

Illusory Looks

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Abstract

One debate the Pyrrhonian skeptics had with the Epicureans concerned the relation between sense perceptions and beliefs. The debate concerned the Epicurean claim that all perceptions are true, a claim rejected by the Skeptics who proceed on the assumption that there is no judgment-component in perception. This discussion echoes widely through today's debates in the philosophy of perception. Like the Epicureans, some of today's relationalists or disjunctivists claim that error and misrepresentation have no place in sensory experience, but enter the picture only once we form beliefs on the basis of experience. And most of today's intentionalists hold both that experiences can have false contents and that they are not beliefs. I have defended a non-standard version of intentionalism, according to which (visual) experiences indeed are beliefs, but have contents — so-called looks-contents — that, if ever, very rarely are false. In this paper, I shall work out in detail how this view can account for non-veridical experience. Just like some of today's relationalists or disjunctivists, I agree with the Epicurean claim that error and misrepresentation typically are a matter, not of experience, but of belief or judgment downstream from experience. Nevertheless, the distinction between veridical and non-veridical experience can be preserved where it intuitively belongs: Illusions can be characterized in terms of misleadingness.

1 Introduction

The Pyrrhonian skeptics had a lively interest in sense perception and its relation to our beliefs about the world. The debates they engaged in with their opponents – the Stoics, but also the Epicureans – echo widely through the once more very lively debates in today's philosophy of perception.

The main opponents of the skeptics – the Stoics – argue that there are so-called kataleptic impressions. These not only represent things precisely as they are, but also make clear

to the cognizer that they do so. Against this, the skeptics argue that for any given candidate kataleptic impression, there can be another that is in every way like it, but nevertheless misrepresents things.

With the Epicureans the Pyrrhonians had a debate concerning the relation between sense perceptions and beliefs. The Epicureans claim that all perceptions are true – in the sense of being a product of physical goings-on between world and mind. Falsity comes into the picture only once we make judgments on the basis of our perceptions, i.e. “downstream” from perceptual experience. For the Epicureans, it is judgment, or belief formation, that is the source of error or misrepresentation.

The Skeptics go along with the assumption that there is no judgment-component in perception. Nevertheless, they have a whole battery of examples they routinely employ against the claim that all perceptions are true. In the so-called *Ten Modes*, we thus find examples of one and the same thing appearing differently to animals and to humans, to different humans, to different senses, or in different contexts. To the extent that these are (incompatible) appearances or impressions of properties that do not, in fact, vary across these situations, it is indeed not easy to see how they all could be true.

The Skeptics therefore reject the claim that all perceptions are true, saying instead that, on the one hand, there are appearances, and on the other, there are judgments or beliefs based on these appearances. According to them, the appearances themselves fall short of being beliefs and do not contain a judgment component.¹

These discussions echo widely through today’s philosophy of perception. Just like those between the Skeptics and their opponents, the debate between intentionalists and relationalists concerns the metaphysics as well as the epistemology of perception. Its main fault line, however, is different: While relationalists hold that veridical experience is essentially a relation, for instance one of direct awareness or acquaintance, between a subject and one or more mind-independent parameters of the perceptual situation, intentionalists hold that perceptual experience essentially is a representational state of the subject. But even though relationalists often deny that phenomenal character can be shared across veridical and non-veridical experiences, they do not think of veridical experiences as kataleptic. Rather, they accept the possibility of introspectively indistinguishable veridical and non-veridical expe-

¹Ultimately, the Skeptics of course use their examples of variation in appearance to urge suspension of judgment.

riences.

Correspondingly, even though most of today's intentionalists think of perceptual experiences as to a certain extent belief-like, they usually insist that they are not beliefs. Most intentionalists would also reject the claim that all experiential content is true. In these respects, they are like the skeptics. In fact, the ease and elegance with which intentionalism promises to account for non-veridical experience in terms of the falsity of its content while preserving a non-disjunctive metaphysics of experience is often taken to be one of its great advantages. In trying to grapple with illusion and hallucination some of today's relationalists, on the other hand, join the Epicureans in claiming that error and misrepresentation have no place in experience, but enter the picture only once we form beliefs on the basis of it. While I agree that error and misrepresentation typically are a matter, not of experience, but of belief or judgment downstream from experience, I nevertheless defend a form of intentionalism. According to *phenomenal intentionalism* (PI), (visual) experiences both are beliefs (of a peculiar kind) and have contents – *looks-contents* – that usually are true. In this paper, I shall work out in more detail how this view can account for non-veridical experience.

