

# Max Scheler, Cousin of Disjunctivism

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## 1) Introduction

Disjunctivism has been one of the most debated positions in philosophy of perception in the last two decades or so. As a kind of side effect of this discussion, the question has been raised about disjunctivism's possible historical antecedents. I shall mention, in particular, two influential pieces. First, Travis (2005) argues that the basic form of naive realism disjunctivism is typically viewed as vindicating was initially put forward by Frege. Second, Smith (2008) claims that a version of disjunctivism is to be found in Husserl's phenomenological account of perception. One aim of this paper is to provide a further contribution to the conceptual genealogy of disjunctivism by focusing on Max Scheler's view of perception.

At this point, the reader may have already become suspicious about the pertinence of my topic. Max Scheler is known to be a phenomenologist whose central interest lies in value theory. He is also known for being, at times, a tremendously obscure writer. One might therefore be sceptical about the chance to discover that we owe him some substantial contribution to the philosophy of perception—one that might even prove relevant in light of

the contemporary debates in the field. Surprising as it may be, I think that Scheler's case is of particular interest for, at least, three important reasons.

The first reason emerges as soon as we compare Scheler's proto-disjunctivism about perception with the cases, already mentioned, of Frege and Husserl. Regarding Frege, Travis's (2005) discussion aims at showing that he shares with contemporary disjunctivists a conception of perception as openness to the world. However, no explicit claim about the distinct nature of veridical and delusional cases is put forward by Frege. In the case of Husserl, Smith (2008) argues that he endorses a version of disjunctivism in virtue of his accepting that "a certain type of 'mental state'—namely, perceptual experience—is simply not to be had in the absence of, because it is constitutively dependent upon, some item in the 'external world'" (315). However, by Smith's own admission, the way in which this idea is spelled out by Husserl amounts to "an unusual form of disjunctivism" (319). Nor will one find arguments in Husserl's writing which *immediately* strike one as embodying the kind of strategy typically pursued by disjunctivists. Thus, in order to make his case, Smith needs to guide the reader through the bulk of potential misunderstandings suggested by a *prima facie* internalist reading of Husserl's writings.<sup>1</sup>

None of this, however, applies to the case of Scheler. As I shall try to show, his way of arguing is *evidently* disjunctivist. For he not only directly challenges the cogency of the argument from hallucination, which constitutes the disjunctivist's standard target, but he also offers an alternative view of perceptual experience built on the explicit recognition that

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<sup>1</sup> More precisely: Husserl clearly distinguishes between imagery and perception: only the second is a direct—as he says, "*leibhaftig*"—presentation of objects. For our discussion, the crucial point is that he (correctly) notes that perception shares such a presentational character with hallucination. When it comes to distinguishing between these two kinds of mental states, he claims that they differ in their possible *Erfüllung*. This, Smith argues, is indeed enough to qualify Husserl's position as a version of disjunctivism, albeit a weak and rather *sui generis* one.

perceptions and hallucinations are states of fundamentally different kind. Moreover, and in contrast to Frege's case, Scheler is committed not only to the quite general picture of perception usually substantiating the disjunctivist strategy, but also to a number of the more specific claims by which it is usually articulated.

Second, as I shall try to show, the version of disjunctivism endorsed by Scheler is philosophically interesting in its own right, as it combines the main idea behind disjunctivism—that perceptions and hallucinations are states of essentially different kind—with a positive account of perceptual experience according to which it affords us direct awareness of the way things look—what Scheler calls “physical appearances”.

Third, Scheler's account of perception can help to illuminate a crucial aspect of the current debate on the nature of perceptual experience. The point is sharply outlined by Crane (2006). According to Crane, the most profound divide in philosophy of perception is the one between intentionalists and disjunctivists. Intentionalists hold that perception is essentially a “representation” of the external, physical world, whereas disjunctivists think it is essentially a “relation”<sup>2</sup> to the external, physical world. Now, how is Scheler's treatment of perception supposed to be relevant in light of this contemporary dispute?

