

Against Metaphysical Disjunctivism

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We first met the core ideas of disjunctivism through the teaching and writing of Pascal Engel¹. At the time, the view seemed to us as being clearly false, despite the fact that it opened new epistemological avenues, especially as far as the skeptical challenge was concerned. Today, we think that a nuanced assessment of disjunctivism is within reach. In order to defend such an assessment, we will first put forward a distinction between two aspects of the disjunctivist position, epistemological disjunctivism and metaphysical disjunctivism². Epistemological disjunctivism³ bears on the characteristics of perceptual knowledge; we will claim that it is neutral regarding the nature of perceptual experience. Metaphysical disjunctivism, on the other hand, is a view about the metaphysical nature of perceptual experience. Its main claim is that perceptual experiences are of a relational nature: the existence of conscious experiences depends on the existence of their worldly objects⁴. In order to give a first illustration of this distinction, let us consider two cases, a good case and a bad one. In the good case, a subject, let's say Mary, is seeing a red

¹ Especially through the sharp introduction to disjunctivism presented in Engel (2007).

² Cf. Pritchard (2012, 23-24) for a crystal-clear recent discussion of this distinction. See also Byrne and Logue (2008) and Soteriou (2009).

³ The main source of epistemological disjunctivism seems to be McDowell (1982). See also Byrne and Logue (2008) and Pritchard (2012).

⁴ The historical sources of metaphysical disjunctivism are to be found in Hinton (1967a), Hinton (1967b), Hinton (1973), Snowdon (1981), Snowdon (1990), and Martin (2002), Martin (2004), Martin (2006). We will also rely on the presentations given by Campbell (2002), Hellie (2007) and Fish (2009). See also the papers in Byrne and Logue (2009) and Haddock and Macpherson (2008). See Crane (2006) for a comparison between metaphysical disjunctivism and its main competitor, intentionalism.

rose and forming the belief that this rose is red on the basis of her experience. In the bad case, Mary is not in optimal viewing conditions. For the sake of the discussion, we will even assume that she is having a mere hallucination of a red rose, and that she is forming a belief about a rose she thinks she is seeing on the basis of her mental condition. Let us also assume that Mary cannot distinguish, from her subjective perspective, between what it is like being in the good case and what it is like being in the bad case: for her, both situations are introspectively indistinguishable on the basis of experience. According to epistemological disjunctivism, Mary has two very different kinds of reasons for her beliefs in the good vs. the bad case. In the good case, she has a reason to believe that is both factive and reflectively accessible: because she is seeing that the rose is red, she has access to a reason that gives her a rational guarantee for the truth of the proposition that the rose is red. In the bad case, on the other hand, Mary does not have access to such a factive reason, and therefore is not in a position to gain knowledge. In this paper, we will assume the truth of epistemological disjunctivism, because we want to focus our discussion on the related, but much more radical, *relational conception of experience*⁵. According to this conception, that we also call "metaphysical disjunctivism", there is no common, fundamental nature at all in Mary's veridical experience of the rose in the good case and her hallucinatory mental condition in the bad case, despite the fact that Mary cannot subjectively distinguish between the good case and the bad one. Indeed, the metaphysical disjunctivist claims that veridical experiences are *essentially different* from the mental conditions involved in bad cases: in the good case, what it is like to see the red rose for Mary is essentially constituted, in her view, by a relation to the fact that the rose is red. Since such a relation cannot exist in the bad case, where there is no such fact to be related to, she infers that hallucinations are of a very different nature from veridical experiences. The relational conception of experience radically departs from more standard conceptions in rejecting the claim that being subjectively indistinguishable, for two mental states A and B, is enough for being typed as identical, or at least as very similar, experiences⁶. As we will see, the metaphysical disjunctivist claims that state A can essentially differ from state B even though what it is like to be in A is the same as what it is like to be in B. We will argue that epistemological and metaphysical disjunctivism should be sharply distinguished: one can reject the relational

⁵ We borrow the terms "relational conception of experience" and "Relational View" to Campbell (2002). See also Crane (2006).

⁶ Cf. Martin (2004)

conception of experience while embracing the view that perception provides reasons that are both factive and reflectively accessible. We will also argue that an explanatory argument can be leveled against the Relational View, and as a consequence that it should be rejected.

1. Epistemological disjunctivism

The core thesis of epistemological disjunctivism

We will borrow the exact definition of epistemological disjunctivism to Duncan Pritchard⁷:

Epistemological Disjunctivism: The Core Thesis

In paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge an agent, S, has perceptual knowledge that Phi in virtue of being in possession of rational support, R, for her belief that Phi which is both factive (i.e. R's obtaining entails Phi) and reflectively accessible to S. (Pritchard 2012, p. 13).

In good, paradigmatic, cases of perceptual knowledge, the agent has access to a defeasible and factive reason. By seeing a red rose, Mary has access to the content of her visual experience, which presents her a certain rose being red. She is thereby in a good position to acquire the knowledge that the rose is red. The reason given by the visual experience is factive, because in a paradigmatic case of visual perception, one cannot see a rose as being red if it is not the case that it is red. At the same time, this perceptual reason is defeasible: if Mary gains evidence to the effect that the context of perception is not normal — for instance, to the effect that she might be hallucinating — it is rational for her to reconsider her belief that there is a red rose just before her. Pritchard's definition is consistent with the traditional definition of knowledge as justified true belief: having a perceptual factive reason to believe that P because one enjoys a veridical experience does not involve, in itself, possessing knowledge, but merely being in a good position to acquire it, even if one does not eventually exploit this possibility⁸. Let us imagine again that while she is visually

⁷ Cf. Pritchard (2012).

⁸ Cf. Pritchard (2012, 26). For the opposing view that perception directly amounts to the acquisition of knowledge, hence that there can be knowledge without justified belief, see Williamson (2000).

presented with a red rose, Mary also has good evidence that she may be hallucinating. In such a situation, she sees that the rose is red, she has a (defeasible) factive reason to believe that the rose is red, hence she is in a good position to gain knowledge of the fact that the rose is red. Nevertheless, it is rational for her in this context to suspend her judgment, not exploiting her good position to gain knowledge. As Pritchard emphasizes, it would be a mistake, in such a situation, to say that Mary knows that the rose is red: she does not know this fact since she refrained from acquiring the belief that the rose is red. It seems important, in order to leave open the possibility of such epistemic situations, to insist that having access to perceptual factive reasons does not directly provide knowledge to the perceiving subject, but only opportunities for knowledge.

What makes epistemological disjunctivism a type of *disjunctivism* is its treatment of perceptual reasons. In this framework, paradigmatic cases of perception provide factive reasons. To this extent, they essentially differ from other subjectively indiscernible mental conditions, like illusions or hallucinations. This does not mean, however, that the epistemological disjunctivist should deny that non-paradigmatic perceptual-like experiences do not confer subjective reasons. To see why this important point is true, let us say more about reasons and their role in belief acquisition. We do not think that having a reason to judge a content that *P* requires entertaining a correct argument to the effect that *P* is true. Mary's visual experience of the red rose, for instance, can be a reason both for her judging that the rose before her is red, and for the introspective judgment that she is seeing a red rose. This does not entail that she could grasp an argument to the effect that those contents are true. Rather, we take it that she has a reason to judge according to these contents because these judgments are likely to be true from her point of view, and because she has access to the content of the experience. Because it perceptually seems to Mary as though the rose is red, it rationally makes sense from her point of view to judge that the rose is red: considering the content of the experience, the truth conditions of this proposition are likely to be satisfied. In such a perspective, reasons, seen as considerations accessible for the subject and according to which certain contents are likely to be true, have two important aspects. From an objective perspective, something counts as a reason for judging that *P* if there is a truth-connection between its obtaining and the satisfaction of *P*'s truth-conditions. A visual experience is an objective reason because there is a truth-connection between having a visual experience presenting the fact that *P*, and its being the case that *P*. From a subjective perspective, we think that a reason is accessible to a subject to the extent that she is sensitive to it, even

though she is not capable of making explicit the connexion between the obtaining of the reason and the obtaining of the content for which it is a reason. If the conception of reasons that we have put forward is on the right track, it should be clear that a subject can be sensitive to a certain kind of reasons, have access to these reasons while forming beliefs or making judgements, without having a full and explicit grasp of the truth-connexions that confer a warrant role to those reasons. It follows that having access to a reason does not imply knowing all its rational characteristics. This is important because typically, a subject reflecting upon the rational role of a factive reason will not know, just because she can access it, that it is factive: having access to a factive reason does not imply being able to discriminate it from a non-factive one.