I shall proceed as follows: In the next section, I shall elaborate three desiderata on any satisfactory account of non-veridical experience. In section 3, I shall argue that despite its great initial promise, standard intentionalism in fact has a hard time satisfying them. And in the last section, I shall work out my own account of non-veridical experience and show that it does quite well with the desiderata.

2 Three desiderata for accounts of non-veridical experience

Philosophers of perception today not only draw a distinction between veridical and non-veridical experiences, but also between two kinds of non-veridicality: hallucinations and illusions. In what follows, I shall use 'experience as of p ' and 'experience as of an object's/something's being F ' as neutral between relationalist and intentionalist accounts of experience. We can then say that a perceptual experience as of p is veridical iff p . Pretty much everyone agrees that veridical perceptual experiences have objects that intuitively are "theirs", and that these typically are ordinary material objects. For a visual experience as of a red bird, for instance, its intuitive object would be the seen bird. Illusions can then be distinguished from halluci-

nations in the following way: an experience e as of an object's being F is an illusion iff e has an intuitive object o , but o isn't F . And e is an hallucination iff e does not have any intuitive object.²

Once these distinctions – let's call them “the veridicality distinctions” – are in place, it is in many cases intuitively clear in which category a given experience falls. The Müller-Lyer illusion, for instance, clearly is an illusion. So are cases of seeing something white cleverly lit with red light, or seeing a cube through a distorting lens. “Hearing” voices, “seeing” a mirage, or randomly having your brain stimulated by a mad scientist so that it visually is as if there was a pink elephant in front of you pretty clearly are hallucinations. And an experience as of a red bird right in front of you is most probably veridical if there indeed is a red bird right in front of you, your line of sight is unobstructed, your eyes (and brain) are working properly, and there is nothing funny about the light. There are rather stable intuitions regarding more complicated cases, too. Here is one: You are having an experience as of a red bird right in front of you. There is nothing wrong with the light, your eyes, or your brain. And there is a red bird – bird₁ – precisely like the one you seem to see right in front of you. However, unbeknownst to you there also is a cleverly disguised mirror between you and bird₁. What is reflected in the mirror is another bird – bird₂ – outside your field of vision. In such a “mirror scenario” your experience quite clearly is an illusion: the intuitive object of your experience is bird₂, but bird₂ is not in the location it seems to be in.³ All in all, and even though there are more tricky cases, the intuitive notion of the object of an experience and the veridicality distinctions based on it, do seem to be a stable part of our pre-theoretic conception of perceptual experience. It would thus seem rather important to get them right at least for the clear cases.

This is thus our first desideratum on any satisfactory account of non-veridical experience: that it be able to draw the veridicality distinctions in the right places. The second and third desiderata will in a sense pull in the opposite direction: they won't concern differences, but rather similarities between experiences across veridicalities. I shall concentrate on two aspects of such similarity: phenomenology and rational role.

Let's start with some phenomenology. Philosophers of perception today do not think

²Intuitive as this distinction might seem, it is a philosopher's distinction, and its relation to notions of illusion and hallucination as used in empirical science is not entirely straightforward. Cf. e.g. Genone 2014, 359ff, Farkas 2013, and other essays in Macpherson and Platchias 2013.

³Mirror scenarios go back to Grice 1961. Cf. also Lewis 1980; Soteriou 2000.

that illusions and hallucinations wear their non-veridicality on their sleeves. A useful notion here is that of “matching experiences”. An experience matches another iff they cannot be distinguished, just by themselves, from the subject’s own point of view. It is widely held that matching is possible across veridicalities, i.e. that it is possible for a veridical experience to be matched by an illusion as well as by an hallucination.⁴ It is rather natural to think of matching pairs of experiences as having the same phenomenal character, but that presupposes – pace at least some relationalists – not only that phenomenal character is introspectively accessible, but also that sameness of phenomenal character is (cf. Dorsch 2016, 38f.) To keep things neutral, matching pairs are therefore usually characterized as *introspectively indistinguishable*.⁵

Clearly, any satisfactory account of non-veridical experience has to be able to accommodate, or even explain, the introspective indistinguishability of matching experiences. More precisely, a satisfactory account of non-veridical experience has to respect the phenomenal character veridical experience actually has and accommodate, or explain, the possibility of its being matched in non-veridical experience. We therefore need to look more closely at the most important phenomenal characteristics that require matching.

