

# Naïve Realism and Phenomenal Intentionality

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## Abstract

This paper argues for the conjunctive thesis of naïve realism and phenomenal intentionalism about perceptual experiences. Naïve realism holds that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience is (at least in part) constituted by environmental objects that the subject perceives. Phenomenal intentionalism about perceptual experience states that perceptual experience has intentionality in virtue of its phenomenology. I first argue that naïve realism is not incompatible with phenomenal intentionalism. I then argue that phenomenal intentionalists can handle two objections to it by adopting naïve realism: the first objection is that phenomenal intentionalism cannot explain how a veridical perceptual experience is directed at a particular object rather than any other object of the same kind. The second objection is that phenomenal intentionalism cannot explain how a perceptual experience is directed at a type of external object rather than other types of objects without appealing to a resemblance relation between a perceptual experience and an external object, which is considered to be problematic.

**Keywords** Naïve realism · Phenomenal intentionality · Singular content · Resemblance

## 1 Introduction: Naïve Realism and Phenomenal Intentionalism

When I visually perceive a bottle of whisky, I have a phenomenal perceptual experience of it. Two questions arise regarding the phenomenal perceptual experience, the *ontological question* and the *intentionality question*. The ontological question is, what is the ontological status of the phenomenal perceptual experience? The intentionality question is, how can the phenomenal perceptual experience be about a bottle of whisky?

*Naïve realism* provides a partial answer to the ontological question, stating that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience is (at least partially) constituted by

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an environmental object that the subject perceives. Naïve realism is considered to be motivated by introspective intuition. If I introspectively reflect on my current perceptual experience of a bottle of whisky and consider what it is, the intuitive answer is that it is partially constituted by a bottle of whisky that I am perceiving (Martin 2000; Kennedy 2009; Langsam 2017; Allen 2019).<sup>1</sup>

*Phenomenal intentionalism* provides an answer to the intentionality question. Although there would be various views that can be counted as phenomenal intentionalism (Kriegel 2013; Bourget and Mendelovici 2019), I focus on the modest view that *the intentionality of perceptual experience is grounded in its phenomenology*. This view is modest because it only concerns the intentionality of *perceptual* experiences, keeping silent on other kinds of experiences such as cognitive and emotional experiences. Let us call this view the “*phenomenal intentionalism of perception* (PIP).<sup>2</sup> According to PIP, when I visually perceive a bottle of whisky and thereby having a perceptual experience, the intentional fact that the perceptual experience is *about* a bottle of whisky is grounded in some fact about its phenomenology. PIP is also motivated by introspective intuition. If I introspectively reflect on my perceptual experience of a bottle of whisky and consider why I can confidently say that it is about a bottle of whisky, the intuitive answer is that it is because a bottle of whisky seems to be phenomenally manifested in the experience.

Given that naïve realism and phenomenal intentionalism are both motivated by introspective intuition, it is natural to think that those who utilize introspective intuition for philosophical considerations are attracted to both views. As far as I know, however, no philosopher explicitly adopts the conjunctive thesis of naïve realism and phenomenal intentionalism. There could be two reasons for this, positive and negative. The positive reason is that phenomenal intentionalism is supposed to imply *internalism* about the phenomenology of perceptual experience, which conflicts with naïve realism. I call this the “incompatibility problem”. The negative reason is that phenomenal intentionalism seems independent of naïve realism motivationally; that is to say, there seems no motivation for advocates of PIP to adopt naïve realism and vice versa. I call this the “independence problem”.

This paper aims to address the two problems, the incompatibility problem and the independence problem, to argue for the conjunctive thesis of naïve realism and PIP (in short NR-PIP). In Section 2, I will handle the incompatibility problem by arguing that proponents of PIP are not necessarily committed to internalism of the phenomenology of perceptual experience. In Section 3 and 4, I will discuss the independence problem; more concretely, I will present two challenges to PIP and argue that PIP can address them by adopting naïve realism. This argument, if succeeded, shows that there is a strong motivation for NR-PIP.

<sup>1</sup> For other theoretical motivations for naïve realism, see Campbell (2002), Johnston (2006), Raleigh (2011) and Logue (2012b).

<sup>2</sup> Ott states that “I shall mainly be concerned with phenomenal intentionality in veridical perceptual cases. [...] I am interested in a very narrow version of PI [Phenomenal Intentionality], one designed to account only for such simple cases. I take no position on whether all intentional content is phenomenal or whether all of its other forms can be derived from the perceptual kind” (2016, 132). I share his interest.

## 2 The Incompatibility Problem

PIP states that a perceptual experience has intentionality in virtue of its phenomenology. This implies that perceptual experiences have intentionality. In contrast, a radical version of naïve realism holds that veridical perceptual experiences do not have intentional content (Travis 2004; Wilson 2018). One may take this version as a representative of naïve realism, claiming that it is incompatible with PIP.

There are two naïve realist responses to this challenge. First, naïve realists may claim that there is an intuitive sense of intentionality in which even radical naïve realists can accept it. As Allen (2019, 6) claims, naïve realists can accept that veridical perceptual experiences have *aboutness* or *directed-ness in an intuitive sense*. This is not to accept that veridical perceptual experiences have *intentional content in a theoretical sense*, namely having *accuracy/veridicality conditions*. Naïve realists can accept that a veridical perceptual experience is about X, while denying that it has intentional content that X is such and such. As discussed in Raleigh (2015), what radical naïve realists want to deny is the idea that veridical perceptual experiences have accuracy/veridicality conditions. Given that the aboutness or directed-ness in the intuitive sense is the standard target of phenomenal intentionalists (Mendelovici 2018, chap. 1), even the radical version of naïve realism is not necessarily incompatible with PIP.