If it seems to Mary that she is seeing a red rose because she is having an hallucination, her sensitivity to this state, leading her to judging that the rose is red, cannot be blamed from a rational point of view. John McDowell acknowledges this point in the following passage: "it might be rational (doxastically blameless) for the subject—who only seems to see a candle in front of her—to claim that there is a candle in front of her"⁹. Mary's doxastic behavior is not unintelligible or irrational when she judges that the rose is red on this basis, because from her point of view the hallucinatory experience is not discriminable from a factive reason. To conclude on this point: even in the bad case, an epistemological disjunctivist may accept that a non-veridical experience confers a reason to believe, despite this reason not being truth-conducive.

Epistemological disjunctivism and internalism

Epistemological disjunctivism is inconsistent, to some extent, with internalism, and it is important to understand exactly to what extent. According to both positions, a subject has a perceptual reason to judge that *P* if and only if she has access to a mental state, an experience that counts as an internalist epistemic support for *P*. Epistemological disjunctivists, however, insist that some mental states, when considered as reasons, have to be typed in a relational way. Let us consider again the contrast between a paradigmatic, truth-conducive, visual experience—the good case—, and a subjectively indiscriminable hallucination—the bad case. This means that what it is like, for the subject, to be in the good case, is identical to what it is like to be in the bad case, or at least that the subject cannot discriminate from the inside between the good case and the bad one. Nevertheless, according to epistemological

⁹ McDowell (2002, 99).

disjunctivism, the subject has access to very different reasons in the good and bad cases: in the good case, but not in the bad one, she has access to a factive reason. This should not be surprising. Our folk psychology itself contrasts factive and non-factive senses of verbs like "to see". Seeing that the rose is red, in a factive interpretation, entails that the rose is red; so it makes sense to claim that a subject, by seeing (in a factive sense) that a rose is red, has access to a factive reason to believe that this rose is red. An epistemological disjunctivist, we think, should not be committed to the claim that the subject having access to a factive reason can know by reflexion alone that the reason is factive. Nor should she be committed to the claim that she cannot know such properties of reasons by reflexion alone: she should just remain neutral on this question. The only essential assumption she should be committed to, we contend, is that in accessing a factive reason in a normal case, a subject has access to a mental state that is distinct in kind¹⁰ from the non-factive reasons she has access to in non-normal cases, even though she cannot discriminate between having access to a factive reason and having access to a non-factive one. This should not be very controversial. In the good case, a visual experience is a (truth-conducive) bearer of information, and as such accessing it gives an opportunity to gain knowledge. The fact that factive and non-factive reasons differ with respect to this epistemological (or informational) property is enough to justify the claim that they differ in kind.

What *would* be controversial would be the different claim that the subject accesses different kinds of reasons in the good and bad cases in virtue of having experiences of a different metaphysical nature. But why would an epistemological disjunctivist be committed to this? The property of being a bearer of information is analyzed, in the current theories of information, as a *relational* property¹¹. So if one does not think that experiences have a relational nature, one is not committed to the claim that experiences having distinct relational properties also have, for this very reason, distinct natures.

So the kind of internalism that is inconsistent with epistemological disjunctivism is a quite strong claim. Following Duncan Pritchard¹², we will describe it by using Putnam's thought experiment of a recently envatted duplicate of a normally perceiving subject. Let us assume that Mary is having a paradigmatic, normal, veridical visual experience of a red rose, and that her brain has

¹⁰ Let us emphasize that being distinct in kind from a non-factive reason does not imply being of a different metaphysical nature. In our terminology, two states may differ in kind because one is a bearer of information but not the other, even if they share a common metaphysical nature.

¹¹ See for instance Dretske (1995).

¹² Cf. Pritchard (2012).

just been duplicated and envatted. We will also suppose that Mary and Twin Mary's brains are synchronized: the patterns of activations in Twin Mary's brain are exactly the same as the patterns in Mary's brain. Let us also assume that Mary's envatted duplicate has conscious experiences, and that these conscious experiences are qualitatively indistinguishable from Mary's¹³. As we have seen, epistemological disjunctivism implies that Mary and Twin Mary *do not have access to the same kinds of reasons*. Mary's experiences have relational properties with her environment that endow them with the property of being factive, so she has, contrary to Twin Mary, access to factive reasons. This is precisely here that epistemological disjunctivism diverges from classical internalism. According to Pritchard, a widely held core thesis of epistemic internalism is the following "New Evil Genius Thesis"¹⁴:

The New Evil Genius Thesis

Mary's internalist epistemic support for believing that P is constituted solely by properties that Mary has in common with Twin Mary.

The New Evil Genius Thesis is not consistent with epistemological disjunctivism, since according to this view, the reasons Mary has access to differ in their properties from the reasons Twin Mary has access to. Let us consider Mary's visual experience of the red rose. This experience has the relational property of conveying information upon the fact that the rose Mary is seeing is red. Let us consider now the qualitatively identical twin mental state Twin Mary is in when Mary is seeing the red rose. Even if we grant that what it is like for Twin Mary while she is enjoying the experience is identical to what it is like for Mary to see a red rose, and for this reason that both experiences, having the same phenomenal character, are intrinsically alike, we do not have to accept the internalist view according to which both experiences have also exactly the same epistemological properties: Mary's and Twin Mary's experiences differ with regard to their relational properties, and these relational properties might very well be essential to their epistemological standing.

¹³ This assumption, as we will see later, is controversial.

¹⁴ This is a slightly modified version of Pritchard's own rendering of the thesis, cf. Pritchard (2012, 38).

The local supervenience thesis

Let us take stock. Epistemological disjunctivism is inconsistent with epistemological internalism in so far as it rejects the New Evil Genius Thesis. It is consistent, however, with the claim that the intrinsic properties of experiences remain the same for Mary and Twin Mary. This claim, that many metaphysicians of mind find plausible, is a consequence of the local supervenience principle. In order to be able to give a statement of this principle, let us first clarify our terminology. First, we will define the *phenomenal character* of an experience as that property of the experience that enables a subject to classify it according to what it is like to have it¹⁵. As a consequence, experience *E1* and experience *E2* differ in their phenomenal character exactly to the extent that what it is like to have *E1* differs from what it is like to have *E2*. Two experiences that differ in their total phenomenal character can be phenomenally similar with respect to certain dimensions. It is useful to introduce the concept of a phenomenal property to capture such similarities. Talking about the phenomenal properties of experiences is a way of typing the similarities between them. Thus, Mary's visual experience of a red rose differs qualitatively from her visual experience of a red tomato; nevertheless, the two experiences share a phenomenal property, which explains their qualitative similarity. We can now formulate the Local Supervenience Principle¹⁶ :

Local Supervenience Principle:

Phenomenal properties and phenomenal characters supervene on brain properties. That is: two organisms that do not differ in their brain properties will differ neither in the phenomenal characters of the experiences they have, nor in the phenomenal properties of those experiences.

Let us assume that it is possible, in principle at least, to artificially reproduce the neural activity of a brain in a laboratory context, in the absence of the stimuli which would normally cause this neural activity. Let us also assume that for a given subject, an experience having phenomenal character *P* is normally correlated with the occurrence of neural activity *A*. The Local Supervenience

¹⁵ Note that according to this definition, the phenomenal character of an experience is an objective feature of this experience that does not depend on the introspective capacities of the subject. It does not follow *a priori* from this definition that indistinguishable experiences should have the same phenomenal characters.

¹⁶ We borrow the expression "local supervenience principle" to William Fish. Cf. Fish (2009, chap. 2).

Principle implies that it should be possible to replicate an experience having phenomenal character P just by reproducing the neural activity A, even in the absence of the normal objects of the experience. This means that according to the Local Supervenience Principle, Mary's and Twin Mary's experiences have the same phenomenal character: they share all their phenomenal properties. If we also assume that the metaphysical nature of experiences is essentially phenomenal — that is, that a given experience having a phenomenal character P could not instantiate a different phenomenal character in any possible world —, it follows that Mary's and Twin Mary's experiences share a common metaphysical nature if the Local Supervenience Principle is true — presumably, a common neural basis.

