

THE OBSCURE CONTENT OF HALLUCINATION

O OBSCURO CONTEÚDO DA ALUCINAÇÃO

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ABSTRACT: Michael Tye (2009) proposed a way of understanding the content of hallucinatory experiences. Somewhat independently, Mark Johnston (2004) provided us with elements to think about the content of hallucination. In this paper, their views are compared and evaluated. Both their theories present intricate combinations of conjunctivist and disjunctivist strategies to account for perceptual content. An alternative view (called “the epistemic conception of hallucination”), which develops a radically disjunctivist account, is considered and rejected. Finally, the paper raises some metaphysical difficulties that seem to threaten any conjunctivist theory and to lead the debate to a dilemma: strong disjunctivists cannot explain the subjective indistinguishability between veridical and hallucinatory experiences, whereas conjunctivists cannot explain what veridical and hallucinatory experiences have in common. This dilemma is left here as an open challenge.

KEYWORDS: Hallucination. Perceptual content. Disjunctivism. Michael Tye. Mark Johnston.

RESUMO: *Michael Tye (2009) propôs uma forma de compreender o conteúdo das experiências alucinatórias. Mark Johnston (2004), por vias um tanto independentes, ofereceu também elementos que nos ajudam a compreender o conteúdo das alucinações. As teorias desses dois filósofos são comparadas e avaliadas nesse artigo. Ambas combinam abordagens conjuntivistas e disjuntivistas do conteúdo perceptivo. Uma teoria alternativa, chamada de “concepção epistêmica da alucinação”, que defende uma abordagem radicalmente disjuntivista, é considerada e rejeitada. Por fim, o artigo levanta algumas dificuldades metafísicas que parecem ameaçar qualquer teoria conjuntivista e levar o debate para um dilema: os disjuntivistas radicais não conseguem explicar a indistinção subjetiva entre a percepção verídica e a experiência alucinatória, e os conjuntivistas não conseguem explicar o que a percepção verídica e a alucinação têm em comum. Esse dilema é deixado aqui como uma questão aberta.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Alucinação. Conteúdo perceptivo. Disjuntivismo. Michael Tye. Mark Johnston.*

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted nowadays that, when we have a veridical perception, like seeing an apple before us, we are directly in contact with a particular object in the external world. The contact is *direct* because it is not mediated by any internal (or mental) item. By perceiving the apple before us, we are directly aware

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of it. Our awareness, as many like to put it, does not stop somewhere short of the external object. This is the view of *direct realism*.

Hallucination poses a puzzle to direct realism. When hallucinating, no external object is out there for us to be aware of. Nonetheless, we can still have a vivid experience that can be exactly alike, in every single detail, to a veridical perception. Traditional versions of the well-known *argument from hallucination* take the bold step from subjective indistinguishability to the conclusion that direct realism is simply false.

In response to this challenge, direct realists have often defended some sort of *disjunctivist* approach, according to which veridical perception and hallucination are radically different types of things and share no common mental state, even though they can be indistinguishable *from the perspective of the subject*. On the other side of the fence, the various versions of the argument from hallucination have usually inspired *conjunctivist* views, in which a common shared element explains subjective indistinguishability.

The obvious question that arises is, if anything, what a hallucination is an experience of. In other words, more akin to the currently prevalent representationalist parlance: what is, after all, the content of hallucination? This question presupposes that hallucinations have content. The very idea that experiences have content is a controversial claim.² For present purposes, however, I simply take it for granted. I assume here that experiences have representational content of some sort. I take this bold claim for granted, as my starting point. One must start somewhere, and this is as good a start as it can be, given where I want to get to.

Amidst his investigations on perceptual content, Michael Tye (2009), in one of his moods, proposed an account of the content of hallucination.³ Somewhat independently, Mark Johnston's (2004) analysis of the object of hallucination also provides us with elements to think about the content of hallucination (or so I shall argue). As a matter of fact, Johnston (2014) explicitly rejects the view that experiences have content. Though he is not himself a representationalist, I follow Hilbert (2004) in considering that his view on hallucination is interestingly adaptable to the representationalist framework. Given that the debate concerning the content view is entirely beside my point here, I opted to speak as if Johnston were happy with the content talk, which isn't in fact the case. The use of a common representationalist parlance avoids unnecessary complications and eases the way to the relevant goals here.⁴

² This claim is famously denied by Travis (2004), Martin (2004, 2006), Brewer (2004, 2006, 2011), Johnston (2014), among many others.

³ Anyone familiar with Tye's work knows that his views have changed significantly throughout the years. This is no different when it comes to hallucination. I consider here the account that Michael Tye advanced in the 2008-2009 period. After that, he (2014) published a paper proposing a quite different account of hallucination. Given my scope and interests here, I won't take this latest paper into account. Whenever I refer to Tye's view, I mean his 2008-2009 account. The novelties that came later, in any case, do not touch the points discussed here.

⁴ I thank the second anonymous referee for pressing me to make this point even more clear and explicit.

Tye's and Johnston's perspectives are alike in many respects, but there are important distinctions that may lead to different accounts of the content of hallucination. This paper is structured in the following way: (I) I start with some preliminary distinctions; (II) Tye's account is briefly introduced; (III) Johnston's view is presented; (IV) with the stage already set up, I draw some comparisons and evaluate their views; (V) a radically different alternative (the epistemic conception of hallucination) is then considered and rejected; (VI) lastly, a sweeping metaphysical argument is considered and left open as a living challenge. At the end, if any illumination on the so far obscure content of hallucination can be reached, my aims have been achieved.

I PRELIMINARY DISTINCTIONS

Both Tye (2009) and Johnston (2004) acknowledge that there is an important core of truth in direct realism. The view that Tye (2009, p. 541) prefers to call "naïve realism" is taken as a reasonable starting point for his investigations; and Johnston (2004) is explicitly carving out a direct realist approach that falls somewhere between disjunctivism and conjunctivism, as these terms are commonly conceived, and that can satisfactorily react to the argument from hallucination. In these very broad terms, the parallels between their views are quite evident.

In order to avoid terminological confusion, I initially unpack some of the key ideas loosely adumbrated so far. Since the discussion at stake walks along a fine line separating positions that are allegedly opposed, the conceptual tools must be precise enough to cut fine differentiations that are often neglected. To that end, I distinguish strong and weak versions of each of the main concepts being used here. A lot of misunderstanding seems to spring from the failure to acknowledge these distinctions.

The *strong argument from hallucination* is an attempt to refute direct realism. Here is one way of unpacking it:⁵

- (1) Hallucination and veridical perception can be subjectively indistinguishable.
- (2) If they can be subjectively indistinguishable, there must be some common element that explains it.
- (3) The common element is some sort of mental state (or act of awareness).
- (4) Hallucinations are mere mental states (i.e. they are not related to external objects).
- (C) Therefore, the only act of awareness shared by veridical perception and hallucination must be purely mental (i.e. it cannot be a relation to external objects, nor can it include elements that are not mental).

