

Forms of Awareness and "Three-Factor" Theories

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In my contribution to part 1 of this volume, I discussed Rand's view of awareness as an activity the identity of which is not exhausted by its objects, and I emphasized her distinction between the *form* of an act of awareness and its *object*, which I illustrated with a brief discussion of its application to sense-perception. I indicated there how the distinction can be used to counter some standard objections to direct-realist views of perception like Rand's, and Onkar Ghate treated this topic in much greater detail (and in somewhat different terminology) in his contribution to part 1.¹

In the last decade especially, there has been a lot of interest in direct realism, and some views have emerged that are similar to Rand's in that their analysis of perception includes, in addition to the subject and the object, a "third factor" that plays a role similar to Rand's idea of form. Among the proponents of such a position are Bill Brewer and John Campbell, the latter of whom is of particular interest because he takes his third factor to be a feature not just of perception, but of consciousness as such.

1. For more in-depth treatments of perception based on Rand's, see Kelley 1986 and Ghate 1998.

Considering Brewer and Campbell's positions, and what I take to be an inadequacy they share, will help to bring out what is distinctive and significant about the idea of forms of awareness.

In order to set a context for this contrast, I will begin by cataloging some significant points on which Rand, Ghate, Campbell, Brewer, and I are in agreement. We view perception as the foundation of thought and knowledge and endorse a direct realist, relational, and nonconceptual account of perception. It is worth pausing over the several shared points of agreement here. The first is *realism* (as opposed to idealism)—the position that in perception we are aware of mind-independent things rather than only of intramental items. The second point of agreement is that, in many cases at least, we are aware specifically of *entities*, as opposed to merely being aware of qualities, dispositions, etc. (as we might, perhaps, speculate that some of the lower animals are). Finally, this perceptual awareness of entities is *direct* in that it is not grounded in some more basic awareness of nonentities (either of mind-dependent objects of any sort, or of qualities, dispositions, etc.).

Direct realism is to be distinguished from a position that used to be called representationalism, is now sometimes called indirect realism, but that I will call "traditional representationalism." According to this view, we are aware directly of internal mental items which resemble or otherwise represent objects out in the world, and we are aware derivatively of these external objects either simply because of the relationship in which they stand to the representations or by means of some sort of inference that there must be something that stands in this relationship.

Our shared position is also to be distinguished from views that hold that, though we are aware directly of some mind-independent things, the objects of our awareness do not include entities but only qualities or dispositions—things like sounds or expanses of color. On this view, our awareness of the entities that have the qualities or dispositions works in just the same way as it does in the case of traditional representationalism, except that the intermediate object, by knowing which we are derivatively aware of the entities, is extramental rather than mental.

Finally, the shared position on perception can be contrasted with what Brewer calls "the content view"—a position that is sometimes now referred to as "representationalism" and which I will call "newfangled representationalism." Whereas both our consensus position and traditional representationalism agree in thinking of perception primarily as a relation between the subject and an object (whether mind-dependent or

mind-independent), newfangled representationalism sees it as a relation to a judgeable content—something like a proposition which *represents* the world as being a certain way (with this ability to represent then being cashed out usually in functional and/or information-theoretic terms).

This last view is like traditional representationalism in that it takes perception to consist in having some state, which one could have whether or not the object one would normally be said to perceive exists, and in that this state can correspond or fail to correspond with the world. Campbell and Brewer have argued convincingly that the various forms of the newfangled representationalism view lead to something very much like the “veil of perception” by which traditional representationalism separates subjects from the outside world. On both views, we are related to external objects only by having certain mental contents that could be just as they are even if the external objects were quite different.²

Representationalism of one form or another has typically been seen as the only viable alternative to idealism because it has been thought that direct realism cannot account for such phenomena as the relativity of perception—i.e., the fact that the same object can appear differently to perceivers in different circumstances or conditions.³ Brewer and Campbell account for this phenomenon by introducing a “third factor” in addition to the conscious subject and the external object of his perception.