As a phenomenologist, Scheler accepts the idea that intentionality is the “mark of the mental”, to use a slogan Crane adopts elsewhere (see his 1998). More precisely, he holds that perceptual experience is a representational state whose nature is given by the specific kind of content it has. At the same time, as I shall try to show, he also puts forward an unmistakably disjunctivist account of sensory experience. At least *prima facie*, this suggests that the position he defends tries to bridge the divide pointed out by Crane. This is an issue I shall come back to at the end of the paper.

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<sup>2</sup> To avoid confusion: the relation in question is not conceived as a causal relation, but as a relation of direct awareness or acquaintance.

In my paper I shall focus on Scheler's essay *Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis*, first published in 1912. Though this work is primarily concerned with the kind of delusions involved in self-knowledge, Scheler offers a preliminary characterization of what delusions are which is derived from reflection on the perceptual case. This specific treatment, I shall argue, constitutes a version of disjunctivism about sensory experience based on the idea that perceptions and hallucinations are states of essentially different kinds.<sup>3</sup>

## 2) Disjunctivism: a sketch

As no clear consensus reigns in the literature about which views the label disjunctivism is supposed to pick out,<sup>4</sup> it will be helpful to provide an initial sketch. The view I shall outline will remain sufficiently general to be fleshed out in many different directions. A good way to start is to consider the main target of the view, as it will allow us to clearly grasp its spirit and motivation.

A family of positions in philosophy of perception exploits the so-called argument from hallucination. As usually construed, the backbone of the argument comprises two steps. The first step is constituted by the constataion that, for any given perception, a hallucination can be conceived which is subjectively indistinguishable from it. The second step consists in arguing that the fundamental fact of a perception being subjectively indistinguishable from a matching hallucination can only be explained by assuming that they are experiences of the same kind.

Often, this line of thought is further substantiated by causal considerations. Suppose you are perceiving a bowl of cherries there on the table. The proximal cause of this perception of yours is a certain pattern of brain stimulation. Imagine now that someone—a future neuroscientist is a common character in such stories—would remove the bowl and the table,

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<sup>3</sup> All translations from Scheler's work are mine.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview, see Byrne and Logue (2009), Haddock and Macpherson (2009) and Soteriou (2009).

but were able to maintain exactly the same pattern of brain stimulation. No change would be noticeable from your subjective perspective. Your previous perception and your actual hallucination would not only be completely indiscriminable, but also— so the argument urges us to conclude—depend on precisely the same pattern of brain stimulation. Thus, that a given perception and a matching hallucination supervene on the same neurophysiological facts is taken to provide further support to the conclusion that they have the same nature.

In philosophy of perception, disjunctivism has been put forward as an attempt to block the argument from hallucination by rejecting the second step. Therefore, disjunctivists typically deny that the subjective indistinguishability of a given perception and of a matching hallucination forces one to conclude that they are experiences of the same kind. On the contrary, they insist in pointing out that perception and hallucination are experiences of fundamentally different natures: whereas perception is, in some sense, a matter of the perceiver being related to physical objects or facts, hallucination is in no way object- or fact-involving. Consequently, some disjunctivists suggest that the most congenial way to characterize hallucination is just by citing its negative epistemic feature of not being discriminable from a case of genuine perception solely on the basis of introspection.<sup>5</sup>

Usually, the so-called transparency of experience is one major motivation appealed to in order to vindicate disjunctivism. The idea is that perception seems to present us *directly* and *exclusively* with the material things which exist in the external world. As the argument goes, were one to attend to one's visual experience of the bowl of cherries there on the table, all the properties one would end up attending to would be the visible properties of the bowl, of the cherries and of the table. No other properties show up in experience—in particular, no other properties which are intrinsic to experience itself, like qualia or any other kind of so-called “mental paint”. Now, disjunctivists argue that their view of perception as essentially

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<sup>5</sup> The *locus classicus* here is Martin (2004).

object- or fact-involving provides, if not the only consistent, surely the most natural explanation of the basic phenomenological datum of transparency.