⁵ This version of the argument is based on the one presented by Aranyosi (2010).

The *weak argument from hallucination*, on the other hand, is restricted to the two initial steps of the strong argument. It only demands *some* common factor to explain subjective indistinguishability, but it is neutral on the nature of that common element. As far as it goes, the weak argument is consistent with direct realism. The strong argument, on the contrary, implies the denial of direct realism because the elements responsible for accounting for the phenomenal character of experience (both veridical and non-veridical) cannot include the direct or unmediated relation with external (or non-mental) items.

Strong conjunctivism is the claim that (i) there is a common element between veridical perception and hallucination that explains their subjective indistinguishability, *and* (ii) this shared element is an act of awareness. Strong conjunctivists typically distinguish between direct and indirect objects of awareness: the direct object is the one shared between veridical perception and hallucination, whereas the indirect object is the stuff in the external world that causes the veridical experience. This view is a straightforward consequence of the strong argument from hallucination.

Weak conjunctivism amounts to the milder claim that there is some common element between veridical perception and hallucination that explains their subjective indistinguishability. It is the counterpart of the weak argument from hallucination.

Strong disjunctivism consists in the negation of weak conjunctivism. It denies that there is *any* common element between veridical perception and hallucination that explains their subjective indistinguishability. Therefore, strong disjunctivists do not accept any version of the argument from hallucination, since the second step of the argument (shared by both weak and strong versions) is straightforwardly rejected. The natural upshot of this view is that veridical perception and hallucination have radically distinct contents (or, alternatively, that hallucinations have no content at all).

Weak disjunctivism rejects the claim that there is any act of awareness in common between veridical perception and hallucination. It rejects the stronger part of strong conjunctivism (i.e. the claim that there are direct and indirect objects of awareness). Weak disjunctivists only deny the strong version of the argument from hallucination. Consequently, this view is, in principle, compatible with direct realism and the weak argument from hallucination.

2 TYE'S ACCOUNT OF HALLUCINATION

Along his investigations, Michael Tye (2009) evaluates different accounts of the content of visual perception.⁶ A significant part of his inquiry concerns whether or not particular objects should enter into the content.

⁶ The focus on *visual* perception is harmless here. Though I confine myself to visual examples, the relevant point is general enough to be extended to any sensory modality.

According to the *existential thesis*, experiences have no singular content.⁷ In this view, perceptual content is purely existential or general: it represents the world as having something or other with certain properties (e.g. size, shape, color) at some spatiotemporal location.⁸ This view is mainly motivated by the requirement that perceptual content shall fix the phenomenology of experience. Since two experiences can be phenomenally alike (and, therefore, subjectively indistinguishable) even when their objects are numerically distinct (or when one of them has no object at all, as in the hallucinatory case), then the strictly *perceptual* content shall not be sensitive to phenomenally idle items such as particular objects.

The main argument advanced by Tye against this view presses its incapacity to accommodate the other constraint on perceptual content; namely, it fails to capture the accuracy conditions of experience. Tye (2009, p. 544) adapts an example from Grice (1961) to illustrate this point: a perceiver looks straight ahead and, unbeknownst to her, there is a mirror placed in front of her, inclined somehow so as to reflect a white cube that is out of her visual field. Now suppose that behind the mirror there is a red cube. Also unbeknownst to the perceiver, some special lighting conditions make the reflected white cube look red to her. This scenario leads the existential thesis to the wrong verdict that the experience is accurate, since the representational content is that there is something cubical and red at a certain location, and in fact there is. However, the red cube is obviously not seen, and the cube that is actually seen lacks the property of being red and at the perceived location. This is a clear case of illusion (or misrepresentation), and the existential thesis lacks the appropriate conceptual resources to explain that.

The defender of the existential thesis might attempt to avoid this problem, as Searle (1983) did, by adding the causal relation with the perceived object into the content. However, since the object itself does not enter into the content, this reply cannot avoid possibly deviant causal chains. Given the impossibility of capturing a particular item as such by descriptive means, the accuracy conditions cannot be fully captured in purely existential terms.

It can also be argued that Tye's argument begs the question against the existential thesis, since its defender can respond that the experience of the red cube in the example above is actually accurate: it says that there is a red cube in front of the subject, and that is actually the case.⁹ It may be argued that the experience counts as an illusion not because of its content being falsidical, but because the object that is actually perceived is not red and in front of the subject. The perceived object is not itself determined by the content, so the illusory character of the experience has to do with the objects related to the experience, not with its content. However, the whole idea of perceptual content is to capture the satisfactory conditions of experience. How (if at all) these conditions will inform phenomenology is a separate issue. If there is something illusory about the

⁷ This thesis is defended by McGinn (1982) and Davies (1992), among others.

⁸ I assume here that the content is partly singular, since it includes particular places and times. This point is pressed by Tye (2009, p. 556) against the existential thesis. I make this assumption because otherwise the purely existential content would face obvious counter-examples.

⁹ I thank the second anonymous referee for raising this point and pressing me to address this alternative response.

experience above, and its content fails to capture it, then there is something missing in the content. The missing part may be the perceived object, or the appropriate relation between subject and the perceived object. Insofar as content goes, it must explain perceptual error, whether or not the posited elements have any phenomenal impact. The problem with the existential thesis, as pointed out by Tye, is that it fails to deliver the right satisfaction conditions.

Once the existential thesis is rejected, Tye (2009) leans towards a position that has been traditionally taken by direct realists.¹⁰ According to that position, the only way to account for our direct contact with external objects is to include them as components of the perceptual content. In the case of veridical perception, this strategy is quite compelling. However, it becomes much less appealing when it comes to hallucinatory experiences.

In order to have a perceptual content that accommodates both veridical perception and hallucination, Tye (2009) advances what he calls the “singular (when filled) thesis” (SWF henceforth).¹¹ This thesis claims that, in a veridical perception, the perceived particular object enters into the content, whereas in a hallucination, the content is just like in the veridical case, except that instead of a particular object there is a gap, or an empty slot, in the content. The contents of both veridical perception and hallucination share a common structure, that Tye (2009, p. 546) calls a “content schema”. The SWF thesis captures the adequacy conditions in the following way: in a veridical perception, a particular object is represented as having some properties, and it in fact has these properties. The perception is illusory if the object lacks some of the properties attributed in the content. In that case, the experience is falsidical. In a hallucination, there is no particular object to fill out the content, and the gappy content can be understood as immediately falsidical, no matter which properties are represented.¹²

Tye (2009, p. 553) also motivates his adoption of the SWF thesis by the fact that the gappy content provides a more intuitive explanation of the “deceptive nature of hallucination”. In a hallucination, the perceiver can be completely deluded, so as to take the hallucinatory object for a real one and react accordingly (e.g. the subject who jumps back to avoid a hallucinated spider). A deceptive hallucination is not perceived as a bunch of qualities, but as a real thing out there. Even though Tye initially qualifies this argument as “unpersuasive”, he (2009, p. 553) affirms that “the supposition that there is gappy content in hallucinatory cases preserves as much similarity as can be preserved between those cases and the veridical ones”. He even adds later that, because of its deceptive quality, “it seems that we really must suppose that his [the subject of a hallucination] experience has a gappy content, one with a **quasi-singular character**” (TYE, 2009, p. 555, author’s emphasis).