The third factor is that which differs when the same subject perceives the same object differently. For example, the same coin might look circular to a subject when viewed from one angle and elliptical when viewed from another; an oar may look straight when viewed in a single medium, but bent when partially submerged in water; the same pail of water may feel cold to a subject when his hand is warm and warm to him when his hand is cold; and Venus may look one way when viewed in the morning and another when viewed in the evening (thus making it possible, as in Gottlob Frege’s famous example, for someone to have two names for the planet without realizing that they refer to the same entity). Brewer (2011a, 96) explains: “Perceptual experience is a matter of a person’s conscious acquaintance with various mind-independent physical objects *from a given spatiotemporal point of view, in a particular sense modality, and in*

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certain specific circumstances of perception (such as lighting conditions in the case of vision). These factors effectively conjoin to constitute a third relatum of the relation of conscious acquaintance that holds between perceivers and the mind-independent physical direct objects of their perceptual experience.” Campbell (2009, 657), speaking of consciousness more broadly, writes: “We should think of consciousness of the object not as a two-place relation between a person and an object, but as a three-place relation between a person, a standpoint and an object. You always experience an object from a standpoint. And you can experience one and the same object from different standpoints.”

Once the presence of a third factor is recognized, explaining the relativity of perception becomes simple, as Brewer (2011a, 96) observes:

the experiential variations noted [between the way a coin looks from different angles and in different circumstances], and any others along similar lines, may all perfectly adequately be accounted for by variations in this third relatum. For example, head-on v. wide-angle experiences, and those of the head side v. the tail side involve different spatial points of view. Experiences of the newly minted v. tarnished and battered coin involve different temporal points of view. Seeing v. feeling it clearly involve different sense modalities; and bright light v. dim light viewings involve different circumstances of perception. Still these are all cases of conscious acquaintance with the very same mind-independent physical coin—with variations in the third term of the perceptual relation.

What I would like to consider is how we should understand this third factor. Any realist (as opposed to idealist) needs to appeal to *some* factor other than subject and object to account for the relativity of perception. Since the phenomenon to be explained is how there can be differences in the perception despite the subject and object being the same, clearly something other than these two must be appealed to. Notice that the representationalist’s representations are themselves a third factor that is supposed to account for these differences.

The difference between these representations and the third factors appealed to by Brewer and Campbell is that the representations are supposed to somehow stand between the subject and the object, making the former’s awareness of the latter indirect. This is clearest in traditional representationalism, according to which the subject stands to the representation in the very same relation that a naïve person would have thought the subject stood to the (external) object: the subject is aware of the represen-

tation, and this awareness counts derivatively as an awareness of the object because of some relation between the representation and the object. In either event, the representation takes the place that the naïve person would have attributed to the external object. Something similar occurs in the case of newfangled representationalism. Here, too, the *content* of one's perception is something that is only contingently related to the world—to the objects that we would ordinarily say that we see.

Brewer's and Campbell's third factors are not supposed to mediate between the subject and object. They are third factors not just in the sense of being something else involved in an episode of perception besides the subject and the object, but in that they are supposed to play a *different sort of role* than either of these two. The representationalist's third factor is not a third factor in this sense. Perception remains for them essentially a two-place affair, with their third item usurping the place of the object. (It is this usurpation that leads to the veil of perception.)

If there is a third factor (or sort of factor) in the sense upheld by Brewer and Campbell, how should we understand it and its relation to the other two? Brewer says little about how the several factors he cites in addition to subject and object cohere into a third factor, and it is not clear that he needs to for his immediate purposes. Campbell has more to say on the subject. His third factor, recall, is *standpoint*, and he arrives at it by broadening the ordinary visual notion of a standpoint to enable it to do the work done by the Fregean notion of "sense"—that is, to explain how statements of the identity of two co-referential terms can be informative.

To "articulate the notion of standpoint" he advocates considering the sense modalities severally and noting for each what factors other than the subject and object are responsible for the differences in the view one can have of an object. (This will be a literal view in the case of vision, and an analog of a literal view in the case of the other modalities.)