Of course, a wide spectrum of objections has been raised against disjunctivism. In this paper I shall ignore these debates almost completely, given that my first and main concern is to show that Max Scheler's treatment of perception mirrors the main moves of the disjunctivist strategy. However, as we shall see, Scheler's own way of fleshing out the backbone offered by this general strategy will prove not only philosophically interesting in its own right, but will also help us to shed some light on the important controversy regarding the compatibility of intentionalism and disjunctivism.

### 3) Scheler's target

In a way similar to contemporary disjunctivism, Scheler's view of perception has a specific target. This target is constituted by a bunch of theories all informed by the same mistake, which consists in, so to speak, inverting the explanatory relation between the "good" perceptual case and the "bad" delusive case. More precisely, and in Scheler's own words, the mistake is this: the "case of 'correct' insight which serves as correlate for each delusion is not assumed in order to make sense of the delusion, but, quite to the contrary, one starts with the delusions and explains also the case of 'correct' insight in the same way in which he believes the delusion is to be explained" (Scheler 1912: 250). What Scheler is pointing out is that the "good" case should be given explanatory priority. This means that one should not take the "bad" case as primitive and, consequently, try to make sense of the "good" case in light of whatever conception one has of the "bad" case. Rather, one should proceed the other way around, i.e. by considering the "bad" case in light of one's conception of the "good" case.

As an illustration of this mistake, Scheler cites Hyppolite Taine's conception of perception as a "true hallucination", or, as philosophers would nowadays prefer to say, a "veridical hallucination". Though, as no precise illustration is provided by Scheler of the view

he intends to criticize, it will be worth the effort to introduce some details of Taine's theory. The claim, referred to by Scheler, that we should treat perception as a case of "true hallucination" is, in fact, the crucial thesis defended by Taine. The underlying reasoning is quite similar to that which substantiates usual versions of the argument from hallucination:

A person labouring under hallucination who sees a corpse's head three paces in front of him, experiences at that moment an internal visual sensation precisely similar to what he would experience if his open eyes were then to receive the luminous rays coming from the head of a real corpse . . . . (Taine 1871: 222)

As typically is the case, the first step of the argument consists in registering that the state in which the hallucinator finds himself is "precisely similar" to that in which he would find himself were he to genuinely perceive a matching scene.<sup>6</sup> The second step of the standard reasoning follows suit, as Taine promptly concludes that, since the "spontaneous visual sensation" is "sufficient to call up in him an apparent corpse's head", we have to assume that its "efficacy [...] extends then to the cases in which the normal antecedents are present", i.e., "when the corpse's head is real and present" (ibid.).

As indicated by the idiom of "normal antecedents", Taine tries to grant support to his argument by appeal to causal considerations. More precisely, he treats a perception as a state which causally depends on "a group of intermediaries", which—moving from the most distal to the most proximal one, and to stay by his example—comprises "the presence of the real head of a corpse", "a certain impingement of luminous rays", "a certain molecular motion of the optic nerve", and, finally, "a particular visual sensation of the nervous centres" (220).

However, so Taine argues, as that "presence of the last intermediary is sufficient to cause the

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<sup>6</sup> Here, I chose to follow Taine in characterizing the hypothetical hallucinator by using the male pronouns "he"/"him", just in order to avoid confusion.

perception to arise” (ibid.), all preceding causal intermediaries may fail to obtain and, still, the subject be in the relevant perceptual state.

A last aspect of Taine’s view is worth considering. He concludes his treatment of perception by observing that, once one comes to appreciate that perception is but a “true hallucination”, one is finally in a position to also “comprehend and correct the error into which consciousness naturally falls with respect to external perception” (224). This error consists in mistaking perception “for a simple naked act of mind, destitute of any sensible character, and indeed of any character other than its relation with the thing which is its object” (ibid.). To illustrate what he has in mind, he proposes the following example: “Take the case of a table, I see it, touch it, perceive it. In addition to my tactile and visual sensations, I find nothing in me but an act of pure attention, a spiritual act, unique in kind, incomparable to any other” (ibid.).

