist might propose the following thesis:

[=_g] To have an experience with a certain phenomenal character is to experience_g the corresponding content.

By contrast, the moderate particularist will propose something like the following:

[=_{mp}] To have an experience with a certain phenomenal character is to experience_p a content of the corresponding qualitative type.

Have we found, in these identity theses, something about which the generalist and the moderate particularist can substantively disagree?

On some reasonable views of properties, the property of experiencing_g a certain content will be identical to the property of experiencing_p a content with the corresponding qualitative profile. On such views [=_g] and [=_{mp}] state the same property identity, and hence can’t be the locus of substantive disagreement between the generalist and the moderate particularist. So suppose that we have a sufficiently fine-grained view of properties to avoid this sort of collapse. Then [=_g] and [=_{mp}] would certainly seem to be inconsistent, and on that score at least promising candidates for finding our wanted substantive disagreement.

¹⁹Indeed, a stronger point can be made. On many reasonable views of property individuation, the property of experiencing_g a certain content will be identical to the property of experiencing_p a content of the corresponding qualitative type. On these views, [SI_g] and [SOI_p] don’t just make the same predictions about sameness and difference of phenomenal character — they literally say the same thing. But even if we adopt a view of property identity which is sufficiently fine-grained to avoid this result, the core problem remains.

²⁰Another possibility would be to exploit, not property identities, but grounding relations between representational and phenomenal properties, where claims about grounding relations holding between types of properties entail but are not entailed by the corresponding supervenience claims. Because the issues that arise from considering theoretical roles based on grounding relations are much the same as those that arise from the property identities discussed in the main text, I focus on the latter for simplicity. Thanks to an anonymous referee for very helpful discussion of these issues.

While on our assumptions $[=g]$ and $[=mp]$ are inconsistent, the difference between them is very fine indeed. Given this, a reasonable hypothesis would be that each of these identity theses would be a permissible precisification of ‘phenomenal character,’ but that the latter expression exhibits sufficient semantic indeterminacy that neither is determinately true. If this is true, then a disagreement about which of $[=g]$ and $[=mp]$ is true would be a verbal dispute, and our attempt to use identity theoretic versions of intentionalism to salvage the dispute between the particularist and the generalist would be a bump in the rug failure.²¹

Suppose, though, that ‘phenomenal character’ does not exhibit semantic indeterminacy of this sort (and, as above, that we have a sufficiently fine-grained view of properties that $[=g]$ and $[=mp]$ are not the same property identity). Then at most one of $[=g]$ and $[=mp]$ can be true, and there is a fact of the matter about which (if either) is true. In that sense, a dispute about which of them is true is not a verbal dispute.²²

While this is a positive result for one highly specific version of the particularism/generalism dispute, I think that it is of limited significance. Suppose that the epistemic theory of vagueness is true, and that Bob is a borderline case of baldness. Then, if we fix a context, there will be a fact of the matter about whether ‘Bob is bald’ is true or false. Despite this, if we consider a dispute about whether Bob is bald, two features of this dispute stand out. First, as Chalmers says, it has ‘the distinctive sense of pointlessness’ characteristic of verbal disputes. Second, (a fact familiar from discussions of vagueness) it seems irresolvable: it is completely obscure how we could ever settle the matter one way or the other.

The worry is that both unfortunate features of our dispute about Bob would seem to apply to the present case. The difference between $[=g]$ and $[=mp]$ is so fine that it is both obscure how we could ever find out which is true and obscure why we would care. $[=g]$ and $[=mp]$ agree, for example, on all of the facts about sameness and difference of phenomenal character. Given this, it is just not obvious what sort of window we might have into which of these is true (if indeed one is determinately true). And even if there is a fact of the matter about which is true, a dispute about this topic seems pointless in the way that the dispute about Bob seems pointless.

5.2 *Radical particularism*

Let’s turn now to the dispute between the generalist and the radical particularist, who holds that our two lime experiences differ in phenomenal character.²³

The generalist and the radical particularist agree about lots of things. They agree that subjects who differ in what they experience_g, or who differ in the qualitative

²¹Some evidence that this is the correct verdict is that if we employ the subscript gambit for ‘phenomenal character,’ it is hard to see what substantive dispute would remain. I return to this in the next section.