Second, naïve realists can avoid this challenge by simply adopting a modest version of naïve realism, which admits that veridical perceptual experiences can have intentional content (Logue 2012a, 2014). Although naïve realists must deny that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience is *fully explained* in terms of its intentional content in so far as intentional content is characterized as being different from environmental scenes, this does not mean that naïve realists should not attribute accuracy/veridicality conditions to perceptual experiences. Although it is controversial what theoretical role naïve realists can assign to intentional content as having an accuracy/veridicality condition, it is not incoherent for naïve realists to admit that veridical perceptual experiences have accuracy/veridicality conditions.

Either way, naïve realists do not need to admit that perceptual experiences lack intentionality. Given this, in what manner could naïve realism be incompatible with PIP? To consider this, let us see what claims are typically associated with phenomenal intentionalism. According to Kriegel (2013, 5), the phenomenal intentionality research program is loosely characterized by six related but different claims:

**Phenomenal Grounding:** there is a kind of intentionality—phenomenal intentionality—that is grounded in phenomenal character.

**Inseparatism:** the phenomenal and the intentional do not form two separate mental realms, but are instead inseparably intertwined.

**Distinctiveness:** Phenomenal intentionality is special and distinctive, in that it has certain important properties that non-phenomenal forms of intentionality do not.

**Narrowness:** Phenomenal intentionality is narrow, that is, it is not constitutively dependent upon anything outside the experiencing subject.

**Subjectivity:** Phenomenal intentionality is inherently subjective: it is built into the phenomenal character of a phenomenally intentional state that it (re)presents what it does to someone.

Basicness: Phenomenal intentionality is a basic kind of intentionality and functions as a source of all intentionality.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that Narrowness is incompatible with naïve realism, while the other five claims do not seem to conflict with it necessarily.<sup>4</sup> If advocates of PIP hold that the intentionality of veridical perceptual experience is not constituted by anything outside the experiencing subject, then they must accept that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience cannot be constituted by an environmental object, which is outside the experiencing subject. This is nothing but the denial of naïve realism.

The first question to be asked is, is PIP necessarily committed to Narrowness? My answer is in the negative. Note that PIP is motivated by the first-person reflection on how we can know that a perceptual experience is about X: when I reflectively consider how I know that this experience is about my desktop monitor, my intuitive answer is that it is because the desktop monitor seems to be phenomenally manifested in the experience. This consideration does not support/imply Narrowness. Thus, the basic motivation for PIP is not related to Narrowness; advocates of PIP can reject Narrowness without losing its basic motivation.

The second question to be asked is, is there any compelling reason to accept Narrowness? The reason why many phenomenal intentionalists accept Narrowness is likely that the phenomenology of conscious experience is typically considered to supervene on the subject's neural states/activities in the current analytic philosophy of consciousness (Horgan and Kriegel 2008, 366). This local supervenience thesis is also widely accepted in scientific consciousness studies in general (Tononi et al. 2016).

Note, however, that the plausibility of the local supervenience thesis comes from the empirical findings showing that neural states/activities play a significant role to determine the phenomenology of conscious experiences, such as colour phenomenology (Rüttiger et al. 1999) and face-recognition phenomenology (Parvizi et al. 2012). Without denying the robust empirical evidence, naïve realists can challenge the local supervenience thesis by claiming that when we visually perceive an environmental object, our relevant neural states/activities *enable* us to have a phenomenal perceptual experience, which is in part constituted by the perceived object (Fish 2009, chap. 5; Allen 2019). This understanding of neural states/activities as playing the enabling role can explain the empirical findings without implying the local supervenience thesis. Although eyes enable us to visually perceive something and eye condition and movement serve to determine the phenomenology of visual perceptual experience, it does not follow from this that the visual perceptual experience supervenes only on the states of eyes; some other items (including neural states/activities) should count as the additional supervenience bases of it. Likewise, if the neural states/activities are an enabling condition for having a phenomenal perceptual experience, there can be some other

<sup>3</sup> Since my focus is on PIP, I restrict the scope of these claims to phenomenal *perceptual* intentionality.

<sup>4</sup> Note that naïve realism does not conflict with Phenomenal Grounding. Naïve realism states that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience is in part constituted by environmental objects that the subject perceives. This implies that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience is grounded in the subject perceiving the environmental objects. Importantly, this does not conflict with the relevant phenomenal grounding claim that the intentionality of veridical perceptual experience is grounded in its phenomenology. What the conjunctive thesis of naïve realism and PIP must accept is *the grounding order* that the intentionality of veridical perceptual experience is grounded in its phenomenology, which is grounded in the subject perceiving environmental objects.

items that count as the supervenience bases of it; as naïve realists claim, environmental objects can be included in them.<sup>5</sup>

Given that we can avoid the local supervenience thesis without denying empirical data as naïve realists do, there is no compelling reason for proponents of PIP to accept Narrowness. Thus, naïve realism is not incompatible with PIP on the condition that Narrowness is discarded.<sup>6</sup>

### 3 The Independence Problem

In this section, I will first point out that there are two objections to PIP and then argue that advocates of PIP can address them by adopting naïve realism. This argument, if it succeeds, shows that there is a strong motivation for advocates of PIP to adopt naïve realism.