The phenomenon Taine is pointing at is that of transparency. As contemporary philosophers typically construe it, what one finds in introspecting one’s perceptual experience is just what is out there in the world. In seeing a bowl full of cherries, one is not aware of any intrinsic properties of one’s visual experience, for all one is aware of are the properties of the objects one sees—as the redness of the cherries or the roundness of the bowl. Therefore, as Taine has it, the only way in which experience reveals itself to the introspecting subject is as a pure act of attention to, or awareness of, external things.

It is interesting to note that Taine, on the one hand, and disjunctivists, on the other hand, make the phenomenon of transparency play a dialectically opposite role in their arguments. Whereas for Taine transparency is a naive mistake that can be dispelled only if one comes to conceive of the nature of perception as being essentially the same as that of hallucination, disjunctivists typically take it to be a fundamental phenomenological datum that



any serious view of perceptual experience needs to respect.<sup>7</sup> The fact that introspection reveals perceptual experience to lack any intrinsic character—so they argue—shows that whatever character it possesses is derived from features of the environment. Therefore, disjunctivists take the phenomenon of transparency to strongly motivate the case against the view—entailed by Taine’s analysis of perception as “true hallucination”—that perceptions and hallucinations are states or events of the same fundamental kind.

#### 4) Scheler’s disjunctive argument

Let us go back to Scheler’s treatment of perception. As we saw, Scheler starts by addressing Taine’s thesis that perception is but “true hallucination” as the embodiment of a general strategy which he sees as wrongheaded. As you might recall, this strategy consists in taking the “bad” case—hallucination—instead of the “good” case—perception—as primitive.

According to Scheler’s own rendering, Taine’s premise consists in holding perception to be “a construct (*Gebilde*) which in no way differs phenomenally from hallucination, but only in that something real corresponds to it” (Scheler 1912: 250). Or, to put it in slightly different terms, the assumption is that “natural perception”—Scheler’s term for genuine perception—lacks any “phenomenologically salient mark” which could distinguish it from cases of delusion (ibid.). Scheler believes this claim plays a key role in Taine’s story—and rightly so, for it constitutes, in fact, the crucial first step on which the argument from hallucination is usually built. Moreover, he points out the causal construal of Taine’s own version of the argument. As we are already quite familiar with this aspect, there is no need to pause on the details. It should suffice to register that Scheler questions the cogency of the causal reasoning underlying the argument in that he challenges the conclusion from sameness of proximal causes—same pattern of brain stimulations—to sameness of experiences. More precisely, he

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<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Martin (1997), (2002) and Fish (2009).

sees the conclusion as unwarranted that a perception and a hallucination proximally caused by the same pattern of brain simulation necessarily have the same “content of experience” (ibid.).

This conclusion is to be rejected because it is but a further instance of the general mistake Scheler has previously highlighted and consisting in “judging perception in analogy to hallucination” (ibid.). But why should one think that this is a mistake in the first place? Scheler’s answer reads:

Only under the assumption that natural perception gives us something which really exists and whose content is not determined by our body, nor by our ‘brain’, has one the right to talk about other similar appearances (*Erscheinungen*) which fail to do so and thus belong to the realm of delusions—here, hallucinations. (Ibid.)

Here, Scheler notes that we usually describe delusive experiences as cases involving “appearances” which are “similar” to those we enjoy in a corresponding veridical case. This habit reveals that perceptual experience proves to be the basic case in light of which the non-veridical ones are to be made sense of. As a contemporary disjunctivist puts it, “in any case of perfect illusion or hallucination, we can explain its character by reference to the case of veridical perception, and we cannot give an explanation of what it is like except by implicit reference to the kind of veridical perception from which it is indistinguishable” (Martin 1997: 98). That delusive experience can be understood only by reference to perceptual experience means that the latter constitutes the primitive kind vis-à-vis the former. What the proponent of the argument from hallucination reveals is precisely insensitiveness to this fact.

