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Content Disjunctivism and the Perception of Appearances

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1. Introduction

Say that I'm walking through the dunes near the sea and spot an old crooked pine tree. I hear the rustling of the needles in the wind and smell the sea nearby. I see that the trunk of the tree has deep grooves in its bark, and I see the clusters of blue-green needles at the tips of its branches, noticing an occasional pine cone. In a typical perceptual experience like this, I am aware of ordinary material things in the world.¹ This relation of awareness enables me to attend to these very items in my environment. I seem to be perceptually aware of the tree, its bark, the clusters of needles, the texture of the bark, the smell of the sea, and the blue-green color of the needles. As some like to put it, my external surroundings are brought into view; they enjoy a type of presence in my mental life in virtue of being perceived by me (Travis 2004: 65; McDowell 2013a: 147).

Whether we indeed stand in a perceptual awareness relation to ordinary things and qualities in the world is controversial. The awareness relation seems to hold among two objects in the world, such as myself and the pine tree, and hence, like any relation, requires that those objects exist.² But we also seem aware of ordinary material objects when we hallucinate. Here what we seem to be aware of does not exist, and hence the seeming awareness relation to ordinary objects cannot always be taken at face value. Given that we cannot always take the seeming awareness relation at face value, the question arises

1. I leave it open whether all experience can be characterized as involving *objects of awareness* (things we take to be in the domain of the first-order quantifiers). A reddish afterimage, the inchoate feeling of anxiety, or the throbbing sensation of a headache may perhaps be examples of experiences that cannot be characterized as involving any awareness of 'objects' although they still involve awareness of qualities. Note though that we should be fairly liberal about the types of objects that we can be aware of; we can see rainbows and fogs, explosions and sunsets, our reflectance in the mirror; we can hear songs and smell dampness. The more liberal we are in the types of 'objects' that we can be aware of, the less plausible it seems that afterimages, anxieties, and headaches are exceptions that involve no such objects of awareness at all.
2. This could be disputed: one might think that we can be aware of things that do not exist and hence that this relation is not existence-entailing. See Priest (2005: Ch. 1) or Crane (2013: Ch. 1) for related views about intentionality; see §3 for a brief discussion of Meinongian approaches.

whether we should ever take it at face value. How ought we to account for the apparent awareness relations to ordinary things and their qualities, given the possibility of hallucinations and illusions (Campbell 2002: 114–24; Crane 2006: 134; Soteriou 2016: §1.1)?

There are at least two important choice points in answering this question. First there is the issue of whether to offer a uniform answer to the question of the seeming relationality across cases of veridical perception, illusion, and hallucination. Given that we do not stand in an awareness relation to ordinary material things when we hallucinate, a uniform approach has the consequence that we never quite stand in the relations of awareness that we seem to stand in, not even in typical cases of veridical perceptual experience.

Any theory must allow for the possibility of *some* divergence between how our perceptual experience seems and how it truly is, given that there is at least such a divergence in hallucinatory cases. A second choice point concerns the question of how to characterize this divergence. When there is a mismatch in how perceptual awareness seems and how it truly is, either one might think that there really is no direct awareness of anything at all, or one might think that there is direct awareness, only not of the objects that we seem to be aware of.

This paper explores a form of so-called content disjunctivism.³ To the question of uniformity, it answers that we ought not to give a uniform account of the seeming relationality across cases of veridical perception and hallucination. We can take veridical perception at face value; in such cases we do indeed stand in a relation of perceptual awareness to things in our environment. This is however not the case when we hallucinate. To the second question of where to locate the divergence between how a hallucination seems and how it truly

3. McDowell (1982/1998: 386–7) and Austin (1962: e.g., at p. 32) can be read as expressing forms of content disjunctivism (though matters are not crystal clear; for discussion of Austin's approach, see Thau 2004: 200–1 and Locatelli 2014; for a helpful discussion of McDowell's approach, see Byrne and Logue 2008: 65–6). Kripke (2013: Lecture IV) briefly defends what he takes to be Austin's view. Others have arrived at forms of content disjunctivism as a development of representationalism; see in particular Tye (2007) and Schellenberg (2011).

is, content disjunctivism answers that there is awareness when we hallucinate, only not of the objects that we seem to be aware of. The mismatch is between the apparent and real relata of the awareness relation.

First I will set out some of the relevant starting assumptions and, second, offer an initial sketch of a simple form of content disjunctivism. The third section makes a positive case for the sketched view. The main claim will be that content disjunctivism offers the most conservative and plausible treatment of the way in which hallucinations are similar to veridical perception and the role that hallucinations can play in our mental lives, such as serving up possible targets of attention. To be sure, these considerations are merely intended to constitute *prima facie* reasons in support of the view; they will certainly not be conclusive.

The fourth and final section offers further discussion of the objects of awareness in cases of hallucination. One might worry that the objects of awareness in cases of hallucination must be sense data. If that were the case, given that some of the familiar problems about sense data are due to what sense data are and hence arise whenever we admit *any* sense data, content disjunctivism may seem to inherit the problems of the sense datum view. In response to this worry, an account will be sketched on which the objects of hallucinatory awareness are a type of object that is in crucial ways unlike sense data. This account develops remarks on the nature of hallucinatory objects by Kripke (2013: Lecture IV). The 'appearing' that is involved in hallucination will be understood as a kind of manifestation of properties. When we refer to 'mere appearances', we refer to a type of object characterized as being such that they do not have the properties that they appear to have. The aim is to sketch the picture in enough detail to allow for further critical engagement and to allay some initial worries.

2. Starting assumptions and an initial sketch of content disjunctivism

I must first fix some terminology and state some preliminary commitments. These commitments are not uncontroversial, and they do matter for the arguments that will follow.

We have already encountered the notion of the relational awareness of objects and of the qualities of objects. One starting assumption is that this is a genuine two-place relation: relevant facts are of the form 's is perceptually aware of x' or 's is perceptually aware of Fness' and they imply the existence of the object of awareness (given some subject s and some object a):⁴

If s is aware of a, then $\exists x(s \text{ is aware of } x)$.

If s is aware of Fness, then $\exists X(s \text{ is aware of } X)$.

The relation of perceptual awareness is assumed to be a determinable, with various sensory determinates. Seeing the tree, hearing the rustling of its needles, or smelling the sea are different sensory ways of being perceptually aware of the tree, the needles, and the sea. In what follows, I will often focus on seeing things.

One is not merely aware of objects and qualities in one's environment; I assume that one also perceives which objects have which qualities. One can believe what one perceives to be the case, and when one does so, one believes *that* various things are the case.⁵ Compare a

4. Many of the principles that will follow are naturally read as capturing something of the nature of the states and objects and hence should be read as metaphysically strengthened. That is, one can read them as implicitly necessitated statements, as statements of the essence of these states (Fine 1994), or — in the case of some of the principles — as offering either real definitions or factual identities (see Rayo 2013; Rosen 2015; Dorr 2016; Correia 2016; 2017; Correia and Skiles 2019). Nothing in the discussion hangs on the way in which the metaphysical strengthening is obtained, and I will leave the appropriate strengthening implicit to ease readability.
5. This may raise the question whether I assume that the contents of perception are conceptual and reject the possibility of non-conceptual content. It's hard to say much on this topic without a long discussion of how to understand the 'conceptuality' of contents, as it has been shown (successfully in my opinion) that arguments use a range of different notions of 'conceptuality'; for discussion, see, e.g., Byrne (2005), Heck (2000), Speaks (2005), Crowther (2006),

case (case I) in which one has an experience of a red circle and a blue square with a case (case II) in which one has an experience of a red square and a blue circle. In both cases one is perceptually aware of two objects, circular and square shapes, and redness and blueness, and yet there is an obvious difference between the two experiences. One straightforward way of capturing the difference is to say that I do not simply see objects and properties but also see, in case I (but not case II), *that* one object is red and circular and *that* the other is blue and square. This can be captured using a notion of *perceiving that p*, which I take to be a mental state with content.⁶ Perceiving that *p* is again a determinable with various sensory determinates. Visually perceiving that the bark has grooves, smelling that the sea is nearby, hearing that the needles rustle in the wind are different sensory ways of perceiving that certain matters obtain.