One objection to PIP is that PIP cannot explain how a perceptual experience is about a *particular* environmental object rather than other objects of the same type (Masrour 2016). When I visually perceive a bottle of Springbank 10 years in my whisky storage, it seems that the perceptual experience is about *the particular bottle* of Springbank in my storage, rather than any other bottles of the same type that are present on the shelves of whisky shops. Simply put, a perceptual experience seems to have *singular* intentionality. The objection is thus that PIP cannot explain the singular intentionality of perceptual experience.

Another objection to PIP is that PIP needs to adopt an apparently problematic thesis, namely *the resemblance thesis*, to explain how a perceptual experience is about a certain *type* of objects (Ott 2016). When I perceive a bottle of Springbank 10, the perceptual experience is about *the type of whisky bottle* rather than other types of whisky bottles such

<sup>5</sup> Opponents of naïve realism may criticize the understanding of neural states/activities as the enabling condition by pointing to two specific kinds of empirical findings: (1) when the same object is perceptually experienced by two subjects who differ in some internal conditions, their perceptual experiences differ phenomenologically (Block 2010) and (2) when two objects with different reflectance properties cause the same neural activations in brain areas responsible for colour perception (V4), the two objects are perceptually experienced as having the same colour (so-called *metameric matching*). If naïve realism holds that (a) neural states/activities only serve to select what external items constitute the phenomenology of perceptual experience and that (b) the phenomenology of perceptual experience is *entirely* constituted by the selected external items, then naïve realism seems incompatible with the empirical findings in question. However, naïve realists can allow that neural states/activities can contribute to perceptual phenomenology *more substantially than just serving the selecting role*, while holding onto the naïve realist core idea that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience is *in part* constituted by external items (French 2018). Although I admit that the empirical data in science of perception might be better explained by the internalist theories accepting the narrowness principle as Pautz (2017) suggested, it is fair to say that naïve realism is *not* incompatible with the empirical data.

<sup>6</sup> One may cast doubt on the compatibility of naïve realism and PIP by focusing on non-veridical perceptual experiences such as illusion and hallucination. It seems undeniable that non-veridical perceptual experiences also have intentionality. If the adoption of naïve realism causes a problem for PIP in explaining the intentionality of non-veridical perceptual experiences, advocates of PIP should not adopt naïve realism. Note, however, that naïve realism does not indicate anything about the ontological status of non-veridical perceptual experiences. As Moran (2018) persuasively argues, naïve realists can coherently take any kind of view about the nature of non-veridical perceptual experiences. Given this, the adoption of naïve realism does not affect what account advocates of PIP can provide for the intentionality of non-veridical perceptual experiences. Although I leave fully open how the conjunctive thesis of naïve realism and PIP should explain the intentionality of hallucinatory experiences, I briefly discuss the intentionality of illusory experiences at the end of Section 3.2.

as the Bowmore's and Talisker's. Simply put, a perceptual experience has *general* intentionality. The basic idea of the resemblance thesis is that a perceptual experience is about a type of objects *in virtue of its phenomenology resembling the type of objects*. However, the resemblance thesis has been regarded as problematic, as Berkeley argued that “an idea can be like nothing but an idea” (Berkeley 1998, 105: PHK 8). The objection is thus that PIP cannot explain the general intentionality of perceptual experience without adopting the resemblance thesis, which appears to be problematic.

In the rest of this section, I will argue that PIP can avoid these objections by adopting naïve realism. In 3.1, I will argue that *NR-PIP* can explain the singular intentionality of veridical perceptual experience. In 3.2, I will argue that NR-PIP can explain the general intentionality without adopting the resemblance thesis.

### 3.1 The Singular Intentionality of Perceptual Experience

When I visually perceive a bottle of Springbank 10 years and thereby having a perceptual experience, it is apparently directed at *the particular bottle* rather than other bottles of the same type. This suggests that a perceptual experience has *singular intentionality*. Can PIP provide a plausible account of the singular intentionality of perceptual experience?

Masrouf presents an argument showing that PIP cannot explain the singular intentionality of perceptual experience (2016, 102–6). I formulate his argument in a manner slightly different from his own, without altering the essential point:

1. Perceptual experience has singular intentionality.
2. PIP implies that the phenomenology of perceptual experience determines which particular object it is about.
3. It should not be *by accident* (in other words, not be *a matter of luck*) that a perceptual experience is about a particular object rather than other objects of the same type (*The anti-luck constraint*).
4. The phenomenology of perceptual experience cannot involve anything that *necessarily* picks out a particular object as the intentional object of the perceptual experience.
5. 2, 3 and 4 are incoherent. Therefore, PIP cannot explain the singular intentionality of perceptual experience.

Although Premise 2 is an apparent consequence of PIP, it is not intuitively clear how Premises 3 and 4 are motivated. Let us see how they are motivated in turn.

Masrouf (2016, 104–5) presents an argument for the anti-luck constraint. His argument can be summarized as a two-step reasoning.