Of course, Scheler now faces the challenge of providing a treatment of perception and hallucination which recognizes their being of essentially different natures and, at the same time, proves able to accommodate the neurophysiological facts which are usually appealed to

in order to substantiate the argument from hallucination. According to the story he offers, things work as follows:

In the case of natural perception what is brain-dependent is merely one's perceiving *this particular content* of reality *instead of* other contents. Brain-dependent is the selection of this content from plenty of other existing contents. [...] On the contrary, in the case of hallucination the *content itself* (and not the selection out of other possible ones) is brain-dependent. (251)

This needs some unpacking. Scheler argues that perception and hallucination differ in terms of their content. He seems to be suggesting that the content of perception does not depend, as such, on the obtaining of neurophysiological facts. What depends on such facts is, rather, one's "selecting" a specific content among many others. It is not entirely clear what this means. To fully understand what Scheler has in mind, we need to take a closer look at his notion of content—a task I shall pursue in the following section. For now, let me just illustrate what I take to be his basic idea with an example. Suppose I am now taking a walk in the park. As I move my body and explore the environment I become visually aware of many different objects. While I look around and see different things—first the bushes just in front of me, then that tall tree over there—the content of my experience changes accordingly. This reveals, Scheler argues, two basic features of our ordinary experience of the world. First, its content is, in some sense, external and mind-independent, as it is determined by what, at a given time, I'm looking at—say, the bushes. Second, at a given time, there are different contents my experience could have—I'm looking at the bushes, but I could be looking at the tree instead. Thus, the actual content of my experience results, as Scheler puts it, from my "selecting" one among the possible contents available at a given time. In other words, by focusing my visual attention on the bushes I fix which specific content my experience have: now, the bushes look

to me in a particular way. According to Scheler, this selective function depends on the obtaining of certain neurophysiological facts concerning, for instance, visual attention and color vision. However, the content—that the bushes look in that particular way—selected in virtue of the obtaining of such neurophysiological facts is not itself brain-dependent, but is determined—in some sense still to be specified—solely by “the things which are there and real” (ibid.). To put it differently: that the bushes look in a particular way—the *content of my experience*—is an independent, external matter, whereas *my becoming aware* of that very content requires the occurrence of certain neurophysiological events in my brain.

In the case of hallucination, on the contrary, Scheler claims that the content of one’s experience—how things look to one—is completely dependent on the relevant neurophysiological facts. As perception and hallucination are characterized by their having contents of different nature, they clearly count as being two fundamentally distinct kinds. For this reason, Scheler describes hallucination as a “delusion in which we merely believe to perceive, without actually perceiving” (ibid.). This description can be seen as instancing the disjunctivist’s strategy of construing hallucination as a state that cannot be discriminated from a case of genuine perception solely on the basis of introspection. However, it is equally important to note that Scheler is not proposing a *thoroughly* epistemic construal of hallucination, as some contemporary disjunctivists do.<sup>8</sup> To put it differently, Scheler thinks that hallucinatory episodes cannot be made sense of just by appeal to the subject’s doxastic situation. For though it differs essentially from perception with regard to content, hallucination does nonetheless possess a *positive* nature of its own—one, moreover, whose *sensory* character cannot be denied.

Let us briefly take stock. In his discussion of (Taine’s version of) the argument from hallucination, Scheler rejects the step which from the constataion that a perception and a

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<sup>8</sup> Sturgeon (2008) has introduced the label “pure disjunctivism” for this version of the position. For a full-fledged development, see Fish (2009).

matching hallucination are subjectively indiscriminable leads to the conclusion that they are of the same nature. In so doing, Scheler also embraces the disjunctivist's basic idea that perception and hallucination belong to fundamentally different kinds. This is so, he argues, in virtue of their having quite distinct contents. Whereas perception works as selecting among several, equally available, mind-independent contents, the content of hallucination is completely mind-dependent. However, this does not mean that hallucination is to be conceived as a non-sensory state, for this would simply run against an undisputable phenomenological datum. To Scheler's eyes, what one should rather say is that no unified account can be given of the sensory character common to both perception and hallucination. Rather, each case needs to be explained by appeal to the relevant kind of content.