Again, this consequence is not inconsistent with the core thesis of epistemological disjunctivism. "Being factive" can be a property of Mary's red rose experience without being one of its *essential* properties. In the informational framework we favor, experiences carry information about the world and they do so in virtue of informational relations with the objects and properties that are instantiated in it. To this extent, an experience can be compared with a map of an environment. The shapes and colors on the map — the analogue of the phenomenal properties instantiated by the experience — do denote places and environmental characteristics in normal paradigmatic situations of use, and in such normal uses the map will give factive reasons to believe that the denoted characteristics are instantiated by the denoted places. By looking at a map, we have an opportunity to gain knowledge precisely because the map carries (factive) information in normal contexts. The factive character of the map, however, crucially depends on the existence of certain contextual relations to the environment. If we move the map in a radically different environment, for instance if we try to use it on another planet, it will of course afford no opportunity to gain knowledge. So it is because the map has certain relational properties that it carries information. These properties are not essential, as witnessed by the fact that we can use the map to navigate in a wrong environment. The map has a potential to deliver knowledge, but this potential can be expressed only if it is properly used in the right environment.

In a similar way, it can be claimed that the factive aspects of conscious perceptual experiences depend upon their relational, non-essential, properties. Such a claim makes sense in a representational framework. However, many authors have defended a metaphysically very ambitious interpretation of the main thesis of epistemological disjunctivism, that rejects representationalism and is inconsistent with the Local Supervenience Principle. We now turn to this interpretation.

2. Metaphysical disjunctivism and the relational conception of experience

The conception of the epistemic role of experience that we have sketched in the first part of our paper is disjunctivist in a very modest way: it claims that veridical perceptual experiences are factive reasons to believe, and that they should be typed apart from illusions and hallucinations at least to this extent. This does not imply that there is nothing mental in common between veridical and non-veridical experiences: two mental states may differ relative to their epistemological standings, one being a factive reason contrary to the other, but still have a common mental nature. This epistemological difference may lead one to classify them in different categories — after all, they have distinct epistemological properties, since veridical experiences reveal the world as it is to the subject, whereas illusions and hallucinations do not — while remaining neutral upon whether they have a common mental nature or not.

Metaphysical disjunctivism and the rejection of the common, fundamental kind thesis

Many disjunctivists are more ambitious, and claim that veridical states and hallucinations are of different fundamental kinds. Note that nobody claims that these states have *absolutely nothing in common*, since both a veridical experience and a hallucination may at least share the property of being subjectively indiscriminable from a perception of an F. The interesting and controversial claim is that they do not share any fundamental property:

Metaphysical Disjunctivism: the Core Thesis

Veridical perceptual experiences do not share any essential, fundamental, nature with non-veridical experiences (like hallucinations or illusions).

One finds a clear statement of this thesis in M. G. Martin's writings, who characterizes disjunctivism as the rejection of the Common Kind Assumption, thus formulated: "whatever kind of mental event occurs when one is veridically perceiving some scene, such as the street scene outside my window, that kind of event can occur whether or not one is perceiving"¹⁷.

It should be clear that the core thesis of epistemological disjunctivism does not logically imply the core thesis of metaphysical disjunctivism. As Duncan

¹⁷ Cf. Martin (2004), in Byrne and Logue (2009, 273).

Pritchard emphasizes, "that the rational standing available to the agent in normal veridical perceptual experiences and corresponding to (introspectively indistinguishable) cases of illusion and hallucination are radically different does not in itself entail that there is no common metaphysical essence to the experience of the agent in both cases"¹⁸. So, metaphysical disjunctivism does not follow from epistemological disjunctivism.

Naïve realism and the relational conception of experience

What are the motivations for rejecting the common kind assumption, then? It is difficult to give a completely systematic answer since the core thesis of metaphysical disjunctivism is negative. However the most interesting motivation has to do with a simple and attractive conception of conscious experience, that Martin calls "naïve realism": "the prime reason for endorsing disjunctivism, he writes, is to block the rejection of a view of perception I'll label *Naïve Realism*. The Naïve Realist thinks that some at least of our sensory episodes are presentations of an experience-independent reality"¹⁹. The notion of presentation, in this quote, should be interpreted in the following way: objects and their properties are *constitutive* of the phenomenal character of our conscious experiences. In order for there to be a conscious experience for a subject, she has to be presented with certain facts. If the facts did not exist, they could not be presented, and as a consequence the experience would not exist. Naïve Realism, as Martin understands it, considers any perceptual experience as a relational structure existentially dependent upon its *relata*. For this reason, following John Campbell, we will also call it the "relational conception of experience". As Campbell puts it:

On a Relational View, the phenomenal character of your experience, as you look around the room, is constituted by the actual layout of the room itself: which particular objects there are, their intrinsic properties, such as colour and shape, and how they are arranged in relation to one another and to you. On this Relational View, two ordinary observers standing in roughly the same place, looking at the same scene, are bound to have experiences with the same phenomenal character. Campbell (2002, 116).

¹⁸ Cf. Pritchard (2012, 24).

¹⁹ Martin (2004), in Byrne and Logue (2009, 272).

In order to have a good understanding of the relational conception of experience, it is convenient to follow Campbell and to contrast it with its main contender, the Representationalist View. According to Campbell's own characterization:

On (...) a Representationalist analysis, in contrast, perception involves being in representational states, and the phenomenal character of your experience is constituted not by the way your surroundings are, but by the contents of your representational states. Campbell (2002, p. 116).

According to this definition, experiences have representational properties which determine their representational content, and their phenomenal characters are constituted by these contents. This is not the only way to characterize the Representationalist View, nor maybe the best, but we will grant it for the sake of discussion.

The Relational and Representationalist views of experience give a very different analysis of what being consciously aware of an object (or an instantiated property) amounts to. According to the Relational View, conscious awareness is a (perceptual) relation to the objects present in the perceived scene and to their properties. That is the reason why, as John Campbell puts it, "we have to think of the external object, in cases of veridical perception, as a constituent of the experience. (...) We have to think of cognitive processes as 'revealing' the world to the subject, as making it possible for the subject to experience particular external objects" (Campbell, 2002), p. 118²⁰.

A very close relative of the Relational View that is worth mentioning is the view that the phenomenal characters of veridical experiences are *factive* and purely mental properties, a view that Benj Hellie calls "Phenomenal Naivete"²¹. Strictly speaking, Campbell's Relational View does not imply Phenomenal Naivete, because he construes the phenomenal characters of experiences as acquaintance relations to particulars and instantiated properties in the world, not as acquaintance relations to facts. The subtle distinction between the Relational View and Phenomenal Naivete is of no importance in the context of the

²⁰ One finds a similar formulation in Martin's writings when he claims that «some of the objects of perception—the concrete individuals, their properties, the events that partake in it—are constituents of the experience. No experience like this, no experience of fundamentally the same kind, could have occurred had no appropriate candidate for awareness existed» Martin (2004), in Byrne and Logue (2009, 273). Martin, however, is not committed to the idea that conscious experience is existentially dependent on worldly objects.

²¹ Cf Hellie (2007, 264-265).

present paper, so we will sometime speak as if phenomenal characters were factive according to the Relational View.

According to representationalism, now, one is consciously aware of an object *O* being *P* if and only if one is having an experience representing *O* as being *P*. Conscious awareness, in this view, is a relation between the subject and a represented object. One sometimes reads that the represented object is a constituent of the representational content of the state, but this is contentious, since on some views contents are unstructured (for instance when they are construed as sets of possible worlds). Besides, the representational relation is intentional. This means that in a representationalist framework, a subject may be consciously aware of an entity that is not really present in the perceptual scene. The Representationalist View implies that normative conditions of satisfaction are associated with experiences: being a representation, a given experience is correct in some contexts, and incorrect in other contexts. This is enough to draw a distinction between the Relational View and the Representationalist View, since the former is not committed to the claim that experiences have conditions of satisfaction.

The contrast between the two positions is especially striking when one considers situations in which perceptual experiences occur in an abnormal way, for instance situations of hallucination. The Representationalist View can explain why Mary's hallucinatory visual experience of a red rose is indiscernible from a veridical experience: in the bad case as in the good one, the experience is nothing but a visual representation of a rose being red²². Since a state can represent another state in its absence, the existence of the representation does not depend upon the actual presence of its intentional objects in the scene of perception. The representational properties of the perceptual state and its representational content may be exactly the same in the good case and in the bad one. It follows that on a representationalist view, one may assume that there is a fundamental mental nature in common between the good case and the bad one, namely, a certain perceptual representation.