One starting assumption is therefore that there are both relations of awareness that relate subjects to objects and perceptual states with some type of content, specifiable with a *that*-clause. There is a

and Van Cleve (2012). Stated without using any explicit notion of conceptuality, I assume that at least *some* of what we perceive to be the case are matters that we can also believe to be the case. This is not to assume that *everything* that we can perceive to be the case are matters that we can also believe to be the case. The assumption is also restricted to us humans: the assumption is that some of what *we* perceive to be the case are matters that *we* can believe to be the case; this is not to assume that *anyone* who can perceive these very matters to be the case can also believe them to be the case. It seems to me that at least one important notion of 'non-conceptual content' is relativized to kinds of subjects (cf. Speaks 2005: 360) and not understood in terms of concepts but beliefs (cf. Speaks 2005: 377): the content of a perceptual state is non-conceptual for a type of subject whenever that type of subject is unable to form beliefs with those very same contents. This is compatible with 'non-conceptual contents' being the sorts of things that can be true or false. Given this particular understanding of non-conceptual content, the assumption is that some of the contents of our perceptual states are conceptual, leaving it open that there are also contents of our perceptual states that are non-conceptual.

6. Note that nothing in the described case requires that the two experiences be from different perspectives. I do not believe that the difference between the two experiences can be captured by turning the awareness relation into a three-place relation taking perspectives as additional relata (*pace* Campbell 2009; cf. Genone 2014: 351).

temptation to reduce one to the other. Some prefer to work only with the notion of perceiving *that* something is the case. Some are drawn to theorizing in terms of the single notion of having an experience of an object *as* being a certain way. Though closely related to the notion of *perceiving that p*, it's a distinct notion and not one that I will use in formulating the relevant principles (though it will eventually be incorporated in §4). Awareness of an object and perceiving that *p* are notions that serve different theoretical roles (cf. McDowell 2013a). The objects of awareness are potential targets of attention. The contents of perception can be potential contents of belief, knowledge, or other propositional attitudes. The theoretical framework will employ both object awareness and perceiving that some matter obtains.

Concerning the relation of awareness, we assume that it takes as its objects at least also ordinary material things. We can be aware of things like pine trees and dunes. We may not always be in a position to know what we are aware of: we may not be in a position to know that we are aware of a pine tree as opposed to, say, a larch and yet be aware of a pine tree.

Just as the nature of an object of awareness does not have to be accessible to us in being aware of that object, the content of our perceptual state need not always be known to us when we are in that perceptual state. The contents of our perceptual states are not assumed to be luminous for us; that is to say, we are not automatically in a position to know that we perceive that *p* when we perceive that *p* (Williamson 2000: Ch. 4).

That perception is a mental state with content is a commitment that is shared with certain forms of representationalism.⁷ According to one way of developing the view, representationalism takes the content of a perceptual state to be a proposition that plays the role of specifying how the perceptual state represents the world (Byrne 2001: 201). Given that, according to representationalism, the proposition plays a representational role when figuring as the content of a perceptual

7. The list of proponents of representationalism is long; three clear defenses are found in Byrne (2001), Pautz (2010), and Siegel (2010).

state, the content of a perceptual state can be true *or false* (Evans 1982: 226). Yet this is arguably not how our veridical perception seems to us: perception seems to be different from belief in that, although we can believe something that isn't the case, we cannot perceive what isn't the case, nor can we see what isn't there. The content of a perceptual state is really a fact, not a proposition, or if we take facts to be nothing other than true propositions, then the proposition that serves as the content of a perceptual state plays the role of specifying the real bits of world that are perceived to be the case. If the proposition plays the role of identifying the perceived fact when figuring as the content of a perceptual state, the proposition must be true. Only true propositions serve to identify facts. Either way, I assume that perception is a presentation in our mental lives of the worldly facts that we are perceptually taking in (McDowell 1982/1998: 386–7). This understanding of perception commits us to the factivity of perception:

If *s* perceives that *p*, then *p*.

What I typically perceive is a certain manifestation of qualities by certain objects. What I perceive is not the sort of thing that can be true or false. It's a manifestation of qualities pegged to objects. A manifestation of qualities by objects is the sort of thing that can be beautiful or ugly, dangerous or the cause of further facts, but it is not the sort of thing that is itself true or false, in contrast to what I believe or think (cf. Austin 1962: 11; Travis 2004: §2). What I believe or think consists in objects being believed or judged to have certain qualities and this *is* the sort of thing that can be true or false, to hit or miss its alethic mark. Factivity is a minimal requirement for understanding perception as a 'direct' perceptual contact with one's surroundings and not as a perceptual way of representing one's surroundings.⁸

8. It's important to note that the core issue is not so much whether there is a factive or non-factive notion of perception. Many theories, including the framework proposed here, can in principle admit both. The issue is how and where to employ these notions and what to understand in terms of what.

The factive conception of perceptual states underwrites a tight connection between perception and awareness in the simple case of perceiving that some object is a certain way. Given some object *a* and some property *F*ness:

If *s* perceives that *a* is *F*, then *s* is aware of *a*.

If *s* perceives that *a* is *F*, then *s* is aware of *F*ness.

If I perceive *that* a pine needle is green, I thereby see the needle and I thereby see greenness.

In the other direction, it seems safe to assume that one cannot see an object without also perceiving it to be a certain way (for some constant *a* and some designator *d*):

If *s* is aware of *a*, then $\exists F(s$ visually perceives that *d* is *F*)
where *d* = *a*.

Why not simply: if *s* sees *a*, then $\exists F(s$ visually perceives that *a* is *F*)? Because ‘*s* perceives that _ is *F*’ is an opaque context, whereas ‘*s* is aware of _’ isn’t. If I see the topmost pine cone, then there is some way that I perceive that cone to be — but only under some way of identifying the cone. To illustrate: it might be that I am seeing a pine cone but not *as* a pine cone, so that I can’t be said to perceive that the pine cone is a certain way. Still, given that I’m aware of the pine cone, there is some way of identifying it — say as *the brown thing at the very top of the tree* — such that I perceive that *the brown thing at the very top of the tree* is blown sideways by the wind. If I weren’t perceiving the cone — at least through some way of identifying it — to be any way at all, I would also not be aware of the cone. (See §4 for further discussion of the opacity of perception.)

What about the case of properties? If I see greenness, must there then be some object that I visually perceive to be green? Things are less evident here. Cases of afterimages (Tye 2005: 169), of seeing redness after pressing your eyes, or of seeing blackness when trying to see in the dark (Johnston 2004: 141) could all be cases of seeing

manifestations of qualitative properties without seeing anything instantiating those properties.⁹

With these starting commitments made explicit, we can offer an initial sketch of content disjunctivism and its account of hallucination. In the initial sections, I will focus on hallucinations and ignore illusions, given that hallucinations provide the more serious challenge to the proposed understanding of perception, but §4 will incorporate illusions within the proposed theoretical framework.

Whereas one could posit a *sui generis* basic mental state of hallucination, I want to propose that we take hallucination to involve the same perceptual state as veridical perception: both hallucination and veridical perception consist in the perceptual disclosure of facts and objects. I will motivate this proposal in the next section. The difference between hallucination and perception is that when we hallucinate, we perceive *it appearing that* something is the case, and when we hallucinate, we are aware not of ordinary material things but of appearances thereof:

If *s* hallucinates that *p*, then *s* perceives that *it appears that p*.

If *s* hallucinates that *a* is *F*, then *s* is aware of a *mere appearance of a*.