## 5) Perceptual content

The key move in Scheler's disjunctive strategy consists in arguing that perception and hallucination differ essentially in virtue of their having contents of distinct kinds. His conception of such distinct kinds of content is still in need of substantial elucidation, though. This is particularly true for the content of perception, as all we know so far about it is just that it is, in some sense, external and mind-independent. Let us start by unpacking the sense in which Scheler takes perceptual content to be external.

A first conception of content entertained and promptly dismissed by Scheler is the following one: "If the name 'content of consciousness (*Bewußtseinsinhalt*)' denotes everything that can be grasped and meant in an intentional act, then also sun, moon and stars are 'contents of consciousness'. Only, this use of the term is completely meaningless" (Scheler 1912: 239). Why does Scheler believe such a way of talking to be useless? After all, the idea that physical objects and properties can enter the content of perceptual experience is accepted by contemporary proponents of externalist versions of intentionalism. Though he does not explicitly spell out the reasons of his quick dismissal, Scheler plausibly thinks that

by conceiving of physical objects as being part of the content of mental states one commits a category mistake. Intentionalists traditionally distinguish between the content and the object of mental states.<sup>9</sup> Consider again my visual experience of the bowl full of cherries. According to the standard intentionalist construal, the bowl and the cherries are the objects of my experience. Though it is open to discussion what the content of such a visual experience might be, the bowl and the cherries are surely out of question, as they have already been assigned their proper role. Therefore, a physical object normally qualifies for being the *object* of perceptual experience, but is not the right candidate when it comes to the question about perceptual *content*.

The proposal Scheler ends up defending is, rather, that perceptual content is constituted by what he calls “*physical appearances (physische Erscheinungen)*” (239). Of course, given his view of perceptual content as external and mind-independent, such appearances cannot be inner states or events—as it is also suggested by the qualification “physical”. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that he does conceive of perception as, in some way, involving the obtaining of certain neurophysiological facts. According to Scheler, what is mind-independent are the contents the perceiver takes in, as they are publicly available. However, one’s display of those capacities which realize such a perceptual taking-in depends on the fulfillment of the relevant causal conditions. In particular, Scheler highlights the capacity to select among several, equally available, mind-independent contents as the key function of perception. Therefore, it is the exercise of this selective function which he considers to be “brain-dependent”, as he writes.

What we should now ask is how his notion of physical appearances fits into this picture. The following passage gives us some important clues: the “dependence of an appearance of external perception on the perceiver’s body does not make it a mental (*psychischen*) content, but only a more or less relational (*daseinsrelativ*) object. However, not

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<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Husserl (1913, §129: 326).

all relational objects are, for this very reason, ‘mental’ or ‘subjective’” (239–40). The basic idea here seems to be that the physical appearances involved in perceptual experience are relational, though not mind-dependent. In contemporary philosophy of perception one finds several proposals which articulate a similar idea about the way in which things appear to us in perceptual experience. A first example is by Alva Noë: “[l]ooks are *objective, environmental* properties. They are *relational*, to be sure. But they are not relations between objects and the interior, sensational effects in us. Rather, they are relations among objects, the location of the perceiver’s body, and illumination” (Noë 2005: 85). In a similar vein, Susanne Schellenberg has proposed an account of what she calls the “situation-dependency” of perception. In her phrasing, “the ways objects are presented are best understood as external, mind-independent, but situation-dependent properties of the object.” (Schellenberg 2008: 59). Importantly, such properties are assigned a theoretical role which is quite similar to the one played by Scheler’s physical appearances. As Schellenberg writes, if “one recognizes situation-dependent properties, no appeal to mind-dependent objects or properties is necessary to explain how there can be a way that objects look that is not accounted for by representing their external, mind-independent properties” (71). The crucial point, here, is that the way a certain thing appears to one in perceptual experience is not a mind-dependent matter.