A first observation here is that matching experiences seem to be as of the same objects and properties. Take a veridical experience as of a red bird right in front of you. A matching non-veridical experience, whether illusion or hallucination, is just as much as of a red bird right in front of you. In fact, it would seem to be of the very same kind of bird and the very same kind of red in the very same position right in front of you.

But the cluster of features I shall concentrate on is not just a matter of what an experience is as of. It also concerns the way in which what the experience seems to be of is “presented” to the subject. This is not just about the phenomenology’s sensory, vivid, and often very detailed nature. More interesting in this context is a certain “immediacy” or “directness” characterizing experience: the surrounding scene and its objects seem to be directly and very forcefully “present” (or “presented”) to its subject.⁶ Some even think that immedi-

⁴The latter two also match each other, but usually people talking of a matching experience have in mind a non-veridical experience matching a veridical one.

⁵Whether perfectly matching experiences actually occur across veridicalities is controversial, too, but for the purposes of this paper the very possibility of matching pairs, or even just of non-veridical experiences that cannot introspectively be recognized as such would seem sufficient.

⁶The terminology of “presentation” and “immediacy” is often credited to Searle (1983, 46). But strictly speaking, Searle’s notion of immediacy is epistemological, not phenomenological.

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(...) distinguishes our perceptual experiences from every other kind of experience that we enjoy. For example, when you see a book in front of you or hold it in your hands, the book itself seems to be present to you in a way it never does when you merely consciously think or imagine that the book is in front of you (Millar 2014, 625).

In what follows, it will be helpful to distinguish between two aspects of immediacy. In the passage just quoted, the way in which the *object* of an experience is present to the subject is highlighted.⁷ Let's call this "object presentation": in having an experience, it is for the subject as if its object both had independent *existence* and was *present* right then and there, in the scene in front of their eyes.⁸ Object presentation in this sense is also often called "particularity" (cf. e.g. Martin 2002).

Like many others, I think that careful phenomenological observation reveals a third element of object presentation. The object is not only presented as existing and present, but also as related to the experience itself. More precisely, "to introspective reflection, our perceptions seem to be in certain ways *dependent on their external objects*" (Dorsch 2016, 41f, emphasis added) – it is as if the object somehow determined what seeing it is like for the subject.⁹

The second aspect of immediacy I am interested in could be called "world presentation" or, to appropriate an expression from the literature on seemings, "felt veridicality" (cf. Tolhurst 1998, 298ff). An experience does not seem to present just some possible scene; rather, it seems to establish immediate contact with, or to make something like an assertion about,

⁷Something similar seems to hold for the object's properties, but it is harder to say what that precisely amounts to. I shall not go into this here.

⁸The to my mind most suggestive characterization of object presentation – "leibhafte Gegenwärtigkeit" – is Husserl's:

Der Vergleich mit einer entsprechenden bloßen Vorstellung, etwa einer bloßen Phantasie, zeigt, wie derselbe Gegenstand *als* derselbe (...) und doch noch in ganz anderer "Weise" vergegenwärtigt sein kann. In der Wahrnehmung schien der Gegenstand "leibhaft", sozusagen in eigener Person gegenwärtig zu sein. In der Phantasievorstellung "schwebt er nur vor", er ist "vergegenwärtigt", aber nicht leibhaft gegenwärtig (Husserl 1901/1984, B 441f.)

⁹There are those who deny this, stressing the "transparency" of experience: "[T]he proposal that experiences, in part, refer to themselves is not easy to swallow. Intuitively, when I see a tomato, for example, my visual experience is directed upon the tomato. It is not about *itself* in addition to the tomato" (Tye 2009, 545). This is not a matter of intuition, however, but of well-trained, careful introspection.

the world as it actually is around the subject. This puts experience on one side of a broader distinction between two kinds of mental states, a distinction that has, for instance, been characterized in terms of direction of fit. Perceptual experiences, it is often claimed, have the same direction of fit as beliefs (as opposed to desires): mind-to-world (cf. Searle 1983, 42).