9. We have to be careful to distinguish the claim that, in the case of an afterimage, one is not seeing anything that is instantiating redness and the claim that in such a case one is seeing uninstantiated redness. There may be an instantiation of redness without anything instantiating redness. In such cases we might, with some regimentation of language, say that *s* perceives that it is red (where ‘it’ is used, not as a pronoun, but in the way we say that it is raining; see Strawson 1954 for discussion). That I might not be seeing anything instantiating redness in the case of an afterimage seems plausible to me. That I’m thereby seeing free-floating uninstantiated properties, and that this suffices to account for the phenomenal character of an afterimage of red (Dretske 1995: 102; 1999; Johnston 2004; Tye 2005) seems far less plausible to me. It seems to me that the property of redness only makes for the sort of qualitative reddishness that could be involved in phenomenal character only by being manifested somehow, not just by existing.

We can hallucinate that p without it being the case that p but not without it appearing to be the case that p and not without being aware of mere appearances. If we let experience be the neutral notion (following Martin 2006), it consists either in the perception of the ordinary matters or the appearance thereof:

s experiences that a is F iff s perceives that a is F or s perceives that it appears that a is F .

In an experience in which a manifests itself as being F in one's conscious mental life, this consists in perceiving that a is genuinely F out there, or it consists in perceiving that it appears that a is F .¹⁰

Even though *perception* is in some sense always veridical given that it's a factive state (and so 'veridical perception' is strictly speaking a pleonasm), this does not mean that there is no sensible notion of a non-veridical *experience*. An experience that p is veridical when it's the perception that p (which implies that it's the case p). An experience that p is non-veridical when it's the perception that *it appears that p*.

As in the veridical case, one may be aware of appearances without knowing that this is what one is aware of, and one may perceive that certain matters appear to be the case without knowing that this is what one is perceiving to be the case. When one is deceived by one's hallucination, one will falsely believe to be aware of ordinary material things, whereas one is aware of appearances of them. True perceptual error is in the first instance a matter of false judgment.¹¹ There may also

10. Compare McDowell: '[A]n appearance that such-and-such is the case can be either a mere appearance or the fact that such-and-such is the case making itself perceptually manifest to someone. As before, the object of experience in the deceptive cases is a mere appearance. But we are not to accept that in the non-deceptive cases too the object of experience is a mere appearance, and hence something that falls short of the fact itself. On the contrary, the appearance that is presented to one in those cases is a matter of the fact itself being disclosed to the experiencer. So appearances are no longer conceived as in general intervening between the experiencing subject and the world' (McDowell 1982/1998: 386–7, footnotes omitted).

11. For further discussion of this doxastic account of perceptual error, see Geneone (2014: §3).

be cases in which one is not so deceived. When faced with the Müller-Lyer illusion, and one realizes full well that this is a visual illusion, one may know that one perceives it appearing that the lines are of unequal length and only form the belief that it appears that the lines are of unequal length. The subject cannot be accused of perceptual error: the perceptual state discloses to the subject that it appears that the lines are of unequal length, and this is right: that is what appears to be the case. Still, we can describe the subject as *experiencing* that the lines are of unequal length, which is then a non-veridical experience.

The metaphysics of *it appearing that p* and of *appearances of objects* will be discussed in more detail in §4. First, I want to outline a positive case for content disjunctivism understood along these lines.

3. On the plausibility of content disjunctivism

An alternative form of disjunctivism, which we can call indiscriminability disjunctivism (a.k.a. negative disjunctivism), holds that there 'is no more to the phenomenal character of [hallucinations] than that of being indiscriminable from corresponding visual perceptions' (Martin 2006: 369; cf. Hinton 1973: 145). The idea that there is no more to the phenomenal character of hallucination than its indiscriminability from veridical perception has struck many as outright implausible or otherwise problematic (Smith 2002: Ch. 8; Siegel 2004; 2006; Hawthorne and Kovakovich 2006; Nudds 2009). Surely hallucination is a mental state with an intrinsic nature. There are positive ways in which a hallucination phenomenally seems to be and a satisfactory theory ought to capture this. In this section I want to develop this complaint and argue that if we look at the various bits of introspective evidence that drive this complaint, we find *prima facie* support for content disjunctivism.

A central datum in the theory of perception is that hallucination could, in principle, introspectively seem exactly what a corresponding veridical perception seems like; indeed, hallucination can seem to *be* veridical perception. Hallucinations can therefore somehow match veridical perceptions in the way they strike us when we reflect on them. That hallucinations cannot introspectively be told apart from

corresponding veridical perceptions ought to be fairly uncontroversial — at least when clearly distinguished from the related but possibly different claim that hallucinations and veridical perceptions have the same *phenomenological character*, which is controversial, since some disjunctivists understand phenomenal characters to be individuated on the basis of the objects that they involve (see, e.g., Martin 2004: 49). The uncontroversial claim is that hallucinations are such that we are not in a position to know by introspection alone that it's hallucinatory as opposed to veridical. Putting it this way leaves it open that it is sameness of phenomenological character that (partly) explains why hallucinations and veridical perceptions are indistinguishable to introspective reflection or that perhaps the introspective indistinguishability can be explained in some other manner or, indeed, that perhaps it can be allowed to stand as a brute fact.¹²

Merely recognizing and accepting that hallucinations can seem to our introspection the way that veridical perceptions seem should not be confused with *doing* justice to the way hallucination seems. How things seem can be treated as evidence for how things are, and accepting that there is some indiscriminability between certain matters is not the same as accommodating what this tells us. Compare the following: to accept that subject *A* in a police lineup is indistinguishable to the naked eye from the person that robbed the store yesterday is merely to accept some evidence, and this is clearly different from drawing the conclusion that the perceptual evidence supports, namely that subject *A* is the robber.

Of course, in the case of hallucinations, we cannot do complete justice to the introspective deliverance stated as it is, namely as that of hallucinations seeming to *be* veridical perceptions. Hallucinations

12. This notion of introspective indiscriminability, and especially also its relation to the individuation of phenomenal character and mental states, has been discussed extensively; see, e.g., Siegel (2004; 2008); Martin (2004); Hawthorne and Kovakovich (2006); Byrne and Logue (2008); Smith (2008); and Hellie (2007; 2010). It should be noted that content disjunctivism offers a characterization of hallucinations that is independent from the epistemic facts concerning indiscriminability and hence avoids the difficulties of individuation in terms of indiscriminability faced by indiscriminability disjunctivism.

aren't veridical perceptions. However, the recognition that hallucinations *merely seem* like veridical perceptions but aren't is a too coarse-grained treatment of the introspective data concerning hallucination. It seems to me that we have further introspective evidence concerning the character of hallucinations.¹³ The question is not simply whether hallucination is veridical perception — we know it isn't — the question is how to think of hallucination while respecting the relevant similarities and differences. In what ways is hallucination actually similar to veridical perception, if any?

Consider first of all the fact that hallucinations, like veridical perceptions, seem to be mental phenomena. An extreme disjunctivist view might hold that there seems to be a mental phenomenon when we hallucinate but that, nevertheless, we should not admit that there genuinely *is* a mental phenomenon; we should go no further than acknowledging that there merely seems (in a purely epistemological sense of 'seems') to be a mental state when we hallucinate. This extreme disjunctivist view is implausible: hallucination *is* a genuine mental state. We have no good independent reason for thinking that there is not even a mental occurrence of some type; it would be an unmotivated and overly radical approach to hallucinations. Hallucinations can play a role in our mental lives and are something that we are introspectively sensitive to. They seem to be undeniably part of our mental lives.

13. This seems to be denied in Hellie (2013: 149, 170), and the denial is also strongly suggested by the approach of Martin (2006: 369), who does not seem to think that the agnostic aspect of indiscriminability disjunctivism goes against any introspective evidence. That there is no introspective evidence concerning different aspects of the intrinsic character of hallucination is hard to maintain if one accepts that introspection gives a substantial insight into the different aspects of veridical perception. If one accepts that hallucinations are introspectively indiscriminable from veridical perceptions and that we have an introspective handle on the different aspects of veridical perception, it seems hard to deny that we have an introspective handle on the different aspects of hallucinatory experiences. If introspection gives us any evidence about different aspects of the character of veridical perception (such as involving a relation to objects in our environment) and it gives us the same evidence about hallucinations, then introspection gives us evidence about different aspects of the character of hallucinations.

