The Phenomenology and Intentionality of Normative-Evaluative Experience

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Philosophy
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Abstract

In the first paper of this dissertation, I argue that bodily experiences, such as pain and itch experiences, emotional experiences, and mood experiences have intentional content that supervenes on their phenomenal character. I call these kinds of experiences normative-evaluative experiences. I argue that these experiences have intentional content that is determined, at least in part, by their positive and negative phenomenal characters.

In the second paper of this dissertation, I examine the tracking representationalist theory of pain experience defended by Brian Cutter and Michael Tye. On their view, the phenomenal character of pain experience supervenes on its intentional content, which is determined by tracking relations that obtain between the experience and certain properties in the environment. I argue that this theory is false. There are cases of structural mismatch between pain experience’s phenomenal character and the tracked properties Cutter and Tye identify. These cases show that pain experience’s phenomenal character does not supervene on the intentional content Cutter and Tye propose. I then argue that alternative versions of tracking representationalist theories of pain experience are unlikely to fare any better for similar reasons.

Finally, in the third paper of this dissertation, following the view defended by David Chalmers in his paper “Perception and the Fall from Eden”, I argue that normative-evaluative experiences have two kinds of phenomenal content: a primitive Edenic content and a Fregean content. I propose a positive view of what these contents consist of.

Keywords

Philosophy of mind, phenomenal consciousness, representationalism, tracking theories of content, phenomenal intentionality theory
Summary for Lay Audience

This dissertation focuses on the positive and negative feelings that accompany certain kinds of experience, such as pain experiences, depressive experiences, happy experiences, and so on. The goal of this project is to suggest that negative and positive feelings are about something or other—they are directed and say something about what they are directed at that is true or false. They are often about things in the world and say things about the world that are true or false. In short, I argue that these feelings have representational content and, moreover, they have the contents they do because of how they feel. I argue that what they represent is something primitive that evaluates things in the world, and that they also have content that reflects the role that these feelings play in our reasoning about the world and other things.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor, Angela Mendelovici, for her invaluable feedback and support during this process. Without her insight and encouragement, this dissertation would not be what it is today. I would also like to thank David Bourget and Anthony Skelton for reading previous drafts of these papers and providing additional comments and suggestions that proved to be very helpful in improving them, as well as Andrew Brook for providing commentary and feedback on an earlier version of chapter 3.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Giselle, for her continued love and support. You always believed in me, even when I didn’t believe in myself. I would have not been able to keep going in this process without you.
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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

As conscious beings, positive and negative feelings make up an important part of our mental lives. These positive feelings are one of the things that make life worth living, and negative feelings can be one of the things that make life very difficult. This dissertation is about these kinds of feelings, and what they represent. More specifically, I am interested in mental states for which part of what it is like to be in them is to feel positively or negatively. These include positive and negative emotional and mood experience, such as anger experiences, fear experiences, joyful experiences, and depressive experience; positive and negative bodily experiences, such as pain experiences, itch experiences, and hunger experiences. In our everyday lives, we regularly have these experiences and are very familiar with the kinds of positive and negative feels that accompany them. Let us call these kinds of mental states normative-evaluative experiences.

In this dissertation, my aim is to argue that normative-evaluative experiences have intentional contents determined by the way they feel. I consider and reject a particular kind of theory of what they represent and advocate for a different theory. In this introduction, I will provide a short breakdown of what each of the three papers in this dissertation argues for and say a little bit about the significance of the conclusions I draw. But first, I will say a little bit about the state of the current philosophical literature regarding phenomenal consciousness and intentionality and roughly where my arguments fit into it. I will do this in the next section

1.1 The Broader Philosophical Context

Over the last few decades, a lot of philosophical work has focused on understanding two prominent aspects of the mind. The first of these is phenomenal consciousness—what Nagel (1974) characterized as the what-it-is-likeness of experience. There is something that it is like to experience the redness of a big, red apple. There is something that it is like to experience the sound of the guitar solo at the end of Led Zeppelin’s song
“Stairway to Heaven”. There is something that it is like to experience the pain one feels when we stub our toe or the joyousness one feels on our wedding day. All of these experiences have experiential qualities—redness, twanginess, painfulness, joyousness—of the experiential state of the subject and the particular phenomenal character of their experience. Much work has been done to try and understand phenomenal consciousness—to explain what it is and how it fits in with the rest of the natural world.¹

The second aspect of the mind that has been the preoccupation of many philosophers for the last several decades is the mind’s intentionality—what has been called the aboutness of our mental states.² It has been readily observed that many of our mental states, such as our beliefs, desires, and thoughts seem to be about things other than themselves.³ These states are regularly described in natural language using sentences involving propositional attitude ascriptions—sentences in which a propositional attitude verb is followed by a clause that expresses a proposition.⁴ I can believe that tomorrow is Friday. I can desire that I will have pizza for dinner. I can know that my computer is broken. The previous statements seem to be ascribing a relationship between mental states and some kind of content. Such observations have motivated philosophers to think more deeply about what is the relationship between mental states and their contents, how the relation between mental states and their contents are fixed, and what the constituents of these contents are.⁵

There are those who see phenomenal consciousness and intentionality as inter-related and have attempted to use either intentionality to explain certain aspects of phenomenal consciousness or have used phenomenal consciousness to explain intentionality. Representationalism is a view that attempts to account for the phenomenology of a

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² See, for example, Horgan and Tienson (2002).
³ See, for example, Searle (1983).
⁴ See Nelson (2019) for an overview of propositional attitude ascriptions.
⁵ For some discussions of the mind’s intentionality see Searle (1983) and (1992), Fodor (1987) and (1990), Horgan and Tienson (2002), Siegel (2010), Kriegel (2011), and Mendelovici (2018). The approach I take to intentional content in this dissertation is to define intentional content as satisfaction conditions. This approach to intentionality is common in the literature. See the first paper of this dissertation for references to complimentary and dissenting approaches.
mental state—its particular phenomenal character—in terms of its intentional content. It states, at a minimum, roughly, that a mental state’s phenomenal character supervenes on its intentional content (perhaps in addition to certain further ingredients) so that no two mental states that are identical in their intentional content (and any specified further ingredients) differ in their phenomenal character. According to this minimal form of representationalism, mental states have their phenomenal character in virtue of their intentional content.

**Phenomenal intentionality theory** is a theory of intentionality that seeks to account for the most fundamental or basic kind of intentionality in terms of phenomenal consciousness. Some versions of the theory state that all intentional features are grounded in phenomenal consciousness, while other versions state that only the most fundamental kinds are, with less fundamental kinds of intentionality deriving from the more fundamental kinds. Pautz (2013) describes the phenomenal intentionality theory as a “consciousness first” approach. Phenomenal intentionality theories take phenomenal consciousness as a given, a starting point—they provide an account of mental states’ intentionality in which the intentionality is a product of phenomenal consciousness in some way. This contrasts with many versions of the representationalist theory, where the aim of the theory is to provide an account of phenomenal consciousness through the intentional contents of mental states.

At their core, both of these approaches to thinking about intentionality and phenomenal consciousness seem to fundamentally disagree about the explanatory direction that theories about intentionality and phenomenal consciousness should take. However, both agree that there is a kind of intentionality that is intimately related to phenomenal consciousness. In my dissertation, I will be concerned with the intentionality of this kind in the case of normative-evaluative experiences, setting aside the question of whether phenomenal consciousness is explanatorily prior to intentionality or vice versa. Although

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6 For a defense of a minimal representationalism see Byrne (2001).
7 Ibid. See also Tye (1995).
8 See Kriegel (2013) and Bourget and Mendelovici (2019) for overviews of the variety of approaches to phenomenal intentionality.
some of my conclusions might bear on the choice between these two views, my aim is not to resolve the disagreement. I believe there are arguments and conclusions in all three of these papers that advocates of both approaches will, hopefully, find engaging and agreeable.

1.2 A Breakdown of the Three Papers

The first paper of this dissertation argues that normative-evaluative experiences have intentionality determined by their normative-evaluative phenomenal character. That is, because these kinds of experiences have certain positive and negative experiential qualities, they represent some content or other (at least partly). The goal of this paper is not to argue for what said content is. The goal is to, simply, make the case that they have such content. One of the significant conclusions of this first paper is that normative-evaluative experiences have *phenomenal content*—intentional content that is determined by experience’s phenomenal character.

The first paper is aimed only at arguing that normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal contents. The second and third papers turn to the question of which contents normative-evaluative experiences represent. The second paper considers a prominent version of representationalism, *tracking representationalism*, which combines representationalism with a theory of intentionality in terms of causation, indication, information, or other tracking relations to items in the environment. Tracking representationalism makes predictions about the phenomenal contents of particular normative-evaluative experiences, which I argue are false. I focus in particular on tracking representationalist accounts of the contents of pain and other bodily sensations, focusing on a representative version of tracking representationalism proposed and defended in Cutter and Tye (2011). After arguing that their tracking representationalist theory of pain experience fails, I suggest some reasons for thinking other versions of tracking representationalism fare no better.

The third paper of this dissertation argues for a specific view of what the phenomenal contents of normative-evaluative experiences are, one that is not tied to any particular theory of intentionality, like the tracking theory discussed in the second paper. The view
that I argue for was first proposed by David Chalmers (2006). On Chalmers’ view, there are at least two kinds of phenomenal content. The first is a primitive content that corresponds to the experiential qualities of conscious experiences, which he calls *Edenic content*. The second kind of phenomenal content is a *mode of presentation* of certain properties in the world. The former is a kind of *Russellian content* and the latter is a kind of *Fregean content*. In this paper, I argue that normative-evaluative experiences have both these kinds of phenomenal content.

### 1.3 My Conclusions in Context

It is controversial within the philosophical literature that normative-evaluative experiences are intentional. By arguing that such experiences have phenomenal content, I am arguing that they are. This is a conclusion that is consistent with both representationalism and phenomenal intentionality theory, and counter to the views of *separatists*—those who reject both families of views and maintain that phenomenal consciousness and intentionality are independent features of the mind. But even some representationalists, like Fred Dretske, want to make an exception for certain normative-evaluative experiences, suggesting that their representationalism might not apply to them. My first paper contributes to this debate by arguing that normative-evaluative experiences are indeed representational.

The second paper takes aim at a prominent version of representationalism, tracking representationalism. Although my primary aim is to argue that tracking representationalism does not offer a satisfactory account of the normative-evaluative aspects of experience, from my conclusions it follows that tracking representationalism is false. In this way, my arguments motivate a move away from this kind of theoretical approach. Even if one adopts a version of the phenomenal intentionality theory, this paper provides some reasons for thinking that ordinary properties of the environment are not constitutive of the phenomenal contents of normative-evaluative experiences.

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9 See Block (1990) and (1996) as examples of the separatist view. See Kind (2001) for further discussion. I am borrowing the term separatist from Horgan and Tienson (2002).

The third paper of this dissertation is likely the most controversial. Ultimately, this paper argues that normative-evaluative experiences have a kind of irreducible, primitive content associated with them that reflects their normative-evaluative experiential qualities. This is their Edenic content. Such experiences also have associated with them a kind of content that reflects the cognitive role that such experiences play in reasoning. These cognitive roles are captured by the modes of presentation associated with the experiences. Moreover, normative-evaluative experiences have these modes of presentation in virtue of their phenomenal character. As far as I am aware, Chalmers (2006) is the only place where such a view is advocated for. Others, such as Pautz (2009a), argue that conscious states represent primitive properties, but do not seem amenable to the view that they represent properties under a mode of presentation in virtue of their phenomenal character as well.\(^{11}\) Thompson (2009) has argued that certain kinds of experiences represent properties under a mode of presentation in virtue of their phenomenal character, but has not advocated for the proposal that experiences have Edenic content as well. I hope the conclusions I have drawn in this paper provide further motivation for Chalmers’ fruitful view.

References


\(^{11}\) See Pautz (2009b).


Chapter 2

2 Emotions, Moods, and Bodily Experiences Have Phenomenal Contents

Much has been written about the connection between intentionality and phenomenal consciousness. Many theorists accept that it is plausible that intentionality and phenomenal consciousness are intimately related in the case of visual, auditory, and certain other kinds of perceptual experiences. For example, it is plausible that what experiences of redness represent is in some way related to what it is like to have such experiences. But it is less clear whether experiences of bodily sensations, emotions, and moods can plausibly be said to have intentional features related to their phenomenal features—or whether they have intentional features at all (c.f., Searle 1992, Block 2005, Kind 2013).

Bodily experiences, emotion experiences, and mood experiences all have a felt positiveness or negativeness. In this paper, I call these kinds of experiences normative-evaluative experiences (I will define this term more precisely below). The goal of this paper is to argue that normative-evaluative experiences have intentional contents that are determined by their phenomenal characters—specifically, their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters. This conclusion establishes something important about the nature of normative-evaluative experiences and their distinctive phenomenal character: it is in the nature of normative-evaluative experience to make truth evaluable claims about states of the world.

I will start by making some terminological and other clarifications in section 1. In section 2, I will define “normative-evaluative experience”. In section 3, I lay out my argument for this paper’s thesis—the thesis that all normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal contents at least partly determined by their normative-evaluative

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phenomenal characters. In sections 4 and 5, I will argue for the two main premises of my argument.

2.1 Intentionality, Intentional Content, and Phenomenal Content

For the purposes of this paper, I define intentionality as the possession of satisfaction conditions. So, any state (such as, for example, a mental state) has intentionality if and only if it possesses satisfaction conditions. I take intentional contents to be satisfaction conditions. Satisfaction conditions include truth conditions, but also the conditions that would satisfy a desire and the conditions that would make a perceptual experience accurate. For example, a belief state, such as the belief that World War I began in 1914, has intentionality because there are conditions associated with the belief that must be satisfied for the belief to be true. These conditions are the belief’s intentional content. In this case, the satisfaction conditions are truth conditions—if it is the case that World War I did, in fact, begin in 1914, then the belief is true. If it did not, then the belief is false.

Perceptual experiences, such as visual experiences, also have satisfaction conditions. When I have a visual experience of a red apple, I am seeing that the apple is red. This

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13 Some authors use the term “intentionality” slightly differently to mean aboutness or directedness, for example, Searle (1983) and (1992), Crane (1998), (2003) and (2009), Horgan and Tienson (2002), Farkas (2008), and Bourget (2010). Defined in this way, something (such as a mental state) has intentionality when it is directed at or about something. This definition of intentionality could allow that there are objects, states, etc. that have intentionality (because they exhibit directedness) but do not possess intentional content. However, on the definition of intentionality that I am working with in this paper, having intentionality just is the possessing of intentional content by some thing or other.

14 This conception of intentionality is consistent with both propositionalism and objectualism about intentional contents—whether contents are propositional or whether they can be satisfied by objects, sets of objects, properties, sets of properties, or something else (see Montague 2007, Grzankowski 2013 and 2016). I intend to remain neutral on this issue. I also intend to remain neutral on how a thing comes to possess intentional content. Generally, it is thought that for something to possess intentional content it is required that the possessor must enter into the appropriate content-determining relation (for some options regarding what the appropriate content-determining relation is, see Dretske 1981, Millikan 1984, Block 1986, Harman 1987, Fodor 1990, and Pautz 2008). I will not take a position in this paper on what the appropriate content-determining relation or relations are.
experience is associated with conditions that must be satisfied for the experience to be veridical—roughly, there must be an apple-shaped object at a particular location that is red. If there is no apple shaped object at that location, or if that object is not red, then my visual experience is falsidical.\(^{15}\)

I define the *phenomenal character* of experience to be what it is like to have an experience. Take, for example, my experience of touching the glass tabletop my computer is currently resting on. There is, for example, a coolness and a smoothness present in my experiencing the glass tabletop. There is something it is like for me to touch this tabletop, so my experience has phenomenal character. This definition follows Nagel (1974) where what Nagel termed “the subjective character of experience” was defined as what it is like to be a particular being. Relatedly, I define phenomenal consciousness to be the possession of phenomenal character. On this definition, something is phenomenally conscious if and only if it has phenomenal character.\(^{16}\)

Experiences are mental states and they are individuated by their phenomenal characters—that is, they are individuated by what it is like to have them. I will often refer to

\(^{15}\) For any particular mental state, how it is related to the world will depend on the kind of mental state it is—whether it is a belief, a desire, a mood, etc. There is a difference in how these mental states relate to the world because there is a difference in their *directions of fit*. This idea was introduced by Searle (1983), following Anscombe (1963).

It is commonly accepted that beliefs and desires can have the same content, but will differ in their direction of fit. Using Searle’s terminology, beliefs and other belief-like states have a mind-to-world direction of fit—they aim at truth. Desires and other desire-like states have a world-to-mind direction of fit—their aim is to be realized. For example, my belief that I own a dog and my desire to own a dog have the same intentional content. My desire to own a dog is satisfied and then extinguished when the state of the world becomes such that I own a dog, i.e., when the desire is realized. My belief that I own a dog is true if the world is such that I own a dog, and the belief is extinguished if I discover that I do not own a dog, i.e., when I discover the belief is false. In the case of our desires, the world is supposed to fit them. In the case of our beliefs, they are meant to fit the world. I do not discuss direction of fit because, though I am discussing intentionally, it is not directly relevant to my concerns in this paper—though it is important to note that not every content-bearing mental state aims at truth. For further discussion of direction of fit, see Searle (1983), Tenenbaum (2006), and Frost (2014).

experiences as phenomenal states and I will consider particular phenomenal states to be distinct if they differ in their phenomenal character.\textsuperscript{17}

Experiences can be multi-modal. They have phenomenal characters that are characteristic of multiple sense modalities. For example, my total experience at time $t$ may contain aspects of visual phenomenology, auditory phenomenology, interoceptive phenomenology, and possibly cognitive phenomenology.\textsuperscript{18} Throughout this paper I will be discussing certain kinds of experiences, such as visual experiences, pain experiences, happiness experiences, etc. In doing this, I am idealizing away from other aspects of experiences’ phenomenology in order to focus in on their visual phenomenology, pain phenomenology, happiness phenomenology, etc. In fact, the phenomenology of the vast majority of experiences will not be purely visual, auditory, etc.

I define a state’s \textit{phenomenal content} as its intentional content that supervenes on its phenomenal character. More precisely, a state $M$ with phenomenal character $P$ has phenomenal contents $C$ just in case any metaphysically possible state with phenomenal character $P$ has intentional contents $C$. In a previous section, I defined intentional content as satisfaction conditions, so phenomenal contents are satisfaction conditions that supervene on a state’s phenomenal character. In what follows, I will say that intentional content that supervenes on phenomenal character is \textit{determined} by phenomenal character, as fixing an experience’s phenomenal character will also fix the experience’s phenomenal

\textsuperscript{17} I do not wish to commit myself to any particular view on the composition of phenomenal states. For example, I do not intend to commit myself to the view that phenomenal states are composed of exemplifications of phenomenal properties, nor the view that phenomenal states are bare particulars that possess phenomenal properties (the former position of the metaphysics of states is defended by Kim (1976) and the latter by Davidson (1969); see Tye (1995, pp. 87-92) for a brief discussion of the metaphysics of states in a similar context; also see Kriegel (2011, pg. 44) for his definition of phenomenal states with phenomenal content that is sensitive to this issue).

\textsuperscript{18} However, the existence of cognitive phenomenology is more controversial (see Bayne and Montague 2011).
content. It is important to note that determination, as I am using the term, is merely a logical relation; it does not imply metaphysical or explanatory priority.¹⁹

I will provide a brief example from visual experience to help clarify the kind of intentional property I am trying to get at with this definition. Take a visual experience of a blue book on a brown desk in front of me. As a visual experience, it has a distinctive phenomenal character. The visual experience of a blue book on a desk involves various distinctive phenomenal characters such as blueness, brownness, squareness, glossiness, graininess, etc., perhaps structured in a particular way to yield a “blue book on a brown desk in front of me” phenomenal character. Plausibly, the experience is accurate just in case there is a blue book on a brown desk in front of me, and any experience with the same phenomenal character will have the same satisfaction conditions. If so, then these satisfaction conditions are the experience’s phenomenal content.