An advocate of the Relational View is bound to disagree. On this view, the perceived object is a constituent of the conscious experience in the good, paradigmatic case of perception. In the bad case, where no real object is to be perceived, nothing can enter into the experience as such a constituent. How are we to understand that the visual experience, in the bad case, subjectively feels just like its veridical counterpart? According to Campbell, the experience is quite different in the case of the hallucination, since there is no object

²² See Smith (2002).

to be a constituent of your experience²³. This is quite an understatement, though. By his own admission, the phenomenal characters of conscious experiences are metaphysically *constituted* by the real objects of these experiences. This logically entails that an experience without object cannot have any phenomenal character at all. There isn't anything it is like to hallucinate a red rose, since such a mental state doesn't disclose any fact in the world that could serve as its object. A "mere" hallucinatory or illusory state cannot be an experience in the full sense, since it is hard to see how it could have a phenomenal character. It follows that a disjunctive analysis of the concept of experience is inevitable: an experience is either a perceptual relation to the world, or a state of a very different kind. The problem that remains, and that we will address later in the paper, is to understand how a state devoid of any qualitative character may be subjectively indistinguishable from a conscious perceptual experience.

Some motivations for the Relational View

In this section we will present and discuss two important motivations for the Relational View.

Transparency

The first motivation is phenomenological. According to the Relational View, one is only aware of the real objects present in a perceptual scene and of their properties in an episode of veridical perception. To this extent, the Relational View seems to be in line with what the phenomenology of such episodes reveals in introspection. When we introspectively reflect upon the characteristics of our perceptual experiences, we do not gain knowledge on anything internal to the mind or on anything having to do with representational vehicles or with representational properties. Let's take Mary who, while perceiving a red rose, focuses her attention not directly on the rose, but rather on her experience of it. What will she learn through introspection? She will self-ascribe a perception of a red rose, a knowledge she would thus express:

- (1) I am seeing a rose, and the rose I am seeing is red.

Such a self-ascription does not characterize the visual experience by referring to any internal object, but rather by directly referring to the object seen.

²³ Cf. Campbell (2002,117).

This reflects the transparency of experience: attending to the "reddish" phenomenal quality of the experience, it seems, is phenomenologically nothing else than attending to the color quality of the rose—a worldly property of a worldly object. Let us borrow the formulation of the transparency thesis to Christopher Hill:

Transparency Thesis: when one tries to attend introspectively to a perceptual experience, (...) one is aware only of what it is an experience of (...).²⁴

Let us emphasize that the Transparency Thesis is an epistemological claim, not a metaphysical claim. Accepting the Transparency Thesis does only imply that we gain knowledge about the phenomenal properties of our experiences by attending to the objects of these experiences. The thesis is utterly silent on the nature of those objects and on the nature of those phenomenal properties²⁵. It does not imply, for instance, that the phenomenal properties of experiences are supervenient on the properties of their objects: it only implies that those phenomenal properties that can be known by introspection supervene on properties of the perceived objects. Thus, the thesis does not imply that phenomenal properties are essentially object-dependent, but only that we get information about them by attending to objects. Transparency is a phenomenological fact that a good theory of consciousness should explain; it should not count as a decisive argument in favour of any theory.

The folk psychology of appearances and the Relational View as the default position

In view of the above, an inference to the best explanation could be drawn to the effect that the Relational View is true, along the following lines:

1. through introspective reflection, conscious sense perception seems to us to be nothing else than a direct contact with the perceived objects and their properties;

²⁴ Cf Hill (2009, 57). Hill characterizes the Transparency Thesis further, by saying that in introspecting one is aware of "what the experience represents or signifies". This reflects his commitment to an intentionalist theory of perception. We leave this out of our definition of transparency, because we want to define it in a neutral way with respect to both the Relational and the Representationalist Views.

²⁵ Cf. Kind (2003).

2. the Relational View, which construes experiences as an acquaintance relation between the subject and the objects of experience, is the best explanation of this observation;
3. so the Relational View is probably true.

Some authors think that this reasoning can be strengthened by appealing to experts. We are not convinced that it really makes sense to refer to expertise in a domain like introspection, but let us assume, at least for the sake of the discussion, that there are indeed experts in phenomenology. Benj Hellie borrows the following five quotes from such experts, whose convergent testimonies are supposed to bring support to the Relational View²⁶:

In its purely phenomenological aspects seeing is (...) ostensibly prehensive of the surfaces of distant bodies as coloured and extended. It is a natural, if paradoxical, way of speaking to say that seeing seems to “bring one into direct contact with remote objects” and to reveal their shapes and colours. (Broad, 1952, 32-33);

Mature sensible experience (in general) presents itself as [...] an immediate consciousness of the existence of things outside of us. (Strawson, 1979, 97);

When someone has a fact made manifest to him, [. . .] the obtaining of the fact is precisely not blankly external to his subjectivity. (McDowell, 1982, 390–1)

Visual phenomenology makes it for a subject as if a scene is simply presented. Veridical perception, illusion, and hallucination seem to place objects and their features directly before the mind. (Sturgeon, 2000, 9)

The ripe tomato seems immediately present to me in experience. I am not in any way aware of any cognitive distance between me and the scene in front of me; the fact that what I’m doing is representing the world is clearly not itself part of the experience. The world is just there. (Levine, 2006, 179)

²⁶ Hellie (2007, 266). Cf also Fish, (2009, chap. 1), who seems to agree with Hellie that this list brings support to the Relational View.

We agree with the advocates of the Relational View that these "experts" give a faithful rendering of the phenomenology of visual experience. It seems to us, however, that these testimonies do not give any strong support to the Relational View. What seems to be coming out therefrom is that visual experience is conceived as an immediate relation to the objects we are seeing. We concur, and we even think that folk psychology typically conceives perceptual experience as being relational. This does not tell much in favor of the Relational View, however, because the Relational View bears on the *metaphysical nature* of perceptual experiences, not on the way they are typically conceived. Let us develop this further.

3. Representationalism as an alternative explanation

Our strategy in this paper is to grant to the disjunctivist that perceptual experiences are factive reasons, and that they are conceived as such by ordinary people. Ordinary people seem to think, along with the "experts", (i) that we are related, through our visual experiences, to objects in the world and to their properties (ii) that this relation is immediate, and that as a consequence the objects are "presented" to us in perception. By "immediate", it seems we just need to understand that the relation is not inferentially based: looking at objects enable us to gain veridical information about them in a non-inferential way. Apart from that, folk psychology is not committed to any particular conception of the perceptual relation and the perceptual states. As a consequence, there does not seem to be any inconsistency between the judgements of the experts and of the folk on the one hand, and representationalism on the other hand, at least insofar as the natures of the perceptual relation and of the perceptual states are concerned. According to the representationalist view, the function of perceptual-representational systems is to track ecologically relevant objects in the world, in order to enable the cognitive agent to accumulate information about them and to act upon them. It follows that in normal cases of veridical perception, perception can indeed be seen as relational in such a framework, since representational states are related to their objects by informational channels. Campbell emphasizes that on a Relational View of perception, we have to think of cognitive processes as 'revealing' the world to the subject Campbell (2002, 118). It is hard to see, however, why the revelation metaphor could not be applied to the Representationalist View as well as to the Relational View: as we have insisted in the first part of this paper, the Representationalist View can incorporate the idea that perceptual

experiences are factive reasons. In normal contexts, the occurrence of a perceptual representation is linked to the existence of an informational channel relating the subject to the perceived scene: the experience would simply not occur if the informational channel did not exist, and if it did not allow a flow of information. Following David Lewis, let us call "acquaintance relations" the informational channels through which we gain information about the objects we perceive and their features²⁷.

The Representationalist View implies that subjects are normally acquainted with the objects of perception, and that this acquaintance relation is direct and immediate, in the sense that it does not rely on any inference²⁸. It is also consistent with the transparency of experience. The function of representational systems is to collect information about ecologically relevant, objective features of the organism's environment. The states of those systems represent objective environmental states. To this extent, they are about objects in the perceptual scene, not about mental objects. As a matter of historical fact, some of the first and foremost advocates of the transparency of experience are also advocates of representationalism. For instance, Gilbert Harman claims that our experience of the world is not mediated in any way by a prior and more fundamental awareness of intrinsic mental features:

When you see a tree, you do not experience any features as intrinsic features of your experience. Look at a tree and try to turn your attention to the intrinsic features of your visual experience. I predict you will find that the only features there to turn your attention to will be features of the presented tree (...). (Harman, 1990, 667).

Harman also contends that we are only aware of the represented intentional objects of our experiences, not of their intrinsic non-intentional aspects. This is the point he makes in the following text:

In the case of a painting, Eloise can be aware of those features of the painting that are responsible for its being a painting of a unicorn. That is, she can turn her attention to the pattern of the paint on the canvas by virtue of which the painting represents a unicorn.

²⁷ Perceptual relations are the paradigm of acquaintance relations according to Lewis; they are based on "channels" or "causal chains" from the object to the cognitive system which "permit a flow of information». Cf. Lewis (1999, 380-381).