For example, suppose the modality is vision. Then we need, further, position, but also the relative orientations of the viewer and object, how close the viewer is to the object, whether there is anything obstructing the light between them, and so on. In the case of hearing, a rather different set of factors would be relevant: not just which object was in question, but what sounds it was making, and the obstruction of light would not be to the point, though the obstruction of sound would be. We do not usually spell out all these conditions, though we are perfectly capable of articulating them when they are important in particular cases. (Campbell 2009, 658)

The goal of this procedure is to "show how we can characterize a way of experiencing an object without appealing to either the idea that 'ways' are characterized by associated representations [as is held by the newfangled representationalists] or the idea that 'ways' are characterized by the idiosyncrasies of the mental paint involved [as is held by the traditional representationalists]. Rather than either the idea of an intervening level of mental representation or the idea of an intervening level of mental paint, we can simply appeal to the notion of experience as a three-place relation between an object, an experiencer and a standpoint" (Campbell 2009, 658). The third factor is, then, the *way* in which the object is perceived by the subject. Or, to use a phrase of Frege's, it is the *mode of presentation*. Frege, of course, used this phrase to describe "senses," and it is worth observing two things in this connection.

First, whatever Frege intended senses to be (and I think he oscillated between different conceptions of it), the tradition that followed from him treated the senses as *intermediates* between subjects and the things to which we would naïvely take them to be referring. For the better part of a century, senses were almost universally understood to be descriptions (or description-like items) that the subject is acquainted with more directly than with the referents (if, indeed, in any given case, there are any referents at all).

Gareth Evans (1982) called attention to those aspects of Frege's writing on sense that tell against this way of reading it, and he suggested that we can make use of the notion to understand how we can be directly acquainted with extramental objects (rather than only with "mental paint," as Campbell calls the mental objects posited by traditional representationalists). But Evans himself, in his execution of this idea, fell into newfangled representationalism—a view that, no less than the traditional reading of Frege, distances us from mind-independent objects.

This thumbnail history suggests that, whatever insight may be contained in Frege's idea of a mode of presentation, there is something difficult about developing it in a way that does not collapse the mode in which something is presented into a thing that is itself presented (and which then somehow presents something further).

The second thing I would like to observe about "modes of presentation" is that they are modes in which an object can present itself to a subject, rather than modes in which the subject can be acquainted with the object. It is the object or its availability to the subject that admits of variation, and any variations in the subject's awareness of the object is

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to be explained by these variations, which are external to the awareness itself. This point was important to Frege, who was reacting against a psychologism in logic that was connected with nineteenth-century German idealism.

By contrast, Rand viewed awareness as an *activity* that can be performed on an object in different *ways*. It can be analogized to the activity of physically grasping something. In order for me to grasp something, there must be some object that I grasp, and I must grasp it with some grip or other. The variations in grip are differences in how I handle the object rather than variations in how the object is available for handling.⁴ Likewise, the differences between various forms in which I can perceive an object are differences in the activity I perform in perceiving it, rather than differences in its mode of presentation. Rand's forms are ways in which a subject is aware of an object, whereas a Fregean mode is independent of any subject (or type of subject) and his faculties.

What about Campbell and Brewer's third factors? Both Brewer and Campbell include the sense-modality in their third factors. However, it is striking that neither includes in his description of the third factor anything about the subject's internal conditions or internal operations, but only factors such as where the subject is located relative to the object, and any other physical conditions external to the subject that are relevant to perceiving in the relevant sense-modality (e.g., the lighting, whether there are obstructions, etc.).

Campbell's choice of the term "standpoint" is significant in this connection: a literal standpoint is a *place* from which an object can be viewed, and specifying it does not require specifying anything about the faculties of the person occupying it. Creatures with very different types of eyes—for example, a nautilus, a housefly, and a human being—can, in turns, occupy the same literal standpoint. Campbell does not say anything in explaining his extended notion of standpoint that would prevent such different creatures from sharing one. Nor is there anything in Brewer's description of his third factor that would present such radically different creatures from sharing one—unless, that is, we think of their vision as a different sense-modality from our own.

Perhaps it is plausible to say that the vision of a nautilus or a housefly is a different sense modality than our own, but what about the vision

4. Of course, facts about the objects do place constraints on the sorts of grips by which we can grasp them, and in order to keep my grip on a changing object (e.g., a melting snowball), I may need to alter my grasp.

of animals that are more similar to us—hawks and dogs, for example? Surely they share the modality of vision with us, yet equally surely objects look different to them than to us, even when we occupy the same standpoint. A hawk's vision is keener than ours, and dogs see less keenly than we do and with more limited color perception, but they have a wider field of vision. Someone might, perhaps, take these sorts of differences to mean that their sense modality is different from ours, but we could say this with as much justice for differences in vision among human beings, or in the same man's vision as it changes across the course of his life.