(i) *If a perceptual experience is about a particular object, then the perceptual experience puts the subject in a position to know about the very particular object (as long as no disturbing condition holds)*. For instance, if I have a perceptual experience of a particular bottle of Springbank, the perceptual experience puts me in the position to know about the very particular bottle of Springbank, such as that it contains brown-coloured liquid. It seems to me that (i) is a plausible description of the epistemic value of singular intentionality of perceptual experience. The general epistemic import of intentionality of perceptual experiences is that a subject is in a position to know about X in virtue of his/her having a perceptual experience about X. It follows from this that if a

perceptual experience is about a particular object, then the subject is in a position to know about the particular object.

(ii) *If it is just by accident that a perceptual experience is about a particular object, then the perceptual experience does not put the subject in the position to know about the particular object.* To see the plausibility of (ii), suppose that one makes up an instance of fake news, without any reliable resource, that a precious bottle of whisky was stolen in a whisky pub in Glasgow, but that a precious bottle of whisky was actually stolen in the ways that the instance of fake news described *just by accident*. If which particular object the instance of fake news is about is determined by which particular object satisfies its descriptions, the particular bottle of whisky that was actually stolen is the intentional object of the fake news. However, we do not think that we can know, through the instance of fake news, that the particular bottle was stolen. This is in part because it is just due to luck that the particular bottle satisfies the descriptions of the instance of fake news.

Given this, suppose next that I have a *hallucinatory* experience in which an empty bottle of whisky seems to be phenomenally manifested, but there is actually an empty bottle of whisky in the way that matches the hallucinatory experience *just by accident*. For the sake of argument, assume that which particular bottle the hallucinatory experience is about is determined by which particular object satisfies its phenomenal content. On this assumption, the intentional object of the hallucinatory experience is the empty bottle that is actually in front of me. However, we do not think that we can know, through the hallucinatory experience, that the particular bottle is empty. This is partially because it is just due to luck that the particular bottle satisfies the phenomenal content of the hallucinatory experience. This consideration supports (ii).

It follows from (i) and (ii) that if a perceptual experience is about a particular object, then it is not just by accident that the perceptual experience is about the particular object. This means that if we accept the singular intentionality of perceptual experience, then the anti-luck constraint is derived. Thus, Premise 3 is derived from Premise 1.

Let us move onto Premise 4: the phenomenology of perceptual experience cannot involve anything that necessarily picks out a particular object as the intentional object of the perceptual experience. Masrouf (2016, 105) claims that it is reasonable to think that which particular object a perceptual experience has as its intentional object is in part determined by which particular object it is *caused* by.<sup>7</sup> Given this, he goes on to claim that if we can appeal to the causal relation between a perceptual experience and a particular object that the subject perceives, we can explain why it is necessary that the perceptual experience has the very particular object as its intentional object. When one has a veridical perceptual experience in which an apple is phenomenally manifested, there is necessarily only one particular apple (among many other apples of the same type) that is causally related to the perceptual experience.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the causal relation picks out the very

<sup>7</sup> This is not to say that there is no other condition to be satisfied for a particular object to be the intentional object of a perception experience. For instance, one additional condition may be that a large number of singular perceptual judgments that can be formed based only on the perceptual experience are true of the particular object. When I say that a perceptual experience is *appropriately* caused by a particular object, I mean that such other conditions are also satisfied.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps, we can imagine an abnormal case in which two particular apples are causally related to a perceptual experience in which only one apple is phenomenally manifested. I do not discuss this kind of illusory cases because my focus is how PIP can explain singular intentionality of *veridical* cases.

particular apple as the intentional object of the perceptual experience rather than any other apple of the same type. In this way, a causal relation can necessarily pick out only one particular object (among many other objects of the same type) as the intentional object of a perceptual experience.

However, Masrouf (2016, 106) claims, the causal relation between a perceptual experience and a particular object is not phenomenally manifested in the experience and therefore it is not included in the phenomenology of perceptual experience. This means that PIP cannot appeal to the causal relation for explaining singular intentionality of perceptual experience. On the face of it, there is no other component of the phenomenology of perceptual experience that can necessarily pick out a particular object as its intentional object. Thus, Premise 4 is motivated.

We have seen how each premise is motivated. How can advocates of PIP respond to the argument against the explanatory potential of PIP for singular intentionality? There are four possible ways to respond, namely denying Premises 1, 2, 3, or 4.

To deny Premise 1 is to say that perceptual experience does not have singular intentionality. This means that a perceptual experience is not directed at a particular object. I think that this option is hopeless for advocates of PIP. When I reflect on my current experience, it seems to me that it is about *this* particular desktop rather than any other desktop of the same type. In this way, the introspective intuition directly supports singular intentionality of perceptual experiences. Furthermore, when I reflect on how I can think (and know) about the particular desktop, my intuition tells us that it is *through the perceptual experience* that I have. This seems difficult to explain if perceptual experience does not have singular intentionality. If advocates of PIP deny these introspection-based considerations, it puts pressure on their use of introspective intuition to argue for PIP. If one denies the import of introspective intuition in one case, why does she not deny it in other cases? It is methodologically incoherent or at least dishonest to utilize introspective intuition in some cases but deny it in other cases without any good reason. Given that PIP is motivated based on introspective intuition, advocates of PIP should not deny Premise 1.