Hallucinations are mental states. Hallucinations also seem to have the structure of mental states with content, and they seem to involve mental awareness relations to objects — just like veridical perception. Another flavor of disjunctivism might allow that there is indeed a mental state of hallucination while insisting that, unlike veridical perceptions, it merely seems to have the structure of a mental state with content and merely seems to involve mental relations to objects. There is an amorphous mental phenomenon that we can call ‘hallucination’ but, on this disjunctivist view, its seeming intrinsic structure is misleading.

The view is again needlessly radical and implausible. Not only is hallucination genuinely a mental state, there is no reason to think that it is some amorphous mental happening or state with no structure. On the one hand, there is the mental state of hallucinating, and, on the other hand, there is *what* is hallucinated. When we both hallucinate that a black raven sits at the top of the pine tree, then there is an actual similarity in our hallucinations because we hallucinate the same matter to be the case. This helps explain why we might both be misled in the same way by our hallucinations and come to the same mistaken beliefs. Without strong independent reasons to think that hallucinations do not involve mental attitudes with content and mental relations to objects, plausibility will be on the side of theories that accommodate this structure.

If even this little is right, there is introspective evidence for what has been called ‘positive disjunctivism’, the view that hallucinations admit of a positive characterization beyond the mere negative epistemic claim that they cannot be introspectively discriminated from veridical perception (Dancy 1995: 436; Byrne and Logue 2008: 69). If hallucinations genuinely have an internal state-content structure to them, this seems to be a ‘positive’ or ‘self-standing’ feature.

If hallucinations indeed involve mental attitudes to a content and awareness relations to objects, we can factor the introspective similarity between hallucinations and veridical perceptions into two aspects:

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[State datum] Hallucinations seem to be the same type of contentful state as veridical perception, and they seem to involve the same type of awareness relation to objects as is involved in veridical perception.

[Content datum] Hallucinations seem to have the same type of contents as veridical perceptions, and they seem to be of the same type of objects as veridical perception.

We cannot do justice to both, at least not given the starting commitments noted in the first section. If hallucinations involve the same type of state as veridical perceptions (as per the state datum), namely a factive state, and if hallucinations also involve the same type of contents as veridical perception (as per the content datum), namely ordinary facts concerning material objects in one’s surroundings, then hallucination would *be* veridical perception — contrary to assumption. Taking both introspective deliverances at face value results in a *reductio* of the possibility of hallucination. Needless to say, from the fact that at least one of these putative introspective deliverances must be misleading, it doesn’t follow that both are. If both are, we are back with the view that non-veridical experiences don’t even have the state-content structure that they seem to have. So, let us consider denying at most one introspective datum. Depending on which of these we accommodate, we arrive at a different form of positive disjunctivism: state disjunctivism or content disjunctivism. State disjunctivism takes hallucinations to be a kind of *sui generis* non-factive mental state distinct from perception and not involving any factive perception — allowing us to do justice to the content datum and taking the state datum to be misleading. Content disjunctivism takes hallucinations to be perceptions of *sui generis* kinds of contents and objects, distinct from the kinds of contents and objects of veridical perception — allowing us to do justice to the state datum and taking the content datum to be misleading. Note that taking the content datum to be mistaken is in line with the assumption that perception is not luminous, that we are not always in a position to know what we are aware of or what we perceive to be the case.

I find the views very close in terms of *prima facie* plausibility, but there is nevertheless a simple consideration against state disjunctivism and in favor of content disjunctivism. State disjunctivism faces a challenge in accounting for the apparent mental awareness of objects in the case of hallucinations. Even if we construe the state of hallucinating *that* there is a black raven sitting on a branch of the pine tree as a non-factive mental state, this is only half of the needed story, as it only accounts for the apparent contentful mental *state* but leaves us in the dark about the apparent awareness of the raven. The analogous postulation of a *sui generis* basic two-place relation of hallucinatory-awareness does not help as long as it remains a *two-place* relation: whatever the nature of the relation, if it is born to the objects that the relation seems to be born to, namely the apparent objects of hallucination such as the black raven in the above example, this still implies the existence of the black raven even though there is no such raven.

State disjunctivism might therefore imply that there merely seems to be awareness of objects in the case of hallucinations; hallucinatory experience is experience without awareness (cf. Dretske 2006; Schellenberg 2011). This seems to me to be a blow to the view. It seems that awareness does not merely happen to accompany some experience; it necessarily accompanies any experience. When we would suffer from a *total* hallucination, it would involve no awareness of *anything*. If tomorrow we find out that we have been brains in vats, we would not conclude that we have never been aware of anything. Surely there is a genuine awareness of things when suffering from a total hallucination; our mental life is not plausibly thought to be misleading on this front.

Moreover, if hallucination involves no awareness, this risks having a domino-effect on further mental states; for example, if our seeming awareness is misleading, our seeming acts of attention must also be misleading. As I insisted above, one role that awareness plays is to serve up potential targets of attention. We can only attend to what we're aware of. If there merely seems to be awareness of objects, it would also merely have to seem that we can focus our perceptual attention on these objects. But, again, our seeming acts of perceptual

attention are not plausibly thought to be misleading. This objection, that there surely is no mere mock attention when we hallucinate, is due to Smith (2002; cf. Nudds 2009: 343), who puts it as follows:¹⁴

When [...] we turn to hallucination, [t]o say that the subject is not aware of anything is surely to under-describe this situation dramatically. [...] [W]e need to be able to account for the perceptual attention that may be present in hallucination. A hallucinating subject may, for example, be mentally focusing on one element in a hallucinated scene, and then another, describing in minute detail what he is aware of. In what sense is all this merely 'mock'? [...] The sensory features of the situation need to be accounted for. How can this be done if such subjects are denied an object of awareness? (Smith 2002: 224–5)

When you hallucinate, you can direct your visual attention to items that are presented as being a certain way in your hallucination. You can only focus your attention on what you are aware of, and hence hallucinations involve awareness of something.

It's not just state disjunctivism that faces this worry. As I already mentioned, indiscriminability disjunctivism holds that hallucinations do not admit of a positive characterization of their intrinsic nature but are just those states that cannot be told apart from veridical perceptions by introspection (Martin 2006: 326). It seems that there is no genuine awareness of objects on this view. Otherwise, there would be a positive characterization of hallucinatory experiences in terms of such objects, which this view denies.

There is also an alternative development of content disjunctivism that has trouble accommodating the apparent awareness and attention in the case of hallucination. For example, Tye (2007; 2008: Ch. 4) defends a view according to which hallucinations have so-called

14. This sort of worry is also raised in Price (1932: 103). Siegel (2006) and Pautz (2007) argue that the purported datum is mistaken, both from the viewpoint of representationalism.

gappy contents that we express through open sentences such as ‘ x is F ’, whereas veridical perceptions *also* have an extra layer of singular contents — such as that some particular a is F (similar views are defended by Johnston 2004: 134–5, and Schellenberg 2011). On this approach, again there are no objects of awareness in the case of hallucination as we only have a mental state featuring gappy content.

That there seem to be objects of awareness and actual foci of attention tells against state disjunctivism, indiscriminability disjunctivism, and gappy content accounts of hallucinations. The proposed form of content disjunctivism takes hallucination to consist in the perception of something appearing to be the case *and* to involve a real awareness of mere appearances. Even in cases of hallucinations there are therefore objects of awareness. Of course, one central task for this approach is to account for these appearances.