¹⁰ McDowell (1994), to name only one, is a tenacious advocate of that position.

¹¹ Similar versions of this thesis were defended by Burge (1991), Loar (2003) and Bach (2007).

¹² To be more precise, the gappy content can be considered falsidical or neither true nor false. For brevity, I consider it here as immediately falsidical. I also ignore for the moment complications such as the cases of *de re* hallucinations, in which a particular object is identified as the hallucinated object (e.g. a subject who hallucinates his mom entering in the room). I believe, as does Tye (2009, p. 548), that such cases pose no special difficulty for the thesis under discussion.

Now take the mirror example again. The SWF thesis has a straightforward explanation of the illusory nature of that experience: since the perceived particular object enters in the content, the perceptual content includes the white cube in it, not the red one. However, the illusory experience, in this case, seems to be *accidentally veridical*, since the experience says that there is a red cube in front of the perceiver, and in fact there is a red cube there. The problem is that the SWF thesis classifies the experience as illusory and gives the *unequivocal* verdict that the experience is simply falsidical or inaccurate, even though the world seems to be just as it is represented to be. The same problem arises in cases of veridical hallucination, in which the perceiver hallucinates something (a red cube, say, in front of her), and it turns out that there is a real red cube in the exact same location. As it stands, veridical illusions and hallucinations seem to be unsatisfactorily explained by the SWF thesis.

Let us look more closely at the veridical hallucination case. Tye (2009, p. 557) claims that, in this case, the gappy content disposes the perceiver to form an accidentally true belief: “cases of veridical hallucination are veridical, then, only to the following extent: the visual experiences they involve dispose their subjects to form true beliefs. The experiences, however, are falsidical or at least neither true nor false”. Tye adopts the view that “the relevant contents, thus, are **potential** cognitive contents and not actual visual contents of my experience” (TYE, 2009, p. 558, author’s emphasis). Consequently, in a veridical hallucination, the perceiver, based on her perception, forms a higher-order cognitive state (a belief, say) that is accidentally veridical. The perceptual content, however, is itself falsidical.

To sum up, Tye (2009) claims that the difference between a veridical experience and a hallucination is the following: in the first case, there is a particular content, in the second, a gappy one. The gappy content may dispose the subject to believe that there is a real object out there. Both particular and gappy contents share the same “content schema”. Besides sharing the same content-structure, they share, if they are subjectively indistinguishable, the same “non-object-involving properties”.

The resulting view asks for a proper understanding of the representationalist thesis. Tye (2008, 2009) draws a distinction between weak and strong versions of representationalism. Strong representationalism identifies phenomenal character and representational content, whereas weak representationalism claims that the phenomenal character only supervenes on the representational content. Once the subjective indistinguishability between veridical perception and hallucination is spelled out in terms of a shared phenomenal character, it follows that the SWF thesis is committed to denying the strong version of representationalism. This is so because, in this view, different contents can be attributed to phenomenally identical experiences.¹³ Tye is well aware of this consequence, and is happy to

¹³ Another option to combine the SWF thesis and strong representationalism would be to deny that the veridical and hallucinatory experiences are phenomenally identical. I thank the second anonymous referee for raising this point, but I prefer to consider this option latter, when I discuss the epistemic conception of hallucination. As of this moment, I prefer to follow Tye’s steps and presuppose the possibility of veridical and non-veridical experiences being phenomenally identical.

embrace it. He (2009) holds that the phenomenal character of experience is given by the “cluster of properties” that is possibly shared by veridical and hallucinatory experiences. Although singular and gappy contents are quite different, they may share a cluster of properties that, ultimately, explains the phenomenological sameness of the two experiences. Weak conjunctivism, therefore, is vindicated: there is something in common, and this thing is not a mental state (or an act of awareness). In conformity with that, Tye (2009, p. 562) claims that “the solution is to look at the properties represented to find phenomenal character, and not to the representing of those properties”. Given that the existence of a common mental state is denied, Tye (2009, p. 562) qualifies his SWF thesis as “a form of disjunctivism”. In my terms, his position qualifies as weak conjunctivist and weak disjunctivist, and the strong versions of both theses are denied.

3 JOHNSTON’S ACCOUNT OF HALLUCINATION

In many aspects, the differences between Michael Tye’s (2009) and Mark Johnston’s (2004) accounts of hallucinatory experiences are a matter of detail. The deeper dissimilarities only emerge after some effort, and also due to some liberty on my part to extend Johnston’s thought *contra* Johnston and beyond the limits of his own investigations.

Johnston (2004) explicitly vindicates the weak version of the argument from hallucination, and he consistently considers it in its weak sense. Motivated by this argument, Johnston (2004, p. 114) demands a common factor between veridical perception and hallucination in order to account for the “(i) subjectively seamless transitions between certain cases of sensing and hallucination, and (ii) the distinctive character of hallucination itself”.¹⁴

The term ‘conjunctivism’ is used by Johnston (2004, p. 114) in the strong sense, as meaning that (i) there is a common object of awareness between hallucination and veridical perception, *and* (ii) in the veridical case, the relation between external object and act of awareness is a causal one.¹⁵ Noticeably, the distinction between mental item (which is the direct object of experience) and external item (which is the indirect object of veridical perception) is built into the very definition of the conjunctivist view. When Johnston rejects the conjunctivist approach, he is therefore rejecting *strong* conjunctivism.

Strong conjunctivism, as I use this term here, contradicts direct realism. When criticizing this view, Johnston (2004, p. 119) claims that “when we see, or

My aim right here is less to explore all the representationalist options and more to characterize Tye’s stance.

¹⁴ By “subjectively seamless transitions”, Johnston (2004) means the fact that veridical and hallucinatory experiences do not carry with them, necessarily, any distinctive phenomenological mark that could be used by the subject of the experience to tell them apart. In other words, a subject could go from a hallucination to a veridical perception, and vice-versa, without possibly being able to tell the difference between them by means of what is phenomenally given by the experience itself. [I thank the first anonymous referee for pressing me to clarify this point.]

¹⁵ Hilbert (2004, p. 187) criticizes Johnston’s inclusion of the causal connection in the very definition of the conjunctivist view, and I am inclined to agree with his criticism. This point, however, goes much beyond my scope here.

more generally sense, external particulars those particulars are no less ‘directly’ present to us than anything in hallucination”. The reason why Johnston rejects strong conjunctivism is somewhat like the reason that led Tye (2009) to defend the singular content of perception.¹⁶ According to Johnston (2004, p. 119), “without external particulars immediately seen or sensed, the whole scheme of descriptive identification of particulars would be ungrounded”. The crucial point here, shared by both philosophers, is that particulars are not derivative objects of awareness.