²⁸ This is of course consistent with the popular idea that visual representations are constructed by the brain through algorithmic processes. Such processes are sub-personal, hence non-inferential.

But in the case of her visual experience of a tree, I want to say that she is not aware of, as it were, the mental paint by virtue of which her experience is experience of seeing a tree. She is aware only of the intentional or relational features of her experience, not of its intrinsic nonintentional features. (Harman, 1990, *ibid.*).

In light of the above discussions, we can say that both the Relational View and the Representationalist View can explain the same range of phenomenological facts. Both views conceive perception as relational²⁹.

4. An explanatory argument against the Relational View

We have argued that the Representationalist View has the resources to explain the phenomenology of perceptual experiences. We have also argued that there is no reason why a representationalist could not endorse epistemological disjunctivism. What remains to be demonstrated, now, is that the Representationalist View provides a better overall explanation of the phenomenological *data*.

Let us start with the following methodological principle, that we think should not be controversial:

Explanatory Constraint: A good theory of conscious experience and its phenomenal properties should be able to explain the phenomenal similarities and dissimilarities among experiences.

Now, the Relational View implies that the phenomenal character of perceptual experiences metaphysically depends on the objects and properties the subject is related to when she perceives. As Campbell writes:

²⁹ This is contested by some authors. For instance, Tim Crane writes that "the intentionalist view (...) comes with a price. For it must deny that perceptual experience is a relation. When one does succeed in perceiving an object, one is related to it, of course; but this relation is not essential to the perceptual experience being of the fundamental kind that it is". (Crane, 2006, 141). This statement might first strike us as blatantly contradictory, since Crane describes the intentionalists both as denying that "perceptual experience is a relation", and as claiming that "when one does succeed in perceiving an object, one is related to it". Crane does not deny that perception *can* be interpreted as relational by the Representationalist View: as we have insisted on before, in paradigmatic contexts of veridical perception, representational states are bearers of factive information about the perceptual scene. What he denies is that perception, that is, the first-order representational state brought about by perception, is *essentially* relational on the Representationalist View.

(...) thousands of people might visit the very same spot and enjoy the same external objects. You characterize the experience they are having by saying which view they are enjoying. On the Relational View, this is the same thing as describing the phenomenal character of their experiences. (Campbell, 2002, 116).

This leads to a precise prediction that the advocates of the Relational View should endorse:

Similarity of Objects Principle: the similarities between conscious perceptual experiences should always be explainable by appealing to similarities in the objects and properties perceived in these experiences: similarities between sensations are due to similarities in their real objective correlates.

It follows that any two similar experiences with respect to their phenomenal properties but dissimilar in their objects would constitute a counter-example to the Relational View.

Let us emphasize at the outset that the explanatory constraint that we have put forward is consistent with the very modest conception of introspection that is advocated by the Relational View³⁰. It does indeed not imply that subjectively indiscernible experiences should have identical phenomenal characters, but only, much more modestly, that their subjective indiscriminability should be explainable by only referring to the properties of their objects. In this regard, we do not see the existence of subjectively indiscriminable experiences having different objects as a problem for the Relational View, as long as it can explain the subjectively felt resemblance between those experiences³¹. Let us consider Dretske's example of two subjectively indiscriminable black-horse experiences, E1 and E2, having two distinct horses H1 and H2 as objects³². It is true that according to the Relational View, E1 and E2 have distinct phenomenal characters, since H1 and H2 are numerically distinct. This is not

³⁰ Cf. Martin (2004).

³¹ It seems to us that if one accepts the intransitivity of indiscriminability, one should also accept that there should be indiscriminable perceptual experiences of the world having distinct phenomenal characters. We are not committed to this claim, but we do not consider it to be blatantly implausible either. For a very different view, see Smith (2002), who claims that as a matter of definition, subjectively indiscriminable experiences should have identical phenomenal characters.

³² Cf. Dretske (1995).

as implausible as it might seem: if one endorses the modest account of introspection favored by the Relational View, one should abandon the idea that indiscernible experiences are necessarily type-identical. As Martin makes clear, this very common presupposition could be questioned:

Many have supposed that what we mean by the phenomenal character of an experience is just that aspect of it which is introspectible, and hence that any two experiences which are introspectively indistinguishable must share their phenomenal characters, even if they differ in other ways. Now, while some such complaints may have widespread support in discussions of phenomenal consciousness, it is not clear whether it should be taken as a primitive claim which is somehow obvious, and the rejection of which is incredible. (Martin, 2006, 366-367).

The important point, as far as the Explanatory Constraint is concerned, is that the Relational View can explain the phenomenal similarity between the indistinguishable experiences E1 and E2: E1 and E2 have phenomenal characters that are metaphysically distinct; nevertheless, since H1 and H2 share many of their properties—we may assume that they share all their intrinsic properties—it is easy to explain the phenomenal similarity between E1 and E2 by appealing to the similarity between H1 and H2.

The Similarity of Objects Principle is also compatible with the recognition that dissimilarities in the phenomenal contents of experiences should sometimes be explained, at least in part, by referring to characteristics of the cognitive systems of the subjects having the experiences. It is sometimes claimed that the Relational View wrongly "attribute[s] all of the distinguishing features of every fact of perceptual consciousness to the entities that count as the objects of consciousness"³³. We do not agree with this claim. Of course, it is true that "how an object of consciousness appears to us sometimes depends, at least in part, on factors that lie on the subject side of the subject/object divide"³⁴. But this is not inconsistent with the Relational View: two subjects facing the same object may be presented with different experiential contents simply because their cognitive system does not respond to the same subset of properties among the set of all the properties instantiated in the object. We think that this is what Campbell alludes to in the following passage³⁵:

³³ Cf. Hill (2009, 83). Cf. also Rey (2005).

³⁴ Cf. Hill (2009, 83).

³⁵ Rey also quotes this passage, and concludes that Campbell is contradicting himself: "per-

After all, two people could be seeing the very same object, and yet the intrinsic character of their experience be quite different. This in itself is undeniable. It is the next step that leads to rejection of the Relational View. The next step is to say that the way in which the object is given is independent of whether the object exists, and independent of whether the subject is experiencing one or many similar objects. (Campbell, 2002, 126).

Perception cannot reveal to the subjects all the properties that are instantiated in a given context of perception: the facts that are seen depend on the subject's perspective, but also on the perceptual-recognitional abilities that are actualized by the subject in the context³⁶. For instance, a subject may be unable to visually recognize a given color instantiated by an object. In such a case, her visual experience will differ from the visual experience of another subject endowed with a more sensitive recognition ability, even though both subjects are presented with the same object³⁷.

So let us now turn our attention to cases that are really problematic for the Relational View, i.e., to cases in which similarities between sensory experiences cannot be explained by similarities in their objects. Hallucinations are a *prima facie* clear counter-example to the *Similarity of Objects Principle*: in an hallucinatory episode of a red rose, Mary enjoys an experience that she would describe as very similar to a veridical visual experience of a red rose,

haps I am missing something here, he writes, but it's hard not to construe these passages as flatly contradictory, and as a *reductio* of the Relational View". Cf. Rey (2005, 138). We do not agree with Rey, because we do not think that the Relational View logically implies that two persons seeing the same objects instantiating the same properties will be presented with the same phenomenal contents.

³⁶ Block (2010) suggests an argument against direct realism by appealing to the phenomenal effects of attention: two perceptual experiences of the same worldly objects and properties may exhibit different phenomenologies because according to the distribution and focalization of attention, some features of experience will be more or less salient. Since these very objects and properties are constitutive of the phenomenology of perceptual experience, it seems that a naive realist is at a loss when having to explain why these two experiences differ. Block's argument takes the form of a dilemma: either the naive realist tries to explain away the phenomenal difference, or he bites the bullet and considers that one of the two experiences, differing only by the distribution and focalization of attention, is illusory. The latter explanation is unsatisfactory, since it would make illusion too widespread. However, there seems to be no explanation available, following the first strategy, that wouldn't appeal to mental properties in order to account for the difference in phenomenal characters. Given our remarks concerning the influence of the subject's cognitive system, it seems we can sidestep Block's objection: attention has a role in how visual information is picked up, and hence, on how worldly objects and properties contribute to a subject's phenomenology.

³⁷ On this point, see Fish (2009, chap. 3).

in the absence of any seen object. Mary's testimony that she had a conscious visual experience very similar to a veridical experience of a red rose during the episode is hard to reconcile with the Relational View. In an hallucinatory episode, no real fact is revealed to the subject. There is nothing real in the scene that could constitute the phenomenal character of the experience. So it is even hard to understand, on the Relational View, how Mary can claim that she had a conscious experience endowed with a phenomenal character³⁸.