2.2 Normative-Evaluative Experience

I define normative-evaluative experience and, with it, normative-evaluative phenomenal character, ostensively. I take a normative-evaluative experience to be any experience that has a negative or positive phenomenal character like that present in an emotional experience such as anger or happiness, in a mood experience such as anxiety or joy, or in an experience of bodily sensations such as an itch or tickle. I take normative-evaluative phenomenal character to be the negative or positive phenomenal character present in the above experiences.

Take, for example, a happiness experience—say, one is spending time with a friend and is having the experience of being happy with them. When having this happiness experience, you may have a visual experience of your friend, you may experience the

¹⁹ Since supervenience and dependence are logical relations, not implying metaphysical or explanatory priority, both representationalists (like Harman 1990, Dretske 1995, and Chalmers 2006) and phenomenal intentionalists (like Siewert 1998, Strawson 1994, Horgan and Tienson 2002, Farkas 2008, Bourget 2010, Pautz 2008, Mendelovici 2018) can accept that there is phenomenal content, though they will offer different accounts of it.
desire to walk up to them and pat them on the back or give them a hug, and you may even experience your internal monologue saying something like, “Wow, what a great person they are”. But, again, in addition to these parts of your overall experience, there is a general pleasantness that is a large part of the happiness experience—a kind of pleasantness that is experienced when in the company of one’s friend. This pleasantness is an example of the kind of phenomenal character I am identifying as normative-evaluative phenomenal character. I refer to experiences that have this kind of phenomenal character as \textit{normative-evaluative experiences}.

Consider, as another example, the experience of anxiety accompanying an attempt at public speaking. The speaker’s experience of anxiety may be accompanied by bodily experiences of, say, their stomach tightening or they may feel restless or fidgety. In addition to these bodily experiences, there is an overriding experience of unpleasantness that forms a significant part of the speaker’s experience when they have their anxiety experience. This unpleasantness is an example of the kind of phenomenal character I am identifying as normative-evaluative phenomenal character.

As a final example, consider an itch experience—say, the experience of an itch in the middle of your back. Again, much as the anxiety experience mentioned above, the itch experience will involve bodily experience. There will be a place on the body (i.e., a spot in the middle of your back) that will be experienced as itchy. But along with this bodily experience there will be an agitation experience that accompanies the bodily experience of itchiness—an uneasiness that often does not dissipate until the itch is scratched. Once it is scratched, the agitation is often replaced with a general sense of satisfaction. This agitation and the following satisfaction are examples of normative-evaluative phenomenal characters.

In calling the experiences highlighted above normative, I am not suggesting that they are in themselves good or bad. Many of them probably are. For example, having a pain experience may be something that is in itself a bad thing to have because of the pain experience’s inherent unpleasantness. However, an experience need not have a normative status in-and-of itself to be a normative-evaluative experience. What is required for an
experience to be normative-evaluative is that it have a positive or negative phenomenal character—that it feel good or bad.

As I understand them, normative-evaluative experiences can be multi-modal experiences, involving multiple types of phenomenology, not merely normative-evaluative phenomenology. Normative-evaluative experiences may have cognitive phenomenology as well as sensory phenomenology. However, whether these other types of phenomenology are present in normative-evaluative experiences does not matter for the purposes of my argument.

In this paper I will focus on normative-evaluative experiences like those highlighted above. I will remain neutral on whether there are other mental states (such as thoughts) that have normative-evaluative phenomenal character. It may be that the account I develop here will apply to thoughts or other mental states that have normative-evaluative phenomenal character (if there are such things), but for now I will remain neutral on this issue.

2.3 An Argument for the Intentionality of Normative-Evaluative Experience

In this section I will outline my argument for the thesis that all normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal contents that are determined by the experiences’ normative-evaluative phenomenal characters. Before I present and defend this argument, I must first introduce and explain the notion of core transparency, a notion that I borrow from Frey (2013) that will play an important role in the argument I develop.

Core transparency is the “presentational” aspect of a phenomenal state. A phenomenal state exhibits core transparency—or, equivalently, is presentational—when it has a phenomenology of directedness. Phenomenal states exhibit this kind of phenomenal directedness when they present the state’s bearer with an appearance of objects, properties and/or qualities, or even a single property or quality (more on this later). If a phenomenal state has this kind of presentational phenomenology, what is experienced does not appear to the subject as an object, quality, etc. that is an aspect of the
phenomenal state itself. Rather, what is experienced is presented as something that is external to the subject’s phenomenal state—for example, phenomenal states regularly present colours as qualities that exist outside of our experience. My phenomenal experience of a chair presents the object experienced as something external to my experience as well. Visual experiences, in general, are examples of phenomenal states that exhibit core transparency.

Phenomenal states can also feel like they are directed at distal states of affairs. I can be in a phenomenal state that feels like it is directed at an interaction I had with someone fifteen minutes ago—perhaps I feel confused about the interactions, and am unsure why it occurred. I can also be in a phenomenal state that feels directed at the plot of a film I watched the previous night—I may be confused, or possibly intrigued, by it. These cases are also examples of core transparency. My experiences have a presentational phenomenology, a phenomenology of being directed at something.

Note that core transparency is a phenomenological notion. To say that an experience exhibits core transparency—or that it is presentational—is to make a point about its phenomenology, a claim about its phenomenal character, and not about whether it is intentional or has phenomenal content. Now, I take it that any experience that exhibits core transparency is in fact intentional and does have phenomenal content. However, a substantive argument is required to establish these further claims. To say that an experience exhibits core transparency is not to say that it has phenomenal contents or any contents at all.

Likewise, to say that an experience presents a particular quality, is to make a phenomenological claim, a claim about its particular phenomenal character. It is not to say that the experience represents a particular content. Again, it is a further claim that an experience that presents a particular quality represents a particular content, one that requires substantive arguments to establish.

Now that core transparency has been introduced, I can lay out my argument for the thesis that all normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal content. The argument goes as follows:
P1. Any experience that has core transparency in virtue of some phenomenal character also has phenomenal content at least partly determined by that phenomenal character.

P2. All normative-evaluative experiences have core transparency at least partly in virtue of their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters.

Therefore,

C1. All normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal contents at least partly determined by their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters.

I will now consider arguments for P1 and P2.

### 2.4 The Argument for P1

P1 is the claim that any experience that has core transparency in virtue of some phenomenal character also has phenomenal content at least partly determined by that phenomenal character. Roughly, it says that any experience with a presentational phenomenology has phenomenal content and that this is in virtue of the phenomenal characters responsible for its presentational phenomenology.

Let us consider first an example of a visual experience. Arguably, a visual experience that exhibits core transparency presents objects and states of affairs with qualities. This is how the visual phenomenology of the experience is structured. Consider in particular the case of visually experiencing a blue book on a desk. In having this visual experience, I am presented with what appears to be a blue book on a desk in front of me. Both the book and the desk are presented as having certain qualities—qualities such as blueness, brownness, squareness, glossiness, graininess, etc. These qualities are experienced as qualifying various things—the book, the surface of the book, the surface of the desk, etc.
Importantly, they are experienced as being possessed by something or other out there in the world, something external to the subject’s own phenomenal state.

Arguably, a phenomenal state that qualifies objects and states of affairs with qualities also necessarily has phenomenal contents (i.e., contents that are determined by experience’s phenomenal character).

If I am in a phenomenal state that presents the book on my desk as having the quality of blueness, then there is a way the world must be for this phenomenal state to be an accurate reflection of how the world actually is. If the world fails to be this way, the phenomenal state presents the world—in the case of our example, the book—inaccurately. This seems to follow for any phenomenal state that presents the world to be a certain way (that presents qualities as being present in the world). These phenomenal states could present the world accurately, or they could present us with an inaccurate view of the world.\(^20\)

Satisfaction conditions that accompany a phenomenal state in virtue of the way the phenomenal state presents the world are satisfaction conditions that are determined by the state’s phenomenal character. The qualities presented in experience all have corresponding phenomenal characters—there is something that it is like to visually experience blueness, something it is like to visually experience squareness, etc. So, if you are in a phenomenal state that has the phenomenal character of blueness, then you are in a phenomenal state that presents the quality of blueness, and this presentation of blueness has satisfaction conditions that go along with it. If, all of a sudden, you began experiencing a red book in place of the blue book, the qualities of the visual experience would change. For one thing, you would now be having an experience with a reddish rather than a bluish phenomenal character. Along with the changes in the visual phenomenology of the experience would come changes in the experience’s satisfaction conditions. The conditions would only be satisfied if the book possessed certain qualities, and which qualities these are would differ from those it would need to have in order to

\(^{20}\) Siewert (1998) makes a similar argument for the claim that experiences have satisfaction conditions.
satisfy your previous experience presenting blueness. If all of this is right, then visual experiences that exhibit core transparency, i.e., visual experiences that have a presentational phenomenology, necessarily possess phenomenal contents.

Even visual experiences that present a single, isolated quality will exhibit core transparency. Imagine a scenario in which someone is in a phenomenal state where they are visually experiencing redness. Their entire visual field is taken up by the redness. There are no other qualities present in this individual’s visual phenomenology. This experience still exhibits core transparency—the experienced quality is still outwardly directed. The redness is presented to us as being “out there” in the visual field. It is not experienced as a quality of one’s own mind any more than experiences of multiple colour qualities bound to objects are experienced as qualities of one’s own mind.

One might object that premise 1 cannot be true because certain inverted qualia thought experiments show that intentional contents do not supervene on phenomenal character—if we accept premise 1, one might argue, we would have to deny the very plausible intuition, brought out by some of these thought experiments, that the intentional contents of experience are (at least partly) determined by our external environments. I will discuss and address one such example, the Inverted Earth thought experiment discussed in Block (1990). I believe my response to Block’s Inverted Earth would generalize to other inverted qualia thought experiments as well.

The Inverted Earth thought experiment goes like this: suppose that there is another planet on which the colours of things are inverted relative to the colors they have here on Earth. The sky and oceans are yellow rather than blue, the grass is red rather than green, etc. Suppose you are kidnapped, brought to Inverted Earth, and given colour-inverting contact lenses so that everything on Inverted Earth appears the same to you as it does on Earth. Block contends that we would, intuitively, say that after enough time on Inverted Earth, the intentional contents of your utterances and thoughts about your environment—as well as your experiences—will change even though your experiences will be phenomenologically identical to the kinds of experiences you had back on Earth. If Block’s intuitions about Inverted Earth are correct, then there are intentional contents of
experience that can change without any change in the phenomenal character of experience. If this is true, then this intentional content is not determined by phenomenal character.

However, Inverted Earth and the intuitions it motivates are only problematic for P1—very roughly, the premise that any experience that has core transparency has phenomenal content—if there are no contents that remain the same after you have made the move to Inverted Earth. I can accept Block’s intuitions and acknowledge that certain intentional contents of visual experience will change after the subject with the inverting lenses has spent enough time on Inverted Earth. And while acknowledging that certain contents of visual experience will shift with the environment, I can consistently maintain that there are other contents of visual experience that do not shift after the move to Inverted Earth. For this reason, Block’s Inverted Earth thought experiment and the externalist intuitions that it is meant to motivate are no challenge to P1 and the arguments I have developed in favour of it. The Inverted Earth thought experiment motivates the intuition that there are intentional contents of visual experience that are dependent on the external environment, and I can grant that those intuitions are correct without it being a problem for my argument.

So far, I have focused on colour experience. But P1 plausibly holds for other kinds of experiences as well. For example, take the case of smelling something putrid or foul. These kinds of olfactory experiences qualify the world with particular qualities—that is, putridness or foulness. When I have an olfactory experience with such a quality, the putridness or foulness is experienced as being “out there”, as external to my experience. It is experienced as being a feature of the world. It could be experienced as a quality of something located in my kitchen garbage bin, for example. It could also be experienced as a quality without a specific location—as simply a smell that permeates the air. Either way, these olfactory experiences exhibit core transparency.

The olfactory experience of putridness or foulness is a phenomenal state that presents the world as being a certain way—as having certain qualities. Those qualities have corresponding phenomenal characters—that is, there is something that it is like to
experience the putridness or foulness in question. Changes in these phenomenal characters entail changes in how the world is being presented in my olfactory experience. If, suddenly, the foulness became sweetness, the satisfaction conditions of my experience would change. These olfactory experiences have satisfaction conditions in virtue of their phenomenal characters. This example seems to generalize to olfactory experiences more generally. P1 is true of olfactory experiences, as well as colour experiences.

P1 is also true of auditory experiences. For example, when I have an experience of hearing a loud noise, such as an experience of hearing the fire alarm in my apartment go off, I am in a phenomenal state that presents certain auditory qualities as being present in the world—my phenomenal state presents the world as being a place where a loud, sharp noise of a particular quality exists. In virtue of this, my auditory experience has certain satisfaction conditions. The experience is true if the world contains the particular qualities presented in my experience. If the phenomenal characters of my auditory state changed so that I was having an auditory experience of hearing birds chirp, I would be in a phenomenal state that presents the world as having different auditory qualities, and this distinct auditory experience would have satisfaction conditions that are different from my auditory experience of the fire alarm going off.

I cannot think of a case where a change in presentational phenomenology would not entail a corresponding change in certain of a phenomenal states’ intentional content. Quite plausibly, any phenomenal state with a presentational phenomenology will have intentional content that is determined by its phenomenal character.

To summarize the case for P1, any phenomenal state that has a presentational phenomenology qualifies objects or states of affairs with qualities. In addition, there is intentional content that is determined by the phenomenal character of states that qualify objects or states of affairs with qualities. Therefore, P1 is true: any phenomenal state that has core transparency in virtue of some phenomenal character also has phenomenal content at least partly determined by that phenomenal character. In the next section I will argue for P2.
2.5 The Argument for P2

Recall that normative-evaluative experiences are experiences that have a negative or positive phenomenal character like those present in certain kinds of experiences such as emotional experiences, mood experiences, and certain bodily experiences such as painful experiences or itchy experiences. This section argues for P2, that all normative-evaluative experiences have core transparency and that they exhibit it at least partly in virtue of their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters. Together with P1, P2 entails that all normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal content at least partly determined by their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters.

I will argue for P2 by considering different types of normative-evaluative experiences and arguing that the normative-evaluative phenomenal characters of each contributes to the experience's core transparency. I will argue that these experiences have normative-evaluative phenomenal characters that contribute to their core transparency by arguing that they have presentational phenomenologies that partly consist in presenting things in the world as having normative-evaluative qualities. Without this aspect of their presentational phenomenologies, they would not have quite the same phenomenal character. This demonstrates that the normative-evaluative phenomenal character of an experience contributes to its core transparency.

In what follows, I will consider three sets of examples. The first set of examples consists of two types of bodily experiences that are normative-evaluative experiences: itch experiences and pain experiences. The second set consists of emotional experiences that are normative-evaluative: happiness experiences. The third set consists of one type of mood experiences that are normative-evaluative: anxiety experience. These experiences are representative of a large variety of normative-evaluative experience. If they have normative-evaluative phenomenal character that contributes to their core transparency, then it is plausible to generalize the argument to other normative-evaluative experiences.

I will first consider itchy and painful experiences. To avoid confusion, I will draw attention to a distinction that is made in scientific research on pain between the sensory
dimensions and the affective dimensions of pain. The sensory dimensions of the experience involve things such as the intensity and quality of the pain, whether it is aching, throbbing, etc. The affective dimension involves mild to severe unpleasantness and distress. The sensory dimension is clearly presentational. However, it is because itchy and painful phenomenal states have their affective dimension that they are defined as normative-evaluative experiences. I am interested in whether the affective dimensions of itch and pain experiences contribute to the experiences’ presentational phenomenology.

I will begin my argument by considering the kind of itchy experience you have when you get a mosquito bite that feels itchy. When one has such an experience one is in a phenomenal state that has a certain phenomenal character. As I stated above, this phenomenal character will include a feeling of agitation—an unpleasantness that will likely dissipate when the mosquito bite is scratched (more on this later). I want to suggest that this phenomenal state has a presentational phenomenology: it presents the mosquito bite as having the quality of unpleasantness. Further, I want to suggest, the mosquito bite is presented as unpleasant in virtue of the experience’s having the normative-evaluative phenomenal character of agitation. After all, if the normative-evaluative phenomenal character in question were absent, one would not have the presentation of unpleasantness.

Phenomenal states with itchy phenomenal character—including the unpleasantness that these states involve—present areas of the body as having certain qualities. One of the qualities that a phenomenal state with this phenomenal character will present the body as having is the quality of unpleasantness. In such a phenomenal state, there is a location L on the body such that the phenomenal state presents L as the place on the body where the unpleasantness is located. The phenomenal state in question has a phenomenology that involves the presenting of L as being unpleasant. Without the normative-evaluative phenomenal character—that is, without the unpleasant feeling—L would not be presented as being unpleasant and the phenomenal state in question would not be a state where a mosquito bite is experienced as being unpleasantly itchy. Maybe the mosquito bite would still be experienced as itchy but it would not be experienced as something that is unpleasant. So, we can conclude that the unpleasant phenomenal character is responsible
for the presentation of L as being unpleasant. If all this is right, itchy experiences exhibit core transparency in virtue of their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters.

One might object that unpleasantness is experienced as a property of the itchy experience rather than as a property of the bodily location L. The suggestion is that it is the experience that is experienced as unpleasant, not the bodily location itself. I find it plausible to say that normative-evaluative bodily experiences feel like they are directed at bodily locations based on the phenomenology of such experiences. Such experiences seem to draw our attention to the areas of the body where the disturbance is felt—they cause us to focus on them. However, one might also think that the normative-evaluative component of an itch experience’s phenomenology is directed at said experience’s sensory component, such that it is the sensory phenomenology of these experiences that is being presented as bad. It is not required for my argument that itchy experiences be directed at the body, as long as they exhibit a phenomenology of directedness, i.e., that they feel like they are directed at something or other.

Much the same can be said for phenomenal states with a painful phenomenal character. The phenomenal state will present an area of the body as having certain qualities, including the quality of unpleasantness (though the unpleasantness involved in pain experience will differ in its specific phenomenal character from the unpleasantness that is involved in an itch experience). There will be a location L on the body such that the painful phenomenal state presents L as the place on the body where the unpleasantness is located (Cutter and Tye, 2011). It is this bodily location that is presented as having the unpleasant quality. The phenomenal state in question has a phenomenology that involves the presenting of L as being painful. Without the normative-evaluative phenomenal character—that is, without the painful feeling—L would not be presented as being painful and the phenomenal state in question would not be a state where an injury is experienced as being a painful injury. Much as in the case of the itchy experience, the painful phenomenal character is responsible for the presentation of L as being painful. Also, much like with itchy experiences, one might think that the normative-evaluative component of a pain experience’s phenomenology is directed at said experience’s sensory component, such that it is the sensory phenomenology of these experiences that
is being presented as bad. It is not required for my argument that pain experiences be
directed at the body, as long as they exhibit a phenomenology of directedness. If all this
is right, itchy experiences and pain experiences exhibit core transparency in virtue of
their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters (at least in part).

Next, consider the example of a happiness experience—say, an experience where one is
happy about a birthday present that one has just received. When one has such an
experience one is in a phenomenal state that has a positive phenomenal character—which
we could describe as elatedness—over receiving such a gift. I will argue that this
phenomenal state—like the ones previously discussed—has a presentational
phenomenology and that normative-evaluative phenomenal characters are (in part)
responsible for the presentational phenomenology.

Phenomenal states that have the kind of positive phenomenal character involved in
happiness experience present objects and states of affairs as being positive. The objects
and states of affairs that please us are what these phenomenal states are directed toward.
In the case of our example, we are in a phenomenal state with a particular phenomenal
character—elatedness—and this phenomenal state presents the state of affairs we are
happy about as being positive—specifically, our receiving a particular gift from so and
so. It is the state of affairs of us receiving a gift that our phenomenal state qualifies with
the quality of elatedness. When a phenomenal state qualifies a certain state of affairs with
a positive quality such as elatedness, the phenomenal state is presenting the state of
affairs as a positive state of affairs. Without the normative-evaluative phenomenal
character—that is, without the elated feeling—the state of affairs would not be presented
as being positive and the phenomenal state in question would not be a state where
receiving the present is experienced as being a positive thing. Again, we can conclude
that the elated phenomenal character is responsible for the presentation of the state of
affairs as being positive. The experience exhibits core transparency in virtue of its
normative-evaluative phenomenal character.