Johnston (2004, p. 121) initially characterizes disjunctivism in its weak sense, as the claim that there is no common act of awareness between veridical perception and hallucination. However, he later switches to the strong version, claiming that, in the disjunctivist view, there is no common factor explaining the subjective indistinguishability between veridical and hallucinatory experiences. When he rejects disjunctivism, he has in mind the strong version. He justifies this rejection in the following terms:

The crucial point is that the something in common need not be an **act of awareness** of which seeing is a subspecies. There can be a common **element** in awareness, which explain seamless transitions and so forth, but which is not itself a common **act** of awareness. (JOHNSTON, 2004, p. 170, author’s emphasis).

Enough for terminological clarifications. We can safely conclude by now that both Johnston and Tye only reject the strong versions of conjunctivism and disjunctivism.

Johnston’s (2004) investigations are mainly guided by the following questions: what explains the seamless transition (from the subject’s perspective) from a case of veridical perception to a case of hallucination? And what kind of thing, if any, is a hallucination related to?

These questions are interwoven. If hallucinations are related to anything at all, that *relatum* is supposed to fix the phenomenology of experience and account for the seamless transitions from veridical to hallucinatory experiences. Disjunctivists, by contrast, typically claim there is nothing properly perceptual that could count as the *relatum* of a seemingly existing hallucinatory object. Some of them resort, for that matter, to higher-order cognitive states in order to explain the nature of hallucination.¹⁷ For those resorting to this strategy, a hallucination is akin to a false belief about what is seen, or a case of *seeming to be seeing* something. Disjunctivists of this sort, such as Huemer (2001, p. 127), claim that “hallucination

¹⁶ I was convinced by the second anonymous referee to weaken my former claim that their reasons for rejecting strong conjunctivism are “very much the same”. They are alike insofar as both claim that the perceived object is a constitutive part of veridical experience, and that rules out the possibility of characterizing veridical and hallucinatory experiences in all the same terms. However, as pointed out by the very attentive and helpful referee, whereas Tye is more directly concerned with the correct metaphysical account of the perceptual content, Johnston is more directly motivated by epistemological considerations concerning what we can learn from different kinds of experiences. The underlying epistemological motivations are made more explicit in Johnston (2006).

¹⁷ This position will be considered more closely in section V.

is not awareness at all [...] for awareness is a relation between the subject and the world, and the hallucination fails to have the right relational properties”.

Another disjunctivist line also denies the existence of any *relatum* for hallucination, but appeals to merely intentional objects. In the same way that Ponce de Leon’s search for the Fountain of Youth does not demand any existing object for him to be searching for, hallucinations may relate us to merely intentional objects. However, Johnston (2004) claims that this analogy is infelicitous. Hallucinations, like veridical perceptions, have a sensory nature and present items to the subject’s attention. In the case of ‘searching’, on the other hand, there is only a verb that takes a grammatical object. One can obviously search for something that does not exist. In the hallucinatory case, however, the urge to determine an object (or *relatum*) does not come from the need of finding a grammatical object to the verb ‘to hallucinate’.

The reason why Johnston (2004, p. 129) advocates an “act/object analysis” of hallucination is because hallucinations “serve up distinctive items for demonstration”, and from these items, he claims, “we can learn certain novel things”. The question is how this object (or *relatum*) of hallucination shall be conceived. The following considerations guide his enterprise: (i) hallucinations are not original sources of *de re* thoughts about particular objects; (ii) hallucinations can secure original reference to qualities, so they can ground *de re* knowledge of qualities; (iii) no particular object can be the primary object of hallucination, but, in a certain sense, particular objects can be considered the secondary objects of hallucination.

Unless one’s ontology is open to accept non-existing entities and/or sense-data, the first consideration shall be uncontroversial. Hallucination is not a relation with any particular object, and that is why it is so puzzling to direct realists. Since there is no particular object of hallucination, there can be no *re de* thought about particulars grounded on hallucinations.

Commenting on the second consideration, Johnston (2004, p. 130) claims that “Frank Jackson’s Mary could come to know what red is like by hallucinating a red thing or by having a red afterimage”. If qualities are *directly* presented to the hallucinator, as Johnston claims to be the case, then *de re* knowledge of qualities can be grounded on hallucination. This claim is, indeed, his main motivation for adopting an act/object analysis of hallucination. If some kind of *de re* knowledge can find its ground on hallucinations, there must be a *res* to which a hallucination is a relation to. There must be, in this sense, an object of hallucination that constitutes its content.

A powerful argument in favor of the claim that a subject can hallucinate novel qualities (and then, based on the hallucinatory experience, learn how these qualities look like) is the following experiment. After being exposed to a bright monochromatic unique green light in a dark room for about twenty minutes, the room is illuminated and the subject afterimages a small red patch, which is then superimposed on a small red background, causing the subject to have a

supersaturated red afterimage.¹⁸ The supersaturated red is more saturated than any visible red in normal circumstances. This is a color that can never be seen, but only afterimaged. This experiment confirms the thesis that novel qualities can be assessed by experiences involving no particular objects instantiating the represented properties (such as hallucinations and afterimages).

The third consideration, that distinguishes primary and secondary objects of hallucination, elaborates on cases of alleged *de re* hallucinations of particular objects. The primary object is the cluster of properties hallucinated. The secondary object, which would account for the *de re* nature of the hallucination, includes references to particular objects. Johnston (2004, p. 132) claims that, in such cases, the primary object simply “strikes the subject” as being about a certain particular object. Particularity here, however, is merely derivative, being based on the “subject’s existing repertoire of singular reference” (JOHNSTON, 2004, p. 132). Secondary objects of hallucination are, in fact, just a “*façon de parler*” (JOHNSTON, 2004, p. 143). The only genuine objects of hallucination are the primary ones. They are, strictly speaking, not objects, but clusters of properties.

Taking into account the considerations above, that aim to uncover the seemingly obscure nature of hallucinatory experience, Johnston (2004) develops a theory that attempts to explain, among other things, the subjective indistinguishability between veridical perception and hallucination. In a veridical perception, the sensed scene before the eyes has a certain relational and qualitative structure that is instantiated by particular objects. The scene itself can be understood as a scene type, which he (2004, p. 133) calls a “sensible profile”. The sensible profile is a complex of qualitative and relational properties that explain the way the scene looks to the perceiver. This *way the scene looks* involves a certain *layout*: “whichever particulars are implicated they have to stand at certain times in certain positions in a three-dimensional space at certain directions and distances from your position now” (JOHNSTON, 2004, p. 134). Although the layout includes particular places, times, and subjects, it is understood as purely relational in itself, as “a universal rather than a particular” (JOHNSTON, 2004, p. 134). Different things can instantiate the same layout. In veridical perceptions, the sensible profile involves more than the layout: it also includes particular objects that fill out the layout.¹⁹

Your seeing the scene before your eyes is your being visually aware of a host of spatio-temporal particulars instantiating parts of such a profile or complex of sensible properties and relations. The suggestion is that in the corresponding case of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination you are simply aware of the partly qualitative, partly relational profile. This means that the objects of hallucination and the objects of seeing are in a certain way akin; the first are complexes of sensible qualities and relations while the second are spatio-temporal particulars instantiating such complexes. (JOHNSTON, 2004, p. 135).