²²In Chalmers’ terms, this would imply that it is not a narrowly verbal dispute. The argument to follow is that it is still what Chalmers calls a ‘broadly verbal dispute.’ For the distinction, see Chalmers (2011), 519-523.

²³This view is much more often associated with naive realists than with representationalists. But there is no reason why a particularist representationalist cannot also adopt the idea that a difference in the object perceived makes for a difference in phenomenal character. I defended this view at great length in Speaks (2015). Obviously my views on the significance of this particular debate have since changed.

profile of what they experience_p, have experiences with distinct phenomenal characters. Reflecting on the phenomenal sorites might well lead both to endorse the claim that sometimes subjects can differ in what they experience_g (and also in the qualitative profile of what they experience_p), and so differ in the phenomenal character of their experiences, without its being the case that there is an introspectable difference between their experiences. They just disagree about whether a certain sort of non-introspectable difference in phenomenal character is possible: one which involves no difference in content other than the external particulars involved in what the subject experiences_p.

Do we have here a difficult to decide substantive dispute between rival views of phenomenal character, or a verbal dispute? We should be suspicious that it is not easy to state the content of the disagreement without using the philosophical term of art ‘phenomenal character.’ We can test this by employing the subscript gambit:

A and *B* have experiences with the same phenomenal character₁ iff *A* and *B* experience_g the same content.

A and *B* have experiences with the same phenomenal character₂ iff *A* and *B* experience_p the same content.

If we now ban the disputed term ‘phenomenal character’ and restrict ourselves to using the subscripted terms just introduced, do we find any claims for the strong intentionalist generalist and the radical particularist to disagree about? It is not obvious that we do.

As noted above, it does not follow immediately that the disagreement between these two positions is merely verbal. It may be that we have a bedrock dispute: a substantive disagreement which cannot be stated without using the term ‘phenomenal character’ (or cognates). As in the case of ‘veridical,’ one might defend this idea by pointing out that ‘phenomenal character,’ while it is a philosophical term of art, is connected to a notion on which we have a pre-theoretic grip. This, of course, is the notion of ‘what it is like to have an experience.’ Unlike some, I am happy to agree that we do have a pre-theoretic grip on this notion. But it just does not seem to me that this pre-theoretic notion is anywhere near determinate enough to decide between the generalist and particularist interpretations of ‘phenomenal character.’

This is much like the position we arrived at in §4.2, when we tried to make a disagreement about the veridicality of cases of veridical misperception substantive by appeal to the pre-theoretic notion of an accurate experience. There I voiced the worry that the pre-theoretic distinction between accurate and inaccurate experiences, while genuine, simply does not give us the materials to decide whether cases of veridical misperception should count as ‘accurate’ or not. In one sense they are, and in another sense they are not. Just so, here it seems to me that our pre-theoretic grip on what it is like to have an experience does not give us the resources to decide whether our two lime experiences have the same phenomenal character, or not.

As in the case of ‘accurate,’ different aspects of this pre-theoretic notion pull us in different directions here.²⁴ On the one hand, part of ‘what it is like’ to have

²⁴While he is not operating within a representationalist framework, someone who is alive to these two different threads in our pre-theoretic notion of phenomenal character is Michael Martin. See especially the distinction between ‘phenomenal nature’ and ‘phenomenal character’ in Martin (2002). For a much more detailed argument that the idea of phenomenal character has two strands of this kind, see Beck (2019).

an experience of a particular lime is to have a particular lime presented as having certain qualities. This suggests that the particular presented is part of what it is like to have that experience, and so that experiences which involve presentation of distinct particulars should have different phenomenal characters. This pushes in favor of the equation of our pre-theoretic notion of phenomenal character with phenomenal character₂.

On the other hand, our two lime experiences are indistinguishable from each other, and so feel the same ‘from the inside.’ So, in that sense, what it is like to have one experience just is what it is like to have the other. This pushes in favor of the equation of our pre-theoretic notion of phenomenal character with phenomenal character₁.