There is, however, a difference between how Scheler describes physical appearances and how Noë and Schellenberg construe looks and situation-dependent properties, respectively.<sup>10</sup> For whereas the latter are taken to count as *properties* instantiated in the external environment, the former are characterized as being some kind of *objects*. The option taken by Noë and Schellenberg seems to me the most congenial here, as Scheler’s talk of appearances in terms of objects is likely to raise the suspicion that he is thereby introducing

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<sup>10</sup> The affinity between Scheler’s view and Noë’s one is likely to run quite deep. For instance, Scheler (1926) defends that perception is tightly connected to motor actions, a claim which constitutes the core idea of Noë’s enactive theory of perception.

some obscure metaphysical entity.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Scheler would have done better in adopting Husserl's conception of appearance as being the perceived "side of the thing" (1907 §41:145), rather than being itself some kind of object.

Let me briefly sum up the main points of Scheler's account of perceptual content. He holds that physical appearances publicly available are the contents taken in by perceivers. Such appearances are in no way "subjective", as they do not depend on the mind of any particular perceiver. That those cherries look red through the transparent and colorless glass of the bowl is a fact that can be appreciated by anybody equipped with the relevant visual capacities. Nonetheless, as the realization of such capacities does require the obtaining of certain neurophysiological facts, one's taking in of such physical appearances depends on it as well.

## 6) Concluding remarks

I have argued that Scheler has solid credentials for being considered a significant precursor of disjunctivism about perception. In section 1, in particular, I stressed three reasons that make his case worth considering. The first one is that Scheler's strategy—in contrast to the cases of

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<sup>11</sup> More worryingly, one could wonder whether Scheler does not simply contradict himself. On the one hand, as we saw, he argues that objects of perception cannot be contents of perception. On the other hand, he characterizes the content of perception—what he calls a "physical appearance"—as a kind of object. However, as soon as we see Scheler as endorsing a distinction already drawn by Husserl, as it is not unreasonable to suppose, the supposed contradiction dissolves. If I look to a tomato from different angles, I enjoy experiences of the same object but with different contents. According to Husserl's view, the changing content—which he qualifies as "noematic"—of my perception is, at any given time, constituted by what he calls the "perceived object as such" (see Husserl 1913, § 88). Of course, the "perceived object as such" constituting the *content* of my experience differs from the *object* that same experience is about. Thus, as long as Scheler conceives of "physical appearances" as objects, the notion he has in mind, I submit, is akin to Husserl's notion of "perceived object as such".



Frege and Husserl—is *distinctively* disjunctivist. The second reason is that his positive story about perception constitutes a version of disjunctivism which is philosophically interesting in its own right. I take the previous treatment of Scheler’s view on perception to have vindicated these two points. If this is true, it is fair to say that Scheler is a close cousin of contemporary disjunctivists.

The third reason mentioned at the beginning of the paper concerns the relevance of Scheler’s case for the current debate about the compatibility between intentionalism—the claim that perception is essentially a “representation” of the external, physical world—and disjunctivism—the claim that perception is essentially a “relation” to the external, physical world. According to Crane (2006), this is the real divide in philosophy of perception.

Of course, Crane does not deny that some combination of intentionalism and disjunctivism is possible. An intentionalist can accept that perception is relational. What she cannot accept is, rather, that such a relational character is an *essential* feature of perception, for according to intentionalist’s lights perception is essentially (a certain kind of) representation. Thus, Crane’s point is that an intentionalist is necessarily committed to the idea that whatever relation may obtain between perceiver and world is “not essential to the perceptual experience being of the fundamental kind that it is“ (141).

In my view, what in particular should make Scheler’s position intriguing to contemporary eyes is his rejection of the commitment formulated by Crane, as he argues that its proprietary intentional content makes perception the fundamental kind of experience it is *and* that such content is fundamentally relational. Thus, according to Scheler experience is both representational and relational—and *essentially* so.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> There have been, of course, other and more recent efforts to show that perceptual experience is, essentially, intentional as well as relational—most notably, McDowell’s one (see, in particular, his 2013). Another example is Schellenberg (2011).

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