We thus arrive at our second desideratum for satisfactory accounts of non-veridical experience: They must account for subjective indistinguishability. In particular, they must accommodate, or explain, the fact that a non-veridical experience introspectively seems to be just as object and world presenting as its veridical match.

The third desideratum concerns the rational role of experience. Matching experiences not only are introspectively indistinguishable, there are also remarkable similarities when it comes to their rational powers. A veridical experience as of a red bird right in front of you provides you with both theoretical and practical reasons. For instance, it provides you with a (*prima facie*) reason for believing that there is a red bird in front of you. And if you for instance would like to know exactly which kinds of red birds live around your house, it might provide you with a practical reason for reaching for your binoculars. There is an intuitive, folk-psychological notion of reason on which all of this holds just as well for any of its non-veridical matches.¹⁰ Of course, the reasons provided by experience can be overridden by background belief to the effect that circumstances are such that your senses cannot be trusted. But as long as you do not (have any reason to) believe any such defeater, a non-veridical experience has the same (*prima facie*) reason providing power as its matching veridical counterpart. I shall call this the “rational equivalence” of matching experiences. Accounting for it is another important desideratum on any satisfactory account of non-veridical experience.¹¹

In what follows, I shall put the three desiderata just developed to work. In the next section, I shall investigate to what extent standard intentionalism lives up to them.

¹⁰For more on this, see esp. Glüer 2009, Glüer 2016b.

¹¹ Cf. Fish 2008; Dorsch 2016. An epistemic disjunctivist such as McDowell will insist that non-veridical experience does *not* provide any, or at least not the same kind of epistemic warrant or “entitlement” provided by veridical experience (cf. McDowell 2008, Glüer 2012b). Schellenberg, a more conciliatory epistemic disjunctivist, distinguishes between two forms of evidence or justification, “factive evidence” and “phenomenal evidence” (Schellenberg 2013; Schellenberg 2014). I am not disputing that more objective notions of reasons or evidence might be useful. I am just insisting that there are useful, subjective notions of reasons according to which subjects can have false or misleading reasons. The intuitive rational equivalence of matching experiences is, *prima facie* at least, of this latter kind.

3 Standard intentionalism on illusion and hallucination

It seems fair to say that the ease and elegance with which intentionalism promises to account for non-veridical experience has long been thought one of its main advantages. But making intentionalism deliver on this promise turns out to be surprisingly difficult.

Intentionalism is the claim that experience is a conscious mental state with representational content. I shall assume that this amounts to saying that a perceptual experience is a propositional attitude, where both “propositional” and “attitude” are understood in a sufficiently uncontentious way to make (most) intentionalists happy.¹² Intentionalists usually observe that experiences are belief-like in important respects; for instance in that they “aim at truth” and have mind-to-world direction of fit. What I shall call “standard intentionalism” insists that the experiential attitude – let’s call it the “e-attitude” – nevertheless is not that of belief, but an attitude *sui generis*. When it comes to the content of experiences, things are more contentious. The basic idea is that the content of an experience as of p is precisely that – p . There also is agreement that the objects of experience are ordinary, middle-sized physical objects such as books or birds, and that experience ascribes sensible properties such as redness, roundness, and being at a certain distance and angle to them.¹³ As I said above, my own position differs from standard intentionalism both in construing experience as a kind of belief and as having looks-contents. I shall come back to that in the next section. For now, I shall focus on the main varieties of standard intentionalism and their accounts of non-veridical experience.

Let’s start with indistinguishability and rational equivalence. Part of intentionalism’s promise is providing a *uniform* account of indistinguishability across veridicalities: Whether veridical or not, an experience as of p is to be construed as an e-attitude towards p . On the assumption that sameness of attitude and content suffice for sameness of phenomenal character, the indistinguishability of matching veridical and non-veridical experiences can then be understood in terms of *sameness of phenomenal character*. Analogously, on the assumption that sameness of attitude and content suffice for sameness of rational role, the

¹²Thus, a “propositional content” is a content that either is, or determines, a truth condition in the wide sense including conditions of accuracy, correctness, or satisfaction, and a “propositional attitude” is any personal level mental state having such a content. Among other things, this leaves it open whether contents are structured or unstructured and whether they are represented in a language-like way or not.