One might object that mood experiences are not always presentational in the way I
suggest—very often if you ask someone what they are feeling anxious about, they will
not be able to answer. They may even say that they are not feeling anxious about anything in particular. In responding to this objection, I would first point out that mood experiences are often directed at particular things. Many mood experiences qualify objects and states of affairs in much the same way that many emotional experiences, such as the example discussed above, do. Consider, for example, an anxiety experience related to public speaking. When one has such an experience one is in a phenomenal state that has a negative phenomenal character—we could describe this as a kind of unpleasantness—over the speaking engagement. My argument is that this phenomenal state is like the phenomenal states previously discussed—that is, it has a presentational phenomenology and that its normative-evaluative phenomenal characters are (in part) responsible for its presentational phenomenology.

Phenomenal states that possess the kind of negative phenomenal character involved in anxiety experiences present objects and states of affairs as being negative. These phenomenal states are directed toward the objects and states of affairs that are making us anxious. When we are feeling anxious about a public speaking engagement, we are in a phenomenal state with a negative phenomenal character and our phenomenal state presents the state of affairs we are anxious about as being negative. It is the upcoming speaking engagement that our phenomenal state qualifies with a negative quality. When a phenomenal state qualifies a certain state of affairs with such a negative quality, the phenomenal state is presenting the state of affairs as a negative state of affairs. Without the normative-evaluative phenomenal character—that is, without the feeling of anxiety—the state of affairs would not be presented as negative. As with the other examples, we can conclude that the anxious phenomenal character is responsible for the presentation of the state of affairs as being negative and the anxiety experience in question exhibits core transparency in virtue of its normative-evaluative phenomenal character.

Though there are a great many types of emotional and mood experiences that are directed at the world and do qualify objects and states of affairs, there are also examples of emotional and mood experiences that are normative-evaluative and do not qualify anything in particular. However, it is not a problem for my argument if certain emotional or mood experiences present unbounded positiveness or negativeness.
For example, one might suggest that the kind of anxiety experience that we might describe as being about nothing whatsoever is presenting unbounded negativity. Consider, specifically, a case where someone wakes up in the morning and simply feels anxious. When their partner asks them why they are feeling anxious, they respond, “I don’t know. I just feel anxious.”

One thing that might be occurring in such cases, I suggest, is that the person in question—though they may not be having an anxiety experience about anything in particular—is having an experience that qualifies a great many things that they encounter or think about throughout their day. Their phenomenal state may qualify the unwashed dishes in the sink, the noise coming from the construction work being done across the street from her apartment, the amount printed on her bank statement, or any number of imagined situations. It could be that the phenomenal state they are in is so aggressive that it qualifies whatever state of affairs they come across in the world and whatever states of affairs they imagine. Though we often say that mood experiences like this one are not about anything, they can be directed at the world and do often qualify a great many parts of it.

There also may be occasions when we are in, for example, a melancholic experience and going about our daily lives, not attending to anything in particular. One might not even be introspectively aware of the melancholic feeling. It could be a feeling in the background of our experience that becomes more present when we begin attending to it. In such cases, it might be reasonable to say that the mood experience is presenting an unbounded normative-evaluative property.21 This, however, is not problematic for P2 as phenomenology that presents unbounded properties is still a presentational phenomenology.

Something similar can be said of supposedly undirected happiness experiences or elated experiences—experiences of which we would say that we are simply in a good mood and

21 See Mendelovici (2013a) and (2013b) for the view that at least some moods represent unbound properties. Tye (2021) has also recently accepted such a view.
not happy or elated about anything in particular. Though we may not be happy or elated about a particular thing, our experiences still qualify many of the objects or states of affairs we encounter positively.

In general, we have good reason to think that supposedly undirected mood experiences are directed because people who experience them will have positive or negative feelings about a great many things in the world. These types of phenomenal states are promiscuous. They qualify any number of things that are put in front of them. When a supposedly undirected mood experience qualifies a certain object, state of affairs, etc. with a positive or negative quality, the experience is presenting the state of affairs (or whatever) as being a positive or negative state of affairs. Without the normative-evaluative phenomenal character—that is, without the anxious feeling or the elated feeling—the state of affairs would not be presented as being positive or negative and the phenomenal state in question would not be a state where one is, for example, feeling fearful, anxious, elated, or happy. All emotional and mood experiences seem to qualify something or other, or they present us with a normative-evaluative property that is unbound, even those that are supposedly undirected. Therefore, apparently undirected emotional and mood experiences—those that we might say are about nothing in particular—pose no threat to P2.

To conclude, I have argued that mood experiences—as well as emotional experiences and pain experiences—have presentational phenomenologies that exhibit core transparency. I have argued for this by going through examples of mood experiences, bodily experiences, and emotional experiences and shown that these experiences are presented as qualifying objects and states of affairs. I have also argued that normative-evaluative experiences have core transparency at least partly in virtue of their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters. I have done this by arguing that without their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters, normative-evaluative experiences would not be presentational in the same way. Normative-evaluative experiences would not be presenting parts of the world as having the kinds of negative and positive qualities that were discussed in the examples above. The approaches taken to account for the core transparency of bodily experience, emotional experience, and mood experience should be applicable to any kind
of normative-evaluative experience. We can, therefore, conclude that P2 is true—all normative-evaluative experiences have core transparency at least partly in virtue of their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters.

With P1—the premise that any experience that has core transparency has phenomenal content—the conclusion I have been arguing for follows: all normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal contents at least partly determined by their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters. By being in a phenomenal state with a normative-evaluative phenomenal character, a subject is in a state that presents something as having a positive or negative quality—that is, a positive or negative property that is presented in experience. Because a normative-evaluative experience has such normative-evaluative phenomenal characters that present qualities in this way, it has phenomenal contents that are determined by its normative-evaluative phenomenal character.

Note that, while I claim that normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal contents determined by their normative-evaluative phenomenal characters, I do not deny that normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal contents in addition to these phenomenal contents or even that they have non-phenomenal contents. Their overall contents might be combinations of contents, both phenomenal and non-phenomenal, from visual experience, auditory experience, bodily experience, cognitive experience, etc., in addition to the phenomenal contents that are normative-evaluative.

2.6 Conclusion

In this paper I have shown that all normative-evaluative experiences exhibit core transparency and that all experiences that exhibit core transparency have intentional contents that are determined by their phenomenal character. From this I conclude that all normative-evaluative experiences have normative-evaluative content that is determined by their phenomenal character (at least in part).

What I have argued for is compatible with two different views on the relation between phenomenal consciousness and intentionality. The first of these is representationalism—the view that an experience’s phenomenal character is identical to or constituted by
certain intentional properties of the experience (see Tye 1995, Dretske 1995, Lycan 1996, Crane 2003, Chalmers 2004, Jackson 2004, Pautz 2008, and Bourget 2010 as proponents of the view). The second of these is the **phenomenal intentionality theory**—the view that there is intentionality that is constituted by phenomenal consciousness, and that this sort of intentionality is a central kind of intentionality (see Horgan and Tienson, 2002; also, see Bourget and Mendelovici 2019 for an overview of the different version of phenomenal intentionality theory). In the next paper of this dissertation, I will argue that a prominent form of representationalism—**tracking representationalism**—cannot properly explain the intentionality of normative-evaluative experience.

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Chapter 3

3 Tracking Representationalism and the Painfulness of Pain

Since the 1990s, tracking representationalism has been a prominent theory of the phenomenal character of experience. As Cutter and Tye (2011) define it, *tracking representationalism* states, at a minimum, that an experience’s phenomenal character supervenes on its representational content and that an experience’s content is determined by certain tracking relations the experience bears to its environment. An experience’s *phenomenal character* is the what-its-likeness of the experience. The *phenomenal qualities* of an experience are those qualities that constitute what it is like to have a particular experience, e.g., the phenomenal quality *redness* partly constitutes what it is like to have a red colour experience. The *representational content* of an experience is its satisfaction conditions.

Both proponents and critics of tracking representationalism have observed that pain experience—specifically, the unpleasantness of pain experience—is difficult for tracking representationalism to account for. I will explain this in more detail in section I, but briefly, the phenomenal character of pain experience is difficult for tracking representationalism to account for because of its negative phenomenal character. That is, pain experience is not simply a sensory experience but one that is unpleasant—pain *hurts*! Negative phenomenal character is difficult for tracking representationalism to account for because the view needs there to be a property or condition out there in the world that the unpleasantness of pain is tracking and that captures this unpleasantness.

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22 See, for example, Aydede (2005) and Cutter and Tye (2011).
23 When talking about pain experiences, I intend “negative phenomenal character” to be synonymous with what we might call in ordinary language the “unpleasantness” of a pain experience or the “bad feeling” of a pain experience. In the psychological literature, this aspect of pain experience, emotional experience, or mood experience, is captured, in part, by the term *negative valence*. However, as is pointed out by Colombetti (2005) and Charland (2005), the meaning of “valence” in the psychological literature is often much more multifaceted and complex than this simple understanding suggests. To avoid confusion and bringing aboard any unwanted assumptions along with my account, I avoid the use of the term in this paper.
However, as I will argue, plausible candidates for this property or condition are difficult to come by.

In this paper, I will begin by looking at one of the most well worked out tracking representationalist theories of pain experience: that defended by Cutter and Tye (2011). I will argue that Cutter and Tye’s version of tracking representationalism does not adequately account for pain experience’s negative phenomenal character as, on Cutter and Tye’s theory, the negative phenomenal characters of pain experiences fail to supervene on the representational content they take them to represent. I will go on to suggest that the problem Cutter and Tye’s account faces will be faced by tracking representationalists that adopt alternative versions of the tracking theory. Because of this, the kind of tracking representationalism that Cutter and Tye defend ought to be rejected.

I will begin by outlining Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience. In doing this, I will explain why pain experiences are thought to be difficult for tracking representationalism to account for and why Cutter and Tye think they have overcome this difficulty. I will then argue that there is a structural mismatch between pain’s phenomenal character and the contents ascribed by Cutter and Tye’s view. I will provide two examples to illustrate this mismatch and explain why such mismatch cases are a problem for their view.

### 3.1 Representationalism, Tracking Representationalism, and Pain Experience

In this section, I will explain what tracking representationalism is and briefly discuss the motivations behind the view. I will then outline the version of tracking representationalism that Cutter and Tye defend and explain how they apply this view to pain experience.

Tracking representationalism, as Cutter and Tye define it, is a theory that weds *representationalism* with a version of the *tracking theory of content*. Representationalism,
minimally, is the thesis that the phenomenal character of a particular experience supervenes on a certain relevant portion of the experience’s representational content. Tracking theories of content state that the representational contents of mental states are fixed via tracking relations.

Proponents of tracking representationalism are generally committed to physicalism. Tracking representationalism provides the physicalist with a way of explaining phenomenal consciousness in physicalistic terms. Jerry Fodor, a prominent defender of physicalism, once wrote that if physicalism is true, then for intentionality to be real it must really be something else. That is, intentionality must be reducible to physical

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24 I state that, according to representationalism, minimally, phenomenal character supervenes on representational content. This is a loose characterization of a minimal representationalism. One could hold that phenomenal properties supervene on representational properties, or that states with certain phenomenal characters supervene on states with certain representational contents. Engaging with these issues would go beyond the scope of this paper, so I will continue to use the loose characterization as nothing in this paper rides on these distinctions.

25 Roughly, there is supervenience of A properties on B properties when there cannot be a difference in A properties without there being a difference in B properties (McLaughlin and Bennett 2018). Representationalism, understood as merely a supervenience thesis does not tell us what the nature of phenomenal character is. The supervenience thesis states merely that there can be no difference in phenomenal character without some difference in the relevant representational contents. Strong representationalism, the thesis that phenomenal character is identical to (or constituted by) the relevant representational contents is a more substantive thesis. It purports to explain what phenomenal character is. Strong representationalism has been defended by Tye in other work (see, for example, Tye 1995). Cutter and Tye only explicitly commit themselves to defending the weaker supervenience thesis. However, it should be noted that Cutter and Tye take representationalism to be the view that “your experience of the red mug on your desk has its distinctive phenomenal character in virtue of the way it represents the world as being—i.e., in virtue of its representational content” (emphasis added, 90). This seems to imply that representationalism, as Cutter and Tye understand it, involves a grounding relationship between certain representational contents and phenomenal character, in addition to a supervenience relation between certain representational contents and phenomenal character. That is, they seem to take representationalism to be the theory that the phenomenal character of an experience supervenes on certain of its representational content, and experience has its phenomenal character in virtue of that representational content. This is stronger and more substantive than simply logical supervenience. I do not believe that much rides on this for the purposes of my paper as my criticism of their view largely revolves around the tracking theory of content they endorse. However, it should be kept in mind that Cutter and Tye seem to have their eye on supporting a version of representationalism that involves something more substantive (and more significant) than mere logical supervenience.

26 According to tracking theories of content, representational content “is a matter of detecting, carrying information about, or otherwise correlating with features of the environment” (Bourget and Mendelovici, 2014). The basic idea behind the tracking theory of content is that mental states represent the world because they are able to detect things in the world or carry information about them.

27 Fodor (1987), pg. 97. Fodor’s comment is actually about naturalism, but on Fodor’s usage of the term, it arguably boils down to physicalism, broadly construed (See also Bourget and Mendelovici 2014 for discussion).
properties and/or relations between physical properties. Though the project to naturalize intentionality, as many have called it, has faced a number of hurdles, intentionality is still thought to be more amenable to explanation in physical terms than phenomenal consciousness.\textsuperscript{28} Many share the intuition that phenomenal consciousness is more elusive, that it cannot be so easily accounted for in physical terms.\textsuperscript{29} Tracking representationalism provides an appealing solution for those who want a physicalistic account of phenomenal consciousness—tracking representationalism reduces (or identifies) phenomenal consciousness to (or with) a phenomenon (i.e., intentionality) that has some hope of being accounted for in terms of physical properties and the relations between them via tracking relations.

Tracking representationalist theories of pain experience have a compelling story to tell about what pain experiences are and how they came to be. According to this story, pain evolved as a kind of warning system to provide us with information about our bodies and environment to protect us from harm. This warning system evolved over tens of thousands of years, continually being shaped by dangers present in our ancestors’ environment. Changes to the pain system that improved the fitness of our evolutionary ancestors were incorporated and eventually we ended up with the complex warning system we have today. Pain experiences are states of that system. They reliably detect danger and harm, and they dispose us to act accordingly. When we have a pain experience that feels a certain way, this is because our pain system is transmitting information to us about a disturbance or injury, and it puts us in a state in which we are disposed to act on that information. In short, the pain system evolved to track danger and harm, and this is useful to us now. As I stated above, this is a compelling story. It’s clear why Cutter and Tye want to develop a theory of pain experience’s phenomenal character that incorporates it.

\textsuperscript{28} See Fodor (2008) for a defense of the naturalization project; see Putnam (1988) and McDowell (1994) for dissenting views; see Mendelovici and Bourget (2014) for further discussion of the naturalizing project.

\textsuperscript{29} See, for example, Levine (1983), McGinn (1991), and Chalmers (1996).
In order to provide a plausible tracking representationalist account of pain experience, Cutter and Tye must identify the contents of pain experiences that are supposed to determine their phenomenal characters, and they must do this in a way that is compatible with the tracking theory and naturalism. The difficulty is that it is unclear which properties, conditions, or other items pain experiences can plausibly be taken to track that can capture their phenomenal characters, including their phenomenal character of unpleasantness. As Cutter and Tye state:

[I]t’s natural for the representationalist to hold that our pain experiences not only represent the presence of a bodily disturbance, but also represent that disturbance as bad, or as having some such negative valuational property. The problem is that this position does not seem to be available to the tracking representationalist … in order to represent the damage as bad, the badness must (under optimal conditions) be causally relevant to the person’s being in the internal state that she is in…when you undergo a pain experience, your internal state is causally sensitive to many physiological features of the bodily disturbance, such as its location, shape, and volume, but according to the objection under consideration, your internal state is not causally sensitive to valuational properties of the disturbance, such as its badness. (Cutter and Tye 2011, pp. 93–94)

The problem that Cutter and Tye are attempting to solve is that of explaining how a tracking representationalist theory of pain experience takes account of the painfulness of pain whilst adhering to the constraints that physicalism places on the theory. In what follows, I will explain how Cutter and Tye attempt to solve this problem.

First, Cutter and Tye flesh out their view of what pain experiences represent. Pain experiences represent the types and locations of disturbances, as well as the extent to which disturbances are bad for the experiencer. More precisely, the content of an individual A’s pain experience is this: there is a bodily disturbance of type d in location l, and d is bad for A to degree x (p. 91 and p. 99). For example, take a pain experience of a deep cut on one’s hand. On Cutter and Tye’s account, the content of this experience would be something like this: there is disturbance of type deep and dagger-like in
location *centre of hand*, and disturbances of type *deep and dagger-like* is bad for the experiencer to a somewhat severe degree.

Cutter and Tye’s representationalist theory of pain experience seems to be well supported by pain phenomenology, by and large. As Cutter and Tye note, pains are experienced as occupying specific bodily locations. They are also experienced as having a fairly distinctive shape and volume.\(^{30}\) This supports Cutter and Tye’s view that pain experiences have contents that represent parts of the body as having certain painful qualities. As mentioned previously, the painfulness of pain is also a salient aspect of pain experience’s phenomenology—pain experiences are not merely sensory experiences of various kinds of bodily disturbances. They are unpleasant and painful; they hurt. Cutter and Tye’s proposal that pain experiences represent bodily disturbances as bad to a greater or lesser degree seems to capture the painfulness of pain experience’s phenomenology.

Cutter and Tye endorse the following version of the tracking theory of content: \(^{31}\) “tokens of a state \(S\) in an individual \(x\) represent that \(p\) in virtue of the fact that: under optimal conditions, \(x\) tokens \(S\) iff \(p\), and because \(p\).” \(^{32}\) That is, if I have a token mental state that represents the property \(p\), then that token mental state represents \(p\) in virtue of the fact that, under optimal conditions, the type of mental state I am in is tokened if and only if \(p\) is present and because \(p\) is present. For example, if I am having a visual experience that represents the property of redness, then my visual experience represents redness in virtue of the fact that, under optimal conditions, the kinds of experiences that visually represent redness are tokened if and only if redness is present and because redness is present.

The tracking theory that Cutter and Tye adopt is, in their view, neutral on whether the dependence relation that grounds the truth of a claim like “\(x\) tokens \(S\) because \(p\)” is a causal dependence relation or some other dependence relation.\(^{33}\) That is, the claim “under optimal conditions, \(x\) tokens \(S\) iff \(p\), and because \(p\)” is not equivalent to the claim “under

\(^{30}\) See Cutter and Tye (2011), pg. 92.


\(^{32}\) Cutter and Tye (2011), pg. 91.

optimal conditions, \( x \) tokens \( S \) iff \( p \), and \( p \) causes \( S \). See, for example, the sentence “the proposition that ‘snow is white’ is true because snow is white”. This does not imply the truth of the sentence that “snow’s being white causes the proposition that ‘snow is white’ to be true”. \(^{34}\) On Cutter and Tye’s tracking theory of content, it is not true, by definition, that the properties a mental state tracks are properties that would cause the mental state to be tokened under optimal conditions. \(^{35}\)

Optimal conditions are the types of conditions under which a system was designed to operate by natural selection, or conditions that a system adapted to throughout the course of its ontogenetic development. \(^{36}\) For example, the optimal conditions that apply to my visual experience of redness would be the conditions that our species’ visual system was designed to operate in by natural selection, or the conditions our visual systems adapt to throughout the course of our development.