If one is willing to parse sense-modalities this finely, then the idea of a modality approaches Rand's of a form of perception. But this is not what is ordinarily meant by "sense-modality," nor is it what I think Campbell or Brewer means by it. Their third factors, then, do not include anything about the subject's internal conditions or activities. They include only the specification of a sense-modality, "a spatiotemporal point of view" and the "circumstances of perception," where this last term is understood to mean *external* circumstances—things such as the lighting conditions or the level of ambient noise.

The context in which they formulated their positions sheds light on why Brewer and Campbell do not incorporate the state and activities of the subject into the third factor of perpetual awareness. Both are concerned to fend off newfangled representationalism and so emphasize the idea of being *acquainted with objects*. In developing the idea of acquaintance, both take their inspiration from philosophers who think of states of acquaintance as having no characteristics other than those contributed by their objects.

Brewer (2011a, xi–xii, 3–4, 95) uses the British empiricists to fix his conception of a direct object and argues that we have the kind of acquaintance with extramental objects that they thought we only have with "ideas" (or, in Hume's case, ideas and impressions). Notice, though, that while the empiricists recognize many sorts of variation among ideas, they recognize no variation in the *manner* in which one is aware of an idea. Locke, for example, catalogs many dimensions along which ideas can vary—simplicity versus complexity, clarity versus obscurity, distinctness versus confusion, reality versus fantasticality, adequacy versus inadequacy, truth versus falsehood—but there is no corresponding list of different ways in which the same idea can be in the mind. There is, for him, no such thing as possessing an idea clearly or obscurely; only possessing a clear or an obscure idea. Any characteristics that one might ascribe to

the awareness of an idea, Locke instead ascribes to the idea itself; leaving the awareness bereft of identity of its own. We can find this same view of awareness in G. E. Moore, who “denies that experiences have intrinsic features. Instead, they owe everything they are to their relation to objects.”⁵ Campbell draws heavily on Moore’s view of awareness as a “generic relation between the thinker and the object.”

Of course, there is hardly anyone who speaks of acquaintance or direct awareness without seeing this relation as being bereft of identity, so it is not surprising that the figures that Brewer and Campbell reference in motivating the idea view consciousness in this way. Moreover, their “third factors” are supposed to rectify the error these earlier thinkers made when they denied that states of awareness have any characteristics other than those contributed by their objects, and Campbell in particular is quite explicit that this error made it impossible for Moore and others to account for phenomena like the relativity of perception without denying that we are acquainted with the ordinary extramental objects that we normally take ourselves to perceive: “This is a problem for Moore’s radical transparency. If your experience of the object is fully characterized simply by saying that we have a generic relation of consciousness holding between you and that thing, then we do not seem to have the resources to explain how there could be different kinds of conscious experience of the thing” (Campbell 2009, 654). To solve this problem Campbell thinks of consciousness “not as a two-place relation between a person and an object, but as a three-place relation between a person, a standpoint and an object” (657). However, it remains a *generic* relation, all of the features of which are supplied by its relata.

It is instructive here to return to my earlier analogy between being aware of something and physically grasping it. The analog of Moore’s position would be that a grasp is a generic relation between the grasper and

5. James Van Cleve (2005), quoted by Campbell (2009, 653). This view of acquaintance as a *generic* relation is common, especially in the first half of the twentieth century. Another example can be found in H. H. Price, who writes that sensing “differs from other acts of acquaintance only in its object, not in its nature, and it has no species” (Price 1950, 18). His reasoning is as follows: “Are there several different sorts of acquaintance, e.g., sensing, self-consciousness, and contemplation of mental images? I cannot see that there are. The difference seems to be wholly on the side of the data. If so, *a fortiori* there are not different kinds of sensing. Visual sensing will simply be the acquaintance with color-patches, auditory sensing the acquaintance with sounds, and so on; the acquaintance being the same in each case” (Price 1950, 5).

the object grasped, to which object the grasp owes all its features. But, Campbell would observe, this view gives us no way to differentiate between grasping something with a precision grip and grasping it with a power grip; so he would instead think of a grasp as a generic three-place relation between a subject, an object, and a grip. How does this position relate to the one I advocated earlier, according to which grasps and, by analogy, states of awareness have characteristics of their own?