¹³Beyond that, a whole lot of further issues are subject to ongoing debate; issues such as precisely which properties are sensible, and of what kind and form experiential contents are. For an overview, cf. Siegel 2016.

rational equivalence of matching veridical and non-veridical experiences can be explained by sameness of attitude and content. I take it that such uniformity is a desirable feature in an account of experience.

Note, however, that accommodating world presentation, or felt veridicality, requires more than (sameness of) content. Imagining that p typically does not have felt veridicality, so merely having the content p does not confer this feature on an attitude. Arguably, the best way for an intentionalist to account for felt veridicality is via the *attitudinal phenomenology* of experience. Felt veridicality is (part of) what it is like to have an e-attitude – as opposed to some other attitude such as imagining – towards a content. This aspect of intentionalism is rarely made very explicit, and it does not seem particularly problematic to me.¹⁴

Note also that accommodating rational equivalence requires more than (sameness of) content. Imagining that p does not have the rational powers an experience as of p has. Moreover, the kind of motivation, explanation, and justification provided by experience is at least very similar to that paradigmatically provided by belief. Yet, experience is not belief, according to the standard intentionalist. This at least raises a question of as to why experience has a reason providing role so similar to that of belief in the first place. To fully account for experience's rational role, the standard intentionalist would need to provide a positive account of what the e-attitude precisely consists in. This, I have called standard intentionalism's "attitude problem" elsewhere (Glüer 2016b).¹⁵

The to my mind most serious problems for standard intentionalism, however, arise from trying to draw the veridicality distinctions in the right places. The most natural idea here is to distinguish between veridical and non-veridical experience in terms of truth and falsity: the content of veridical experiences is true, that of non-veridical ones is false. A first pass at implementing this idea might construe an experience as of an object's being F as having a content of the form $\exists x Fx$ (cf. e.g. Lewis 1980; Davies 1992). Let's call this "simple generalism".

Simple generalism has its attractions. Explaining indistinguishability by means of identity of content (and attitude) requires contents that those experiences that have objects

¹⁴I would like to note, however, that there might not be any introspectively detectable difference in *attitudinal* phenomenology between experience and occurrent belief. As far as I can tell, both have felt veridicality.

¹⁵Briesen 2015 shows that solving it is no easy task.

can share with those that don't. General contents here have an advantage over (object-dependent) singular contents: if veridical experiences had contents the very existence of which depends on that of their objects, they could not share them with hallucinations.

Moreover, using simple general contents would seem to allow for drawing the veridicality distinctions in a simple and elegant way. The basic idea would be that for simple generalism, falsity comes in two forms: the object of the experience not having the property ascribed to it and there being no such object. Thus, simple generalism suggests that an experience with a content of the form $\exists x Fx$ is veridical iff there is an object that is F , illusory iff there is an object but it isn't F , and hallucinatory iff there is no object.

But these veridicalities just aren't in the right places. The mere existence of an F , somewhere in the universe, does not suffice to make my current experience as of an F veridical. Of course, any plausible form of simple generalism will have the experience represent the object as having many different properties, among them being at some location in the subject's sensorily accessible vicinity. But that does not help (much). Whether or not my experience is veridical does not depend on whether *some object or other* around here is F , but on whether its intuitive object is. Analogously, the illusion-hallucination distinction is all about whether there is any intuitive object of the experience or not.

The first inadequacy is easily illustrated by means of mirror scenarios. If what you intuitively see is a red bird somewhere outside your field of vision reflected in an invisible mirror in front of you, the actual presence of just such another bird behind the mirror does not make your experience veridical.

The second inadequacy can be illustrated by means of a minor modification to the mirror scenario: just take away the bird behind the mirror. Now, simple generalism would diagnose the experience as non-veridical, but since there is no bird right in front of you, it would have to classify it as an hallucination. Intuitively, however, the experience clearly has an object – the bird reflected in the mirror.

In sum, simple generalism makes a mess of the veridicality distinctions. It gets the intuitive object of the experience wrong because it does not in general manage to make the truth or falsity of experience content depend on the right object. It therefore falls short of what has been called "Searle's assumption":

(SA) The question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of

the question of whether there is an object being perceived (Soteriou 2000, 176).