Cutter and Tye apply their tracking theory of content to the content of pain experience in the following way: under optimal conditions, an individual tokens a pain state \( S \) (with a specific phenomenal character) iff there is a disturbance \( d \) and \( d \) is apt to harm the individual to degree \( x \), and because this is the case. \(^{37}\) That is, what is tracked by pain experiences are bodily disturbances and their location, as well as the degree to which the bodily disturbance in question is apt to harm the individual. \(^{38}\) Notice that on the tracking theory of content Cutter and Tye endorse for pain experience, the content ‘being bad for \( A \) to degree \( x \)’ is fixed by a tracking relation between an individual’s mental state and the

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\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) This aspect of Cutter and Tye’s view raises interesting questions about tracking theories of content (e.g., ‘can a perceptual mental state really track a property if that property cannot cause the state to be tokened’ or ‘are tracking relations really intelligible if they are not grounded in a relation of causal dependence between mental states and things in the world’?) that go beyond the scope of this paper. In challenging Cutter and Tye’s view, I intend to focus on the structural mismatch between the phenomenal character of pain experiences and the properties they, on Cutter and Tye’s view, track. I do not intend to argue one way or the other whether the properties tracked by pain experience are capable of causally affecting us. Because of this, I will put these issues aside.

\(^{36}\) See Cutter and Tye (2011), pg. 91.


\(^{38}\) On Cutter and Tye’s view, pain experiences are token identical to forward-looking functional states that produce avoidance behaviour, i.e., a functional state that leads subjects to avoid disturbing injuries or otherwise making them injuries worse (p. 100).
property of aptness to harm an individual to a certain degree. That is, under optimal conditions, the painfulness of pain experience tracks the aptness of an injury to cause harm to the subject of the experience to a certain degree.\textsuperscript{39} Harmfulness, on their view, should be understood as harmfulness to an evolved teleological system—that is, as harm to a system that has evolved to perform a specific function.

Their view is outlined, roughly, in the following paragraph:

\begin{quote}
If what it is for something to be bad for you is to be apt to harm you, what is it for something to harm you? While the notion is difficult to make precise, we take it that there is no great mystery about what it is for something to harm something else, or about how it is consistent with a naturalistic worldview that something could be harmed. Since Darwin, we are all now familiar with how the notion of a teleological system can be made naturalistically acceptable. We can understand the notion of harm in relation to the notion of a teleological system. Very roughly, something harms a teleological system to the extent that it hinders that system (or one of its subsystems) from performing its function(s). (99-100)
\end{quote}

Though Cutter and Tye do not say so explicitly, I take it that they are invoking Darwin’s name because what they mean when they refer to a “‘system’s (or subsystem’s) function’”, is something like ‘the function the system (or subsystem) was selected to perform by natural selection’. So, roughly, what it means to harm something is to impede or hinder it from doing what it evolved to do.

Cutter and Tye do not further elaborate on what they mean by this but I will illustrate what I take them to mean with an example. Take the human visual system. This system is harmed by damage to it when some kind of disturbance occurs that interferes with it performing the function it evolved to perform, i.e., loosely, providing us with visual information about the external environment. This harm may consist in physical damage to the eye, damage to the parts of the brain responsible for visual processing, etc.

\textsuperscript{39} See Cutter and Tye (2011), pg. 99.
Cutter and Tye believe *aptness to cause harm to a certain degree* is what pain experiences track when they represent a bodily disturbance as bad to a certain degree because, as they argue, the properties of *being bad for you* and *being apt to harm you* are necessarily co-instantiated.\(^{40}\) That is, on their view, nothing can be apt to harm you to a certain degree without also being bad for you to a certain degree and vice versa, “at least on a certain sense of ‘bad for you’”.\(^{41}\) Cutter and Tye do not elaborate on what sense of *badness for you* they think is co-instantiated with *aptness to harm you* but presumably it is the kind of badness that pain experiences represent (it must be for their tracking representationalist account of pain experience to work).\(^{42}\)

Now that I have explained Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience, I will present my argument against their view in the next section. I will argue that there are cases of what I will call a “structural mismatch” between the phenomenal character of pain experience and the aptness of the type of bodily disturbance to cause harm. If there are such structural mismatch cases, then pain experience’s phenomenal character does not supervene on the tracked properties Cutter and Tye propose and their tracking representationalist theory of pain experience is false.

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\(^{40}\) See Cutter and Tye (2011), pg. 99.

\(^{41}\) Ibid, pg. 99.

\(^{42}\) It should be noted that defining optimal conditions as either design conditions or conditions the system adapted throughout our ontogenetic development, as Cutter and Tye do, leads to an indeterminacy regarding which conditions actually are optimal conditions. This is because which conditions evolution “designed” a system to operate under is itself indeterminate. Take, for example, a cut on the hand one receives whilst cutting vegetables. On Cutter and Tye’s view, the pain experience is tracking a disturbance of a certain type that is apt to harm me to a certain degree. Is the tracked disturbance in this circumstance of the type knife-cut? If the design conditions are those present very far back in our evolutionary history, then presumably not. But what non-arbitrary reason is there to separate out conditions present later in our evolutionary history, such as conditions present several thousand years ago when human beings were hunter-gatherers? I am not sure there is a principled reason to include our earlier evolutionary history from later evolutionary history when the later history is still exerting selection pressures on our evolved systems. If more recent history is included in the design conditions, then it may be that the disturbance type knife-cut is the type of disturbance that the experience is tracking. Cutter and Tye do not tell us how to solve the problem of specifying the optimal conditions such that there will not be this kind of indeterminacy. Given that evolution continues to act and exert selection pressures on us and our biological systems, I am skeptical that there is a way to make this distinction in a non-arbitrary way. Because of this indeterminacy it is difficult to evaluate Cutter and Tye’s proposed representationalist theory as it is hard to say which tracking relations are the ones that fix a mental state’s content.
3.2 The Argument

In this section, I will argue that there is a structural mismatch between the properties that co-vary with pain experiences under optimal conditions and pain experience’s phenomenal character. Specifically, pain experiences’ negative phenomenal qualities—the painfulness of pain experience. My argument is similar to the structural mismatch argument developed in Pautz (2010), though the approach I take to develop the argument is different. In what follows I will explain what a structural mismatch is and how the existence of structural mismatches undermines Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalism. I will then argue that, on Cutter and Tye’s view, there is a structural mismatch between the properties that co-vary with pain experiences under optimal conditions and their phenomenal character.

For my purposes in this paper, a structural mismatch occurs when there is a difference in the relations of similarity and difference that experiences bear to one another in virtue of their phenomenal characters and the relations of similarity and difference that hold between the contents said phenomenal characters purportedly supervene on. For example, it is sometimes thought that there is a structural mismatch between the phenomenal characters of color experience and the properties of objects that color experiences track, which is presumably surface reflectance profiles of objects or the like (see Pautz 2010 and Hardin 1988). For example, the phenomenal character of experiences of red is more similar to the phenomenal character of experiences of violet than it is to experiences of green, but surface reflectance profiles of objects that appear red are more similar to the surface reflectance profiles of objects that appear green than they are to the surface reflectance profiles of objects that appear purple. There is a difference between the

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43 Pautz’s argument is developed using what he calls “structure judgments” such as the following: “pain experience $P_2$ is roughly twice greater than pain experience $P_1$” (Pautz 2010, pg. 343). Pautz argues that under tracking representationalism, many structure judgments will turn out to be false. However, it is more reasonable to hold that the structure judgments are true than it is to maintain that tracking representationalism is true. Therefore, we should reject tracking representationalism. See also Hardin (1988) for another structural mismatch argument involving color; Pautz (2010) also develops his structural mismatch argument in the case of color.

44 This example is taken from Byrne and Hilbert (2003), pg. 13.
relations of similarity and difference between the phenomenal characters of color experiences, on the one hand, and the properties they track, on the other.

In what follows, I argue that the existence of structural mismatches in the cases I describe shows that pain experience’s negative phenomenal character does not supervene on the representational contents Cutter and Tye say they supervene on. I will now introduce two different examples of structural mismatch that Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience is subject to. If I am correct about either of these examples of structural mismatch, then Cutter and Tye’s theory is false. The first is the Paper Cut Example.

Consider two injuries: injury A and injury B. Both injury A and injury B are small, surface level cuts to the thumb. Injury A is a small cut received whilst handling a knife. Injury B is a small paper cut received whilst loading the printer. Injuries A and B are similar in many ways, though likely not identical as the edge of the paper and the knife would cause somewhat different types of cuts. However, one way in which they differ significantly is in how much they hurt, i.e., in how bad they feel. Injury B, the paper cut, is surprisingly painful given the minimal size and depth of the injury. Injury A, the knife cut, is by comparison, not very painful at all. The sharp, stinging sensation that accompanies the paper cut is absent. At most, a dull, hardly noticeable throbbing is present. Though similar in many ways, injury A and injury B seem to differ in how bad they feel.

Recall that, on Cutter and Tye’s view, the phenomenal character of a pain experience supervenes on the representation of a certain kind of bodily disturbance as being bad for you to a certain degree. More precisely, the phenomenal character of a pain experience supervenes on the following representational content: there is a bodily disturbance of type \( d \) in location \( l \), and \( d \) is bad for \( A \) to degree \( x \). Further, on Cutter and Tye’s view, the property a type of disturbance has of being bad for someone to a certain degree is co-instantiated with the property a type of disturbance has of being apt to harm the subject to a certain degree. It is this property that the experience tracks. Because pain experiences track this property, they have the kind of painful phenomenal character they do.
In the example I discuss above, both the knife cut and the paper cut are, presumably, bad for the experiencer to an equal degree. Though they are somewhat different types of injuries, being different kinds of small cuts, they are both small cuts that occur in the same bodily locations. We have no reason to think that a small paper cut on the thumb is a more harmful type of injury than a small knife cut on the thumb. However, paper cuts sting in a way that small knife cuts of roughly the same size and depth generally do not. Think back to a paper cut you have experienced in the past at some point and reflect on the inordinate amount of painfulness that the miniscule injury caused you. What we see in the case of injuries A and B is a difference in painfulness without a difference in the aptness of the types of injuries in question to cause harm under optimal conditions.

There is a structural mismatch between the painful phenomenal character of these experiences and the harmfulness of two injuries, even under optimal conditions. This means that the unpleasant phenomenal character of these pain experiences does not supervene on the representational content identified by Cutter and Tye, i.e., the property of being bad for the experiencer to a certain degree, a property that is co-instantiated with the property of being harmful to the experiencer to a certain degree. If this is true, then Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience is false.

I will now consider a second example, The Headache Example, and then I will address some objections to my argument.

Headaches, in general, feel unpleasant and painful. Exactly how unpleasant and painful they feel varies widely. Take the case of two headache experiences, the first of which is significantly more painful than the second headache experience. Though the first headache is significantly more unpleasant than the second, it seems unlikely that the first head disturbance is significantly more apt to cause harm to the experiencer than the

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45 Mark Daley suggested to me that papers cuts, a type of injury caused by a sharp edge, are a type of injury that would have been more likely to become infected in our evolutionary history. It may, therefore, be that paper cuts would have been more apt to cause harm than a knife cut. Ultimately, this is an empirical issue. Even if it does turn out that paper cuts are more apt to cause harm than other, less painful kinds of cuts, only one successful counter-example is needed to show that painfulness does not supervene on aptness to cause harm.
second head disturbance. On Cutter and Tye’s view, the first headache experience must be tracking a type of disturbance that is significantly more likely to cause the experiencer harm than the type of disturbance the second headache is tracking, under optimal conditions. However, there is no reason to think that the first headache is in fact tracking a disturbance in one’s head that is significantly more likely to cause them harm than the second headache. Headache experiences are bad for us because they are painful and it is the pain we feel when we have a headache experience that we find debilitating. Though they may be loosely associated with a kind of disturbance that is apt to cause us some kind of harm, such as dehydration, it seems unlikely that a headache experience that is significantly more painful than another is also associated with something like significantly more dehydration. It does not seem plausible that the unpleasantness of headaches reliably co-varies with aptness to cause harm (under optimal conditions) in the way that Cutter and Tye’s theory prescribes. If I am correct, then this is an example of the painfulness of pain experience not supervening on the aptness of a type of injury to cause me harm. If this is true, then Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience is false.

3.3 Objections

I will begin by considering a response that Cutter and Tye provide to a similar case—what I will call The Great Vein Example. The case they consider goes something like this: Take two injuries. Assume that both occur under optimal conditions. In the first, your leg is sliced open at the location of the great saphenous vein. In the second, your leg is sliced open at a location just next to the great saphenous vein. For both injuries, the painfulness experienced is roughly the same. However, the first injury, where the great saphenous vein is sliced, is much more apt to cause you harm than the injury in the second case, where the vein has not been sliced.

Cutter and Tye’s response to The Great Vein Example is the following: the two injuries in question may fall under any number of different types. They may fall under the types

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46 See Cutter and Tye (2010), pg. 102.
slices, slices to the leg, or slices of the great saphenous vein. However, this does not mean that those two injuries are represented by experience under these types. It may be that the experiences in question represent these two injuries as slices to the leg so that, even in optimal conditions, they represent the injuries as being equally bad for you. Injuries of that type, i.e., the type slice to the leg, are equally harmful under optimal conditions. So, the property tracked by both pain experiences is the same, and there is no structural mismatch in this case.

The Great Vein Example has a similar structure to the two structural mismatch cases I raise. The Great Vein Example—where there is a cut to the great saphenous vein and a comparable cut near the great saphenous vein—purports to be a case where two pain experiences with the same painful phenomenal character are associated with injuries that are harmful to radically different degrees. Ex hypothesi, injuries (that occur under optimal conditions) that pose radically different levels of harm to their subject ought to be more or less painful than one another to a substantial degree. The Great Vein Example is meant to show that the degree of painfulness associated with an injury and the degree to which the injury is harmful can come apart. Therefore, the latter does not determine or fix the former. Put roughly, the example is meant to demonstrate that experiences with the same painful phenomenal character can co-vary with different degrees of harmfulness under optimal conditions.

Cutter and Tye’s response is to suggest the type of injury represented by experience is the same in both cases. Pain experience does not represent the cut to the great saphenous vein as a cut to the great saphenous vein. It represents the injury as a mere cut to the leg. In the Great Vein Example, the two pain experiences are tracking the same type of injury. They are, therefore, representing the same content. Because of this, there is no coming apart of painfulness from degree of harmfulness. As far as it goes, I believe Cutter and Tye’s response is correct. Pain experience does not represent the two injuries in question differently, despite the different levels of harm each of them poses to the subject.

The examples I raise are importantly different from the Great Vein Example. My examples are cases in which the disturbances are similar or identical in kind and degree
of harmfulness but are associated with different degrees of painfulness. The Paper Cut and the Headache Examples are cases where the aptness of the represented disturbances to cause harm are roughly the same but the painfulness experienced varies, so they are direct counterexamples to the claim that the latter supervenes on the former. The contents on which painfulness is meant to supervene are already the same, so the strategy Cutter and Tye use to respond to the Great Vein Example does not apply to the Paper Cut Example and the Headache Example.

Perhaps Cutter and Tye could take a similar approach and say that I have somehow mischaracterized the descriptions under which the injuries in question are represented—they are, in fact, more different from one another than I have characterized them. Take the Paper Cut Example. I have not been so explicit, but one could read the example as claiming the paper cut and the knife cut are both represented by pain experience under the descriptions: disturbance of type small, surface level cut in location thumb. Cutter and Tye could rightly claim that, because the two cuts are slightly different (one having been created by a sheet of paper, the other having been created by the edge of a knife) pain experience represents them under slightly different descriptions. So, Cutter and Tye might respond, it is not true that the paper cut and the knife cut are represented under the same description by experience, and the fact that they aren’t accounts for the difference in painfulness between the two experiences. By comparing a paper cut and a knife cut, I am comparing apples to oranges while claiming that I am comparing apples to apples.

This would be an effective response to the Paper Cut Example if Cutter and Tye were defending a weaker version of tracking representationalism than they in fact do. If Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience only made a mere supervenience claim—i.e., the phenomenal character of pain experience supervenes on the experience’s representational content and that content is determined by tracking certain properties of a disturbance including aptness of the disturbance to cause the experiencer harm—then this response would successfully refute the objection posed by the Paper Cut Example to their view. In general, if A properties supervene on B properties, then there can be no difference in the A properties without a difference in B properties. If, as in the Paper Cut Example, the representational contents of two
experiences are even slightly different, differences in phenomenal character between the
two experiences will not show that phenomenal character fails to supervene on
representational content.

However, Cutter and Tye are not simply claiming that the phenomenal character of pain
experience supervenes on certain representational contents (which are fixed by certain
tracking relations). Their tracking representationalist theory of pain experience is stronger
than this in two ways. First, Cutter and Tye claim that the painfulness of pain experience
tracks the aptness of a type of injury to cause the experiencer harm. It is not just that the
phenomenal character of pain experience writ large supervenes on certain contents. It is
specifically the *painfulness* of pain experience that is supposed to supervene on certain
contents (which include a valuational property). Second, they maintain that it is *because*
certain properties are tracked (i.e., the aptness of an injury to cause the experiencer
harm), that pain experience represents valuational properties and has painful phenomenal
character. On Cutter and Tye’s view, the tracked property plays an explanatory role—it
is, at least in part, *because* pain experience tracks the aptness of injuries to cause us harm
that they are painful. But if differences in the degrees of painfulness can be explained
away by type of injury represented rather than the degree to which said injury is apt to be
harmful, then this undermines Cutter and Tye’s claim that the tracking of harmfulness
does the explanatory work of accounting for the degree of painfulness experienced. That
is, it cannot simply be the *type* of injury represented that is accounting for the different
levels of painfulness associated with the two injuries because it is supposed to be the
representation of a negative valuational property that accounts for the difference. In short,
if Cutter and Tye respond to the Paper Cut Example by claiming that differences in the
type of injury represented by pain experience accounts for the substantial differences in
the degree of painfulness felt in each case, then they cannot claim that it is the tracking of
a type of injury’s aptness to cause harm that determines the degree of painfulness.

To summarize, Cutter and Tye cannot respond to the Paper Cut Example by claiming that
differences in the types of injuries represented accounts for the differences in painfulness
between the paper cut and the knife cut. Doing so would force them to hold to a weaker
version of their tracking representationalist theory of pain experience wherein the
tracking of an injury’s aptness to cause harm really does not determine the level of painsfulness one experiences in optimal conditions. They can continue to maintain that the painful phenomenal character of pain experience supervenes on representational content that is partly determined by the tracking of a type of injury’s aptness to cause harm—it is just that this, on this weaker version of their tracking representationalist theory, the tracking of such a property does not seem to explain why pain experiences feel the way they do.

Let’s now consider whether this same response works for the Headache Example. It is much less plausible that I somehow mischaracterized the descriptions under which the two headaches are represented in the Headache Example. I see no reason to think that, under optimal conditions, two headaches cannot be represented as being of the same type while also being painful to different degrees. To avail themselves of this response, Cutter and Tye would need to provide a reason to think otherwise. I do not believe there is such a reason, so I will put this response aside and consider a further objection.

Let us consider one more possible response on Cutter and Tye’s behalf to the Paper Cut Example and the Headache Example. Cutter and Tye could claim that both examples involve misrepresentation. Specifically, Cutter and Tye could respond that at least one of the injuries in each of the two examples are being misrepresented by pain experience. In the Paper Cut Example, for instance, they might say that the paper cut is more painful than the knife cut because our pain experience is misrepresenting the paper cut as being bad for the experiencer to a higher degree than the knife cut, even though they are, in fact, bad for us to the same degree. If what is occurring in the two examples is simply misrepresentation, then it is not a problem that the painful phenomenal character of the experiences in question and the specified harmfulness property seem to be mismatched because in these cases the appropriate property is not being properly tracked.