In particular, one may worry that appearances of objects are just sense data.¹⁵ Sense data are objects that genuinely have the properties that the physical objects in the world appear to have to the experiencing subject (Price 1932: 105; Ayer 1940: 123; Jackson 1977: 95, 103;

15. Content disjunctivists who are careful not to speak of sense data have been interpreted as committing themselves to sense data nonetheless. Thau (2004: 194) interprets McDowell’s notion of ‘mere appearances’ as committing him to sense data. As Byrne and Logue (2008: 65–6) make clear, however, McDowell’s notion cannot charitably be understood as sense data. It’s even somewhat unclear whether McDowell’s disjunctivism can be characterized as a content disjunctivism at all or whether he ultimately intends to endorse an epistemic disjunctivism (for discussion, see Byrne and Logue 2008: 66). Byrne and Logue (2008: 63) on their turn read Austin’s as ‘flirting with the view’ that we see sense data when we hallucinate (at a later point in their paper they simply attribute this view to Austin, see 2008: 69). But it seems to me quite clear that, on the contrary, Austin is rather explicit that he doesn’t take them to be sense data when he writes, ‘[In the] mirage case [...] we are supposing the man to be genuinely deluded, he is *not* “seeing a material thing”. We don’t actually have to say, however, even here that he is “experiencing sense data”; for though, as Ayer says above, “it is convenient to give a name” to what he is experiencing, the fact is that it already has a name — a *mirage*’ (Austin 1962: 32, footnote omitted). Austin seems to be quite clear that, yes, there is something that we see when we hallucinate (but see Thau 2004: 200–1) but that, no, it’s not a theoretically innocent step to identify what we see with sense data. I agree and for the precise reason that sense data are characterized by the phenomenal principle (see below).

Smith 2002: 25). That is to say, sense data are just those objects for which the so-called phenomenal principle holds (cf. Robinson 1994: 32):

Phenomenal principle: if it perceptually appears to a subject that something is F , then there is something that *is* F (viz. the sense datum).

The phenomenal principle is what sets sense data apart from other objects. But it’s precisely the phenomenal principle — that sense data genuinely instantiate the properties that the worldly objects appear to us to instantiate — that makes sense data so problematic.

Let me mention one familiar issue (there are others; see, e.g., Sanford 1981). If I hallucinate an Yves Klein painting that is square and blue all over, hanging on the white wall above my couch, there would have to be a square and blueish sense datum or mental image. Where would *that* be located? If it’s ‘in my head’, why can’t we see a square and blue thing within the confines of my skull? If it’s where the painting appears to be, namely above the couch, and it is genuinely square and is genuinely colored the way the painting is colored, there would be a blue and square object above my couch, but there isn’t.¹⁶ If the blue and square object is located in some other type of ‘phenomenal space’ (Broad 1925: 181; Russell 1927: 252–3; Price 1932), this needs to be spatial in quite a literal sense for the thing to take a square shape, and then we already need an *ad hoc* restriction on the phenomenal principle, since the painting *appears* to be hanging above my couch and not to reside in some kind of phenomenal space.

Another theoretical option is that mere appearances of objects are Meinongian non-existent objects. Some argue that hallucinations must involve objects that do not exist (Smith 2002: Ch. 9; McGinn 2004). The Meinongian theory offers a different approach to upholding the phenomenal principle.¹⁷ If there is something that is indeed

16. For arguments that sense data *are* spatially located, see Jackson (1977: 80, 102–4).

17. Though there might be issues here: arguably, hallucinated objects appear to

blue and square, when I hallucinate an Yves Klein painting above my couch, then in what sense is it still a hallucination? A Meinongian answer: because what I see when I hallucinate the painting is a *non-existent* object (that is nevertheless genuinely blue and square).

Meinongianism is a controversial ontological theory. How could something genuinely have a square shape without being in space, and how could something be in space without genuinely existing? Meinongians have offered various answers.¹⁸ To take one prominent example, noneism answers that the non-existent objects have the so-called existence-entailing properties, such as being blue and being square, *at possible* (and impossible) worlds (Priest 2005; Berto 2008). Moreover, on this view, perceptual awareness of objects is not itself an existence-entailing relation; that is to say, we can be actually aware of non-existent objects. This modal approach raises the question what the content is of the hallucination, given that the non-existent painting is not actually blue or square. If the hallucination involves the content that the painting *is* blue, then it cannot after all be a factive state and we fall back to state disjunctivism. The modal Meinongian might say that we perceive that the painting is blue *at some world*, but does that really capture what we perceive? *That* something merely could have been a certain way is not what we plausibly perceive when we hallucinate.

There is much more to be said here, but one wonders whether there is a way of avoiding sense data and non-existent objects. Briefly surveying some of the issues concerning the ontology of sense data and non-existent objects, we see at the very least that offering a plausible account of these appearances is indeed a theoretical challenge, and so, only with an account of the appearances do we obtain some sense of the overall plausibility of the view sketched here. The next section aims to meet this challenge.

exist, and yet what one sees doesn't exist according to the Meinongian view. This is closely related to Russell's (1907) objection to Meinong (1904/1960).

18. Reicher (2019: §5) provides a nice overview.

To sum up where we are: veridical perception is exactly what it seems like; hallucination is what it seems like except for not involving the *kinds* of facts and objects that it seems to involve. This accommodates that there is genuine visual attention targeting the actual objects of hallucination — whatever they are. The *prima facie* case in support of content disjunctivism is that it offers the most plausible and conservative treatment of what our mental life seems like across cases of veridical perception and hallucination.

4. Towards a theory of the perception of appearance

Hallucination consists in perceiving that it appears that something is the case and involves awareness of appearances of objects. For example, my hallucinating that a black raven sits on a branch of the pine tree consists in perceiving that it appears that a black raven sits on that branch and involves the awareness of an appearance of a black raven. How should we understand these two notions of appearance: *appearing that* something is the case and *appearances* of objects?¹⁹

I claimed earlier that what I perceive is typically a certain manifestation of qualities by certain objects and that what I perceive is not the sort of thing that can be true or false. What if I hallucinated everything about the raven in the crooked pine tree in the dunes? I would be inclined to say the same thing. When hallucinating the pine tree in the dunes, I still perceive some kind of manifestation of certain qualities by certain objects. Yet, at the same time, the manifestation doesn't in this case consist in an object really *instantiating* the manifested properties; otherwise I would not be hallucinating. There must be a qualitative manifestation of a different kind, consisting in it *merely appearing*

19. Alternative accounts of appearances have been offered. For example, Alston (1999) and Langsam (1997: 47) offer accounts based in a relational notion of objects appearing to a subject as F, and Shoemaker (1994; 2006), Noë (2005), and Genone (2014) offer accounts that posit a special family of 'appearance properties' or 'perspectival properties'. See also discussions concerning different ways of understanding the 'looks of objects' in Martin (2010), Brewer (2011: §5.3), and Kalderon (2011).

that the objects are various ways.²⁰ This is not a purely epistemological notion. To avoid confusion, I will use 'seeming' for the epistemological notion. Given the distinction, we would often say that appearances explain seemings; for example, when I hallucinate that a raven sits at the top of the tree, it might *seem* to me that there is such a raven partly *because* I perceive it *appearing* that there is such a raven.

I propose that, formally speaking, the relevant notion of 'appearance' is regimented so as to have a fairly flexible grammar, being able to qualify both sentences and predicates. Let us use 'A' to symbolize this flexible 'operator'. It never changes the grammatical category of the term it operates on. In particular, when the notion is attached to a sentence, we get another sentence; when the notion is attached to a predicate, the result is a new predicate. If '*p*' is a sentence, then 'A[*p*]' is a sentence that says that *it appears that p*. For example, 'A[the raven sits at the top of the tree]' says that *it appears that the raven sits at the top of the tree*. If 'F' is a predicate, then 'A[F]' is a predicate that expresses the property of *appearing F*, and the sentence '*a is A[F]*' says that *a appears to be F* (or that *a is such as to appear F*). For example, given the predicate '*_ is yellow*', the qualified predicate '*_ A[is yellow]*' expresses *the property of appearing to be yellow*.²¹

20. What I call a 'manifestation' seems to coincide with what McDowell (2008: 383, fn.7; consistent with his 1982/1998) calls 'appearance', which he distinguishes from 'mere appearance'.