The challenge for the intentionalist thus is to make the veridicalities depend on the intuitive object of experience while still accounting for indistinguishability. One early suggestion came from Searle. He took up the moral Grice himself had drawn from examples like the mirror scenario: to be the intuitive object of an experience you have to cause it (in the right way, of course). Searle therefore suggested incorporating a causal condition into the content of experience. According to “causal generalism”, a visual experience as of a red bird in front of me has the content

(CG) There is a red bird there, and that there is a red bird there causes this visual experience (cf. Searle 1983, 48).

This saves experiences in mirror scenarios from being veridical: in our mirror scenario, for instance, there is a red bird where the experience presents it, but that is not what causes the experience.

But while causal generalism does not generate so-called “veridical illusions”, it ultimately makes at least as much of a hash of the veridicality distinctions as simple generalism. What is rarely noticed is that on causal generalism, it is not the intuitive object of an experience that is required to cause it. Rather, it is the *fact* that there is an object that has the properties ascribed to it by the first conjunct of the experience content. Let’s call such a fact an “S-fact”. That there is an S-fact is precisely what is typical of cases of “veridical illusion”. But it is equally typical of so-called “veridical hallucination”. Causal generalism provides no way of distinguishing between these. Moreover, the presence of an S-fact is rather atypical of both illusion and hallucination in general. As there is no S-fact as soon as there is no object that has *all* the properties ascribed by the first conjunct of the experience content, there usually is no S-fact in non-veridical experience. While it might be the case that on causal generalism, all intuitively non-veridical experience has false contents, it has no further resources for distinguishing illusions from hallucinations. Falsity comes in only one flavor, so to speak.

And it doesn’t seem easy to remedy this. We could try making causing the experience another condition an object must satisfy in order to be the object of the experience. But that won’t help. The basic idea of falsity coming in two flavors would seem to require first deter-

mining whether an experience has an intuitive object, and then to see whether that object has the relevant properties. As long as we in effect use all of these properties to determine whether there is any object, falsity only comes in one flavor: there not being any object with all the relevant properties. This is too egalitarian, so to speak; intuitively, the causal relation between experience and its object is not simply one descriptive condition on that object among others.

The criticisms most commonly leveled at causal generalism can be read as responding to this concern.¹⁶ Recanati, for instance, complains that causal generalism commits the “fallacy of misplaced information” (Recanati 2007, 131), and Burge accuses it of “over-intellectualization”. Neither Burge nor Recanati want to give up on the causal condition, however. They just want to relocate it.

According to Recanati, the causal condition is part of what he calls the “psychological mode” of the experience. Like Searle, Recanati stresses “the similarity between speech acts and mental states such as belief. Both have a propositional content, and both have a dual structure, with the ‘psychological mode’ corresponding, on the side of mental states, to the illocutionary force on the side of speech acts” (Recanati 2007, 128). Just like the illocutionary forces of speech acts, psychological modes can place further conditions on satisfaction:

For example, an order represents a certain state of affairs as a state of affairs such that the addressee complies with the order only if he brings it about. But bringing about the state of affairs in question is not sufficient for compliance: it must be the case that the addressee brings about the state of affairs *as a result of being ordered to do so* (Recanati 2007, 134).¹⁷

Similarly, Recanati suggests, a perceptual experience as of a red bird in front of you has the simple general content *that there is a red bird there*. But

¹⁶Some other concerns worth noting concern indistinguishability. The contents causal generalism works with are *not* fully general: they both make indexical reference to the experience itself and to the location the object appears to be in: All perception is “essentially indexical. It is essentially of the *here* and *now*” (Searle 2015, 65). To explain indistinguishability, causal generalism therefore would need to draw a distinction between content elements that influence phenomenology, and elements that don’t. Another question is whether causation can plausibly be said to be represented in experience. While the relational aspect of object presentation certainly should be accounted for, it is not so clear that the relevant relation is presented *as* that of causation.

¹⁷Tye uses a comparison with states such as memory and knowledge to make a similar objection (cf. Tye 2009, 545).

[t]hat fact can be represented in all sorts of modes; for it to be represented in the perceptual mode, it must be the case that the fact itself causes the representation. But this feature, hence the self-referential component whose importance Searle rightly emphasizes, is a property of the perceptual mode of representation, not a property of the content of perceptual representations (Recanati 2007, 135).