To deny Premise 2 is to restrict the scope of PIP to *general intentionality*. Perhaps, PIP only concerns the question of what type of objects a perceptual experience is about, not the question of what particular object it is about. In other words, PIP only concerns the general intentionality of perceptual experience. This leads to the view that the singular intentionality of perceptual experience is not explained in terms of its phenomenology but other factors such as the subject's functional/causal properties. I think that it is a possible option, but is the last resort for advocates of PIP. This is because, if I reflect on my perceptual experience when perceiving a bottle of whisky and consider why I can confidently say that it is about a particular bottle of whisky, the intuitive answer is that *the particular bottle of whisky* is phenomenally manifested in the experience. Given that the fundamental motivation for PIP is to respect our intuitions about the connection between the intentional and phenomenal aspects of experiences, advocates of PIP should not concede the scope of PIP unless it turns out that there is no other option.

The denial of Premise 3 requires us to deal with Masrouf's argument presented above: (i) If a perceptual experience is about a particular object, then the perceptual experience puts the subject in a position to know about the very particular object. (ii) If it is just by accident that a perceptual experience is about a particular object, then the



perceptual experience does not put the subject in the position to know about the particular object. Therefore, if a perceptual experience is about a particular object, then it is not just by accident that a perceptual experience is about a particular object. As we have seen, (i) is plausible because it seems a straightforward expression of the epistemic value of perceptual singular intentionality and (ii) is supported by the anti-luck condition for knowledge. Since the anti-luck condition for knowledge is widely accepted (Engel n.d., “Epistemic Luck”), its denial needs justification; however, I do not find any plausible justification for it.

To deny Premise 4 is to say that the phenomenology of perceptual experience involves something that necessarily picks out a particular object as the intentional object of the perceptual experience. As we have seen, however, a good candidate for the reference-fixing, namely the causal connection between a perceptual experience and a particular object, is not available, because it does not seem to be phenomenally manifested in a perceptual experience. In order to reasonably deny Premise 4, therefore, we need to specify a good reference-fixing factor that can be phenomenally manifested in perceptual experiences.

It is here that naïve realism gives support to PIP. Naïve realism holds that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience is constituted by an environmental object that the subject perceives. That  $X$  is a constituent of perceptual phenomenology implies that  $X$  is phenomenally manifested in perceptual experiences. According to naïve realism, thus, a particular environmental object that a subject actually perceives is phenomenally manifested in his/her perceptual experience. Given this, NR-PIP can coherently endorse the view that *which particular object a perceptual experience is about is determined by which particular object the phenomenology of the perceptual experience is constituted by*. Let us call this the “constitution-based singular intentionality thesis (CSI)”. CSI is intuitively plausible. If a perceptual experience is about  $X$  and its phenomenology is also constituted by  $X$ , then it is intuitive to posit an in-virtue-of relation between them, stating that it is about  $X$  in virtue of its phenomenology having  $X$  as a constituent.<sup>9</sup>

CSI can explain how the (singular) intentional object of perceptual experience is determined *in a necessary form*. A perceptual experience is constituted by a particular object that the subject perceives only if the following counterfactual holds: if the subject did not perceive the particular object but another object of the same type, then *the* perceptual experience did not occur. This means that when a subject visually perceives a particular object and thereby having a perceptual experience, it is necessary that the perceptual experience is constituted by the particular object rather than any other objects of the same type. Because of this, CIS allows that the phenomenology of a perceptual experience determines which particular object the perceptual experience is about *in a necessary manner*. Thus, NR-PIP can reasonably deny Premise 4 by adopting CSI. In this way, NR-PIP can explain the singular intentionality of perceptual experience.

### 3.2 The General Intentionality of Perceptual Experience

Suppose that I visually perceive a red apple and thereby having a perceptual experience. According to PIP, the experience is directed at a red apple in virtue of having

<sup>9</sup> For this point, see also Allen (2019, 6).

perceptual phenomenology. However, saying this does not complete the whole explanatory task. The additional task is to explain how and why the phenomenology of the perceptual experience makes it to be *about a red apple rather than other types of objects* such as a green apple or a red car. How can PIP address this explanatory task?<sup>10</sup>

Ott (2016) argues that PIP should adopt *the resemblance thesis* to achieve this explanatory task. The resemblance thesis states that a perceptual experience is about a specific type of objects *in virtue of its phenomenology resembling the type of objects in perceptually and introspectively detectable aspects*. In other words, a perceptual experience is about a specific type of objects in virtue of *sharing observable properties with the type of objects*, where the notion of observation includes perception and introspection. Suppose again that I visually perceive a red apple and thereby having a perceptual experience. According to the resemblance thesis, what makes the perceptual experience to be about a red apple rather than other types of objects is the fact that the experience shares observable properties with a red apple to *the largest extent*, compared with other types of objects such as a green apple and a red car.<sup>11</sup>

Ott argues that the resemblance thesis fits very well with PIP (Ott 2016, 137–38), claiming that PIP “is best served by invoking resemblance to explain how its chosen states get to be about their objects in the world” (Ott 2016, 132). Although Ott responds to a few objections to the resemblance thesis (2016, Section 3), he does not address a version of the most famous objection to the resemblance thesis, namely Berkeley’s objection that “an idea can be like nothing but an idea” (Berkeley 1998, 105: PHK 8).<sup>12</sup> In what follows, I present two Berkeley-inspired challenges to the resemblance thesis, one ontological and one epistemological. The ontological argument challenges the claim that PIP is best served by invoking resemblance, suggesting that there may be a better alternative explanation; the epistemological argument challenges the compatibility between the resemblance thesis and PIP. I then argue that PIP can better explain the general intentionality of perceptual experiences by adopting naïve realism rather than the resemblance thesis.