21. Accepting this single appearance qualifier has advantages over accepting a family of basic appearance properties (as, e.g., in Shoemaker 1994; Noë 2005; Genone 2014). Instead of accepting a whole swath of appearance properties, the current view holds that 'appearances properties' are just ordinary properties that objects appear to have (i.e., properties involved in appearance facts). We only need the single modifier to build these complex properties. Restricting ourselves to these appearances properties restricts our theorizing in undesirable ways. Accounts that only admit appearance properties may be able to deal with illusions as the instantiation of appearance properties (Genone 2014: §5), but they have trouble accounting for the possibility of total hallucinations, since in that case, we either need an account of what has the appearance properties in such cases, or we deny that anything has those properties. On the proposed view, all forms of illusion and hallucination (including partial and total hallucinations) can be given a uniform treatment as the perception of matters appearing to be the case (see below).

We can use the appearance predicates to form definite and indefinite descriptions in the usual ways. The indefinite description 'an appearance of a raven' has the form of 'an appearance of an F' and picks out something that satisfies the qualified predicate 'A[F]'. The definite description 'the appearance of the raven at the top of the tree' has the form 'the appearance of the F' and picks out the (purportedly) unique object that satisfies the qualified predicate 'appearing to be a raven sitting at the top of this tree'. Descriptions can also modify the relational property of *being identical to a*, where '*a*' is a constant (or a proper name). The description 'an appearance of Poe', say, is an indefinite description that employs the qualified predicate 'appearing to be (numerically) identical to Poe' and hence has the form of 'an A[= Poe]'.²²

Altogether, the theoretical framework recognizes the following: (1) *matters that appear to be the case*, expressed by statements of the form 'A[*p*]'; (2) *objects instantiating appearances of properties*, expressed by statements of the form '*a is A[F]*'; and (3) *things that can be identified as appearances of objects*, which can be singled out by (indefinite and definite) descriptions that identify things using predicates of the form '*_ is A[F]*'. The task is now to elucidate these notions further and develop, at least partially, the metaphysics of these matters.

One central feature of the notion of appearance is that something can appear to be the case without it being the case:

It is not the case that: if A[*p*], then *p*.

It can appear that a black raven sits at the top of the pine tree without there being such a raven.²³ In such a case, we can say that it *merely* appears that there is such a raven.

22. If one finds this construal of appearances of *a* artificial (and I'm sympathetic to this), one could take the appearance qualification to apply to names directly to give new names. There are however complexities that can arise here when there are multiple hallucinations about the same thing.

23. I focus on appearance sentences (sentence of the form 'A[*p*]') but commitments carry over to predicates. For example, we also have that it's not the case that if *x is A[F]*, then *x is F*. The bark of the tree can appear to be yellow with being yellow.

Hallucinations and illusions are both cases of perceiving that something appears to be the case, with the difference between hallucination and illusion consisting in whether one is aware of the very thing involved in what one perceives appearing to be case:

s undergoes the illusion that a is F iff s perceives that $A[a$ is $F]$ and s is aware of a .

s hallucinates that a is F iff s perceives that $A[a$ is $F]$ and $\neg(s$ is aware of $a)$.

In other words, if I visually perceive it appearing to be the case that a black raven sits at the top of the tree and there is no such raven at all, then I'm also not seeing *the raven* (given that seeing is existence entailing), and hence I must be hallucinating the scene.²⁴ If one visually perceives it appearing to be the case that the bark of the tree is yellow and one is seeing the bark of the tree (only it isn't yellow), then one suffers from an illusion concerning the bark of the tree. The illusion can be truthfully described from the perspective of the undergoing subject as the following: *the seen* bark over there appears to be different from the way it really is.

Note first of all that hallucinations, illusions, and veridical perceptions all involve the same kind of mental state: they all involve perceptual states. Note secondly that hallucinations and illusions do not conflict with the factivity of perception. In the case of perceiving something appearing to be the case, it still follows that it's really appearing to be the case:

24. One might be tempted to think of hallucination as the state in which one perceives that it appears that a is F even though a does not exist. But this does not seem to capture all cases of hallucination. If I perceive that it appears that my brother is walking down the street, then I might be suffering from a hallucination if my brother is actually far away in some other continent and not the real object of my seeing. What makes the described scenario a case of hallucination is that I am not *seeing* my brother while undergoing the perceptual state. Needless to say, there is more to be said about (apparent) 'veridical' hallucinations (Lewis 1980; Johnston 2006).

If s perceives that $A[p]$, then $A[p]$.

If I perceive that it appears to be the case that the bark of the pine tree is yellow, then it appears to be the case that the bark is yellow.

One might object that the natural notion of appearance is of something appearing *to* a subject. Although the current framework employs a basic notion of appearance *simpliciter*, it does not have to deny that there is a sensible relational notion of appearing to subjects as well. On the current account, this relational notion of appearing can be characterized in terms of perception and appearance *simpliciter*:

It appears *to* s that p iff s perceives that $A[p]$.

That it appears *to me* that the bark of the tree is yellow consists in *my perceiving* that it appears that the bark is yellow. The relational notion of 'appearing to someone' mixes in the aspect of the apparent manifestation of a property by some object and the presence of this manifestation in a subject's mental life. The latter is a matter of the subject being presented with what appears to be the case *in the very same way that we are presented with our environment in veridical cases of perception*. The former, the appearance itself, is understood as consisting only in the apparent manifestation of some property by some object. There is an objective similarity between hallucinations and veridical perception. We gloss over natural joints if the relational notion of appearance is taken as the only notion of appearance.

That appearance facts don't themselves involve a subject also doesn't mean that they don't depend on subjects. Appearances may be assumed to be mind dependent in the sense that something appears to be the case if and only if someone visually perceives that this is so. This means that something appears to be the case only if there is someone to whom this appears to be case.²⁵

25. Although there is no bar on holding appearances to be mind dependent just because it doesn't directly involve a subject, it would be compatible with a view on which there can be appearances that are not due to subjects in any way. For the discussion about whether things can have 'objective' or 'unseen' looks, see Martin (2010); Brewer (2011); Kalderon (2011); and Genone (2014).

Given the way we understand visual illusions, we have it that if s suffers from the illusion that a is F , then s sees a . Things are different for the case of hallucinations. Here we have it that if s hallucinates that a is F , then $\neg(s$ sees $a)$. If I hallucinate that a black raven is sitting at the top of the tree, I'm not seeing that raven. This threatens to undermine the idea that perceiving something to be the case goes hand in hand with awareness of objects and properties. If I perceive that it appears that the raven is sitting at the top, is there not *something* that I am aware of? As already discussed, there are strong reasons to think that there must be (Price 1932: 103; Smith 2002: 224–5), though what I'm seeing cannot be the raven, as there is no such raven. If they are also not to be sense data, or non-existent objects, what are they?

I propose, following Kripke (2013: 94) and Austin (1962: 95, fn. 1) before him, that we recognize *sui generis* intentional objects, characterized in terms of how they appear to a perceiving subject.²⁶ Like the appearance facts, they are plausibly assumed to be mind dependent, depending on the subjects who are (at least at some point in time) aware of them. We can identify these intentional objects as being the *appearances of things* (i.e., as being those objects that instantiate the property of appearing in certain ways), because we can and typically do single them out on the basis of how they appear. When I hallucinate a raven sitting at the top of the pine tree, I'm seeing something that is *an appearance of this raven*. So, using definite descriptions:

If s hallucinates that *the F* is G , then $\exists x(s$ is aware of x and $x = \text{an appearance of the } F)$.