¹⁸ The experiment is explained in more detail in Johnston (2004, pp. 141-2), who took it from Hurvich (1982, pp. 187-8).

¹⁹ Johnston (2004) also includes natural kinds in the content of veridical perception. Nothing in this paper hinges on that, and I prefer to set it aside and remain neutral on that.

The object of hallucination is a “proper part of the more demanding sensible profile that one is aware of in a corresponding case of seeing” (JOHNSTON, 2004, p. 136). In both cases, the subject is *directly* aware of something. The difference is that in a hallucination one is directly aware of less than one would be aware of in the corresponding veridical perception.

Hence, subjective indistinguishability is explained by a common factor that is not a common act of awareness. Johnston’s strategy parallels Tye’s (2009) in many respects. However, Johnston still has to explain what Tye (2009, p. 553) calls the “deceptive nature of hallucination”. In fact, the perceiver can be completely deluded by a hallucination and react as if there were a particular external object being perceived. Hallucination may well be incapable of securing *de re* reference to particular objects, but it is not perceived as a bunch of floating qualities. Johnston (2004, p. 140) is perfectly aware of this demand: “hallucinated sensible profiles can mimic particularity”. This mimicking capacity is explained by the spatiotemporal layout generating the illusion of a particular moving in certain directions. The perceiver is led to believe that there is a particular object out there, but this seeming object is a secondary object of hallucination, an object that appears only in higher-order states. The content of hallucination itself contains only a complex of sensible qualities and relations. According to Johnston (2004, p. 142), “thanks to containing certain properties in certain relations to continuous places and times, a primary object can immediately strike the subject as a moving particular”. As a result, the deceptive nature of hallucination is something like a Vegas billboard illusion: it looks as if an object is moving around the board, when in fact there are only successive lights going on.

4 TAKING STOCK

The structural similarities between the views of Tye (2009) and Johnston (2004) are striking and, in fact, it is sometimes a tricky job to say exactly what difference there is, if any.

The first likely dissimilarity concerns the gappy content theory. The Vegas billboard picture evoked by Johnston’s explanation of the deceptive nature of hallucination is compatible with an existential account of the content of hallucination (though not a *purely* existential one, since the layout includes particular times and places). The idea that hallucination “mimics particularity” seems, in principle, perfectly compatible with an existential account. In fact, this account even seems to provide a theoretical gain in metaphysical economy, since the existential approach of the hallucinatory content does not ask for any (possibly costly and complicated) “metaphysics of empty slots”.²⁰ Assuming that veridical perception is constituted by singular objects, which is granted by both Tye and Johnston, the existential account of hallucination can find no place for the notion

²⁰ Tye (2009, p. 548) does not elaborate on this topic, but he recognizes that this is a real issue and must be eventually addressed.

of a common schema (the “SWF schema”) shared by both veridical and hallucinatory experiences. It is hard to see, though, what sort of explanatory role this notion is actually playing. Since the common factor role, which explains subjective indistinguishability, is assigned to non-particular elements in the content, it is far from clear what reasons there are, if any, for insisting on a common (singular-like) schema.

Still, the gappy theory seems to provide a better account of veridical hallucination. In the case of veridical hallucination, Tye (2009) argues that the precisely *perceptual* content of the experience is falsidical, though it disposes the perceiver (at least in so far as perception goes) to form an accidentally veridical belief. In contrast, according to the existential account of hallucination, the strictly perceptual content of a veridical hallucination turns out to be simply veridical. In this view, there is nothing in the perceptual content of hallucinations showing that something went wrong in perception. However, a hallucination (be it accidentally veridical or not) obviously involves some sort of defective encounter with reality. If hallucinatory content is cashed out in terms of (instantiated) clusters of properties spatiotemporally located, then we lack the required resources to explain what went wrong in veridical hallucination.

Another argument against the existential account of hallucination comes from phenomenological considerations. After analyzing the phenomenological elements that determine the “sense of reality” of perceptual experience, Dorsch (2010) noticed that some elements can hold in the absence of others. Among the “reality characteristics” distinctive of veridical perceptions and of (seemingly veridical) hallucinations, in opposition, say, to typical imagining or dreaming, there are two of major interest for us: (i) *particularity* (objects are experienced as being numerically distinct), and (ii) *locatedness* (perceived objects appear to be spatiotemporally situated). Those two features, however, do not go necessarily together. Some cases of seeing, for instance, are vague about the precise location of the object. A limiting case is recounted by Sims (1995, p. 110): a patient with histrionic personality disorder²¹ vividly hallucinated a person at her bed, but she was unable to locate that person spatially, in relation to her environment. When asked to do so, she said she couldn’t, since the hallucinated person had no definite location in relation to the other objects in the room (walls, curtains). The case recounted by Sims is somewhat anecdotal, and the whole situation seems to be quite underdescribed. Though this example may be less than persuasive, it seems less unlikely that other cases like that may exist, which casts doubt on Johnston’s (2004) attempt to explain the feeling of particularity in hallucinations as derived from the feeling of locatedness.

To be fair, the existential account of hallucination is only one possible way of elaborating on Johnston’s ideas. He is, to be true, against the idea of experiences having content altogether. Still, a Johnston-inspired representationalist view seems to fare better with gappy contents for hallucinations. If we plug the gappy account

²¹ Histrionic Personality Disorder (HPD) is defined by the American Psychiatric Association (2013, p. 667) as a personality disorder characterized by a pattern of excessive attention-seeking, emotional overreaction, and over-dramatization of ordinary situations.

in Johnston's theory, we can simply regard the uninstantiated sensible profiles as analogs of gappy contents. In this (gappy-representationalist) reading of Johnston, layouts demarcate spatiotemporal gaps that are mapped into the content.

As to the phenomenological objection mentioned above, it may be argued that locatedness suffices to fix numerical identity and to enable demonstrative reference. In that case, locatedness would be sufficient to determine the sense of particularity, although it may not be necessary for it (the feeling of particularity could well have other sources). Another possible reply could appeal to the fact that vague locations are still locations, and a certain degree of locatedness would be enough to generate the sense of particularity. In any case, by adopting the gappy approach, whatever vantage point this may offer concerning the explanation of the phenomenology of particularity, Johnston can just as well claim the same.