Let us start with an ontological challenge to the resemblance thesis. The resemblance thesis that Ott has developed presupposes that a perceptual experience shares observable properties with an environmental object. This presupposition cannot be accepted without justification/argument if a perceptual experience is regarded as *different in*

<sup>10</sup> One might claim that the question can be answered by saying that the phenomenology of the experience makes it such that it is accurate only when there is a red apple (rather than other types of objects) before me. In this case, however, we are asked why and how this is so; this question is not essentially different from the original one. Moreover, I think that this answer goes wrong direction in explanatory order. It seems to me that the fact that the experience is about a red apple rather than other types of objects explains (not being explained by) the fact that the experience is accurate only when there is a red apple (rather than other types of objects) before me.

<sup>11</sup> Ott (2016) does not explicitly distinguish between singular intentionality and general intentionality. Since I have interpreted the resemblance thesis as aiming to explain the general intentionality of perceptual experience, the description of the resemblance thesis that I have presented slightly differs from Ott’s one. But the problem with the resemblance thesis that I will take does not depend on this difference.

<sup>12</sup> Ott (2016, 141–42) tries to explain the singular intentionality of perceptual experience by appealing to resemblance. His idea is that it is very unlikely that a single perceptual experience perfectly resembles two numerically distinct scenes in reality and therefore it can single out an actual scene as the only one which the experience perfectly resembles. This account does not deal with Masrou’s argument against PIP with respect to singular intentionality, because it relies on the *contingent* fact that a perceptual experience does not perfectly resemble two numerically distinct scenes in reality.

*ontological kind* from an environmental object. Given that concrete environmental objects instantiate perceptible properties such as colour and shape properties, advocates of the resemblance thesis are required to explain how perceptual experiences can also instantiate perceptible properties of the same kind. It is a possible option for advocates of the resemblance thesis to simply insist that it is a primitive fact that perceptual experiences can instantiate perceptible properties. However, this option is nothing but the denial of the explanatory requirement and therefore is the last resort. If some kind of explanation is available, it is preferable.

Advocates of the resemblance view might claim that perceptual experiences do not literally share the same kind of perceptible properties with environmental objects, but rather they instantiate *introspectible phenomenal properties such as phenomenal squareness and phenomenal redness*, which are different in kind from perceptible properties. In this case, however, they are required to explain why and how two different kinds of properties, phenomenal properties and perceptible properties, can be similar in the relevant sense. It might be coherent to say that these properties share some perceptual kind of *higher-order properties*, such as *being reddish-property* and *being squarish-property*, and that the instantiation of the common higher-order properties explains why and how they are similar. However, this explanation is at least ad hoc. We usually do not include such perceptual kind of higher-order properties in the list of existent entities. Furthermore, it is ontologically less economical to introduce *phenomenal properties* (ontologically distinct from perceptible properties) and *higher-order perceptual properties* in addition to perceptible properties than otherwise. If there is less ad hoc and more parsimonious explanation available, it is preferable.

Let us turn to an epistemological challenge to the compatibility between the resemblance thesis and PIP. I take a specific intentionality question for the sake of argument: when we perceive an environmental object *E* in a good viewing condition and thereby having an experience with perceptual phenomenology *P*, what is the perceptual experience directed at? The most intuitive hypothesis is that the perceptual experience is directed at *E*-type objects rather than other types of environmental objects. The epistemological challenge is presented by asking the question of how advocates of the resemblance thesis can verify this hypothesis.

To verify the hypothesis in question, advocates of the resemblance thesis at least need to examine how much *P* resembles *E*. To do this, they need to compare *P* and *E*. This comparison can be carried out only if (1) we can know what *P* is like and (2) we can know what *E* is like. Advocates of the resemblance thesis can secure the first condition, since there is no problem for them to accept that we can directly know what *P* is like by introspection.

How about the second condition? We seem able to know what *E* is like by perceiving it. Perceiving *E* partially consists of having a perceptual experience, and the perceptual experience seems to play a significant epistemic role to know what *E* is like. Advocates of the resemblance thesis face difficulty in explaining the epistemic role of the perceptual experience. Given the resemblance thesis that perceptual intentionality is grounded in resemblance, it is expected that its advocates explain the epistemic role of perceptual experiences partially in terms of resemblance: a perceptual experience of *E* enables us to know what *E* is like in virtue of its phenomenology—namely *P*—largely resembling *E*. This amounts to the explanatory claim that we can know what *E* is like by perceiving it *in part because P largely resembles E*. This means that

advocates of the resemblance thesis can secure the second condition that we can know what *E* is like by *presupposing* that *P* largely resembles *E*. However, the primary task is to examine how much *P* resembles *E*. It is clearly question-begging to presuppose that *P* largely resembles *E* to examine how much they resemble.

There are two options available to advocates of the resemblance thesis to avoid this consequence. The first is to claim that we can know what *E* is like *without perceiving it*. The second is to explain the epistemic role of perceptual experience *without appealing to resemblance*. The first option seems hopelessly unintuitive. The second option leads to the abandonment of the resemblance thesis. It is thus reasonable to conclude that the resemblance thesis does not allow us to examine how much *P* resembles *E* without begging the question.