The right conclusion, I think, is that while we do have a pre-theoretic notion of phenomenal character, it is indeterminate whether ‘phenomenal character’ expresses phenomenal character₁ or phenomenal character₂. If this is right, then once we have settled which experiences have the same phenomenal character₁ and phenomenal character₂, there is no further substantive question about the phenomenal properties of experiences. In that case, the present attempt to find a substantive disagreement between the generalist strong intentionalist and the radical particularist is a ‘bump in the rug’ failure.²⁵

As in the discussion of moderate particularism, it should be acknowledged that if ‘phenomenal character’ does not exhibit semantic indeterminacy of the relevant sort, then there is a fact of the matter about which of [SI_g] and [SI_p] (if either) is true.²⁶ In that sense, a dispute over which of [SI_g] and [SI_p] is true would be substantive. However, the pessimism voiced at the end of the last section also seems apt in this case: a dispute about whether phenomenal character is phenomenal character₁ or phenomenal character₂ seems irresolvable and pointless in a way characteristic of verbal disputes.

To be sure, the case for this negative conclusion is not as strong in the present case as in the case of [=_g] and [=_{mp}]. At least [SI_g] and [SI_p] sometimes disagree about whether experiences have the same phenomenal character! But even if one is convinced that a dispute about whether phenomenal character is phenomenal character₁ or phenomenal character₂ is substantive and worth having, this conclusion is of extremely limited importance for the status of the particularism/generalism debate. That is because it would render that debate substantive only against the backdrop of a thesis — strong intentionalism — which virtually all particularists reject. The dispute between generalists and the vast majority of particularists would remain unredeemed.

²⁵If this is correct, one explanation of the situation would be the theory of ‘what it’s like’ proposed by Mehta (2022). On Mehta’s view, ‘what it’s like’ is context-sensitive in such a way that in some contexts it picks out properties closely connected to the hard problem of consciousness — ‘hard character’ — and in other contexts picks out properties more closely connected with the access to the external world provided by perceptual experience — ‘perceptual character.’ A natural thought would then be that phenomenal character₁ is hard character, phenomenal character₂ is perceptual character, and which of these is picked out by ‘phenomenal character’ varies from context to context.

²⁶Here’s an argument that it does not exhibit the right sort of indeterminacy. If radical particularism were true, then the phenomenal characters of an experience of a dog and a very different but indistinguishable robot dog would be very different. But the idea that the phenomenal characters of these experiences are radically different is (according to the argument) ruled out by our concept of phenomenal character. Thanks to an anonymous referee for discussion here.

6 CONCLUSION

Attempts to give substance to the dispute between the particularist and the generalist must involve finding some agreed-upon theoretical role for the notion of the content of experience. By far the most well-known candidates for such a theoretical role connect the notion of the content of experience to facts about the accuracy conditions or phenomenal characters of experiences. We've seen that neither theoretical role is up to the task. While there are other potential theoretical roles for 'content of experience' which we could explore, space prohibits me from going further down this road.²⁷ Instead, in this concluding section, I want to provisionally accept the conclusion that the dispute between the particularist and the generalist is verbal, and briefly look at the consequences of this conclusion for some other debates which have been prominent in recent philosophy of mind.

First, one might compare the debate which has been our focus to the debate between advocates of 'rich' vs. 'sparse' conceptions of the properties which figure in the contents of experience. While that dispute has an obvious structural similarity to the disagreement between the particularist and the generalist, the focus of that dispute has been on what Susanna Siegel calls 'the method of phenomenal contrast.'²⁸ Arguments employing this method begin by drawing our attention to a difference in phenomenal character between two experiences which is (allegedly) noticeable on the basis of introspection. It is agreed on all sides that an introspectable difference of the right sort suffices for a difference in the phenomenal properties instantiated by the relevant subjects. Given that the disputants agree to [WI] or some other thesis which licenses an inference from a difference in phenomenal character to a difference in content, this suffices to put disputes about rich content on a considerably firmer footing than the dispute between the particularist and the generalist, which involves no such dispute about which experiences are introspectively discriminable from certain others.