Similarly: If s hallucinates that a is F (i.e., s perceives that $A[a$ is $F]$), then $\exists x(s$ sees x and $x = \text{an appearance of } a)$. Say I name the hallucinated

26. Per Kripke, 'A suggestion might be this: one can attribute to language — when and if it extends the use of the verb "see" to allow an object even when there is no physical object there — the recognition of a special kind of thing called the "hallucinatory objects", which is seen' (2013: 94). What Kripke calls 'hallucinatory objects' I call the appearances of objects — this is merely a verbal difference, I think.

raven 'Poe', then I hallucinate that Poe is sitting at the top of the tree, and what I'm seeing is an appearance of Poe.

What is crucial for the proposed account is that the appearance of the raven is not the raven, yet it is something, something that exists and that you can see. One needs to carefully distinguish the properties that an appearance of an object actually has from the properties that it appears to have (Kripke 2013: 95).²⁷ The appearance of the black raven at the top of the pine tree really has the properties of being a mere appearance, of being seen by me, of giving me an ominous feeling. It does *not* have the properties of being a raven, of sitting at the top of the tree, or of being black. This means that we reject outright the phenomenal principle for mere appearances that we discussed earlier. What we see when we hallucinate precisely doesn't have all the properties it appears to have.

Although what we see when we hallucinate doesn't have all the properties it appears to have, it does genuinely have the properties of *appearing black*, *appearing to be a raven*, and *appearing to be sitting at the top of the pine tree*. I assumed earlier that, in the veridical case, we are aware of the properties that things have and that we can focus our attention on the ways things are. Indeed, one might think that we

27. Kripke draws on an analogy with fictional characters (see also Thomasson 1998: Ch. 3). Kripke takes fictional characters to be actually existing objects. We must clearly distinguish between the properties that they actually have and the properties that, fictionally (i.e., in a given story), the object is said to have. When we say 'Hamlet is a fictional character', we can either mean that he is actually a fictional character (which is true) or that he is, in the fiction, a fictional character (which is false). Kripke briefly explores treating perception in an analogous way: '[T]he analogy is that, as in the case of fiction we discussed before, one can have two types of predication: the out-and-out sense and what is ascribed to it purely visually, analogously to predication according to a story. This distinction can also be applied to hallucinatory objects. "Is hallucinatory", "was caused to be seen by such and such medical problems", are out-and-out usages, whereas "has a certain shape", "is colored green", are analogous to predication "in the story"' (2013: 95). Kripke's notion of predication that is ascribed 'purely visually' corresponds to ascribing properties that the object *appears* to have. The appearance operator 'It appears that [p]' is analogous to the in-the-fiction operator 'Fictionally [p]', which Kripke employs in his treatment of fictional characters.

cannot attend to an object without attending to at least some of its actual sensible features. What we focus on in the case of non-veridical experience are ways things appear to be. That is to say, just like we see appearances of objects, we see appearances of properties, the properties expressed by the qualified predicates:

If s hallucinates that a is F , then $\exists X(s$ is aware of X and $X =$ the property of appearing to be F).

When we hallucinate something being F , we are aware of appearances of F ness. When we hallucinate that the raven sits at the top of the tree, we are aware of the property of appearing to be sitting at the top of the tree, a property that is genuinely instantiated.

In the other direction, you can see the appearance of a raven (or be aware of the appearance) when and only when you hallucinate that a raven sits at the top of the tree, that is, when and only when you perceive that it appears that a raven sits there:

If s is aware of an appearance of an F , then $\exists X(s$ perceives that $A[an F$ is $X])$.

When one sees appearances of things, one must be perceiving that something appears to be the case, which means (if one does not also see the things that the appearances are appearances of) that one is hallucinating.

We have so far identified the appearances on the basis of what they are appearances of; for example, we have been discussing the appearance of a raven.²⁸ It needs to be stressed that, although we can identify these intentional objects on the basis of how they appear, we do not have to. We can, for example, also single out the appearance of the

28. Note that we are here only concerned with ways of identifying or picking out the objects (something that *we* do, with the help of the discussed definite descriptions) and not a matter of individuation (necessary and necessary conditions for being that object), nor a matter of essence or identity in some other sense. For discussion of these distinctions and, more generally, a helpful framework in which to work out the ontology of appearances, see Fine (1982).

raven on the basis of other properties that it genuinely has, such as its being seen by me. For example, the appearance of the raven can also be identified as *the thing that, at a given time and place, I'm aware of and that gives me an ominous feeling*. Needless to say, there can also be mixed descriptions, appealing both to ways things appear and to other properties that intentional objects genuinely have. For example, being an appearance of a raven might not be uniquely identifying, as more people might be hallucinating about ravens. Such appearances can be distinguished purely on the basis of who is seeing them. In that case, *being the appearance of a raven that I'm aware of* (which has the form: *being the x such that x is $A[F]$ and s is aware of x*) will be uniquely identifying when I'm aware of only one appearance of a raven.

Relatedly, what we can identify as an appearance of a raven can also be identified as the appearance of other things. The very same thing (i.e., an appearance of a raven) is also an appearance of a black bird and an appearance of something sitting at the top of the pine tree. The appearance of a raven, the appearance of a black bird, and the appearance of something at the top of the pine tree are not plausibly taken to refer to distinct intentional objects. When I focus my attention on what appears to me to be a raven, I thereby focus on the very thing that appears to me to be a black bird and the very thing that appears to be sitting at the top of the tree. They are the very same object of awareness appearing to me in a variety of ways. This bears on the identity criteria of appearances that we are aware of, as it seems that how many objects there appear to be to a subject must coincide with the number of appearances of things that the subject is actually aware of:

s perceives that $A[the F = the G]$ iff the $A[F]$ that s is aware of = the $A[G]$ that s is aware of.

Given that it appears to me that the raven = the black thing = the thing sitting at the top of the tree, we have it that I'm aware of the appearance of the raven, which just is an appearance of a black thing, which just is the appearance of the thing sitting at the top of the tree. Without this principle, we would allow the possibility of an objectionable

explosion of objects of awareness that one is actually aware of when hallucinating.²⁹

A further matter that bears on the individuation of appearances is that there is, plausibly, an opaque context in reports of the contents of perception, including the perception of what appears to be the case. As I briefly mentioned earlier, 's perceives that _ is F' is opaque, and the contexts 's is aware of _' and 's sees _' are transparent. Consider first the case of veridical perception. Imagine that Mary Jane — who doesn't know that Spiderman is Peter Parker — (veridically) perceives that Spiderman swings by her window. It's plausible to say that she perceives that Spiderman swings by her window but not that she perceives that Peter Parker swings by her window, even though Spiderman = Peter Parker. In contrast, when it comes to the relation of awareness, there is no such opacity. Mary Jane is aware of Spiderman, and she is thereby aware of Peter Parker, given that Peter Parker = Spiderman. In this veridical case, we can therefore say all of the following: (1) she perceives *that* Spiderman swings by her window, and (2) she does *not* perceive *that* Peter Parker swings by her window, and (3) she is aware of Peter Parker (though, she doesn't know that this is whom she is seeing).

Given this background, consider hallucinations. Say that Mary Jane is daydreaming and hallucinates that Spiderman swings by. We say that she perceives that it appears that Spiderman swings by. Even though 'Peter Parker' is co-referential with 'Spiderman', we cannot substitute into the relevant context; that is to say, it doesn't seem right to say that she perceives that it appears that Peter Parker swings by her window. The context 's perceives that A[_ is F]' is again opaque: we cannot substitute co-referential terms at that location in the sentence. Similarly, the context 's hallucinates that _ is F' is opaque.