The moral drawn from this consideration is that the resemblance thesis does not allow us to specify the intentional object of perceptual experience *based on perceptual and introspective observations*. The intentionality-determining resemblance between perceptual phenomenology and an environmental object is something *posited/postulated*; we cannot observationally examine whether such postulates are true. Thus, the resemblance thesis implies that we *cannot observationally know* what type of environmental object a perceptual experience is directed at.<sup>13</sup> This conflicts with the introspective intuition that we seem able to specify the general intentional object of a perceptual experience (at least to some extent) through introspectively reflecting it.<sup>14</sup> This conflict is not ignorable for advocates of PIP, since a basic motivation for PIP comes from introspective intuition.

Let me summarize the epistemological challenge to the compatibility between the resemblance thesis and PIP.

1. If the resemblance thesis is true, we cannot examine how much *P* resembles *E* through perceptual and introspective observations (for short, observations).
2. If we cannot examine whether *P* resembles *E* through observations, we cannot know that *P* resembles *E* through observations.
3. If we cannot know that *P* resembles *E* through observations (and the resemblance thesis is true), we cannot know that a perceptual experience with *P* is directed at *E* through observations.
4. The basic motivation for PIP is that we can know that a perceptual experience with *P* is directed at *E* by introspecting it.
5. Therefore, the resemblance thesis does not fit with the basic motivation for PIP. This casts doubt on the compatibility between the resemblance thesis and PIP.

So far I have presented two Barkley-inspired challenges to the resemblance thesis. If there is alternative way for PIP to explain how and why the phenomenology of

<sup>13</sup> Note that this is not to claim that if the resemblance thesis is true, we can never know what type of environmental object a perceptual experience is directed at. My point is that if the resemblance thesis is true, it is not through perceptual and introspective observations that we can know an intentional fact, such as a perceptual experience being directed at a red apple rather than a green apple or a red car.

<sup>14</sup> I do not claim that it is intuitive to think that we can *fully* specify the intentional object of perceptual experience by introspection. For example, I do not claim that we can introspectively specify the intentional object of perceptual experience to the extent of determining whether it is about a real red apple or a fake red apple. My point is rather that it is intuitive that we can specify the intentional object of perceptual experience by introspection *to the extent of determining whether it is about a red apple, green apple or a red car*.

perceptual experience makes it to be about a type of environmental objects rather than other types without facing these challenges, advocates of PIP should buy it.

My claim is that naïve realism provides PIP with a theoretical resource to address the explanatory task in the desired manner. Naïve realism holds that the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience is (at least in part) constituted by a particular environmental object belonging to a specific type (such as red-apple-type). Based on this constitution claim, NR-PIP can provide a simple and clear explanation of how and why the phenomenology of perceptual experience makes it to be about a type of environmental objects rather than other types. Instead of the resemblance thesis, NR-PIP can adopt *the constitution-based general intentionality thesis (CGI) that what type of external object a perceptual experience is about is determined by what type of external object the phenomenology of the perceptual experience is constituted by*. Suppose that I visually perceive a red apple and thereby having a perceptual experience. The phenomenology of the perceptual experience makes it to be about a red apple rather than other types of items such as a green apple and a red car *in virtue of having a red apple as its constituent rather than other types of items*. This explanation is not ad hoc, because naïve realism is not introduced only to explain the general intentionality of perceptual experience, but is independently motivated by introspective intuition. Furthermore, this explanation is economical, for it does not introduce any special kind of property such as perceptual kinds of higher-order properties. In addition, CGI itself is intuitively plausible as CSI does (see Section 3.1).

Furthermore, CGI allows that we can specify the general intentional object of a perceptual experience (at least to some extent) through introspectively reflecting it. We can know the phenomenology of veridical perceptual experience by introspection. Since the phenomenology of perceptual experience involves an environmental object as its constituent, we can introspectively know (at least to some extent) what type of environmental object it is constituted by.<sup>15</sup> This means that we can introspectively know what type of environmental object a veridical perceptual experience is directed at (at least to some extent).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Note that the naïve realist constitution thesis is *more determinate* than the claim that a perceptual experience is (at least in part) constituted by an environmental object that the subject perceives. This claim does not imply that we can introspectively know what type of environmental object the perceptual experience is constituted by, because it does not specify *what aspect of the perceptual experience* is constituted by the environmental object. For example, if it is not the phenomenology but the metaphysical nature that is not accessible by introspection, then we do not have introspective access to the external constituent. The naïve realist constitution thesis is more determinate in that it specifies what aspect of perceptual experience is constituted by an environmental object: *the phenomenology*. Because of this, it follows from the naïve realist constitution claim that we can introspectively know what type of environmental object the perceptual experience is constituted by.

<sup>16</sup> Note that I do not claim that we can always know by introspection alone *what particular object* a veridical experience is directed at. Suppose that I see an object  $O_1$  in an epistemically unsafe condition in which there are many objects qualitatively identical to  $O_1$  around me. Suppose further that my friend erroneously tells me that what I see is not  $O_1$  but one of other such objects. In this case, although the phenomenology of my perceptual experience is in part constituted by  $O_1$ , it is controversial whether I can know by introspection alone that it is constituted by  $O_1$  rather than other qualitatively identical objects. This is because the unsafe external epistemic condition and/or my friend's testimony may serve as an epistemological defeater. My claim is weaker: we can introspectively know *what type of object* a veridical perceptual experience is directed at.