However, under Cutter and Tye’s version of the tracking theory of content, misrepresentation can only occur if optimal conditions do not obtain. Recall that Cutter and Tye endorse the following formulation of the tracking theory of content: tokens of a state $S$ in an individual $x$ represent that $p$ in virtue of the fact that: under optimal
conditions, \(x\) tokens \(S\) iff \(p\), and because \(p\). On their view, if conditions are optimal, and a subject is tokening a mental state with a particular painful phenomenal character, that state is tokened iff the tracked property is also present. That is, if conditions are optimal, and a token state \(S\) that represents \(p\) is tokened, then \(p\) must be instantiated as well. If \(S\) is tokened under optimal conditions and \(p\) is not instantiated, then \(S\) does not represent \(p\). This is the case because tracking theories of content rely on nonsemantic, content-endowing conditions to determine content. As Mendelovici (2013) states:

tracking theories [such as Cutter and Tye’s] peg veridicality to their favored notion of nonsemantic success, a type of success distinct from veridicality...The connections a mental representation has in content-endowing conditions determine its content, and nonsemantically successful conditions are conditions either identical to or of the same type as content-endowing conditions. As a result, a representation cannot misrepresent in nonsemantically successful conditions [emphasis added]. But that means that whenever there is misrepresentation, there must be a nonsemantic defect, a defect apart from being nonveridical. (Mendelovici 2013, pg. 434)

That is, since tracking theories rely on success in certain content-endowing conditions to determine content, there must be some sort of nonsemantic defect present for there to be misrepresentation.\(^{47}\) If Cutter and Tye wish to defend against the Headache Example and the Paper Cut Example by claiming that both involve cases of misrepresentation, then they must point to a nonsemantic defect that is present when we get a paper cut or have a headache that would cause our pain experiences to misrepresent. In Cutter and Tye’s version of tracking representationalism, optimal conditions are the type of conditions under which our pain system was designed to operate in by natural selection. I see no reason to think that our pain system was not designed to detect cuts like those caused by paper or knives. Regarding headaches, tension-type headaches, for example, are a ubiquitous type of headache that has been suffered by nearly everyone at some point in

\(^{47}\) This is not to say that, on Cutter and Tye’s view, veridical representation is only possible when optimal conditions obtain.
their lives. Contributing factors to them are varied and can include tenderness of pericranial muscles and co-existing mood disorders. While certainly some tension-type headaches occur in non-optimal conditions, I see no reason to think that all headaches (or all the specific types of headaches needed to construct mismatch cases like the ones I’ve proposed) are a phenomenon that only occur in conditions with a nonsemantic defect present. The burden is on Cutter and Tye and their defenders to point out the nonsemantic defect present in these examples if they wish to claim what is occurring is misrepresentation.

3.4 Alternative Tracking Theories

My arguments in the previous section show that Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience is false because there is a structural mismatch between the contents it ascribes and the phenomenal characters of pain experiences. There is still the lingering question of whether combining representationalism with other versions of the tracking theory might yield a version of tracking representationalism that can avoid this problem. I am skeptical that alternative tracking theories will combine more successfully with representationalism. In what follows I will canvass one well-known version of the tracking theory and suggest some reasons for thinking it would still have difficulty accounting for the two structural mismatch cases I describe. I will conclude with some brief comments regarding a second well-known version of the tracking theory.

I will first look at a version of the tracking theory that is similar to the version Cutter and Tye adopt: the optimal-functioning theory. I argue that an appeal to misrepresentation

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48 Rizzoli and Mullally (2018), pg. 21.
49 In this section, I am following Mendelovici (2013)’s classification of tracking theories as optimal-functioning theories, teleological theories, and asymmetric dependence theories. Cutter and Tye’s version of the tracking theory is a kind of hybrid between the optimal-functioning and teleological theories. For the purposes of our discussion, I do not see much difference in substance between Cutter and Tye’s hybrid theory and other purely teleological theories as in both theories the content-endowing conditions are the same type as design conditions. I, therefore, do not discuss teleological theories as a potential variation in this section. Tye (2000) clarifies that, on his hybrid theory, what counts as optimal conditions will depend on the creature in question. For creatures such as us, when considering the contents of our sensory
is no more plausible under this alternative versions of the tracking theory for much the same reason as before—the tracking representationalist must still point to a nonsemantic defect that is present when we get a paper cut or have a headache that would cause our pain experiences to misrepresent and there is no apparent nonsemantic defect.

The optimal-functioning theory is a version of the tracking theory on which optimal conditions are simply conditions in which tokening a state $S$ would help the subject survive and/or flourish. On this view, $x$ tokens a state $S$ that represents $p$ because, under certain conditions, tokening $S$ when $p$ is present helps $x$ to survive and/or flourish. As Mendelovici (2013) states, “This theory does not allow for misrepresentation in conditions in which a representation’s tokening helps one survive or flourish, since what a representation corresponds to in those circumstances just sets or determines its content.” For misrepresentation to occur, the subject must be tokening $S$ under conditions in which the tokening of $S$ does not help them survive or flourish.

Adopting the optimal-functioning version of the tracking theory would alter Cutter and Tye’s tracking theory of pain experience in a substantial way. On the theory Cutter and Tye defend, the content-endowing conditions are of the same type as historical conditions present in evolutionary history—that is to say, optimal conditions are of the same type as the conditions our pain system was designed to operate in by natural selection. On the optimal-functioning version of the tracking theory, content-endowing conditions are not historical conditions. They are current conditions that include, for example, conditions that need to be present for $x$’s pain system to function in a way that helps the subject to survive and flourish.

A tracking representationalist adopting the optimal-functioning version of the tracking theory would not be in a better position to say what is occurring in the Headache Example and the Paper Cut Example is misrepresentation. There is still no plausible experiences, the relevant optimal conditions are design conditions. For creatures that do not have an evolutionary history, the optimal conditions that need to be present are close to those described in the optimal function theory under discussion.

nonsemantic defect present in either example. In both examples, we can stipulate that there is nothing wrong with either subject physiologically that would impair the functioning of their pain systems (no neurological damage or nerve damage, for example). It is also plausible that feeling pain when we experience a cut continues to be adaptive—if feeling pain when you are cut is, in general, adaptive, there is no reason to think that it is suddenly not when receiving a paper or knife cut.\footnote{A tracking representationalist could attempt to say that the excessive pain of a paper cut is itself non-optimal and this is the nonsemantic defect that accounts for the misrepresenting of the pain system. This, however, is not a very satisfying explanation as to why the pain system is failing to appropriately track the harmfulness of an injury in these circumstances as the explanation simply points to the normal functioning of the pain system itself as the source of the defect. This, also, is not a strategy a tracking representationalist who also endorses strong representationalism could avail themselves of as then the explanation of why the pain system is misrepresenting would be circular.}

It is maybe questionable whether the pain we feel when we experience a headache is adaptive and, in some way, enhances our evolutionary fitness. However, presumably, at least in some cases, feeling pain when we have certain kinds of headaches is adaptive. For example, having a headache when we are dehydrated presumably enhances our fitness to some extent as it motivates us to get something to drink. If we alter the Headache Example somewhat to specify the kind of headaches being experienced, the optimal conditions as specified by the optimal-functioning version of the tracking theory are still met. I, therefore, do not think Cutter and Tye are in any better position to claim nonsemantic defects are present in either of my examples if they adopt the optimal-functioning theory.

There is another version of the tracking theory of content one could use to develop a tracking representationalist theory of pain experience: the \textit{asymmetric dependence theory}.\footnote{Fodor (1987) and (1990) proposes and defends of this view.} On the asymmetric dependence theory, $S$ represents $p$ because $p$ causes $x$ to token $S$, and all other instances of $x$ tokening $S$ (those caused by $q_1$, $q_2$, etc.) are asymmetrically dependent on the $p$-to-$S$ causal relation. That is, $S$ represents $p$ because the law-like connection between $q_1$, $q_2$, etc. and $S$ would not exist without the law-like
connection between $p$ and $S$, but the connection between $p$ and $S$ would still exist even if the laws ‘$q_1$ causes $S$’, ‘$q_2$ causes $S$’, etc., did not exist.

To determine whether the $p$ to $S$ connection is the fundamental, content-determining causal relation (as opposed to the $q_1$ to $S$, etc., causal relations), one needs to consider the relevant counterfactuals. Assuming a straightforward possible worlds analysis of counterfactuals, one needs to consider whether, in the nearest possible worlds to our own where the $p$ to $S$ connection is broken, the $q_1$ to $S$, etc., connections are also broken. Does $q_1$, etc., no longer cause $S$ to be tokened in those nearby possible worlds where $p$ no longer causes $S$ to be tokened? More needs to be done to work out how to apply the asymmetric dependence theory to Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience and to work through the relevant counterfactuals to determine whether adopting the asymmetric dependence theory would allow Cutter and Tye to plausibly claim that what is occurring in the Headache Example and the Paper Cut Example is misrepresentation. I do not have the space to do all of that in this paper. However, objections have been raised by Seager (1993), Gibson (1996), and others\(^{53}\) to the effect that the asymmetric dependence theory is not sufficiently naturalistic. If these objections are correct, then the asymmetric dependence theory would not be fit for the tracking representationalist’s purposes anyways.\(^ {54}\)

### 3.5 Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience is false. I have argued that it is false because there is a structural mismatch between pain experience’s phenomenal character and the properties Cutter and Tye say experiences track. If there is such a structural mismatch, then we must deny that


\(^{54}\) According to objections in this vein, the asymmetric dependence theory cannot account for meaning naturalistically because it derives the asymmetric causal dependencies that are content-determining from meanings themselves. For example, how do we know that certain neurological events are not the meaning of our concept ‘cow’ even though the tokening of ‘cow’ may be asymmetrically dependent on those neurological events—events that occur when we see cows? It is because we know that ‘cow’ means cow rather than certain neurological events. For further discussion, see the papers cited previously, as well as Adams and Aizawa (2021).
the phenomenal character of pain experience supervenes on the tracked content Cutter and Tye identify. I have also identified other versions of the tracking theory content and suggested Cutter and Tye cannot pivot into an alternative tracking theory to save their view. Ultimately, representationalists committed to tracking theories of content are in a difficult place when it comes to accounting for the painfulness of pain experience, as we have good reason to think painfulness does not supervene on the most plausible tracked contents that have been proposed.

References


Chapter 4

4  The Phenomenal Contents of Normative-Evaluative Experience

As a part of our conscious mental lives, we regularly have experiences that have a felt positiveness or negativeness that accompany them—these include both excruciatingly unpleasant and mildly unpleasant pains, exuberant joy, mild amusement, nerve-wracking fear, and deep states of depression. I call these kinds of experiences *normative-evaluative experiences*.\(^{55}\) Normative-evaluative experiences, as I have defined them, include *bodily experiences* (such as pain experience, itch experience, and hunger experience), *emotional experiences* (such as happiness experience, anger experience, and fear experience), and *mood experiences* (such as depression experience and anxiety experience).\(^{56}\)

I have previously argued that normative-evaluative experiences have *phenomenal content* determined (at least in part) by their normative-evaluative *phenomenal character*.\(^{57}\) I define *intentional contents* as satisfaction conditions.\(^{58}\) I define phenomenal content as intentional content that supervenes on phenomenal character. I define phenomenal character, following Nagel (1974), as the what-its-likeness of experience.\(^{59}\)

I will assume in this paper that normative-evaluative experiences, as well as perceptual experiences, have phenomenal content. The purpose of this paper is to argue for a theory of what the phenomenal contents of normative-evaluative experience are. In this paper, I will present and argue for a particular theory of what the phenomenal contents of

\(^{55}\) See paper 1 of this dissertation for a more precise definition of “normative-evaluative experiences”.

\(^{56}\) Though the focus of this paper and my argument is not on non-bodily *perceptual experiences*, which include visual experience, auditory experience, and olfactory experience, these experiences will be discussed in the course of my arguments.

\(^{57}\) See paper 1 of this dissertation for this argument.

\(^{58}\) To illustrate what I mean by satisfaction conditions, take, for example, a visual experience, such as the visual experience of a red apple. If the world satisfies the satisfaction conditions associated with the experience, then the experience is veridical. If the world does not satisfy these conditions, then it is falsidical. See the first paper of this dissertation for further explanation and discussion.

\(^{59}\) See paper 1 of this dissertation for further explanation and discussion of these definitions.
normative-evaluative experience are. I will not be discussing or arguing for a particular view regarding how we come to represent these contents.

The view I will argue for was first proposed by David Chalmers (2006a). On Chalmers’ view, there are at least two kinds of phenomenal content. The first is a kind of primitive _Russellian content_ that corresponds to the experiential qualities of conscious experiences, which he calls _Edenic content_. The second kind of phenomenal content is a kind of _Fregean content_—a _mode of presentation_ of certain properties in the world. In this paper, I argue that normative-evaluative experiences have both these kinds of phenomenal content. Other philosophers, such as Pautz (2009) and Thompson (2009), have agreed with elements of Chalmers view. However, as far as I am aware, no one else has endorsed Chalmers’ claim that experiences have the two kinds of phenomenal content, nor has anyone explored how Chalmers’ view can be applied to the kinds of experiences I am calling normative-evaluative experiences.60

I will begin by explaining what Russellian and Fregean contents are. I will then provide some reasons for thinking that experiences have both Russellian and Fregean phenomenal contents. I will then explain how such a view can be applied to normative-evaluative experience. I will recommend a particular account of the Russellian and Fregean contents of normative-evaluative experiences and argue that it is intuitively compelling. Finally, I will discuss a few problematic cases for the account.

4.1 Russellian and Fregean Content

On my view, normative-evaluative experiences have two types of phenomenal contents, one of which is Russellian and one of which is Fregean. In what follows, I will explain what Russellian and Fregean contents are. My explanation in the following will be brief and general, with an eye towards making use of these conceptual tools in a discussion of phenomenal content (rather than linguistic or other kinds of mental content). The

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60 In Chalmers (2006a), he discusses how his view applies to pain and other bodily experiences, but he does not discuss emotional or mood experiences.
discussion that follows is an adaptation of the discussion of Russellian and Fregean content in Chalmers (2006a), sections 3 and 4.

*Russellian contents* are satisfaction conditions that are composed of objects and properties. For example, when I have a visual experience of a red apple, one might think that I am having an experience that visually represents an object, the apple, as instantiating the property red. This is a Russellian content.\(^{61}\) In order for the experience to be veridical, there would need to be an apple present in the world at a particular location that has the property in question.

For the purposes of our discussion, which concerns perceptual and bodily experience, as well as emotional and mood experience, the kinds of properties that are likely candidates to serve as components of the Russellian contents of these experiences include *physical* properties (such as surface reflectance properties, in the case of visual experience), *dispositional* properties (such as the disposition to cause certain kinds of experiences in appropriate conditions), *mental* properties (such as the properties instantiated by one’s visual field), and *primitive* properties (such as Edenic properties, which I will describe shortly).\(^{62}\) I will at times refer to physical and dispositional properties of objects as *ordinary* properties of objects, in contrast to mental or primitive properties. I will refer to Russellian contents involving ordinary properties (as opposed to primitive or mental properties) as *ordinary Russellian content*.

Edenic properties are primitive, intrinsic properties of things. Chalmers (2006a) introduces the notion of Edenic properties through an allegory involving an imagined Garden of Eden. In this allegory, Eden is a place where we have unmediated contact with the world: we have experiences of objects without any kind of causal intermediary between us and them. In Eden, the properties of things are revealed to us just as they are.

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\(^{61}\) Russellian contents are either object-involving or existentially quantified. See Siegel (2021) for further details. I avoid raising this distinction in the main text of this paper as my discussion will mainly be concerned less with the representation of objects in phenomenal content and more so the representation of properties.

\(^{62}\) This is drawn from Chalmers’ discussions in Chalmers (2004) and (2006a).
In Eden, the true nature of the world is exactly as our perceptual experience presents it. *Edenic properties* are the properties that would be instantiated in the actual world if the actual world was Edenic. As Chalmers (2006a) puts it:

In the Garden of Eden, we had unmediated contact with the world. We were directly acquainted with objects in the world and with their properties. Objects were presented to us without causal mediation, and properties were revealed to us in their true intrinsic glory. When an apple in Eden looked red to us, the apple was gloriously, perfectly, and primatively red. There was no need for a long causal chain from the microphysics of the surface through air and brain to a contingently connected visual experience. Rather, the perfect redness of the apple was simply revealed to us. The qualitative redness in our experience derived entirely from the presentation of perfect redness in the world. (381)

Intentional states that represent Edenic properties have *Edenic contents*. Since Edenic properties are a kind of property, Edenic contents are a kind of Russellian content.

Fregean contents are propositions composed of modes of presentation of objects, properties, or propositions, rather than (as in the case of Russellian contents) propositions composed of objects and properties themselves. Modes of presentation place conditions on things in the world that must be satisfied for those things to be the mode of presentation’s extension. For example, a Fregean content corresponding to the property *red* attributed by a visual experience of a red apple would be a condition that some

63 I take it that Fregean propositional contents have modes of presentation as components, and the satisfaction conditions of the Fregean propositional content will be determined by the satisfaction conditions of its constituent parts. For example, take the proposition Hesperus is Phosphorus. This proposition is composed of two concepts with the same referent—the planet Venus. However, each concept is associated with two different modes of presentation—something like: the first object visible in the evening sky and the last object visible in the morning sky. The satisfaction condition for the proposition Hesperus is Phosphorus will be something like: the first object visible in the evening sky is the last object usually visible in the morning sky (see Chalmers 2004 for further discussion).

64 See Chalmers (2004).
property in the world must satisfy to be the property associated with the experience. If the associated conditions are fulfilled by things in the world, then the experience is veridical. If the associated conditions are not fulfilled by things in the world, then the experience is falsidical.

For illustrative purposes, let us say that visual experiences of redness, for example, attribute physical redness to the environment, i.e., some sort of physical property objects have corresponding to our experience of redness. We might, then, represent physical redness under the following mode of presentation: the property that normally causes phenomenal redness in the perceiver. If this property is present in the environment in the relevant locations, then the perceiver’s visual experience of redness is veridical. If this property is not present in the environment, i.e., if the experience of redness is being caused by some property other than the physical properties that normally cause phenomenal redness in the perceiver, then the experience is falsidical.

An important feature of Fregean modes of presentation (as elaborated by Chalmers 2006b and other contemporary Fregeans, such as Jackson 1998) is that their truth values are relative to features of the contexts in which the thought, utterance, or other content-bearer is evaluated. Examples of such contextual features include the speaker of the utterance, the time of evaluation, or the place of evaluation. For example, if we are evaluating the truth of the utterance “This is Phosphorus”, who the speaker of the utterance is, when the statement was uttered, and in which place, are all relevant to the evaluation of its truth value. Thus, Fregean modes of presentation are evaluated at centered possible worlds—traditional possible worlds supplemented with specifications of a speaker or thinker, the time, and the spatial location. Take the earlier example of the mode of presentation of a visual experience of redness. The mode of presentation of this experience is evaluated relative to the perceiver, rather than a speaker or thinker. To assess what the specified mode of presentation of an experience of redness refers to at a centered world, we need to

65 For ease of exposition, I refer to the sub-propositional parts of contents, e.g., objects, properties, and modes of presentation, as contents as well.
66 For more, see Chalmers (2006a), pp. 391-392.
take the specified perceiver and determine what normally causes phenomenal redness in this individual.

Because Fregean modes of presentation are evaluated at centered possible worlds, they are evaluated differently than Russellian content. This can be seen, for example, when assessing the Russellian definite description the property that normally causes phenomenal redness in the perceiver. This definite description only denotes if there is a unique perceiver in the world being evaluated. In contrast, the Fregean mode of presentation that picks out the property that normally causes phenomenal redness in the perceiver at the centre of a world can refer at a centered world even if there are multiple perceivers at that world, because the center of the world is specified independently of the world. There are other important differences between descriptions and Fregean modes of presentation that I don’t have the space to go into here.67

Chalmers (2004) argues that visual and other perceptual experiences have Fregean contents that are determined by their phenomenal characters.68 He also contends that experiences have a Russellian content associated with them as well. These Russellian contents are the ordinary physical properties attributed to the world by experience. They are not phenomenal contents because they are not determined by the subject’s phenomenal character—two subjects with experiences identical in phenomenal character can differ in the ordinary physical properties their experiences are attributing to the world. Chalmers (2006a) calls this type of view pluralist, as it contends that there is more than one content associated with a given experience.69 The pluralist accepts that we should not restrict ourselves to thinking that a particular experience (or concept, utterance, etc.) has only one type of content. Different contents can be associated with a given content-bearer and serve different explanatory purposes.70

68 Thompson (2009) also defends the view that colour experiences have Fregean phenomenal content.
69 Chalmers (2006a), pg. 383.
70 See ibid for further details.
Chalmers (2006a) claims that experiences have a second kind of phenomenal content, which he calls *Edenic* content.\(^{71}\) Edenic contents are contents that are or include as components Edenic properties. Since they are or include properties, they are Russellian contents. Edenic contents directly reflect the experience’s phenomenology.\(^{72}\)

In the next section, I will briefly discuss why I think a theory of phenomenal content that incorporates both primitive Edenic Russellian content and Fregean content is preferable to a theory of phenomenal content that relies solely on either (Edenic or ordinary) Russellian or Fregean contents. In the following section, I will provide a positive view of what I think the phenomenal contents of normative-evaluative experience are. The overarching goal of this paper is not to argue, in general, that experiences have the two aforementioned kinds of phenomenal content. Rather, my goal is to present a view of phenomenal content for normative-evaluative experience that incorporates these two kinds of content and show that it provides an intuitively plausible account of these experiences’ phenomenal contents.