Campbell treats the characteristics that I attribute to the state of awareness as parts of the third factor. This is analogous to Locke’s (*de facto*) strategy of exporting the clarity or obscurity of one’s awareness to the objects. However, since the third factor is not the object, exporting (what I think of as) the state’s features to it does not eliminate the possibility of a subject’s being aware of the same object in different ways. Moreover, since the third factor is essentially the sum of all of the things that I would treat as characteristics of the state, we might think of Campbell’s position and the one I have been advocating as notational variants. Indeed, if you wanted to represent my view in a formal system like the predicate calculus you would have to do so, just as Campbell suggests, by treating awareness as a three-place relation, and, for many purposes, I would have no objection to doing so. However, I see no reason to treat awareness in this way that does not apply equally well to grasping or walking or any other action that can be performed on (or with respect to) an object. And unless there is some such reason, awareness is no more a generic, three-place relation than any other action is: all can be represented this way (though not without being somewhat misleading ontologically).

My sense is that Campbell is anxious to treat awareness in particular as a generic relation because he thinks that any identity possessed by the state of consciousness itself would constitute a barrier between us and external objects. We can see this worry in his analogizing the brain’s role in visual perception to that of a medium that remains transparent only by a process of “constant adjustment and recalibration” that is “always sensitive to the finest details of the scene being viewed.” On this view, the brain is not “constructing a conscious inner representation whose intrinsic character is independent of the environment”; rather, “there is a kind of complex adjustment that the brain has to undergo, in each context, in order that you can be visually related to the things around you; so that you can see them, in other words.” However, Campbell adds that “the adjustment and recalibration may not always yield full transparency,” and

he gives as an example of this “looking at the world through a jaundiced eye,” which he analogizes to looking at it through yellowish (rather than “purely transparent”) glass (Campbell 2002, 119).⁶

Granted, this is a metaphor, and Campbell says earlier that any metaphor is bound to have its limitations, but it is striking that the metaphor he gives for the workings of the brain and nervous system in producing perception is one in which they are working to *get out of the way*. An observer, viewing an object through a fallibly transparent medium, would have a better and more reliable view of the object if the medium were removed; for it adds nothing other than the threat of opacity. Similarly, the analogy implies, we would better perceive the world if we were not encumbered by our brains and nervous system. The view Campbell is trying to fend off is that the brain’s activity in perception creates an internal object. Notice, though, that both views depict the subject ultimately as being aware of the object *no how*. Either the brain’s activity constructs an internal object with which we are acquainted *without doing anything*, or else the brain’s activity consists in keeping itself transparent so that we can be acquainted with the object again *without doing anything*. But once we recognize being aware of objects as something we *do*, rather than viewing it as a “generic relation” in which we stand, the fact that there are physiological processes involved in awareness ceases to be troubling, and instead of facing an alternative between our nervous systems either working to construct a veil of perception or working to get out of our way, we can understand our nervous systems as doing the work of acquainting us with the world.

Campbell’s comment on the jaundiced eye is similarly interesting. It implies that there is some *right way* for things to look—the way they would look if the mechanisms were functioning properly and were fully transparent. We find the same idea in Brewer, who makes the following suggestion about “supposed general yellowing of the jaundiced person’s perception”: “Their experience, at least according to the standard philo-

6. Compare Fumerton 2006, 9: “One could suppose that in veridical perception the relevant changes in the brain simply open the shades to reveal what is there before the perceiver. But the metaphor is in the end devastating to the direct realist who wants to identify the phenomenal reality, the character of the reality that is given to one in experience, with features of external reality. The opening of a window shade does not causally determine the scene revealed. What one sees through a window depends on what is there outside the window. Change the environment and you see something different. But I take it that the changes that take place in the brain, however produced, causally determine the phenomenological scenery, so to speak.”

sophical description of the case, consists in visual acquaintance with the objects before them partially obscured by a general hallucinatory superimposition introspectively indistinguishable from the presence of a wash of yellow light” (Brewer 2011a, 116). Both Brewer and Campbell think that the world really looks as it does without the yellow tint, which they see as obscuring the world from view. I disagree.