5 THE EPISTEMIC CONCEPTION OF HALLUCINATION

Up to this point, we have just assumed that veridical and hallucinatory experiences can share the very same phenomenology. However, the fact that two experiences cannot be told apart introspectively is consistent with their phenomenal character being quite different. This possibility is curiously reinforced by the non-transitivity of indistinguishability, which is remarked by Johnston (2004, p. 165). If someone hallucinates a dark red patch that becomes gradually less saturated, one may be unaware of the difference between two patches presented in brief successive instants. Nonetheless, the initial and final moments present patches that are clearly distinguishable. Johnston (2004, p. 166) notes that "the hallucinator can miss some of the qualitative features of his hallucination", since there can be "more to the object of hallucination than how it strikes the subject". This observation is used to support his act/object analysis of hallucination, but it can just as well be used to motivate the dissociation of what the subject can introspectively differentiate from real differences in phenomenal character. Hilbert (2004, p. 188), for instance, takes the failure of transitivity in perception to motivate the denial of the naïve claim that "the immediate objects of perception are just as we taken them to be".

The possibility of veridical and non-veridical experiences having different phenomenal properties, despite their being subjectively indistinguishable, was largely explored by the so-called *epistemic conception of hallucination*.²² This view proposes a more radical disjunctivist account of perceptual experience in which the explanation of subjective indistinguishability does not resort to a common phenomenology, but to a certain epistemic process of introspection in which different things may simply look alike.

There are, certainly, many players in this game. I have no intention to exhaust the alternatives here. In what follows, I illustrate this position considering two possible routes. The first way, which is the most influential one, characterizes

²² This view is defended, among others, by Martin (2004, 2006), Soteriou (2005), Brewer (2008), and Fish (2008, 2009).

hallucination “solely by saying that it is like what it is not” (DANCY, 1995, p. 436). This is the *negative epistemic conception of hallucination*. The second way is even more radical and claims that hallucinations are false beliefs about experiences, but have no phenomenology of their own. This is the *eliminativist epistemic account of hallucination*.

The most prominent proponent of the negative approach is Michael Martin (2002, 2004, 2006). He claims that a hallucination consists fundamentally in an experience that is subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical experience from the perspective of the perceiver. A hallucination is, therefore, something that fundamentally looks like something it is not, and its nature consists uniquely in being a kind of impostor. Hallucination, in this view, is defined in terms of subjective indiscriminability, which is in turn characterized in terms of knowability. An experience is subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a certain kind if and only if it is not possible for the subject to *know by introspection alone* that her experience is not of that kind.²³ According to this view, phenomenal sameness and subjective indiscriminability are distinct but closely related phenomena. If two experiences are phenomenally identical, it follows that a subject with well-functioning discriminatory abilities will not be able to tell the difference between them. But the converse does not hold. Two experiences can be subjectively indiscriminable to a subject even if they are not phenomenally identical. This is so, for example, if the phenomenal difference is too slight and therefore inaccessible to the subject, even if her introspective abilities are functioning properly.

A theory of hallucination must offer the conditions that must be satisfied in order for a state to count as hallucinatory. Siegel (2004) pointed out that there are obvious counterexamples to the negative epistemic definition. Consider the case of cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators. A toad, for example, may not be able to know anything at all by introspection alone, since introspection involves higher-order representations that cognitively simple creatures like toads may not be capable of. In this case, a toad trivially satisfies the condition above: it is never possible for the toad to know by introspection alone that its experience is not a veridical one. As a consequence, toads (and rocks and tables) would be trivially hallucinating all sorts of things all the time. This is obviously absurd.

Martin (2006, p. 379) responded to this objection by cashing out subjective indiscriminability in terms of *impersonal* knowledge. The idea is to replace the particular subject with an *ideal* introspector. The improved formulation of the conditions is the following: an experience is subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical experience of a certain kind if and only if it is not possible for an *ideal introspector* to know by introspection alone that the experience is not of that kind.

Nonetheless, the "impersonal" version brings other difficulties with it. Brewer (2011, p. 111) compared the idealized notion of "being indistinguishable by introspection" with the mathematical notion of "being unknowable". This

²³ The term 'introspection' denotes here the distinctive way in which the subject comes to know about her own mental states, whatever that ability exactly consists in.

comparison, however, is problematic. Pautz (2010, p. 275) pointed out that there is an important difference between these cases. In the mathematical context, "being unknowable" is intuitively grasped within the idealized mathematical framework. In the context of perceptual experience, however, we have no basic pretheoretical intuition to appeal to. In the context of perceptual experience, the impersonal condition ("being indistinguishable by introspection") is not an epistemic condition at all, but it is an entirely primitive notion. As a primitive notion, it is not defining hallucination in terms of something else that we have an independent grasp on. Hallucinations, on this view, become some sort of brute facts that resist any deeper explanation.

There is also another reason why the idealized condition seems problematic. Being subjectively indistinguishable is accounted for in terms of what an ideal distinguisher can distinguish. This seems circular. This would only be informative if the kind of ability of the ideal distinguisher were defined in independent terms. This is supposedly done by the notion of "knowledge by introspection". But this notion, as pointed out above, is unclear and cannot be explained in independent epistemic terms. As a primitive notion, it only renames the concept that is supposedly being defined. The property of being subjectively indistinguishable is defined in terms of the property of being unknowable by introspection, but the *explananda* is as primitive and non-intuitive as the *explanandum*. This is why the definition seems circular: whatever you take to satisfy the first condition you can make it satisfy the second one, for there is no independent procedure that can be used to test if something satisfies only the second condition. The right side of the biconditional does not explain anything: it is itself in need of explanation.

Responding to Siegel's (2004) criticism concerning the hallucinations of cognitively unsophisticated creatures, Martin (2006) says that a simple creature does not need any capacity to introspect: we can "attribute experience to the dog through attributing a specific take on the world, without thereby supposing that the dog is self-aware" (MARTIN, 2006, p. 396). His negative epistemic condition says that the dog has a hallucinatory experience if and only if an ideal introspector having the same experience would be unable to tell it apart from a veridical experience. The pressing question, however, is what distinguishes this (epistemic) condition from the property of being subjectively indiscriminable from some matching veridical experience.

Moreover, the negative epistemic criterion seems insufficient to come to grips with the nature of hallucination. Smith (2008) points out that many ordinary non-hallucinatory experiences can meet the negative criterion (i.e. they are subjectively indiscriminable from veridical experiences). The reason why the negative epistemic condition does not satisfactorily demarcate the class of states that deserve the label 'hallucination' is because it is inadequate to pick out exclusively sensorial states, and hence inadequate to distinguish hallucinations from non-sensorial states. Consider, for example, the experience of a very rapid flash of light.²⁴ The subject of such an experience can well wonder: 'did I just see

²⁴ The example is from Smith (2008, p. 184). This everyday case can also be found in psychological experiments using a tachistoscope, which is a device that flashes images on a screen very briefly.

a flash?' The situation here admits of three explanations. Maybe the subject did see a flash, but she is not sure because it was barely detectable. The experience was, so to say, at the very threshold of her discriminatory abilities. Another possibility is that the subject did not see anything, but was simply 'under the impression' that she did. A third possibility is that the subject briefly hallucinated a flash of light. The main difference between the second and the third cases is that in the third case the subject had a sensory experience, whereas in the second one she had no sensory experience at all, however brief. According to Smith (2008, p. 185), "there are here three psychological states that need to be distinguished from each other: having a momentary perception, having a momentary hallucination, and having neither, but merely 'thinking' that one has, or may have, just perceived something". The problem of a negative epistemic criterion is that it fails to distinguish hallucinatory experience from mere 'thinking'. Merely thinking that you have a sensorial experience does not amount to effectively having one, and hallucinating, contrary to mere thinking, is intrinsically sensorial.