### 4.2 Why *Both* Russellian and Fregean Phenomenal Content?

In this section, I will provide some reasons for thinking that a broad range of perceptual experiences have both Fregean phenomenal contents and Edenic Russellian phenomenal contents.\(^{73}\) My aim in this section is to provide some motivation for accepting this thesis, though I will not be attempting to provide any definitive arguments in its favour. I will begin by suggesting that perceptual experiences have Edenic content.

#### 4.2.1 Edenic Content

In what follows I will provide an argument for the claim that perceptual experiences have

\(^{71}\) Ibid. In this paper, Chalmers extends his discussion to include bodily experiences as well.

\(^{72}\) Ibid, see pp. 398 and 406.

\(^{73}\) I am restricting myself to perceptual experiences in this section of the paper as how the two stage view applies to perceptual experience is already well worked out in Chalmers (2006a). The aim of the next section will be to discuss how the view applies to bodily experiences and emotion/mood experiences.
Edenic content. As I stated previously, this is not meant to be a definitive argument. It is merely meant to motivate the proposal. I will then argue that, if it is true that perceptual experiences have Edenic contents as their sole phenomenal content, this is incompatible with what I will call the veridicality intuition, the intuition that the phenomenal contents of perceptual experience are often veridical. This motivates the claim that perceptual experiences have a second kind of phenomenal content: Fregean phenomenal content.\(^{74}\)

We ought to think that perceptual experiences have Edenic content because these experiences present us with primitive experiential properties and we can consider whether or not those properties are instantiated in the world.

As Chalmers’ Eden thought experiment suggests, when we introspect a perceptual experience, such as a visual experience of redness, what we seem to be acquainted with are primitive sensory properties—e.g., primitive colour properties, such as primitive redness—that are presented by our phenomenology as being part of the world. Primitive colour properties, for example, seem to cover the surface of objects. As I argued in the first paper of this dissertation, there are satisfaction conditions that come along with this kind of phenomenology.\(^{75}\) We can assess the veridicality of colour experiences based on whether the world actually does instantiate the primitive colour properties we seem to be acquainted with in colour experience. Moreover, these are satisfaction conditions that visual experiences possess in virtue of their visual phenomenologies, i.e., that are phenomenal contents.

The most natural view of what these contents are is that they are Edenic contents, i.e., primitive properties that objects would possess in an Edenic world. Our perceptual experiences present the world to us as if it is Edenic, and if the world is not Edenic—if it

\(^{74}\) The view that Russellian phenomenal contents are mental properties is also incompatible with the veridicality intuition. I will not discuss this view as it seems uncontroversial that such views are incompatible with the veridicality intuition. Unless the world is composed of mental properties, then experiences that attributed mental properties to the world will be false.

\(^{75}\) A similar argument is developed in Siewert (1998).
is not a place where Edenic properties are actually instantiated—then our perceptual experiences are systematically falsidical.\footnote{See Chalmers (2006a) for additional discussion and argument.}

I find it difficult to deny that the world we are presented with in perceptual experience is Edenic and that we can evaluate the veridicality of experience in virtue of this phenomenology.\footnote{Chalmers (2006a) suggests that we are making use of two distinct notions of veridicality when we evaluate the veridicality of perceptual experience—\textit{perfect} and \textit{imperfect} veridicality. For a colour experience to be perfectly veridical, it is required that objects in the world actually instantiate the perfect colours that our colour experience represents them as having. As Chalmers states, “the perfect veridicality of color experience would require that our world is an Edenic world, in which objects instantiate primitive color properties” (402). That this standard of veridicality is applicable to colour experience is motivated by the experience’s phenomenology. If we took the phenomenology of our colour experience “at face value, we would accept that we were in a world where primitive properties such as perfect redness and perfect blueness are spread homogeneously over the surface of objects” (ibid). According to our colour experience, the world is a place that contains primitive colours and for that experience to be perfectly accurate, the world would need to have those perfect colours in it. A colour experience is imperfectly veridical when it is veridical according to our ordinary standards of veridicality for colour experience. These ordinary standards of veridicality are ones that can be met in our imperfect, non-Edenic world. This standard of veridicality is supported by our ordinary, common-sense judgments about the veridicality of colour experience. As we say in the example discussed earlier where there was a disagreement over the colour of a white shirt, there is evidence anyone could use to judge the veracity of my claim about the colour of my shirt. We would conclude that anyone who rejected such evidence was being unreasonable. This is because we have a shared, ordinary standard of veridicality that applies to colour experience that is distinct from the standard of perfect veridicality. As Chalmers states, when “an ordinary white wall looks white to us, then even if it merely instantiates physical properties and not perfect whiteness, it is good enough to qualify as veridical by our ordinary standards” (ibid). These two forms of veridicality do not contradict one another. Rather, that both seem to be applicable to our experiences suggests that experiences have two kinds of satisfaction that apply to them: one that is perfect and another that is imperfect. That is, there are two ways that an experience can be correct: one that reflects ordinary standards of veridicality and one that reflects the standards that our phenomenology, taken at face value, places on the world.} We can imagine a world in which the properties things possess are exactly those they appear to possess. We can imagine this world precisely because this is how our world is presented to us in experience. The fact that we can evaluate the veridicality of our perceptual experiences based on the experiential qualities they seem to present gives us reason to believe that they possess Edenic content.

\subsection*{4.2.2 Russellian Content and the Veridicality Intuition}

I have argued that perceptual experiences have at least one kind of phenomenal content: Edenic content, which is a type of Russellian content. I will now argue that perceptual
experiences have a second type of phenomenal content, which is Fregean. In order to argue for this claim, I will introduce the veridicality intuition, the intuition that our perceptual experiences have phenomenal contents that are often veridical. I will argue that Russellian contents, whether Edenic or not, are not veridical, so we need to accept another type of phenomenal content that satisfies the veridicality intuition. I will argue that the best candidate for this content is a kind of Fregean content.

The **veridicality intuition** is the intuition that our perceptual experiences have phenomenal contents that are often veridical. I will now argue that we have good reason to believe that the veridicality intuition is true. We ought to accept this intuition because it reflects how we often think and talk about our perceptual experiences.\(^{78}\)

For example, take a disagreement one might have with someone over the correct colour of a shirt. Let us say that I am wearing a shirt that, in ordinary lighting, appears to be white. Let’s say that I am sitting in a red spotlight. Imagine an interlocutor comes up to me and begins to tell me that my shirt is red. I contradict them and say, “no, in fact, my shirt is white”. All I would need to do to end the argument would be to turn on a light, open a window, or bring them outside into the light of day. They would then be able to see that I was correct. My shirt is white. Moreover, this would be evidence anyone could use to judge the veracity of my claims with regard to the colour of my shirt. We would conclude that anyone who rejected such evidence was being unreasonable. In the course of our everyday lives, we regularly treat questions of colour as factual, and we rely on our experiences of colour to give us the correct answers. This suggests that the experiences have contents that are fixed by their phenomenal characters—i.e., phenomenal contents—that are often veridical. To say that such experiences are often nonveridical or that there is simply no fact of the matter about, for example, the colour of my shirt is deeply counterintuitive.

\(^{78}\) Denying the veridicality intuition is maybe not as far-fetched as it might seem. Boghossian and Velleman (1989) argue that colour experience is systematically illusory. The story of Eden developed in Chalmers (2006a) provides a compelling illustration of the idea that the world is not quite how it appears to us. This view is also defended by Viger (2006), Mendelovici (2013b) and (2016), Hoffman (2019), and Cutter (2021).
So, we have good reason to believe that perceptual experiences have Edenic phenomenal content, and we also have good reason to think that the veridicality intuition is true. However, if the sole phenomenal contents of perceptual experience are primitive Edenic properties, then the world would have to be Edenic for our experiences to be veridical. If, for example, the red apple I am viewing does not possess the property of primitive redness, then my colour experience, which is, ex hypothesi, attributing primitive redness to the apple, is falsidical. So, for primitive Russellian contents to be phenomenal contents exclusively without violating the veridicality intuition, the world would have to be Edenic.

Are there any reasons to think the world is Edenic? It does appear to be Edenic based on our experience of it. Objects do seem like they have primitive colour properties. When we listen to someone playing the violin, the instrument seems to produce primitive auditory properties. These experiences provide, at a minimum, *prima facie* justification for thinking such properties actually do exist.\(^{79}\)

However, once we go beyond initial appearances, we also have good reasons for thinking the world is not Edenic.\(^{80}\) One reason we should doubt that our world is Edenic is the existence of perceptual illusions. In cases of perceptual illusion, our experience presents objects as having properties they, in fact, do not. An example of a perceptual illusion is a straight stick appearing bent in water.\(^{81}\) Perceptual illusions suggest that there is no necessary connection between the properties of objects and our experience of them. The connection is contingent and mediated by causal interactions. Though the existence of perceptual illusions does not entail that there are no Edenic properties in the world and that we do not veridically represent them in experience, it is strange that we would

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\(^{79}\) See Huemer (2001)’s discussion of the principle of phenomenal conservatism. See Cutter (2018) for a defense of the view that the world is Edenic.

\(^{80}\) The following reasons are taken from Chalmers (2006a) and my discussion draws heavily from it. For critical discussion of Chalmers’ arguments see Cutter (2018). For a more thorough explication and defense of the view that perception is systematically illusory see Cutter (2021).

\(^{81}\) See Smith (2002), ch. 1 for further examples and discussion.
misperceive Edenic properties on occasion if we, in fact, had direct, unmediated access to the world and its intrinsic properties.

Our scientific knowledge of the world gives us another reason to doubt that the world is Edenic. Through scientific investigation we have determined that our perception of objects and their properties is mediated by the physical properties of objects and our environment. Complex physical properties that affect the reflection or radiation of light off objects seems to be the cause of our experience of their colour. As Chalmers puts it, our scientific investigations do “not reveal any primitive properties in the object, and furthermore, the hypothesis that objects have the relevant primitive properties seems quite unnecessary in order to explain color perception”. That is, the scientific story of how we perceive colour in the world is complete without appeal to the primitive, intrinsic colour properties of objects. Such properties are superfluous. If such properties did exist, one would think they would have a role to play in explaining how colour perception works.

This second reason is also not a knockdown argument against the idea that Edenic properties actually do exist in the world. One could concede that Edenic properties are causally inert but insist that they really do exist. Cutter (2018) pushes back against the kind of argument advanced in the previous paragraph, suggesting that the explanatory story described is incomplete as real, instantiated Edenic properties are needed to explain why experiences have the phenomenal character they do. According to Cutter (2018), that a given experience has the phenomenal character it does is explained by the fact that the experience is representing properties that determine its phenomenal character. So, ex

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82 See Hardin (1988) for a detailed discussion.
83 Chalmers (2006a), pg. 399.
84 Brian Cutter’s views on the representational contents of perceptual experiences have changed substantially over time. In Cutter and Tye (2011), which paper 2 of this dissertation focused on, he defended a reductive tracking representationalism in which perceptual experiences represent ordinary Russellian contents. His view later changed and in Cutter (2018) he defends a primitivist tracking representationalism in which perceptual experiences track and represent primitive Edenic colour properties and other primitive Edenic properties. More recently, in Cutter (2021), he has changed his view, and no longer thinks that perceptual experiences track primitive Edenic properties. He still thinks perceptual experiences represent primitive Edenic properties, but has come to accept that there is widespread error in perceptual experience.
hypothesis, Edenic properties have a role in explaining the nature of experience’s phenomenal character. Cutter (2018) also thinks that actually instantiated Edenic properties would likely be needed to explain how such experiences come to represent Edenic properties in the first place as a wide range of current psychosemantic theories currently rely on causal/informational connections with the world to establish content relations between mental states and things in the world. Moreover, on Cutter’s view, if Edenic properties are grounded in the physical properties of objects, then we need not worry that Edenic properties have no causal relevance, as “supervenient properties aren’t generally excluded from causal relevance by subvening properties” Of course, the problem with this position is that it is not plausible that Edenic properties are grounded in physical properties, as Cutter himself came to realize.

If the world is not Edenic, then the veridicality intuition cannot be true unless there are other kinds of phenomenal content beyond Edenic content. I will now ask whether non-Edenic Russellian contents might satisfy the veridicality intuition. There are two main kinds of Russellian contents to consider: mental Russellian contents, which merely ascribe mental properties, and ordinary Russellian contents, which might ascribe physical or dispositional properties.

Mental Russellian properties do not suffer from the same problem as Edenic Russellian contents since we do have mental states with various properties, which such contents veridically ascribe. However, what we want to account for is our experiences’ veridically presenting aspects of the external world, not aspects of our minds. For example, we want

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86 Chalmers addresses an objection similar to Cutter’s by suggesting that such a view “would metaphysically complicate the world” as “the relevant primitive properties are a significant addition to the world over and above the microphysical supervenience base” (Chalmers 2006a, 399). Cutter denies that, as properties grounded in the physical world, Edenic properties would be a significant addition to our metaphysical picture of the world (Cutter 2018, 8-9).

87 See Cutter (2021). In this paper, Cutter defends the view that perception is widely illusory—objects in the world do not possess the kind of properties experiences represent them as having. In short, he argues that the kinds of sensible properties experiences represent cannot be identified with the kinds of properties possessed by objects in our world, and that it is implausible to suppose that objects possess some kind of extra property over-and-above their physical properties that sensible properties could be identified with.
to account for the fact that certain colour experiences accurately present coloured garments. It does not help to say that colour experiences accurately present mental aspects of our minds (or that they inaccurately present garments as having mental properties).

Ordinary Russellian contents are more plausible candidates, but I will now argue that such contents cannot satisfy the veridicality intuition. Specifically, I will argue (following Chalmers 2006a and Thompson 2007 and 2009) that they cannot satisfy veridicality intuitions in inversion cases. Consider the following scenario, inspired by Shoemaker (1994), which I will refer to as inversion without illusion.

Take the veridical phenomenally red experience of an apple within a certain community of perceivers. It is possible that there is (in the same world, on a remote planet) another community of perceivers that normally has phenomenally green experiences when they look at the same apples, as well as other objects that normally cause phenomenally red experiences in the other community. The inverted community’s phenomenally red experiences are normally caused by objects that cause the non-vert community to have phenomenally green experiences in normal circumstances, such as blades of grass. Intuitively, it seems that both the invert and non-vert communities are having veridical experiences of the apple, even though their experiences differ phenomenally as they are both viewing the apple under normal viewing conditions and having the colour experiences they normally do when viewing such objects. Of course, the Edenic contents of the inverts and non-verts' experiences are plausibly both non-veridical, but there is also a sense in which their experiences are correct, and equally so.

As noted above, there are two main kinds of non-Edenic, non-mental Russellian contents that experiences might have as phenomenal content: physical properties (such as spectral reflectance properties) and dispositional properties (such as the property of causing experiences for a certain phenomenal type). Physical Russellian contents cannot
accommodate the inversion without illusion scenario. This is because invert and non-verts' red experiences, for example, occur in the presence of distinct physical properties—that is, on their respective worlds, invert and non-verts’ red experiences are being caused by different properties. If some physical property were part of the phenomenal contents of the inverts’ and non-verts' red experiences, the same physical property would be part of the (identical) phenomenal content of the red experiences of both communities. However, the invert and non-vert communities red experiences do not occur in the same circumstances, so their red experiences could not both be veridical.

Russellian contents attributing simple dispositional properties such as causing experiences of redness can accommodate the intuition that both inverts’ and non-verts' experiences of red are veridical in the preceding scenario, but they cannot accommodate the intuition that abnormally caused experiences (by the standards of a given community) are non-veridical. For example, an invert could have a phenomenally red experience caused by a property that would normally cause them to have a phenomenally green experience. The intuition is that such an experience is non-veridical, but simple dispositionalist properties cannot accommodate this because the property that caused the invert's phenomenally red experience—and that normally causes phenomenally green experiences—also possesses the dispositional property causing experiences of redness. As a result, a dispositional account needs to be qualified along the following lines: experiences of redness ascribe the property that normally causes experiences of redness in certain perceivers. For such a description to denote different properties in the invert and non-verts communities (as it must to preserve the veridicality intuition in inversion cases), the relevant perceivers need to be restricted to the perceivers of a community (and in a such a way that the relevant perceivers are restricted to their community even if members of one community leave their environment and travel to the environment of another). But phenomenal contents are determined by phenomenal characters, which are shared by the invert and non-vert communities. So we cannot build particular perceivers

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88 Thompson (2007) uses spectrum inversion without illusion to argue for this view as well, as does Chalmers (2006a).
or communities withinRussellian contents. As a result, dispositional Russellian contents cannot adequately capture veridicality intuitions about inversions without illusion. In order to accommodate these intuitions, we need to appeal to Fregean contents, which can have thinker-relative or perceiver-relative truth conditions that track intuitions about inversion cases.

4.2.3 Fregean Phenomenal Content

Some Fregean contents represent objects and properties under a phenomenal mode of presentation where a mode of presentation is phenomenal when an aspect of the subject’s phenomenal character contributes to the condition on extension. An example is the Fregean content we might gloss as the property that normally causes phenomenal redness in the perceiver, which is a condition placed on properties in the world that is satisfied iff the property is the normal cause of the relevant phenomenal state in the perceiver. Importantly, “the perceiver” should not be construed as inserting any given perceiver, or an actual definite description, in the mode of presentation; rather, it is a placeholder for the centre of the world at which the mode of presentation is evaluated. Phenomenal modes of presentation of this kind are phenomenal contents: any individual having the same phenomenally red experience will have the same mode of presentation associated with that experience. For any such individual, it will be the case that the presence of a property that normally causes phenomenally red experiences in the individual makes such experiences veridical (with respect to their Fregean contents).

Fregean contents along the lines just specified can accommodate the inversion without illusion scenario discussed in the preceding section. This is because the extension of the mode of presentation of phenomenally red experiences is resolved differently in the invert and non-vert communities. For the non-vert community, it is resolved with a non-vert at the centre, and it picks out the property that causes red experiences here. For the invert community, it is resolved with an invert at the centre, and it picks out the property

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89 Chalmers (2006a) makes a very similar point using spectrum inversion while developing his argument against Russellian phenomenal content.
that causes green experiences here. In this way, the very same phenomenal content can pick out and be made true by different external properties. Thus, Fregean contents can accommodate veridicality intuitions in inversion cases. Chalmers (2004, 2006a) and Thompson (2009), who both make arguments that are similar to the preceding, discuss the Fregean contents of non-evaluative and non-normative experiences at length.

Now that I have provided an argument for the thesis that experiences possess both Fregean phenomenal content and Edenic content, I will argue for an account of the Fregean phenomenal contents and Edenic contents of normative-evaluative experience.

4.3 Normative-Evaluative Phenomenal Content

In the previous section I provided some reasons for thinking that experiences have two kinds of phenomenal content—Fregean phenomenal content and Russellian Edenic phenomenal content. Briefly, we have good reason to think that perceptual experiences have Edenic phenomenal content, but there are additional satisfaction conditions that seem to supervene on these experiences’ phenomenal characters and that satisfy the veridicality intuition. I suggested that these contents are plausibly Fregean phenomenal contents. In this section, I will provide an account of the Russellian Edenic and Fregean phenomenal contents of normative-evaluative experiences.

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90 Thompson (2009) argues in favour of a Fregean theory of phenomenal content for colour experience. In his argument, Thompson also makes the point that Fregean contents can accommodate spectrum inversion without illusion, and he argues that Russellian dispositionalist views cannot.