This opacity bears on the individuation of mere appearances in the following way. Mary Jane doesn't see Spiderman (after all, we assumed that she is hallucinating); rather, she only sees *an appearance of Spiderman*. However, even though there is an appearance of Spiderman,

29. Thanks to an anonymous referee for this point.

there is nothing that we can identify as an appearance of Peter Parker, given that it's not the case that Mary Jane perceives *that* it appears that Peter Parker is any way. What she is aware of isn't an appearance of Peter Parker because, at that point, she doesn't perceive that it appears that Peter is swinging by her window. It also doesn't appear to Mary Jane that Spiderman = Peter Parker, so we cannot identify an appearance of Spiderman with an appearance of Peter Parker. The appearance of Spiderman ≠ an appearance of Peter Parker, even though Spiderman = Peter Parker. Whereas the context 's is aware of _' is not opaque, it turns out that the context 's is aware of an appearance of _' *is* opaque: we cannot substitute co-referential terms at that position in the sentence.

Opacity is a puzzling phenomenon in all its forms and instances, and it's far from clear how to account for it, but, given the current framework, it seems at least not appropriate to think of the opacity as arising from the fact that the actual contents of perception coincide with what the subject takes to be the contents of perception.³⁰ The opacity doesn't arise from a constraint that restricts third-person reports of what subjects perceive to how the relevant subject is disposed to report the content of what is perceived to be the case. I also want to resist the idea that the opacity arises from a constraint that dictates that the content of perception coincides with the content of the possible perceptual beliefs that are formed on the basis of the perception.³¹ After all, when I hallucinated that the raven sits in the tree, I perceived that it appears that a raven sits at the top of the tree, yet, given that appearances can be misleading, I would neither report nor form the

30. When I speak of what the subject 'takes to be the content of perception', I do not mean to imply that there is some higher order belief about the content of perception. Rather, it's a feature of how the perception, as a matter of fact, results in beliefs of a subject. The simplest case: if *s* forms the perceptual belief that *p* on the basis of perceptual state *x*, then this amounts to *s* taking the content of *x* to be *that p*.

31. In one sense of 'conceptual content' (see fn. 5), this assumption would seem to rule out that perceptions have non-conceptual content, an assumption that — without consideration of further arguments — I wish to avoid.

belief that *it appears* that a raven sits there; I would report and believe (mistakenly) that *a raven* sits there. Although this is a typical case of being misled by a hallucination, causing mistaken perceptual beliefs is not in any way essential to something appearing to be the case. As noted above, I might also be fully aware that I'm hallucinating, in which case I form the correct belief that something merely appears to be the case. This goes back to one of the starting commitments, namely that perception is not a luminous state: when we perceive that *p*, we are not thereby guaranteed to be in a position to know that we perceive that *p*. A central feature of appearances is precisely that they can mislead: what it is like to perceive that *p* will be indiscriminable by reflection alone from perceiving that it appears that *p*. From the first-person perspective, the appearance-qualification isn't recognizable as such; to recognize it as such, we need to appeal to further background beliefs (about what the world is like, what sort of situation I am in, what I am looking at, whether I have taken any psychedelic drugs, etc.). When we describe someone as perceiving that it appears that *p*, we are therefore not implying that the subject *thereby* knows that it appears that *p*, as the subject might not even have the belief that it appears that *p* but rather only the (possibly mistaken) belief that *p*.³²

We assumed that whenever one is aware of an appearance of an *F*, one perceives that it appears that *an F* is a certain way. It does not follow from this that one perceives that it appears that *an appearance of an F* is a certain way, even though what one is aware of is indeed an appearance of an *F*. I hallucinate that a raven sits at the top of the pine tree, and I'm thereby aware of an appearance of a raven. But that I'm aware of an appearance of a raven doesn't mean that I perceive it appearing that *an appearance of a raven* sits in the tree. It might be tempting to somehow identify the object of awareness with one of the

32. Williamson assumes that perceiving is a determinate of a more general factive mental state and that knowledge is the most general determinable factive mental state, so that to perceive that *p* is one *way* of knowing that *p* on his view (2000: 34; see also Byrne 2016). Though the current framework agrees that perceiving is a factive state, its involvement in cases of hallucination and illusion might make it unsuitable for being a way of knowing.

things 'involved in' the very facts that appear to be the case. This temptation is however to be resisted. When we specify the object of awareness, we specify what we are actually related to. When we specify what we perceive appearing to be the case, we specify what the *apparent* object of awareness *appears* to be like. The actual object of awareness cannot be identified with the apparent object of awareness. The actual object of awareness was an appearance of a raven, whereas the apparent object of awareness was a raven.

Having said this, there still seems to be a sense in which, taken jointly, the specification of the object of awareness together with the specification of what we perceive to appear to be the case, gives — in the case of hallucination — a specification of what the *actual* object of awareness (the appearance) appears to be like. It may help to capture this using a separate locution, of having an experience *of* an object *as* being a certain way. Recall our neutral notion of experience: *s* experiences that *p* iff *s* perceives that *p* or *s* perceives that it appears that *p*. We can introduce a further neutral notion of having an experience *of* something *as* being a certain way, '*s* has an experience of *_* as being *_*,' in which the first blank tracks actual objects of awareness (and hence is not opaque, contrary to '*s* perceives that *_* is *F*') and the second blank takes properties that either are or appear to be instantiated by the object. We have an experience *of* something when we are aware of *it* and either *it* is what we perceive to be a certain way or *it* is an appearance of something else and we perceive that it appears that this something else is a certain way. In the hallucinatory case, I have an experience *of* an appearance of the raven *as* sitting in the tree, given that I experience that a raven is sitting in the tree and I'm aware of the appearance of a raven. In the veridical case, I have an experience *of* the pine tree *as* being crooked and old, given that I perceive that the pine is crooked and old and I'm aware of the pine tree.

There is, of course, much more to say about the metaphysics of appearances as well as the outlined theory of perception that it helps to underwrite. Currently, the notion of 'appearance' is somewhat of a placeholder, constrained by principles that draw various connections.

It needs further elucidation. We have focused on the role of appearances as contents of perception, but this doesn't settle the role of appearances in the phenomenological character of mental states. On the side of the ontology, there are further open questions regarding the ontological status of mere appearances, such as whether we should think of these as (mind-dependent, non-eternal) abstract objects that lack a spatial location or not. There are also various worries that might be raised, and there are existing objections to disjunctivism that bear on the proposed view. In particular, the view faces the causal argument (Robinson 1985; 1994) and the closely related screening off argument (see Martin 2004).³³ There is also a more general potential worry about requiring causal connections between perceptual states and the objects of awareness (Grice 1961) and the possibility of veridical hallucinations, since — pending further commitments about the ontological status of mere appearances — it's not clear whether mere appearances are the sorts of things that we make causal contact with and cause our perceptual states (cf. the discussion about created abstract objects, e.g., in Deutsch 1991).

Although the list of governing principles and commitments has grown, the outlined theory is ultimately quite simple. It works with three primitives: *perceiving that p*, *awareness of x*, and a qualifying notion of *appearance* (which qualifies both what we express with sentences and what we attribute using predicates). The neutral notion of *experience* (which can be veridical or non-veridical) as well as the notions of *hallucination* and *illusion* are understood in terms of the three basic terms of the theory. Veridical experience is a matter of the very facts out there featuring as the content of our perception and of the actual material objects around us featuring as the objects of our awareness. When we hallucinate, we perceive that certain matters appear to be the case and we are aware of objects that merely appear to have properties that they do not actually have. The ontology of the theory

33. I do not think that these objections succeed (for responses to the argument, see Allen 2015; Moran 2019; I address the worry in my manuscript 'Content Disjunctivism and the Screening Off Problem').

admits thin objects, mere appearances, that may merely instantiate the properties of appearing in various ways and of being the object of awareness for hallucinating subjects. Such a mere appearance is *an appearance of a certain object x* in virtue of it being perceived that it appears that *this object x* is a certain way. There is no general veil of appearance standing 'between' experiencing subjects and the world. All experience, veridical and hallucinatory, involves awareness of objects. I argued that this view is supported by how our experience seems to us and the role it plays in our mental lives.³⁴

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