The more radical way to address this difficulty is to bite the bullet and claim that a hallucination, and more generally any non-factive experience, is only "conscious" in a derivative sense, because it simply *does not have any phenomenal character*. William Fish puts forward such a bold approach³⁹. He advocates an error-theory of hallucinations as conscious experiences. On this approach, when Mary hallucinates a red rose, the mental state she is in during the episode entirely lacks any phenomenal character. All that is happening in her mind is that she wrongly forms the same introspective beliefs and behaviors that she would acquire in the context of a veridical visual experience. In particular, she acquires the (false) belief that she had a visual experience with the phenomenal character of a red-rose perception.

Fish is opposing the majority view in the philosophy of phenomenal consciousness, according to which there cannot be any distinction between it seeming to a subject as if she is having a phenomenal experience and her really having this experience. Most philosophers are strongly inclined to think that there is no room for the appearance/reality distinction in our introspective grasp of phenomenal states.

This leads to a first argument against Fish's radical position, the argument from the authority of the subject on her self-ascription of phenomenal contents: it just seems inappropriate to raise doubts about self-ascriptions of phenomenal contents, even in non-veridical contexts of perception, and this seems to stem from the very meaning of our concept of a sensory conscious experience. Subjects seem to have a special kind of authority upon these self-ascriptions. There is a contrast, in this regard, between the following dialogues:

(H) a. Mary: This is a red rose.

b. Pierre: You are wrong. There is no rose at all in front of you, you are hallucinating.

³⁸ Cf. Smith (2002).

³⁹ Cf. Fish (2009).

- (E) a. Mary: It now visually appears to me as if there is a red rose in front of me.
b. Pierre: You are wrong. Nothing visually appears to you, you are hallucinating.

(H) is OK: in abnormal circumstances, one can raise doubt about the rational justification provided to a subject by one of her visual experiences. (E) seems not only odd but, according to our folk psychology of visual hallucinations and of visual appearances, contradictory. Fish argues that if our folk psychology considers that there is no appearance/reality distinction in the domain of conscious experiences, then our folk psychology is systematically mistaken: hallucinations appear to have a phenomenal character, despite the fact that there is literally nothing it is like to having an hallucination. He borrows to David Rosenthal's higher order thought theory of consciousness the idea that a subject may have a higher-order thought that she is in a first-order mental state of a given kind even in the absence of this first-order thought. Again, this claim has very counter-intuitive consequences. Consider an amputated patient feeling pain in her phantom limb. On Fish's view, such phantom pains cannot share the phenomenal properties of veridical episodes of nociception, since they simply do not have any phenomenal character. It follows that the subject reporting a painful experience in a phantom limb is wrong: the non-veridical sensory state cannot be painful, since it is devoid of phenomenal properties. She only has the higher-order thoughts that accompany normal, veridical, experiences of pain, but these states, not being strictly speaking "phenomenal", do not exemplify the phenomenal property of painfulness. It is very hard to believe, however, that the existence of higher-order conceptual thoughts could account for the painfulness of the subject's phantom limb.

According to our folk psychology, conscious experiences have a dual role. First, they have an *explanatory role*. The occurrence of experiences can typically cause motor responses and can lead to the acquisition of beliefs. This seems to be true in hallucinatory context as well as in normal contexts of veridical perception: thus, Macbeth's hallucination of a dagger before him causes him to grasp for something. His conscious visual experience explains his reaching behavior. According to Fish's theory however, Macbeth doesn't have any conscious experience we could refer to when explaining his behavior. So how are we to explain it? An obvious answer is to mention the higher-order thoughts acquired by Macbeth during the episode, in particular the belief that it visually appears to him that there is a dagger before him. This is unsatisfactory, however, because Macbeth's acquiring the non-veridical higher-order belief

about his visual experience is left completely unexplained. How is this belief acquired? It is not caused by any conscious visual experience, since Fish denies the existence of such experiences in hallucinatory contexts. So we must suppose that the belief is caused by unconscious mental states, presumably by unconscious states of Macbeth's visual cortex. This is a very unwelcome consequence: to our knowledge, unconscious visual states are not apt to directly cause beliefs. Cognitive neuroscientists of vision postulate numerous types of unconscious representations and of unconscious processes, but none of these representations are supposed to directly give rise to beliefs, precisely because they are unconscious, hence not accessible to the subject.

So we see that it is hard to explain why Macbeth has self-ascribed a visual content of a dagger in front of him in the absence of any conscious experience that could have caused this introspective belief. This is the second problem that Fish's theory has to face: it cannot explain how and why the higher-order thoughts that play, according to his view, such a prominent role in accounting for the subject's linguistic behavior in hallucinatory contexts are acquired. Let us emphasize that we do not deny that higher-order thoughts may have an important role to play in understanding some hallucinations. According to the metacognitive belief model of hallucinatory experience, for instance, hallucinatory episodes arise from the externalization of intrusive thoughts—typically, of unintentionally occurring sounds or visual images⁴⁰. On this view, however, the occurrence of higher-order thoughts is explained by the occurrence of first-order states which are themselves endowed with phenomenal content. Fish cannot appeal to such states, since he claims that non-factive states are devoid of any phenomenology⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Cf. Filippo Varese and Frank Laroi (2012).

⁴¹ Against Fish's "reflexive account" of the metacognitive view on hallucination, Jérôme Dokic and Jean-Rémy Martin (2012) endorse a "monitoring account" according to which hallucinations are mistaken for veridical perceptions because of low-level metacognitive mechanisms, responsible for the monitoring of the quality of first-order experiential states. These "metaperceptual" mechanisms usually detect whether an experiential state has been generated internally or externally and are sensitive to its source (be it perception, imagination or what have you). On this account, hallucinations are simply states which have been wrongly tagged by this low-level monitoring system as *perceptual states* and which, as a result, produce the same cognitive effect as a genuine perception, without sharing its sensory phenomenology: indeed, no sensory phenomenology is at play in such a case – what these wrongly tagged states share with genuine perceptions is a "feeling of reality", which is no part of the sensory content of perception. We do not think that this view escapes the explanatory problem we have raised. Indeed, it has to face the following dilemma. Either the states tagged as perceptual states are endowed with a phenomenology of their own, differing in kind from the phenomenology of factive states. But then, the main advantage of Fish's approach is lost, since the very existence of this phenomenology and

There is also a third problem, which is related to the rationality of introspective beliefs, and to their relation to knowledge. We have commented above on the *explanatory role* of conscious experiences. These states also have a *justificatory role*: conscious experiences give reasons to act and believe. This seems to be also true for hallucinations. Macbeth's hallucinatory vision of a dagger not only causally explains, but also rationally justifies, his decision to try to reach a dagger in front of him. As Pautz notes⁴², even philosophers who endorse a radically externalist conception of perceptual evidence, as for instance Timothy Williamson does, typically agree that an illusory or an hallucinatory experience provides a justification⁴³: the visual appearing of a dagger in front of Macbeth is a reason for him to form a belief and to act on the basis of this belief.

On Fish's view, by contrast, an hallucinatory state is metaphysically constituted by a set of non-veridical higher-order thoughts. This entails that hallucinatory states cannot be reasons in any sense or justify actions or beliefs—not even introspective beliefs. They can play no rational role in thought. So clear cases in which an hallucinatory state would play a rational role in motivating a conclusion would be a decisive argument against Fish's view. Let us discuss two such cases:

Case 1: The lucid hallucinator

Jean-Paul S. is an expert in phenomenology. He ingests drugs on a regular basis, in order to study what he takes to be the phenomenology of visual hallucinations. These drugs give rise to episodes that are difficult to discriminate from veridical perceptions. Along these similarities, there are also some subtle differences that he is able to notice, so he is able to discriminate hallucinations from veridical perceptions when he concentrates. One morning however, as he wakes up, he happens to have forgotten whether or not he has ingested his drug. As a consequence, he concentrates on

its nature would have to be explained. Or they are devoid of any phenomenal character. But then, again, why do they give rise to higher-order cognitive states such as beliefs, episodic memories, ... etc? As far as we know, only conscious states give rise to beliefs or to other cognitives states.

⁴² Cf. Pautz (2013).