The negative epistemic view is not only in trouble in finding a plausible criterion to demarcate hallucinatory experiences in a non-circular way. Martin (2002) defends the thesis that perceptual phenomenology extends beyond what is discriminable to the subject. According to him, the "phenomenal nature" of a perceptual experience outstrips what is subjectively distinguishable, or the "phenomenal character". In his terminology, even though veridical experience and hallucination may share the same "phenomenal character", they differ in "phenomenal nature". He accuses the representationalist of believing in the myth of a common nature. Two different things, with different natures, can surely be subjectively indistinguishable. The property of being subjectively indistinguishable from something else does not pick out a ground-floor psychological type. The only thing that unifies the class of states that are subjectively indistinguishable from veridical experiences is the very property of being subjectively indistinguishable. Martin's account, however, does not explain *why* hallucinations look so similar to veridical perceptions. The negative account that he advocates can (at most) tell which states count as indistinguishable, but the fact that those states are indistinguishable is simply a brute fact of the world. What seems particularly problematic about his view is that the phenomenal nature of hallucination is simply left aside, as if no positive account of it could possibly be given. Unless an account of the metaphysical ground of hallucination is given, the fact that hallucinations have the sensorial phenomenology that they have is simply left unexplained.

The difficulty to come to grips with the phenomenal nature of hallucination by means of a negative strategy has led some philosophers to try a more radical route: what if we simply deny hallucinatory phenomenology altogether? This gave birth to what I call the *eliminativist epistemic account of hallucination*.

William Fish (2004; 2008; 2009) is perhaps the most prominent defender of this view. He claims that subjective indistinguishability can be fully explained by the "discriminatory context", or "the subject's discriminatory capacities and the observation conditions under which the discrimination is attempted" (FISH, 2008,

p. 146).²⁵ Different things can be indistinguishable to a subject at a time. The subjective indistinguishability between hallucination and veridical perception, he claims, is just a topic for empirical investigation. One possible explanation is that it is generated by a deficit in the meta-cognitive skill of “reality discrimination”.²⁶ According to Fish (2008, p. 157), “reality discrimination is characterized as the ability we have of telling mental episodes that are internally generated apart from real veridical experiences”. By themselves, he claims, hallucinations have no phenomenal character. Hallucinators are mistakenly led to believe that they have visual experiences, with specific phenomenal characters, but “although such subjects think/believe/judge that hallucinatory states have phenomenal character, they are wrong” (FISH, 2008, p. 159).

Although hallucinations have no phenomenal character on their own, there is obviously something it is like to hallucinate. However, according to Fish (2008, p. 160), the explanation of *something-it-is-like claims* is simply that, when hallucinating, the subject falsely believes that she has a *perceptual* experience. Just like (visual) perceptual experiences prompt beliefs that “there is something it is like to see something”, the phenomenal impression may just as well be the upshot of a false perceptual belief (FISH, 2008, p. 160). By so doing, Fish explicitly inverts the “standard order of explanation”.

Fish (2008) goes even further. If the subject in question is not conceptually sophisticated enough to form beliefs (e.g. animals or infants), then the allegedly hallucinatory experience is nothing more than a behavioral reaction to some cognitive or perceptual malfunctioning.

To begin with, I must confess that the epistemic conception of hallucination strikes me as quite bewildering. The very possibility of inverting the “standard order of explanation” is hard to swallow. One must be very eager to vindicate strong disjunctivism to end up defending such an unlikely story. The epistemic conception is committed to the odd view that higher-order cognitive states can generate subjective states that are exactly like actual perceptions, but that lack phenomenal character altogether. Hallucinations are thus some sort of shadows from beliefs. Shadows that acquire a seemingly phenomenal quality just because the subject believes so. In what follows, I summarize a few arguments against this view.

The epistemic conception, at least in Fish’s (2008) version, is unable to account for cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators. In Fish’s view, unsophisticated creatures that lack higher-order states like beliefs (due to their lack of the appropriate concepts or mechanisms) would not be able to have hallucinatory experiences. Susanna Siegel (2008) argues that Fish’s behaviorally-based (or “effect-based”) explanation of animals’ hallucination is deeply unconvincing. She (2008, p. 215) remarks that his theory “does not ensure that hallucinations have any felt reality from the point of view of the hallucinator”. In the case of unsophisticated creatures, hallucination (if it still deserves this title at

²⁵ For the record, Fish’s notion of ‘indistinguishability’ is strongly influenced by Williamson (1990).

²⁶ This term is taken from Slade and Bentall (1990, p. 125).

all) lacks not only a proper phenomenal character, but there is nothing it is like to be in that state. A lethargic cat that hallucinates a butterfly but remains quiet would be a theoretical impossibility in this view. For that matter, I quote Johnston (2004, p. 124):

Being susceptible to visual hallucination is a liability which just comes with having a visual system, i.e., comes with being able to see, and does not require the operation of the ability to think or believe or reflectively grasp the fact that you are seeing, any more than seeing requires this.

Moreover, impossible scenes, such as Escher's drawings, can perfectly well be objects of hallucination (SIEGEL, 2004). In such cases, one could know, only by introspecting the scene, that it cannot be veridical. Consequently, it would be irrational to believe, based on introspection, that this is a veridical experience of any sort. Since the corresponding higher-order state cannot be made credible, it makes no sense to explain this hallucination as a projection from a belief that cannot be rationally believed. If I don't believe in what I see, I don't believe that I'm having a perceptual experience. Consequently, I should not believe there is something it is like to be in that state. This case seems to break the explanatory chain of the epistemic theory in its very origin.

The epistemic conception of hallucination, I conclude, does not seem promising. The negative and eliminativist strategies face pressing difficulties, and I fail to see how they could overcome them. Unless strong disjunctivists come up with a more persuasive account, we have good reasons to stick to weak conjunctivism, just like Tye and Johnston did.

6 METAPHYSICAL WORRIES

First of all, it shows the persistent difficulty in getting rid of the Cartesian dual world, divided between Johnston (2004) claims that the sensible profile shared by hallucination and veridical perception is a "proper part" of the content of veridical perception. The notion of being a *proper part* has strong metaphysical connotation. If the perceptual relation with the world, direct as it is, involves the representation of aspects of reality, then a proper part of it seems to be the representation of fewer aspects of reality. A hallucination (understood as an uninstantiated sensible profile) is not related to the world in a less direct way, but is only related to less.