One of my friends reports having noticeably different tints in his two eyes, so that when he switches back and forth between eyes, the effect is like that of rocking the tint knob on a television back and forth. For this to be the case, must one of his eyes be damaged (less than fully transparent)? Suppose (as for all I know is the case) that my friend is equally able to discriminate gradations of color with each eye. On what grounds, then, would we say that one eye saw correctly, while the other saw through an obscuring tint? Perhaps on the grounds that one of the two eyes sees the world as most people see it? For all we know, such variations in tint may be ubiquitous, with the result that there is no normal tintless view by contrast to which certain eyes may be identified as afflicted with an obscuring tint (just as there is no “normal” way of speaking by contrast to which everyone else can be identified as speaking with an accent). Or, switching to another sense modality, given that the same water feels hotter or colder depending on the temperature of one’s hands, must it be that there is some condition of our hands that would allow us to feel the way the water *really* feels, with all of the other conditions partially obscuring the true feel of the water from us?

Switching examples again, how are we to understand color-blind or myopic people on this transparency model? Is their medium not transparent enough to let the colors or fine details of shape through? Clearly their way of perceiving is worse than that of normally sighted people in various respects, but are they not seeing the objects as they really are? Surely we should say, with Brewer, that such people perceive objects “in a degraded visual modality” (2011a, 116). But the modality is degraded only by the standard of what is normal *for a human being*. Some animals surpass us in distance vision or in their ability to distinguish colors. Presumably their visual experiences differ from ours in something like the way the experience of a normally sighted person differs from that of a myopic or color-blind person. If we regard the degradation of the myopic or color-blind person’s vision as doing anything analogous to *obscuring* his view of the world, then we have to regard the nature of human sense organs as doing the same for all human perception.

Since any sense faculty will be limited in its acuity, regarding these limits as obscuring the world from us amounts to taking as one's standard of awareness the sort of omniscience that Moore, Bertrand Russell, and others thought that we had of sense-data.⁷ But it is impossible to live up to this (supernatural) standard, and so it will push us toward the conclusion that our acquaintance with external objects is always partially obscured or else superimposed with a hallucinatory material. Any view that includes this (supernatural) standard of direct awareness will, if developed consistently, lead us to regard ourselves as trapped behind a veil of perception (even if some versions will permit us to regard the veil as less than fully opaque).

By contrast, if we acknowledge that to be aware of something is to be aware of it *in some form*, then differences in acuity or in tint or in how things feel to us when we are in different conditions will not lead us to conclude that we are perceiving the world through an obscuring medium. And, if we think of this form as standing to the act of awareness as a grip stands to the act of grasping, we will not fall into the error of treating the form as the object anymore than we mistake a grip for the object grasped. How we are aware of the objects around us depends on all sorts of facts about us and our faculties and conditions. The same person experiences the same object differently when he is in different conditions, other people may experience it more differently still, and other animals surely experience it quite differently. But these differences in *how* we are aware of an object are not differences in *what* we are aware of, because what we are aware of is the object, rather than the form in which we are aware of it—just as what we physically grasp is an object rather than the grip we have on it.

If we accept this view, differences between the ways in which people perceive the same objects—or between human perception and that of various animals—need not puzzle or trouble us. These differences will be analogous to the differences in physical grips that result from subtle differences among normal human hands, or from the more dramatic dif-

7. Russell, for example, describes his acquaintance with a sense-datum as follows: "so far as concerns knowledge of the colour itself, as opposed to knowledge of truths about it, I know the colour perfectly and completely when I see it, and no further knowledge of it itself is even theoretically possible. Thus the sense-data which make up the appearance of my table are things with which I have acquaintance, things immediately known to me just as they are" (Russell 1912, 73–74).

ferences between healthy and deformed hands, or between human hands and the claws or talons of various animals.