⁴³ « In unfavourable circumstances, one can fail to gain perceptual knowledge, perhaps because things are not the way they appear to be. (...) Nevertheless, one still has perceptual evidence, even if the propositions it supports are false. True propositions can make a false proposition probable (...). If perceptual evidence in the case of illusions consists of true propositions, what are they? The obvious answer is: the proposition that things appear to be that way » (Williamson, 2000, 198).

the phenomenology of the rich visual experience he is enjoying in order to decide whether or not this experience is veridical. After a short while, because he has carefully taken note of some relevant characteristics of his experience, he concludes that he is enjoying an hallucination, which is true.

Jean-Paul's conclusion seems to be not only true, but justified: Jean-Paul *knows* that he has gone through an hallucinatory episode. Noticing the specific characteristics of his visual experience, he has rationally come to the conclusion that this experience is not veridical. It seems difficult, however, to make sense of this case on Fish's approach: how could Jean-Paul get knowledge about the phenomenology of his hallucination if hallucinations do not have any phenomenology to begin with?

Case 2: Psychedelic Mary

Like Jackson's Mary, Psychedelic Mary has never seen any color. One day, however, she discovers that some drugs can systematically produce visual hallucinations of colors. Because she has (again, like Jackson's Mary) total knowledge of the working of her brain, she can predict which drug is going to produce which hallucination. Hence, she can describe the colors that she hallucinates as being red, orange, rose, green, etc. Despite never having seen any red object, it seems that Mary knows what it is like to have an experience of red. To this extent, it seems that Mary has gained knowledge about the phenomenal character of a "reddish" experience. This is also reflected in her ability to correctly describe similarities among colors. For instance, she knows that an experience of orange is more phenomenally similar to an experience of red than to an experience of green and that an experience of violet is more phenomenally similar to an experience of blue than to an experience of green⁴⁴.

Fish's theory entails that Psychedelic Mary has not acquired any knowledge about color visual experience. How could she have acquired such knowledge if, as Fish claims, hallucinations do not have any phenomenal charac-

⁴⁴ We borrow the idea of this thought experiment to Johnston (2004). Johnston claims, as we do, that "Mary could come to know what red is like by hallucinating ... [Even in hallucination] one comes to know what certain qualities are like, and ... so [one] is able to place them in a [resemblance-order] with other qualities of the same family" (Johnston, 2004, 130-131). Cf. also Hawthorne and Kovakovich (2006, 178).

ter? Mary's inferential and linguistic behavior would therefore be difficult to explain. We must remember that according to Fish's approach, Psychedelic Mary never had any conscious experience of colors. It follows, we may presume, that the color concepts she seems to be using, for instance when she claims that orange is phenomenally more similar to red than to green, do not denote anything. So Mary seems to have acquired knowledge, but she doesn't know anything about color experiences; she seems to be able to recognize colors, but she does not master any color concepts; she seems to make true statements about the phenomenal relations between color experiences, but these statements are just devoid of any content. This is not credible; for this reason, the conceivability of Psychedelic Mary's case is inconsistent with Fish's theory.

Let us conclude on Fish's radical view. This view rests on a revisionary conception of consciousness, according to which the subjects do not always have authority upon the contents of their conscious experiences. We argued to the effect that it has to face two serious objections: it can neither give any convincing explanation of the higher-order thoughts it appeals to, nor a correct account of the justificatory role of hallucinatory episodes. It seems very implausible, to deny that subjects enjoy a kind of conscious experience when they are hallucinating. This does not imply, however, that the Relational View is false: an advocate of the Relational View may grant that hallucinations (and other non-veridical experiences) have phenomenal characters, while insisting that these phenomenal characters differ in kind from the phenomenal characters of veridical experiences⁴⁵. This seems to be Mike Martin's position. Indeed, Martin endorses the following claims:

1. certain visual experiences, namely, "causally matching" hallucinations⁴⁶, are introspectively indiscriminable from veridical perceptions⁴⁷;
2. these experiences are phenomenally conscious: "Surely the condition of introspective indiscriminability guarantees that phenomenal conscious-

⁴⁵ This is also Hinton's position: "In the first place, there must be indistinguishable, or at least closely similar, subjective events; though not at all in the way that the doctrine of visual experiences requires, not ones that I can tell you about. We have touched on this already: it would be absurd not to posit, not to hypothesize, similar going-on in me when I see a flash of light and when I have that illusion." (1967b, 226)

⁴⁶ A "causally matching hallucination", in Martin's terminology, is an hallucination that is "brought about through the same proximal causal conditions as a veridical perception" (Martin, 2006, 368).

⁴⁷ Cf. Martin (2006, 369).

ness is present"⁴⁸; we may assume, since there is on Martin's view "something it is like" to have these experiences, that they have phenomenal characters—in this regard, Martin's approach differs from Fish's;

3. the phenomenal properties of these hallucinations should be typed by indiscriminability properties, that is, by negative epistemological properties. In other words, there is nothing more to the phenomenal character of a causally matching hallucination than the negative epistemic property of being introspectively indiscriminable from a veridical perception: "why did James shriek like that? He was in a situation indiscriminable from the veridical perception of a spider... With no detectable difference between this situation and such a perception, it must seem to him as if a spider is there and so reacts in the same way"⁴⁹.

Martin contends that a metaphysical disjunctivist should not search for a more substantive characterization of hallucinations' phenomenal characters than (iii). His negative approach is tailored to eschew what he calls the "screening off" concern:

Suppose we do get a further specification of the kind of mental event that occurs in the non-privileged circumstances. If what marks these cases out in the first place is just that they involve the absence of perception, then one may worry that whatever fixes what they have in common with each other will apply equally to any case of perception (...). Now if the common element is sufficient to explain all the relevant phenomena in the various cases of illusion and hallucination, one may also worry that it must be sufficient in the case of perception as well. In that case, disjunctivism is threatened with viewing its favored conception of perception as explanatory redundant. Martin (2004, 46).

We see that Martin's motivation is that he wants to avoid the introduction of a common factor that could explain both the phenomenal characteristics of hallucinations and the phenomenal characteristics of veridical perception: "if one allows that there is a more substantive characterization available across a wide range of cases of what it is for mere appearance to occur, the question arises whether such a state can also be present in the case of veridical perception"⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ Cf. Martin (2006, 375).

⁴⁹ Cf. Martin (2004, 68).

⁵⁰ Cf. Martin (2006, 370).

Such a common element could exert a preemptive role and “screen off” the relational aspect of perceptual states in the explanations in which these states are mentioned.

If “non-privileged” states are typed according to indiscriminability properties, it is clear that the preemption threat is averted. Let us consider, for instance, the explanation of James’ shrieking while hallucinating a spider. On Martin’s view, that is only because there is no subjectively detectable difference between James’ seeing a spider and James’ hallucinating one that James reacts as if a spider was present: nothing beyond the phenomenal properties of “privileged” states needs to be mentioned in the explanation. This is fine as far as the “screening off” problem is concerned, but this leaves some important phenomenological facts unexplained. If we define a class of hallucinations as a class of states introspectively indiscriminable from veridical perceptions, it will be *a priori* true of these episodes that they will be phenomenally similar to veridical experiences. This does not mean, however, that the explanatory challenge we have raised in the beginning of this paragraph has been met: it remains a complete mystery, on Martin’s modest approach, why there are states that are introspectively indiscriminable from veridical perceptual states, and why those states seem to be phenomenally similar to veridical states even though they are of a different metaphysical nature.

More generally, Martin’s view fails to account for phenomenal similarities that exist between relational and non-relational phenomenal states. Let us consider the case of pictorial experience. Pictures, as Wollheim emphasizes, allow us to enjoy visual experiences of “things that are not present to the senses”. Pictorial experience has indeed a dual aspect. When we look at a picture, we see its surface and its properties, but we also see the objects that are depicted. To borrow Wollheim’s terminology, we see the depicted objects “in” the picture, in the sense that the visual experience we have of these objects while looking at the picture is very similar to the experience we would have if we were directly seeing the things themselves. Here is the passage in which the dual aspect of seeing-in is explained:

Seeing-in is a distinct kind of perception, and it is triggered by the presence within the field of vision of a differentiated surface. (...) When the surface is right, then an experience with a certain phenomenology will occur, and it is this phenomenology that is distinctive about seeing-in (...) The distinctive phenomenological feature I call “twofoldness” because, when seeing-in occurs, two things happen: I am visually aware of the surface I look at, and

I discern something standing out in front of, or (in certain cases) receding behind, something else. So, for instance, I follow the famous advice of Leonardo da Vinci to an aspirant painter and I look at a stained wall, or let my eyes wander over a frosty pane of glass, and at one and the same time I am visually aware of the wall, or of the glass, and I recognize a naked boy, or dancers in mysterious gauze dresses, in front of (in each case) a darker ground. In virtue of this experience I can be said to see the boy in the wall, the dancers in the frosty glass.