91 Chalmers (2006a) argues that an experience’s Fregean phenomenal content is derived from its Edenic content. An experience’s Edenic content is satisfied iff the appropriate primitive property is instantiated. The experience’s Fregean phenomenal content is satisfied iff the appropriate Eden-matching property is instantiated. A property will be Eden-matching if and only if it plays the role a corresponding primitive property plays in Eden—the role of causing experiences of a certain phenomenal type. For example, a phenomenally red experience has satisfied Fregean phenomenal content iff there is a relevant object that instantiates a property that plays the role that primitive redness does in Eden. Chalmers refers to this as a two-stage view of phenomenal content as the Fregean phenomenal content of its experience derives from its Edenic content (see Chalmers 2006a, pg. 404-406, for further details). I do not intend to defend Chalmers’ specific two-stage account of how Fregean phenomenal contents are derived in this paper, though I think it is promising and a virtue of the view that it provides an explanation of Fregean phenomenal contents.
I will suggest that the Edenic contents of normative-evaluative experiences are characterized by primitive valuational properties. By *valuational properties*, I mean properties such as goodness, badness, positiveness, negativeness, dangerousness, harmfulness, or beneficialness. I do not intend to provide a comprehensive analysis of the kinds of valuational properties that different normative-evaluative experiences represent. My concern in this paper is to present the view that normative-evaluative experiences have two kinds of phenomenal content—Edenic and Fregean—and provide some reasons for thinking that such an account is promising. If it turns out, for example, that fear experiences represent things as being primitively dangerous rather than primitively threatening, it is not an issue for my argument. Both options are consistent with my thesis that such experiences represent primitive valuational properties. For this reason, I will be somewhat loose when characterizing the kinds of primitive valuational properties that experiences represent. I will assume that different kinds of normative-evaluative experiences represent different kinds of valuational properties so that the kinds of valuational properties that pain experiences represent are different than the kinds of valuational properties that fear or happiness experiences represent. If it turns out that all normative-evaluative experiences with a negative valence represent the same kind of valuational property and all normative-evaluative experiences with a positive valence represent a different kind of valuational property, that is fine as well, as this would also be consistent with the view I am defending.

In what follows I will explain what I take the specific Edenic and Fregean phenomenal contents of pain experience, fear/happiness experience, and melancholic/cheerful experience to be. I take these to be kinds of normative-evaluative experiences that are representative of bodily experience, emotional experience, and mood experience, respectively.
4.3.1 The Phenomenal Contents of Pain Experience

Let’s begin the discussion of pain experience by considering an injury such as a cut down the palm of the hand. Phenomenally, I am experiencing a painfulness at the location of the injury that is vibrant and unpleasant.

Let us consider first the Fregean phenomenal content of this experience. A plausible mode of presentation for this experience would be something like: there is a bodily state in me and it has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal painfulness in me. This mode of presentation is intuitively plausible as it captures a number of factors that I believe are relevant when evaluating the veridicality of pain experience. Under this mode of presentation, a pain experience will be veridical if it is being caused by a bodily state of mine with the properties that normally cause this kind of painfulness in me. Often this bodily state will be an injury or disturbance of some kind. In the case of the cut in the palm of my hand, the pain experience will be veridical if the cut on my hand has the physical properties that are usually associated with having an experience with the right sort of phenomenal painfulness.

The central condition that needs to be met for a pain experience to be veridical is that the painfulness experienced be caused by a state of the body that normally causes this type of painfulness. For example, if I am having a pain experience of a cut in the palm of my hand, the painfulness should be caused by a disturbance in my hand and not by something else, e.g., properties of a neural state normally associated with hallucinations or phantom pain.

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92 Insofar as other bodily experiences have a normative-evaluative phenomenology, I take it that the account of their Fregean phenomenal content will be much the same as the account given here for pain experience.

93 Note that I have opted for existentially quantified modes of presentation rather than modes of presentation that pick out a specific object. I am skeptical that the identity of an object is relevant to the satisfaction conditions of our experience. What matters for whether our experience is veridical is not whether an injury is some particular injury, like the injury that caused our experience, but rather whether there is an injury present that has the correct properties. With that being said, I am mostly concerned with the question of which properties are represented in normative-evaluative experience. I see no reason to think that other views about how objects are represented in phenomenal content would be inconsistent with my view about the representation of properties in normative-evaluative experience.
limb pain. If a pain experience presented me with a world in which my hand was cut, and it was not cut, then it is intuitive to conclude that the pain experience is false.

Pain experience, much like visual experience and other perceptual experiences, also involves the representation of properties at various locations. Incorporating the mode of presentation of location, pain experience likely has a mode of presentation something like: there is a disturbance [at location such and such] that is causing this experience and has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal painfulness in me.

It is less obvious what are the Edenic contents of pain experiences and other kinds of bodily experiences. As Chalmers (2006a) notes in his discussion of bodily experience, phenomenologically, the properties attributed by pain experience seem to be primitive pain properties. He observes that the phenomenology of pain experience seems to suggest that primitive pain properties are intrinsic properties attributed to parts of the body. However, he notes pain properties also seem to have a strong connection to pain experiences themselves. It seems inconceivable that pain properties could be instantiated without them being experienced—that is, it seems inconceivable that a pain property could be instantiated without it also being a property that is felt by someone or other. According to Chalmers, this seems to suggest that Edenic pain properties may be relational properties—potentially something like: the property of having the intrinsic quality perceived in a pain experience. Neither option—that primitive painfulness is an intrinsic property or that it is a relational property—is fully satisfying and adequately

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94 For a discussion of phantom limb pain, see Tye (1995).
96 See Chalmers (2006a), pg. 451. Chalmers does not address this issue, but, as pain experience has both a sensory dimension and an affective dimension, pain experiences attribute both primitive sensory properties to bodily states (corresponding to the sensory phenomenology of pain experience) as well as primitive normative-evaluative properties (corresponding to the affective dimension of pain experience). As discussed in the first paper of this dissertation, the sensory dimensions of the experience involve the likes of the intensity and quality of the pain, whether it is aching, throbbing, etc. The affective dimension involves mild to severe unpleasantness and distress. This is true of other kinds of bodily experience as well, such as itch experience. See Melzack and Wall (1982) and Price (1999). For a discussion of this distinction in the philosophical literature see Grahek (2001).
captures the phenomenology of pain experience.\textsuperscript{98} Chalmers posits that Edenic pain properties are intrinsic properties “whose instantiation entails the existence of an associated painful experience…In effect, it is an intrinsic property that stands in a necessary connection to distinct intrinsic properties of experience”.\textsuperscript{99}

Though Chalmers’ suggestion as to the nature of Edenic pain properties seems to best reflect pain phenomenology, as well as our intuitions about the necessary connection between pain experience and pain properties, this would make Edenic pain properties (as well as other Edenic properties attributed by other bodily experiences) different from the kinds of Edenic properties attributed by perceptual experiences in a significant way.\textsuperscript{100} If Chalmers’ suggestion is correct, it would also mean that Edenic pain properties are not only uninstantiated but also uninstantiable.\textsuperscript{101} To illustrate this point, take the example of the experience of a pain in one’s ankle. This pain experience seems to attribute primitive painfulness to the ankle. Moreover, the painfulness seems to be intrinsic to the ankle, a property of the ankle and nothing else.\textsuperscript{102} However, primitive painfulness also seems to be tied inexorably to experience itself and its intrinsic phenomenal character, as it is difficult to conceive of the painfulness existing without it being experienced. So, while primitive painfulness seems to be intrinsic to the ankle, it also seems to be necessarily connected to the intrinsic properties of the pain experience itself in that the pain properties cannot be instantiated without being related to an accompanying experience. I do not know how to conceive of a property that is both intrinsic to a thing but also can only be instantiated if another intrinsic property is instantiated. But I do not think it is a problem for the view that the Edenic contents of pain experience are primitive, intrinsic pain properties that are uninstantiable. As it is likely that Edenic contents are uninstantiated primitive properties, I see no reason to be troubled that Edenic pain

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{99} Chalmers (2006a), pg. 452.
\textsuperscript{100} However, Chalmers (2006a) notes that gustatory experiences may also attribute these kinds of uninstantiable Edenic properties. He notes that the phenomenology of taste experience is less clear on this matter but deserves further attention.
\textsuperscript{101} See Chalmers (2006a)’s discussion of bodily sensations where this point is further discussed.
\textsuperscript{102} By "intrinsic to the ankle", I simply mean that primitive painfulness seems to be a quality that is possessed by the ankle in virtue of the ankle itself and not some other thing.
properties are not just uninstantiated, but also could not be instantiated in any possible world. Given this, I think it is reasonable to accept Chalmers’ characterization of pain experience’s Edenic contents as primitive, intrinsic pain properties that have a necessary connection to the intrinsic phenomenal character of pain experience.\(^{103}\)

4.3.2 The Phenomenal Contents of Fear and Happiness

I think it is plausible that the Fregean content associated with emotional experiences have the same structure as those associated with perceptual experiences and pain experience. Take, for example, having a fearful experience of an aggressive dog. The Fregean content for this fearful experience would be something like: there is a state of affairs that has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal fear in me.

Much like with pain experience, it is important for the veridicality of emotional experience that the properties causing the experience are a normal cause of the emotional experience in me. If I am normally afraid of aggressive dogs and have an experience with fearful phenomenal character, my experience is accurate. My phenomenally fearful experience is accurately representing the aggressive dog negatively. Now, if I was Cesar Millan, the dog whisperer, I would not normally be fearful of aggressive dogs, so a phenomenally calm response to an aggressive dog would be accurate, since a phenomenally fearful response is not the norm in Cesar Millan.\(^{104}\) Also, as in the case of pain experience, it is important for the veridicality of the experience that a state of affairs with the appropriate properties be its cause. If my fearful experience of the aggressive dog was actually caused by some kind of neurological intervention, for example, we would not consider my emotional state to be an accurate reflection of the state of the world around me because my experience is being caused by something that is not

\(^{103}\) As I noted previously, this also seems to be true of the Edenic contents of other bodily experiences, such as orgasm experience, as well itch experience and hunger experience. To quickly illustrate, it does not seem conceivable that something could have the property of primitive pleasure if that property is not being experienced.

\(^{104}\) Presumably. It may be the case that Cesar Millan normally feels a small tinge of fear when encountering an aggressive dog, and he is just good at hiding it, in which case, Cesar Millan would be veridically representing the dog negatively to a minimal degree.
there.\textsuperscript{105} This is not only true of normative-evaluative experience, but of perceptual experience as well. In general, if an experience is a hallucination or caused by irregular means, we have the intuition that it is falsidical. The Fregean view of the phenomenal contents of fearful experiences can accommodate this intuition.\textsuperscript{106}

In the case of the fear experience of the aggressive dog, the properties that seem to be the cause of the fear experience are properties of the dog and its behaviour. Some of the relevant properties of the dog may include the size of the dog or its teeth, the dog’s demeanor (e.g., its behaving aggressively by flashing its teeth, growling, making small lunges in your direction), or the loudness of the dog’s bark. However, if the dog had all of these properties, but was in a cage, we likely would not have a fearful experience in reaction to it. Despite the dog having threatening features and demeanor, the danger is no longer present because the dog can no longer attack us. If someone had a fear experience in response to an aggressive dog that was caged, it seems correct to say that this person’s fear experience is misrepresenting the danger present in the situation (as well as being an abnormal experience). This suggests that the property that serves as a normal cause of my fear experience of the dog is a dispositional property such as \textit{being poised to cause harm}.

The Edenic properties attributed by the fear experience will be something like primitive scariness. This is a primitive property we attribute to things when we experience them as being intrinsically scary or frightening. In Eden, the dog would have this property (at least at that time and place—in other situations involving the dog it may instantiate a different primitive property in Eden when its demeanor, dispositions, and other

\textsuperscript{105} It seems like emotional experiences’ Fregean contents will often involve the representation of location as well. For example, when we have a fearful experience of an aggressive dog, it seems likely that we are representing the aggressive dog under something like the following mode of presentation: there is a state of affairs [at location such and such] that has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal fear in me. However, there are likely other emotional experiences that do not represent the location of their object. For example, if I am experiencing phenomenal anger because a friend of mine borrowed my car without asking, the fact that the event took place at such and such a location seems irrelevant to the accuracy of my emotional experience. What matters is that the event occurred, not necessarily where it occurred. In such a case, the mode of presentation of the experience would be something like this: there is a state of affairs that has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal anger in me. The location of the state of affairs need not be included.

\textsuperscript{106} See Chalmers (2004).
circumstances change). That is, in Eden, we experience the aggressive dog as being primitively and intrinsically scary—there is a quality of the dog that is not reducible to its dispositions or features of its behaviour.

Unlike in the case of pain experience, there does not seem to be any issue with the property of primitive scariness being necessarily related to intrinsic properties of my experience. It seems to be a primitive property of external states of affairs. For example, when I have a fear experience of the dog, it seems to be the dog has primitive scariness and not something else.

What about other fear experiences, where what we are afraid of is a complex state of affairs, say the possibility of nuclear war with Russia? Let’s say I am reading a news report about escalating nuclear threats coming from the Russian government. While reading the news report, I begin to have a fear experience that one might describe as a creeping sense of existential dread.

It is important to keep in mind when considering the phenomenology of this emotional experience that I am not merely experiencing a certain kind of fearfulness—I am having a fearful experience that seems to be about such and such state of affairs. This experience is, phenomenally, quite distinct from that of having a fearful experience of the aggressive dog or a fearful experience of public speaking.\(^{107}\) The object of my fearful experience is

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\(^{107}\) The phenomenal character of my fear experience may involve thoughts about the Russian state, the Russian government, nuclear weapons, NATO, etc. How my experience feels would not be the same if, for example, there were escalating nuclear tensions with Brazil and I was fearfully contemplating the implications of nuclear war with that country. This is, in part, because an experience in which I am thinking about North Korea (or England, India, or Iran for that matter) does not have the same kind of phenomenal character as an experience in which I am thinking about Russia.

One might think that this analysis of emotional experience is relying on a fairly controversial notion—that emotional experience involves cognitive phenomenology—a phenomenology that is \textit{distinctive} to thought (See Bourget and Mendelovici 2019 for discussion; see also Bayne and Montague 2011, Pitt 2004, Pitt 2009, and Kriegel 2011 for more on cognitive phenomenology). However, I do not think what I am committing myself to here is that controversial. I am only committing myself to the view that thinking involves phenomenology, i.e., that there is something that it is like to think, that this phenomenology is a part of emotional experience, and that the phenomenology accompanying these thoughts are part of the phenomenology on which the phenomenal content of emotional experience supervenes. I think it is fairly intuitive that emotional experiences involve thought in some way in the sense that my occurrent thoughts have a phenomenology and these thoughts have an effect on the phenomenal...
very far removed from my person and encompasses a very complex state of affairs. In this circumstance, it is clear that my fear experience is related to a particular state of affairs that involves the Russian state, its possession of nuclear weapons, and the increasing probability of their use. My fear experience seems to be directed at this state of affairs and is representing it as being dangerous. Regarding the Edenic contents of this fear experience, my experience seems to be attributing primitive scariness to this state of affairs—though we might want to characterize it as existential scariness or something of that nature to reflect the different phenomenal character of the fear experience.

The Fregean phenomenal content of this fear experience is much like the fear experience of the aggressive dog. It’s something like: there is a state of affairs that has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal fear in me. The kinds of properties possessed by this state of affairs may include certain physical properties of the nuclear weapons, psychological properties of Russian or other government officials, or other geopolitical factors. Much like in the case of the dog, the property that is the normal cause of my fear experience is likely a dispositional property of the state of affairs that it possesses in virtue of possessing the other properties of the state of affairs I mentioned.

character of my emotional experience (see Seager 2002 for a related discussion). If I continue to think about something that makes me angry, I may get angrier. If I learn something new about a situation that has made me angry, I may stop feeling angry. I think it is also fairly uncontroversial that these accompanying thoughts are often occurrent, and hence are part of the phenomenology of emotional experience. The more controversial bit is that the occurrent thoughts involved in my emotional experience have a phenomenology on which phenomenal content supervenes. My previous example, that of having fear experiences about escalating nuclear tensions with North Korea and Russia helps illustrate why I think it is probably true that thought contributes to the phenomenology of fear experience. These two fear experiences may feel very different, in part because of my occurrent thoughts about the two countries. I may feel less fear at the escalation because I am thinking that North Korea has much fewer or far poorer nuclear weapons than Russia, or I may be thinking that North Korea is less likely to use their nuclear weapons for various reasons, despite the increasing tensions. It may even be the case that my occurrent thoughts about North Korea just feel different than my thoughts about Russia do. Either way, it seems that my fear experiences about Russia and North Korea can have different phenomenal characters due to the occurrent thoughts I am having about them. I think it is natural to conclude that there will also be difference in the two experiences’ phenomenal content.

However, what is important for the view I am advocating in this paper is that the objects represented in the contents of normative-evaluative experience are determined in some way. Though I think it is likely that cognitive phenomenology is a part of the phenomenal character of emotional experience, and that the phenomenal content of such experiences supervenes on it as well, it also consistent with my view if it turns out that the putatively cognitive phenomenology of emotional experience is entirely derivative of sensory phenomenology, i.e., perceptual, bodily, and verbal phenomenology.
The dispositional property in question is plausibly something like: the disposition to cause mortal harm.

The fear experience will be veridical iff the state of affairs in question has the properties that would normally cause me to feel the kind of existential dread I am feeling. If the state of affairs actually has these properties, then I think it is intuitive to say that my fear experience is veridically representing a state of affairs that is threatening and dangerous.

I believe a similar account works for other kinds of emotional experiences as well. Take, for example, a happiness experience where I am attending the wedding of close friends and I am pleased to see them married. Again, it is clear that my happiness experience is related to a particular state of affairs, i.e., the wedding of my two friends, and I am experiencing the state of affairs as a primitively pleasant and happy event. I think, straightforwardly, we can say that the Edenic content of my happiness experience is something like primitive happiness or pleasantness that we are attributing to the wedding. The Fregean phenomenal content of the experience will be something like: there is a state of affairs that has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal happiness in me. In this case, the relevant property is plausibly something like the disposition to cause joy or happiness possessed by the state of affairs in question, which it likely possesses in virtue of possessing a complex set of properties, including the outward behavioural expressions of joy exhibited by my married friends. If, for example, my friends were visibly distressed during the wedding, then, plausibly, the wedding is not an event that possesses the appropriate dispositional property. If I was still having a joyous experience while witnessing my friends get married while being visibly distressed, then it seems correct to say that my experience is misrepresenting the event as something positive.\footnote{One might wonder about cases where visible distress does normally cause me to be phenomenally happy. What should we say about such cases? I address this in the objections below.}

I believe these cases are representative of much of our emotional experience and further analysis would provide similar accounts of the Edenic and Fregean contents of emotional experience.
experience that are intuitively appealing as well. I will now move on to discussing the phenomenal contents of mood experiences in the next section.

4.3.3 The Phenomenal Contents of Melancholic and Cheerful Experiences

Mood experiences have a very similar phenomenal feel to that of emotional experiences. The positive feeling one has when one is happy about a particular event and the positive feeling one has when in a cheerful mood more generally are not phenomenally distinct. We tend to distinguish between moods and emotions based on their object and duration. Generally speaking, moods, if we think of them as having an object at all, are often about something more general, and they tend to last for longer periods of time than emotions, which we usually think of being about discrete events and lasting for shorter periods. As mood experience is, phenomenally, very similar to emotional experience, the account of mood experience’s phenomenal contents will be much the same as the account given for emotional experience.

Take, for example, a melancholic experience. Let us say that I have woken up this morning feeling melancholy. I am “down-in-the-dumps”, one might say. I feel negatively about most things; I feel as if nothing is going right. I feel unmotivated to get out of bed and do much at all. We would say of me, in this example, that I have woken up in a bad mood. In this case, what is it that my experience is representing? What is its phenomenal content?

I think it is clear that the Edenic content of this melancholic experience involves something like primitive negativity or badness. That is, when we are having a melancholic experience, we are representing this kind of primitive valuational property. It is more contentious whether melancholic experience and other kinds of mood experiences are representing such properties as being had by or bound to something or

109 See Kind (2013) for further discussion.
other or whether they are unbound properties. When I am feeling melancholy, am I representing certain things in the world or certain states of affairs as being primitively negative or bad, or am I simply representing this primitive property without attributing it to anything?