While this is a happy result, it is worth noting two qualifications. First, not all discussions of which properties are represented in experience proceed on the basis of introspectable phenomenal differences between experiences.²⁹ To the extent that disputants make use of considerations to do with veridicality conditions or other notions discussed in the preceding sections, these disputes may also turn out to be verbal. Second, even when the method of phenomenal contrast is in play, the disagreement between the rich and the sparse theorist can sometimes turn into a disagreement about whether the relevant phenomenal difference is genuinely perceptual.³⁰ There is room to wonder whether disputes of this sort may be verbal.³¹

²⁷Especially noteworthy here is Schellenberg (2018)'s defense of particularism on the basis of facts about the constitution of perceptual capacities. While I'm not persuaded that we have a firm enough grip on either the constitution of perceptual capacities or the relationship between the constitution of those capacities and the nature of the contents to which they relate us in order to substantiate the dispute between the particularist and the generalist, none of the arguments in this paper touch Schellenberg's defense of particularism.

²⁸The classic paper here is Siegel (2006).

²⁹See, for example, Bayne and McClelland (2019)'s discussion of 'ensemble representations', which relies instead on epistemic considerations to do with immediate justification for perceptual beliefs.

³⁰Helton (2016) (§4) discusses some examples of this.

³¹Logue (2013) considers the view that there may be no fact of the matter about whether kinds are represented in experience, which is at least in the ballpark of the view that the question of whether or not kinds are represented is a verbal one. But the considerations which drive her argument are

Second, one might wonder, especially given the close connection many assign to phenomenal character and the content of experience, what light our discussion sheds on the thesis of ‘phenomenal particularism,’ according to which perceived external objects are (in some sense) parts or constituents of the phenomenal character of experience. While phenomenal particularism is most commonly associated with a naive realist view which denies that experiences have representational properties, we’ve already seen that it could be endorsed by the radical particularist who endorses [SI_p]. That view is a biconditional which makes a claim about the conditions under which experiences have the same or different phenomenal characters, and doesn’t say anything about the constituents of anything. But many radical particularists might find phenomenal particularism plausible, and we can then ask whether there is a substantive disagreement about phenomenal character between this sort of radical particularist and a generalist who denies that particulars are ever constituents of phenomenal character. I think that the same considerations which make it plausible that the dispute between the radical particularist and the generalist is merely verbal suggest that this sort of dispute between the phenomenal particularist and her opponent is verbal as well.³²

Last, it is worth noting that the conclusion of this paper is consistent with the view that both experiencing_g and experiencing_p are genuine propositional attitude relations, and this view leaves room for debate about whether one of these relations might be in some sense more fundamental than, and explanatory of, the other.³³ The considerations which would be relevant to this question seem as though they would be quite different than those which have been the focus of the debate between particularists and generalists thus far. For example, we might look to theories of the facts in virtue of which we perceptually represent objects and properties as in our environment. If the correct theory of object representation turns out to be of a piece with the correct theory of property representation, that would seem to favor treating experiencing_p as more fundamental. If it does not, that would seem to favor treating experiencing_g as more fundamental.

* * *

Whenever a philosophical dispute is stated using a philosophical term of art, it is worth asking whether that dispute can be restated without the use of that term. ‘The content of experience’ is such a philosophical term of art. The difficulty of finding a disagreement between the particularist and the generalist which makes no use of that term suggests that this disagreement should be regarded with more suspicion than has been common in recent philosophy of mind.³⁴

somewhat different than the ones on which I have focused.

³²Again, see Beck (2019) for more on this topic. A bigger question asks whether there is a verbal component to the dispute between the naive realist who endorses phenomenal particularism and a representationalist who denies it. While this goes well beyond anything I have argued here, I am inclined to think that some of the arguments above can be adapted to show that this dispute is at least partly verbal.

³³Thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this point.

³⁴Thanks for helpful comments on previous versions of this material to Joe Gottlieb and to participants in a discussion of a meeting of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

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