Indeed, we can accommodate much more radical differences in forms of perception than this. This is well illustrated by a science fiction example that has long circulated in Objectivist circles. Imagine a Martian who experienced colors or the temperature of his environment in the way in which we experience musical tones.⁸ When his eye was trained on a green object, for example, he might have the experience we have when hearing middle C on a piano, and when a red object came into view, he might have an experience like that of hearing the A just below it. Perhaps, when multiple colors were in view he would have an experience like that of hearing a chord. The Martian would be aware of the same attributes that we are aware of in ordinary color perception, but he would be aware of them in a very different form (just as vision and touch enable us to be aware of shape in very different forms, and echolocation enables bats to be aware of it in yet a third form).⁹

If we do not distinguish between form and object in this way, the fact that we can perceive attributes like shape both visually and tactilely will be mysterious. Moreover, within any given sense modality, the differences of acuity among people and between people and other animals, will require us to postulate obscuring media, hallucinatory tints, and the like. This is the view of perception suggested by Campbell's example of the medium that struggles to remain transparent, but it is not clear to me whether Campbell accepts it. The use of the metaphor does not commit him to it, and there are passages, such as the following, in which he seems to reject it: "On the Relational View of perception, we have to think

8. Various examples of Martians experiencing the objects of one of our sense modalities in the way we experience the objects of another have been in circulation since at least the 1960s. The version of the example I give here is based on Gotthelf 2000, 56.

9. The example concerning vision and touch is from Binswanger 1989. Of course, such a Martian's awareness of a color would include an awareness of the form in which he experiences it, just as our awareness of the same color includes an awareness of the very different form in which we experience it. A special act of introspection is required on the part of the perceiver (whether earthling or Martian) to isolate the form from the object and to conceptualize them separately. Indeed, our terms for sensory qualities are typically ambiguous: it is unclear whether they refer to qualities in the objects themselves or to features of the way in which we are aware of them. (And they have been used in both ways in Objectivist circles.) This makes examples like that of the Martian difficult to formulate. For the purposes of this example, I am using color terms to name qualities of the objects, but I am not taking a position on the nature of these qualities.

of the cognitive processing as ‘revealing’ the world to the subject; that is, as making it possible for the subject to experience external objects. . . . On the Relational View of experience, we have to think of experience of objects as depending jointly on the cognitive processing and the environment. Experience, on this view, cannot be understood simply as a matter of cognitive contents becoming subjectively available” (Campbell 2002, 118).

But if our own cognitive processing makes experience of external objects possible, so that the experience depends in part on it, then we would expect facts about these processes—facts about how they are being performed in a given instance, about the condition of the faculties that perform them, and so on—to have an influence on the way in which we experience the objects. This influence would be of the same broad sort as that had by the vantage point from which we view the objects and the lighting conditions in which we do. And just as there is no single *correct* vantage point from which to view an object—one by reference to which we can consider the view from every other vantage point to be somehow incorrect or faulty—we should not think that there is some one correct way for our perceptual faculties to operate, such that, for example, when one person’s vision has a different tint than another’s, one of them must be viewing the world through an obscuring medium.

Thus, we arrive at Rand’s position that awareness is an activity that has a nature, such that awareness will always be in some form or other, and the form will be determined by internal features of the perceiver as well as by such external factors as his spatial relation to the object and the lighting conditions. I think this is an implication of Campbell’s position, but it is one that he and Brewer seem reluctant to embrace. I worry that this is due to some remnant of what Rand describes as “the unchallenged premise that any knowledge acquired by a process of consciousness is necessarily subjective and cannot correspond to the facts of reality, since it is ‘processed knowledge’”—the idea that “identity [is] the disqualifying element of consciousness”—“the notion that only an ineffable consciousness can acquire a valid knowledge of reality, that ‘true’ knowledge has to be causeless, i.e., acquired without any means of cognition” (*ITOE* 80). Because their views of perception do contain something analogous to Rand’s idea of form, a comparison with them highlights what I think is Rand’s distinctive insight into the nature of awareness. I will give her the last word: “All knowledge *is* processed knowledge—whether on the sen-

sory, perceptual or conceptual level. An ‘unprocessed’ knowledge would be a knowledge acquired without means of cognition. Consciousness (as I said in the first sentence of this work) is not a passive state, but an active process. And more: the satisfaction of every need of a living organism requires an act of *processing* by that organism, be it the need of air, of food or of knowledge” (*ITOE* 81).