I close this section by addressing an objection to CGI.<sup>17</sup> The objection points out that CGI is committed to an unintuitive consequence regarding the intentional object of *illusory* experiences. Suppose that I perceive a red apple in a non-ideal viewing condition and it looks like a white peach to me. It seems intuitive that this illusory experience is directed at a white peach rather than a red apple. Since I perceive a red apple even in this illusory case, however, naïve realism seems to be committed to the claim that the phenomenology of the illusory experience is in part constituted by the red apple that I perceive. It follows from this claim and CGI that the illusory experience is directed at a red apple rather than a white peach. This consequence seems unintuitive. Furthermore, it conflicts with the epistemological claim that we can introspectively know what type of environmental object a perceptual experience is directed at, since I seem unable to introspectively know that the illusory experience is directed at a red apple rather than a white peach.

There are two possible responses to this objection to CGI. One response is to reject the application of the naïve realist constitution thesis to illusory experiences. Naïve realists can deny that illusory experiences are constituted by an environmental object that the subject incorrectly perceives, while holding that veridical perceptual experiences are constituted by an environmental object that the subject correctly perceives. This position can be classified as V/IH disjunctivism (Byrne and Logue 2008, 2009), according to which illusions (and hallucinations) are explained differently from veridical perceptions. By taking V/IH disjunctivism, naïve realists can deny that the naïve realist constitution thesis holds for illusory experiences. One might claim, for example, that the intentional object of an illusory experience is determined by *the intentional object of a corresponding veridical perceptual experience* while holding that the phenomenology of an illusory experience is explained in terms of its introspective indiscriminability from a corresponding veridical perceptual experience (Martin 2004). This entails that when one mistakenly perceives a red apple as a white peach, the illusory experience, which is introspectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a white peach, is directed at a white peach rather than a red apple. This epistemic disjunctivist position does not conflict with PIP, because it can accept that the intentionality of illusory experiences is grounded in its phenomenology, where the phenomenology is explained in terms of the introspective indiscriminability from a corresponding veridical perception.

Another response to the objection to CGI is to admit that when I have an illusory experience in which a red apple looks like a white peach, it is directed at a red apple rather than a white peach, while arguing that this is less unintuitive than it may appear at first sight. Naïve realists can take VI/H disjunctivism, which states that the naïve realist constitution thesis holds for not only veridical perceptual experiences but also illusory experiences. It follows from this and CGI that the illusory experience in question is directed at a red apple rather than a white peach. Here the VI/H disjunctivists can argue that *this is fine*. As Kalderon (2011, 769–70) points out, the look of a red apple “will vary with position and intensity of the illuminant and with the color and position of other elements of the scene”. Even though a red apple looks like a white peach to me in a specific non-ideal viewing condition, I can change the viewing condition by coming closer to it or improving the lighting condition for example. By

<sup>17</sup> I appreciate the anonymous reviewer’s suggestion to address this objection.

doing so, I would realize that it is actually not a white peach but a red apple. When realizing that it is not a white peach and that the experience that I had was illusory, I am not inclined to treat the illusory experience as being directed at a white peach. Rather, it seems more appropriate to say that the illusory experience was about a red apple, but I did not notice the intentional fact. Close reflection on how we actually consider the intentionality of illusory experiences indicates that it is not so unintuitive to think that when a red apple looks like a white peach in a non-ideal viewing condition, the illusory experience is directed at a red apple rather than a white peach.

This VI/H disjunctivist position does not conflict with PIP, since it admits that the intentionality of an illusory experience is grounded in its phenomenology: when an illusory experience is in part constituted by a red apple that the subject incorrectly perceives, it is directed at the constituent of phenomenology: a red apple. Furthermore, although the VI/H disjunctivist position cannot allow that we can introspectively know what type of object an illusory experience is directed at, it can coherently accept a weaker epistemological claim that we can introspectively know what type of objects a *veridical* perceptual experience is directed at. As Logue (2012a, 194) points out, “if veridical experiences really do encompass things outside one’s head, then one might reasonably expect that introspection is at least partially directed outward towards those very things (after all, they’re part of the experience too)”. Given this, naïve realists can reasonably claim that *the epistemic favourability of visual experiences regarding introspection* no less varies depending on the viewing condition than how *the epistemic favourability of environment regarding perception* varies depending on the viewing condition. When having an illusory experience in which a red apple looks like a white peach, we cannot introspectively know that the illusory experience is constituted by a red apple, since it is an unfavourable epistemic condition for introspection. When having a veridical experience in which a red apple is correctly experienced, we can introspectively know that the veridical experience is constituted by a red apple, since it is a favourable epistemic condition for introspection. In this way, the VI/H disjunctivist position can partly secure the epistemological advantage of NR-PIP. Either disjunctivist position (V/VH or VI/H) to take, naïve realists can address the objection to CGI.

In conclusion, NR-PIP can provide a better account of the general intentionality of perceptual experiences by adopting CGI rather than the resemblance thesis. This is also a strong motivation for advocates of PIP to adopt naïve realism.

## 4 Conclusion

I have argued that naïve realism is not incompatible with PIP (Section 2) and that PIP can better explain singular and general intentionality by adopting naïve realism than otherwise (Section 3). These arguments strongly support NR-PIP. Contrary to our typical image of the relation between naïve realism and phenomena intentionalism, they can become good friends.

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