We will not commit ourselves to Wollheim's project of defining depiction in terms of seeing-in, but only to the claim that pictorial vision has the twofold phenomenological nature that he identified. The existence of this dual aspect raises a serious difficulty for all versions of the Relational View of experience: it seems that we cannot explain all the phenomenal properties of pictorial experiences by mentioning only the objects present in the surroundings of the subject and their properties.

Let us suppose that you are looking at Chardin's still life with glass flask and fruit. According to the Relational View, only instantiated properties of objects present in the perceived scene can account for the phenomenal properties of your experience. But referring to features of the scene will not be enough to explain the phenomenal character of your experience. For instance, you are having a visual experience of a pear standing on a table and instantiating a certain visual shape. It would be natural to type the corresponding phenomenal property by referring to the specific shape of the pear. Nevertheless, there is no pear in the context of your visual experience: in fact, no three-dimensional object does instantiate the visual shape you are looking at.

You cannot say either that your visual experience of seeing a pear in the picture is indiscriminable from a veridical perception of a pear. This would be plainly false: Chardin's picture is not a *trompe-l'oeil*, and as a consequence your pictorial experience of the painting does not just replicate the ordinary experience of seeing a pear. According to Wollheim's view on seeing-in, seeing-in involves a simultaneous, conscious awareness of a picture's design and of its representational content⁵¹. So when you see a pear in Chardin's picture, you both see the picture's surface—two-dimensional shapes, colors, ...—*and* you visually recognize the depicted object as a pear, that is, as a three-dimensional object. So we certainly cannot type the phenomenal character of your expe-

⁵¹ In these regards, it differs from Gombrich's illusion theory of pictorial experience.

rience by indiscriminability properties. Nonetheless, it seems to be a phenomenological fact that this experience is very similar to the experience of directly seeing a pear, and this phenomenological fact has to be explained.

A representational explanation of this phenomenological fact is easy to put forward: it can be assumed that in a visual experience of seeing-in a picture, the visual system *both* registers the properties of the picture's surface and the properties of the depicted objects. According to Mohan Matthen, a picture provides two sets of conflicting cues to the visual system: cues about visual properties of the picture itself—its texture, color, etc...— and cues that are similar to the cues that the depicted object would have provided if it were present. The visual treatment of these cues "lead to two different visual representations that exist side-by-side, though they cannot be attended to simultaneously"⁵². Some recent empirical findings show, consistently with the representational view, that looking at pictures of things puts the visual systems in states that are very much like the states that we are in while seeing the real things⁵³. Thus, as Matthen notes, Koenderink and van Doorn have developed an experimental technique that shows that a subject looking at a flat surface depicting a three-dimensional object is able to map the three-dimensional aspects of the object seen in the picture⁵⁴. This entails that the pictorial experience of the subject is an experience as of an object in a three-dimensional space, even if the surface that is directly seen is flat.

According to the Relational View, on the other hand, one obviously cannot account for the phenomenal similarities between pictorial experience and direct vision by mentioning representational properties, nor can one account for the twofoldness of pictorial seeing by appealing to the co-existence of two different kinds of representations. An advocate of the Relational View has therefore to face the following dilemma: either depicted objects are not really seen into pictures; or pictures really instantiate the properties of these objects. Jérôme Dokic, in a recent paper, embraces the second horn of this dilemma:

When I see Richter's Candle (1982), I do not have any feeling that a candle is present. This in turn has been analysed as entailing that no candle is presented as being located in egocentric space (even

⁵² Cf. Matthen (2005, 390).

⁵³ One can already find this idea in Descartes' *Optics*, where it is stated that pictures "enable the soul to have sensory perceptions of all the various qualities of the objects to which they correspond" and that a picture "causes our sensory perception of these objects". Descartes, R., *Philosophical Writings*. Tr. by J. Cottingham et al., 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985., vol. 1 p. 166.

⁵⁴ Cf. Koenderink and van Doorn (2003, 255).

though egocentric-spatial notions are relevant to specifying the depicted scene). Still, my visual-recognitional abilities related to candles are actualized in the same way as when I see a real candle. What I want to suggest is that the actualization of these abilities is factive in both the pictorial and the ordinary cases. In the pictorial case, I see part of the picture itself as having the appearance of a candle. More precisely, I see the picture as having the appearance of a candle on its surface, or perhaps in it. There is no illusion here, since the picture really has this appearance, which is perceptually accessible only from a selected set of points of view. (Dokic, 2012, 404).

We see that according to Dokic, a picture of a candle really has the appearance of a candle, where such an appearance has to be constructed as an objective perspectival property. This is not plausible however. Koenderink and van Doorn's experiment shows that subjects have an experience of the three-dimensional properties of depicted objects while looking at their pictures. Does this really imply that those pictures instantiate three-dimensional shapes properties? Where would those three-dimensional properties be instantiated? Let us suppose, for instance, that you are looking at Chardin's still life, and that you visually recognize the three-dimensional shape of a pear. Dokic claims that the appearance of the pear is really instantiated by the painting, but it is not clear to us how this could make sense, at least if we agree that the depicted pear appears to you as a three-dimensional object, and that a picture of a pear is typically not pear-shaped. We can conclude that pictorial visual experience is a counter-example to the Similarity of Objects Principle.

There may be other counter-examples to the Similarity of Objects Principle. Let us consider speech-perception. When we attend to the content of a speech, we consciously perceive phonological structures in the stream of discourse. We are sensitive to perceived similarities, which enable us to group the linguistic sounds into the distinctive units that are known as phonemes. These similarity classes are language-relative. In English, for example, the aspirated "p" in "pen" is perceived as sufficiently similar to the unaspirated "p" in "spun" to be categorized in the same linguistic unit. In other languages, like Thai, Hindi or Kechua, there are what linguists call "minimal pairs" of words that are phonologically differentiated only by aspiration. Now on the Relational View, we should find features of the acoustic wave corresponding to those phonological contrasts. This is a consequence of the Similarity of Objects Principle: phenomenal similarities should always be explainable by sim-

ilarities in the objects perceived. As Georges Rey has emphasized in several publications, this prediction of the Relational View is at odds with the findings of contemporary phonology. Here is a typical textbook statement to the effect that there is no correspondance between phonological structures and acoustic structures:

The stream of speech within a single utterance is a continuum. There are only a few points in this stream which constitute natural breaks, or which show an articulatory, auditory or acoustically steady state being momentarily preserved, and which could therefore serve as the basis for analytical segmentation of the continuum into 'real' phonetic units. . . The view that such a segmentation is mostly an imposed analysis, and not the outcome of discovering natural time-boundaries in the speech continuum, is a view that deserves the strongest insistence. (Laver, 1993, 101).

According to mainstream phonology, a hearer will typically represent phonological structures in a linguistic sound to which it is not clear at all, as far as we know, that anything real does correspond in the sound wave⁵⁵. Of course this does not make sense on the Relational View. The issue here, it seems to us, is not so much that the predictions of the Relation View contradict our best scientific theories. After all, these theories might be wrong, and we might find structures in the acoustic wave in the future that could be identified with the sound properties presented in hearing linguistic utterances. The problem is rather that on the Relational View, it is *a priori* impossible for conscious sensory states to be systematically illusory: on this view, we can be assured *a priori* that there are real acoustic correlates of phonematic distinctions, even though we have been unable to identify them until now, and even if we have very strong empirical reasons to doubt that such correlates exist. This does not sound plausible at all.

5. Conclusion.

Our strategy in this paper has been to concede that, indeed, perception and hallucination differ in kind. However, we suggest that this difference should be understood as a difference between factive and non-factive first-order experiential states. Subjects of genuine perceptions and subjects of hallucina-

⁵⁵ For more on this topic, see (Fodor et al., 1972, 279-313) and (Jackendorff, 1987, 57).

tions are not in the same epistemic position regarding the objects and properties of their environments. As we have argued, this epistemological distinction between perception and hallucination does not entail metaphysical disjunctivism. Our modest disjunctive account is compatible with a representationalist understanding of phenomenal character - be it a weak one - according to which phenomenal properties supervene on a subject's brain state. In turn, this causal thesis concerning phenomenology is incompatible with the thrust of the metaphysical disjunctivist approach (Snowdon, 1981; Nudds, 2009). Representationalism is everything but as capable as disjunctivism to account for the phenomenology of conscious perception. However, it fares better when it comes to giving a positive account of the introspective indiscriminability of perception and hallucination. This explanatory advantage should count as a decisive point in favor of a representational account of phenomenal consciousness.

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