Gappy and singular contents obviously differ from one another. Tye (2009, p. 562) claims that "at the level of content itself, there is indeed no common factor". But he remarks elsewhere that "the content involved in veridically experiencing a red object and the content involved in hallucinating a red object have something important in common" (TYE, 2008, p. 209). This *thing* in common brings with it a metaphysical difficulty. Johnston (2004) explicitly characterizes the common factor

as qualities and relations of sensible profiles, which are characterized as uninstantiated universals. When hallucinating, the subject is aware of universals. However, Dunn (2008, p. 378) remarks on how odd it is to be directly aware of universals, not to say *uninstantiated* universals. To start with, no causal relation can hold between (uninstantiated) universals and our awareness of them. According to Dunn (2008, p. 378), “it seems to be a process cloaked in mystery”.

What, after all, accounts for the phenomenological presence of a certain quality in a hallucination? The representationalist answers this question by pointing to the content, and saying that the property is represented to be out there, but it happens not to be there. The representationalist can go even further and say that a given experience *e* represents a given quality *Q* in virtue of the fact that *e* is normally caused by training the eyes on real objects that instantiate *Q*. Indeed, it is because the subject undergoes *e* that she is ever enabled (if she is sophisticated enough) to ask ‘what is that’ with relation to *Q*.

Though ingenious, the representationalist approach seems to miss an important part of the whole story. Fish (2004, p. 8) subtly observed that a deeper question was left unanswered: after all, *why* does being in a state that represents a certain property suffice to make this property phenomenologically present? As he qualifies the question, it is not the “thin causal question” of “why the subject comes to be in state *S* (a question about the aetiology of the state)” (FISH, 2004, p. 9). We touch here what Fish calls the “deep explanatory question of **why state S has the phenomenology it does**” (FISH, 2004, p. 9, author’s emphasis). The problem that must be addressed by any conjunctivist theory is how to “deep-explain” the phenomenological presence of properties without their actual instantiation in the perceived scene. Strong disjunctivists, like Fish (2004, p. 9), understand quality awareness as a real-world instance of the quality acting directly “on the subject’s sense organs”. Since they postulate a common factor to explain phenomenological similarity, conjunctivists, on the other hand, are committed to offering the same “deep explanation” for the phenomenological presence of a quality in both hallucination and veridical perception. As a consequence, in veridical perception, “the presence to the senses of certain visual properties – their perceptual presence – does not deep-explain why those properties are phenomenologically present” (FISH, 2004, p. 9).

The “deep problem” points to a profounder difficulty in combining conjunctivism and direct realism. Part of what we are directly related to in our acts of awareness are mundane properties. The argument from hallucination, traditionally applied to *objects* of experience, can be adapted and spelled out in terms of *properties*.²⁷ The argument, in rough, goes from the fact that one can hallucinate an uninstantiated property to the conclusion that the perceived property in veridical perception is not an instantiated physical property of external objects. Conjunctivists simply assume that hallucination and veridical perception are both related in the same way to the same kind of properties, but their assumption may be metaphysically unwarranted. Even if the properties represented

²⁷ That is exactly what Thompson (2008) did when arguing for the incompatibility of representationalism and direct realism.

in both cases are the same, there is still something mysterious about how they are related to the subject. Contrary to direct realism, it seems that the very instantiation of a property is irrelevant to its perceptual appearance.

Since hallucinatory experiences are not encounters with existing particular objects, representationalists must look elsewhere to find the grounds of their phenomenology. Given the principle of ontological parsimony (which, by the way, inspired the whole representationalist project of naturalizing consciousness), one shall refrain from populating the world with novel entities to account for the phantasmagorical objects of hallucination. Among the things in the representational content, some are more or less abstract than others. The typical representationalist strategy, it seems, was to consider the more abstract items as universals, and to let them have a life independently of being instantiated. That was, in very rough strokes, the strategy adopted by the conjunctivist accounts discussed in this paper.

As Thompson (2008, p. 400) warned, “we should be careful not to confuse at the outset an attractive view about the intentional content of experience with an attractive view about what metaphysically grounds the phenomenal character of an experience”. The two views discussed in this paper may look quite appealing from within a certain limited set of concerns, but they may hide a much less attractive metaphysical core. According to Thompson, “we might well wonder, how can **universals** do this metaphysical job? Or, how can we be acquainted with universals in the way that seems to be required in order to account for our experience of redness?” (THOMPSON, 2008, p. 400, author’s emphasis). The response typically given to these questions, alas, seems to lie far outside the naturalistic spirit that motivated representationalism in the first place. Universals presumably exist outside space-time, and they lack causal powers. The deep problem is not exactly how we come to represent universals, but rather how uninstantiated properties could ever constitute the phenomenal character. Even if universals are allowed to have a life of their own, the very relation between subjects and universals, which is constitutive of phenomenal experience, seems to be less than fully naturalistic.

The metaphysical conundrum just sketched seems to challenge Tye (2009) and Johnston (2004) alike. Direct realism, which both of them are committed to, seems to require more than they may be willing to give. The claim that properties are uninstantiated universals is a crucial one for both of them. It is hard to see how a common factor between hallucination and veridical perception could ever be found without it. But if this metaphysical problem sketched above is a genuine one, as it seems to be, conjunctivism and direct realism make strange bedfellows.

For the reasons discussed in the previous sections, strong disjunctivism seems to be equally hopeless. Strong disjunctivists have a hard time explaining the subjective indistinguishability between hallucination and veridical perception, and they don’t fare any better when it comes to explaining the distinctive nature of hallucination.

We end up here left with a dilemma concerning the nature of hallucinatory experience. In this paper, I dare not fancy a solution myself. I can, however,

envison a few alternatives. One can, for instance, deny that a hallucination can possibly relate the hallucinator with novel properties. In this case, hallucinated properties could be metaphysically grounded on previously perceived instantiated properties. This line of response, however, would be committed to denying Johnston's claim that hallucinations can ground *de re* knowledge of qualities. Another alternative is to bite the bullet and affirm the universality of perceptual properties. If a detailed account of the relation between acts of awareness and universal entities can be contrived, the apparent obscurity surrounding this relation may well be dissipated.²⁸

These alternatives, of course, are far from exhausting the whole terrain. As stated in the very beginning, my aim here is much less ambitious. I only aimed to compare and critically evaluate the theories of Tye (2009) and Johnston (2004), which are two influential approaches now on the market. By considering some objections to their strategy of combining weak conjunctivism and weak disjunctivism, I ended up touching some metaphysical challenges that were not, as far as I can see, appropriately addressed by any of them. I leave them here as open challenges for conjunctivists of any sort.

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²⁸ Alford-Duguid and Arsenault (2017), for instance, take something like the former line, whereas Tye (2009; 2010) seems to take the latter.

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