I think very often it is the case that our mood experiences will represent things as having valuational properties. I think it is true of the melancholic experience I described above that it is representing many different things as being primitively negative. For example, I may be lying in bed feeling melancholy and thinking about getting out of bed. In this case, I am representing a potential event, my getting out of bed, as something negative. Let’s say that, next, I get out of bed, walk over to my computer, and try to turn it on to watch some videos on the internet. However, I am frustrated in my aim by a Windows update. Because I am in a melancholic mood, that normally innocuous Windows update being forced on me is suddenly very irritating, and it makes me feel even more melancholic. The melancholic experience now seems to be directed towards my computer (or possibly Microsoft and/or their update), and the experience is attributing primitive negativeness to the computer (or Microsoft/the update).

I think it is very often the case that mood experiences will have determinate objects. It is just that those objects will shift over time without the valuational property being represented as changing. But, one might wonder, what object am I representing in that space of time between when I get out of bed and when I reach my computer and encounter that obtrusive Windows update? Let’s say, in this period of time, I am not thinking or feeling much at all. I am in a state where I am mindlessly walking from one place to the other and the phenomenal character of my experience is fairly impoverished outside of its sensory phenomenal character. What could possibly be the object of my melancholic experience during this period of time?

\[110\] Mendelovici (2013a) and Tye (2021) accept the view that mood experiences represent unbounded properties. Various potential objects of mood experience are canvassed in Mendelovici (2013a) and Kind (2013). They are also discussed briefly in Tye (2021).
I think there are two possible correct answers to this question, both of which are compatible with my view. The first is to accept that, in such instances, our melancholic experience is representing an unbounded negative valuational property. Under this view, mood experiences are a continuous stream of representational states wherein both bound and unbound valuational properties are represented. If this is true, then the portions of the mood experience that are representing unbounded properties are not assessable for accuracy—they are contents that have yet to acquire a determinate object. When an object has been determined, they will then have a determinate truth value.

The second option is to say that, in these periods of mindless activity, we cease to have a melancholic experience—after getting out of bed, while walking to my computer, I am no longer having a melancholic experience and am no longer representing a negative valuational property (bound or unbound). If this is true, when we are in a melancholic mood, we do not have a continuous melancholic experience, but multiple slices of melancholic experience throughout time. The Edenic content of our melancholic experience will be a primitive negative valuational property attributed to some object or state of affairs. The Fregean phenomenal content of such an experience will be something like: there is a state of affairs that has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal melancholy in me.

Very often melancholic experiences will be falsidical. Getting out of bed and Windows updates are not the kinds of things that would usually cause melancholy. They lack the appropriate dispositional property that is picked out by the melancholic phenomenal mode of presentation: something like the disposition to frustrate well-being. Because of this, when my experience represents them under a melancholic mode of presentation, the experience is misrepresenting.111 Now let’s say that it is the death of a loved one that has caused my melancholic experience. There will be times throughout my period of melancholia where I think about that event actively, or when it is in the back of my mind,

111 One might wonder about those with chronic depression who do normally experience mundane things as negative or awful. Are such people veridically representing the world as something negative? I will come back to this question when I discuss objections in the next section.
and at such times, it seems correct to say that my experience is representing that event as being primitively negative. In such cases, my experience will also be veridical because such an event has the right kind of dispositional property—the kind of dispositional property that normally causes me to feel melancholic.

Which of the two options canvassed is correct depends partly on whether we continue to experience a low level of phenomenal melancholy during our periods of inattention or phenomenal experience of melancholy ceases when we are engaged in mindless activity. I do not have a clear sense of which of these options is correct, partly because it is characteristic that we are inattentive to our own experience during them. However, both options are consistent with my view.

There is a third option that I find less plausible than the first two. It is that we are often representing nebulous or vague states of affairs when we have mood experiences. In the example of melancholic experience, the idea is that we are representing something very broad and nebulous, like the world itself, as being primitively bad or awful when we feel melancholic. Though I think it is possible that something like ‘the state of the world’ is the object of our melancholic experience at times, I think it is likely that we do not represent such objects in mood experience very often. Possibly, when considering a sequence of states of affairs in our melancholic experience and representing them as primitively bad, we may come to represent something like the state of affairs encompassing the world itself as being primitively bad. This content would seem to include everything in the world in a conjunctive proposition that would, practically, always be falsidical because it is not true that everything in the world possesses a dispositional property that normally causes me to experience phenomenal melancholy. Again, I think this is a reasonably rare occurrence in our mood experience. More often

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112 See Kind (2013) for a discussion of this option.
113 It is not plausible that such experiences represent disjunctive propositions encompassing everything in the world as it would be much too easy for them to be true. There just needs to be something in the world that possesses a property that would normally cause me to experience phenomenal melancholy for it to be true. Tye (2021) makes a similar point in his discussion of the contents of mood experiences.
than not, I think the objects of our mood experience are more concrete and specific states of affairs, or they involve representations of unbounded valuational properties.

I think the theory of phenomenal content I am defending does a good job of accounting for the phenomenal contents of a large variety of normative-evaluative experiences. I think any kind of normative-evaluative experience one could come up with can be plausibly treated in one of the above ways. In the next section I will consider some possible objections to the account I have developed.

4.3.4 Objections

A primary area of disagreement with the theory of phenomenal content I have developed for normative-evaluative experiences would likely come from the account I have given of their Fregean phenomenal contents. I will focus on these kinds of objections in this section as, it seems to me, objections aimed at the Edenic component of the account are likely to apply to other kinds of experiences as well and not be specific to normative-evaluative experience.

One might object that the phenomenal modes of presentation I have proposed for mood experiences do not get the right answer under certain circumstances. I can think of two illustrative examples, which I will address in turn.

Consider, for the first example, someone who normally experiences fear in response to relatively mundane and unthreatening circumstances—that is, those who suffer from phobias. One such common phobia is a fear of public speaking. Someone who fears public speaking might have a fear experience whenever they are forced to speak in front of others. For such a case, one might say that my account seems to suggest that this individual is representing a certain state of affairs as primitively bad or dangerous (an Edenic content) as well as a Fregean content that is something like: there is a state of affairs that has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal fear in me. Someone who fears public speaking would normally experience phenomenal fear when forced to speak in public, and would, ex hypothesi, be representing veridically when encountering such a situation. However, it seems counterintuitive to say that one is
representing veridically while representing a crowd who has gathered to hear one speak as bad or dangerous.\textsuperscript{114}

To respond to this objection, I will first flesh out the scenario in question a bit more. In the scenario I am considering, the subject of the fear experience has commenced giving a presentation to a room full of people. The object of the individual’s fear experience appears to be the crowd itself, which is physically present before them.

There is an issue that theories of perceptual content must also deal with that I think parallels what is going on in this scenario: the problem posed by systematic perceptual illusions. A mundane example of a perceptual illusion is that of a straight stick appearing bent in water. One could say that a Fregean theory of the contents of this visual experience also get the wrong answer. Sticks in water normally cause me to experience bent looking sticks. One could argue, if the Fregean content of the experience is something like: there is an object that has the properties that normally cause this kind of visual experience in me, then it is getting the wrong answer as well. This content entails that the perceptual experience of the bent stick is veridical when, in fact, it is illusory, because sticks in water normally cause us to visually experience bent sticks. However, the above account is an incorrect construal of the Fregean contents of the visual experience of the bent stick. Recall that the Fregean content of experience E is something like the condition of the world that normally causes experiences of the same type as E. Any given experience will fall under multiple types. For example, the experience of the bent stick in water is an experience of a bent stick and it’s an experience of a bent stick in water. When we consider what the Fregean content of an experience is, we can type experiences more or less finely. To determine how exactly an experience ought to be parsed, we need to think about what the cognitive role of the experience is and whether

\textsuperscript{114} It should be noted that there are circumstances where it seems accurate to perceive oneself as in a bad or dangerous circumstances. For example, if you are on trial for murder, and you are testifying in your own defense, it seems accurate to represent your surroundings as being bad or dangerous for you. The circumstances I have in mind in the text are much more mundane.
the type of experience attributed to the mode of presentation of the experience is properly reflecting the experience’s cognitive role.

When we have a visual experience of the shape of a stick, the cognitive role of the experience is to give us a reason to believe the object in question has a certain shape. What is relevant to evaluating the veridicality of the experience is whether the stick in question possesses the features that normally cause me to have visual experiences of bent sticks, not whether the stick in question has the features that normally cause me to have experiences of bent sticks in water. The stick itself is not bent—it lacks the relevant features—so the experience is falsidical. The Fregean account of perceptual content provides the right answer in cases of perceptual illusion.

I suggest something similar is occurring in the case where an individual is engaging in the act of public speaking and experiencing fear. They are subject to a kind of perceptual illusion (though one that is likely less hardwired into our physiological architecture). Their fear experience is being caused by a state of affairs involving the individuals in the room and their properties—roughly, by a room full of individuals sitting passively. This state of affairs does not possess the correct dispositional property to be veridically represented as being scary by the fear experience: it is not poised to cause harm to the perceiver. The fear experience, is, in fact, misrepresenting the group of people gathered as scary under the Fregean account of the experience’s phenomenal content. Much like

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One could also consider a slightly different version of the scenario in which the individual in question is contemplating a situation in which they will have to speak publicly and are having a fear experience. The object of their fear experience appears to be a state of affairs in which they are speaking to a crowd. It is this state of affairs that is being represented as primitively scary. Much as in the previous example, the subject is misrepresenting such scenarios as scary even though it is the case that they do normally represent states of affairs where they engage in public speaking as scary. It is a misrepresentation, because the imagined event lacks the appropriate dispositional property that would normally cause the subject to experience phenomenal fear. They are not being threatened by the people present. The people present are not behaving aggressively or exhibiting antagonistic behaviour.

Let’s say the situation being imagined by the subject is a scenario in which they are engaging in public speaking, and the crowd is behaving in a hostile way. In this version of the scenario, the subject is imagining the crowd jeering and antagonizing them while they are trying to give their presentation, and the subject is experiencing phenomenal fear as a result. In such a circumstance, it seems like the properties of the crowd in this state of affairs are such that they are disposed to cause us harm in some way. In this case, it seems like the subject’s fear experience is veridical if the imagined state of affairs is itself a veridical
in the case of perceptual illusion, this kind of fear experience has the intuitively correct truth value on the Fregean account.\textsuperscript{116}

The second example I wish to consider is someone who normally experiences happiness when witnessing the suffering of others. When seeing someone suffer, this person has a happiness experience that represents the state of affairs of the individual suffering as being primitively good or positive. The Fregean mode of presentation for the experience, ex hypothesi, is something like: there is a state of affairs that has the properties that normally cause this kind of phenomenal happiness in me. One might object that the Fregean view leads to the unsatisfactory conclusion that this individual is representing the suffering of others veridically when experiencing such events as pleasurable.

In response to this objection, I argue that under the view I have proposed the individual who experiences happiness when being exposed to the suffering of others is, in fact, misrepresenting—the event in question will not have the correct dispositional property: something like the disposition to cause joy or happiness. The properties of states of affairs that involve suffering are not, in fact, normal causes of happiness. They generally cause others to feel discomfort and unhappiness. State of affairs that are disposed to cause discomfort and unhappiness are not a normal cause in the individual in question. States of affairs that are disposed to cause discomfort and unhappiness will normally cause said individual to have such experiences. Though they may often experience the suffering of certain others as something pleasurable and good, that is not what such states of affairs are disposed to do given the properties that they possess. Since the states of affairs involving the suffering of others do not possess dispositional properties that

representation of an actual event. In this case, I believe the correct thing to say is that the fear experience will inherit part of its satisfaction conditions from the experiential state that is representing the speaking engagement with the hostile crowd.

\textsuperscript{116} Okay, one might ask, but what about people who are always afraid of others? Wouldn’t their fear experiences when encountering others be veridical on the Fregean account if people always cause them to experience fear? And if so, isn’t such a result counter-intuitive? In such cases, I would still suggest that many of the subject’s fear experiences are misrepresenting because most of the individuals they encounter are not disposed to harm the subject—they are not behaving aggressively, threatening them, etc.
normally cause the individual in question to feel joy or happiness, their experience of these states of affairs as such is falsidical.

However, what if we alter the scenario to say that this individual is a normative-evaluative invert so that, relative to us, the negative and positive qualities of their experience are inverted, and they are a member of a community of normative-evaluative inverts—they are pleasure/pain inverts relative to us, happiness/sadness inverts, depression/elation inverts, etc. Circumstances where we would normally experience pain, they would experience pleasure, and vice versa, and in circumstances where we would normally experience happiness, they would experience sadness and vice versa. Wouldn’t such an individual, when they experience happiness when others suffer, be veridically representing the suffering of others as something positive under the Fregean account of their experience’s phenomenal content? After all, it seems that states of affairs involving the suffering of others would be disposed to cause pleasure within this community.

I believe the correct response to this objection is deny that this kind normative-evaluative inversion is conceivable. Normative-evaluative qualities seem to have an intrinsic motivational value attached to them. Pleasure, for example, as an experience has an intrinsically positive quality to it and pain has an intrinsically negative quality. And along with these intrinsic positive and negative qualities comes a certain motivational force.\(^{117}\) The affective dimensions of pain experience are intrinsically negative and, by their very nature, they give us reason and motivation to want to alleviate them.\(^{118}\) Such experiential qualities, because of their intrinsic evaluative and motivational features, could not be inverted—that is, there is no possible world in which there are individuals that have pleasures that play a cognitive role that is negative, and have pains that play a cognitive role that is positive.

\(^{117}\) Colin Klein (2015) and David Bain (2013) draw a connection between the motivational aspect of pain and its inherent unpleasantness. See also Melzack and Wall (1982). For a dissenting view, see Corns (2014).

\(^{118}\) Though, of course, such reasons and motivations are defeasible, as can be seen in people who come to enjoy certain pain experiences.
This is a somewhat uncomfortable response for my view, as there are other kinds of experiences, such as colour experience, where it seems intuitive that certain communities can associate different cognitive roles with the same colour experience—that is, it makes sense that, if a community always experiences things we experience as phenomenally green as phenomenally red and vice versa, then they would associate a different cognitive role with red experiences than we do. However, experiential qualities such as pain are significantly different experiential qualities from colour qualities because they possess an intrinsic motivational force.

More broadly, one might also object to the use of statistical normalcy in the Fregean phenomenal content of emotional and mood experience. Someone might argue that statistical normalcy is not the kind of normalcy that factors into the satisfaction conditions of emotional and mood experiences. While it might make sense to say that perceptual experience has Fregean phenomenal content that is satisfied by its statistically normal cause, there is no good reason to think emotional and mood experiences are attuned to statistical normalcy.

I would push back on this objection by suggesting that there is good reason to think that the reliability of our emotional and mood experiences is relevant to the evaluation of their veridicality, and this is why statistical normalcy plays a central role in the modes of presentation of such experiences. When we think about the world, make judgments, and plan future actions, our emotional and mood experiences play a certain cognitive role. To illustrate, think about a situation in which you are considering whether you can trust an acquaintance with looking after your cat while you are out of town for the week. In part, you may make your judgment based on a cognitive evaluation of this person’s past behaviours. You will ask yourself, based on my past experience with them, did they behave in a way that is responsible? However, your opinion of this person, and whether they are responsible enough to look after your cat, is likely based on how they have made you feel in the past—whether they have behaved in such a way that you felt positive and reassured in their presence. Our judgments about people, for example, are not based solely (or maybe even primarily) on a purely cognitive assessment of their behaviour in thought. Our judgments of others are informed by our emotional and mood experiences.
themselves, and whether such experiences are picking up on features of the world (in many cases, when making judgments about others, these will be certain behaviours that we take to be indicative of reliability and trustworthiness) that are reliably positive for us or detrimental is very much relevant to whether such experiences are representing the world accurately.

As Seager (2002) suggests, emotional experience provides us with a quick assessment of value in the world to help us guide action. They evolved alongside our perceptual and cognitive capacities to help us survive in a dangerous world. Our emotional experiences do this by reliably responding to properties in the world that are likely to be positive or negative for us. I have treated the ordinary satisfaction conditions of emotional and mood experiences much like those of perceptual experiences because it is likely that emotional experiences have evolved in tandem with our perceptual and cognitive capacities in order to guide our actions. Whether they are guiding correctly seems very much relevant to the ordinary satisfaction conditions of such experiences.

4.4 Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that we have some good reasons to think that the phenomenal contents of experience are Edenic contents and Fregean phenomenal contents. I then applied this account of phenomenal content to normative-evaluative experience. I believe the resulting account is compelling and provides us with an account of phenomenal content for normative-evaluative experience that is both in keeping with the phenomenology of normative-evaluative experience and provides intuitively compelling satisfaction conditions. Much more work needs to be done in order to fully flesh out an Edenic and Fregean theory of the phenomenal content of normative-evaluative experience, to apply it to the many different kinds of experience that has a phenomenology of felt goodness and badness, and to consider the various problematic cases in more detail. Further, more work needs to be done to consider the relationship between the phenomenal contents of normative-evaluative experience and thoughts that attribute valuational properties to things. I believe this paper provides the groundwork for such further research and goes some way to justifying the pursuit of such a project.
References


Chapter 5

5 Conclusion

In the first paper of this dissertation, I argued that normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal content that is determined (at least in part) by their normative-evaluative phenomenal character. The upshot of this paper is that experiences such as mood experiences and emotional experiences have phenomenal content, in part, because the phenomenology of these experiences presents certain things as being negative or positive. The same is true of the affective dimensions of certain bodily experiences, such as pain experience. These kinds of experiences have phenomenal content (in part) because they have a phenomenology that presents certain things as being positive or negative.

In the second paper of this dissertation, I argued that tracking representationalist theories of pain experience are false. I specifically focused on Cutter and Tye’s tracking representationalist theory of pain experience. I argued that structural mismatch cases, such as the ones I highlight, make it clear that the properties specified by Cutter and Tye, which pain experiences are purported to track, do not supervene on pain experience’s phenomenal character. If this is the case, their approach, which seeks to in some way account for the phenomenal character of pain experience in terms of its intentional content does not succeed. I argued that similar approaches will likely have the same issue, suggesting that tracking theories of pain experience in general are unlikely to succeed. Though this paper is somewhat of a digression from the first, which is concerned with normative-evaluative experiences writ large and the content that supervenes on the phenomenal character of such experiences, this paper does the important work of ruling out a certain approach to understanding the relationship between the intentionality of normative-evaluative experiences and their phenomenal character.

The third paper of this dissertation gives a positive view of what the phenomenal contents of normative-evaluative experiences are. The purpose of this paper is to directly answer a question posed by the first. Where the first paper argues that normative-evaluative experiences have phenomenal content, this paper tells us what those contents are. An important conclusion of this paper is that normative-evaluative experiences represent
primitive normative-evaluative properties. Further, they possess Fregean phenomenal content that represents ordinary properties of our world under modes of presentation. These modes of presentation reflect the cognitive role that such experiences play in our reasoning.

A significant question left unanswered by this third paper is: why is there a strong modal connection between the phenomenal character of normative-evaluative experiences and their cognitive roles? Further explanation is needed. In Chalmers (2006), he argues that the Fregean phenomenal contents of perceptual experience derive from their Edenic contents. These experiences attribute primitive Edenic properties. These contents are veridical iff the appropriate primitive Edenic properties are instantiated. The Fregean phenomenal content of perceptual experiences are veridical iff properties that match the Edenic properties attributed by the experiences are instantiated. An ordinary property present in our world will match an Edenic property if it “can play the role that primitive properties play in Eden”.¹¹⁹ For example, in Eden, primitive redness plays the role of causing phenomenally red experiences. In the actual world, this role is played by the ordinary properties of objects.¹²⁰

Such an explanation may also work for normative-evaluative experience. Chalmers (2006) does argue that it applies to bodily experiences. However, further research is needed to fully flesh out Chalmers’ view and consider if it can be applied to emotional and mood experiences as well.

References


¹¹⁹ Chalmers (2006), pg. 405.
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