As Recanati himself stresses, having the causal condition in the mode instead of in the content does not predict any phenomenal differences; his version of causal generalism is what we can call “phenomenally equivalent” with Searle’s. Unfortunately, the two versions are also equivalent when it comes to their ability to draw the veridicality distinctions in the right places. According to Recanati, an experience has a simple general content of the form $\exists x (F_1x \& \dots \& F_nx)$ where F_1, \dots, F_n are sensible properties. Its mode then requires the fact that $\exists x (F_1x \& \dots \& F_nx)$ to be the cause of that very experience. But again, as soon as there is no object having properties F_1, \dots, F_n , that fact does not obtain. And here, too, no easy remedy seems to be at hand; making the mode require the object with properties F_1, \dots, F_n to also cause the experience would again be too egalitarian.

Burge’s reaction to Searle can be interpreted as providing an answer to precisely this worry. His complaint is not that causal generalism misplaces the causal condition, but that it over-intellectualizes its representation:

Almost anyone will have the initial feeling that the Intentional content Searle attributes to visual experience is too complicated or too sophisticated. One instinctively thinks that not every visual experience, including those of babies, higher animals, and unreflective adults, has that complicated and reflective a content (Burge 1991, 198).

Burge therefore suggests leaving generalism behind. According to him, Searle’s assumption is better accommodated by means of construing experience content as *singular*, more precisely, as containing a “perceptual demonstrative”. Its semantics requires “that the demonstrative fails to apply to anything unless the experience is appropriately caused” (Burge 1991, 202). More precisely, the causal condition is construed to be part of the demonstrative’s *Fregean (or Neo-Fregean) sense*.

This means that experiential content is singular, but *not* object-dependent. “Burgean singularism” thus allows matching veridical and non-veridical experiences to have the same content – in the sense of having the same Fregean sense. This sameness then can be used to explain their indistinguishability. In its 1991 form, Burgean singularism needs to employ a free logic and can then draw the illusion-hallucination distinction either in terms of two kinds of falsity or in terms of falsity (illusion) and truth-valuelessness induced by lack of referent (hallucination). To the extent that we can get our heads around the idea of object-independent singular senses, and do not mind a free logic, this is neat.¹⁸

What is not so clear, however, is in precisely what sense Burgean singularism is less intellectually demanding. After all, Fregean senses are usually taken to be “grasped” by the subjects of whose thoughts they are parts. Moreover, the plausibility of the demand for more simplicity is certainly debatable.¹⁹ Last, but not least, Burgean singularism might not be able to accommodate the relational aspect of object presentation. “Hidden” in the semantics of the perceptual demonstrative, it is hard to see how the causal relation between object and experience could be phenomenally present. The demands of object presentation and intellectual simplicity thus seem to pull in somewhat opposite directions here.

The probably most commonly held form of intentionalism does not construe experience contents as object-independent, but rather as object-dependent singular contents. Typically, these are thought of as Russellian structured propositions.²⁰ Proponents of “object-dependent singularism” are fond of claiming that we need to construe the object of experience as a component part of experience content if we at all want to capture object presentation or “particularity”. I do not find these claims persuasive, but I won’t go into that here. For even if we grant that Russellian singularism captures the particularity of those experiences that do have objects, it raises a number of serious worries with regard to those that don’t: hallucinations. As object-less experiences cannot have the same object-dependent content as veridical and illusory experiences, object-dependent singularism cannot explain either indistinguishability or rational equivalence by means of sameness of content. Thus,

¹⁸Burge now holds that experiences do not have propositions, but merely complex perceptual demonstratives such as *that F* as their contents (cf. Burge 2010). Even though that would prevent drawing the veridicality distinctions in terms of truth and falsity, they could presumably be drawn in ways sufficiently analogous to those just sketched.

¹⁹See e.g. Millar 2014, 649, and section 4 for more on this.

²⁰A notable exception is Schellenberg (2011; 2013; 2014; 2016) who construes experience contents as composed of object-dependent Fregean senses.

the uniformity that was supposed to be one of the main virtues of intentionalism is lost, and a kind of disjunctivism about experience is forced upon us (cf. Tye 2009; Gow 2017).

But even if the object-dependent singularist goes disjunctivist, we still need an account of hallucination, and none of the options available are unproblematic. Presumably, we do not want to say that hallucinations do not have any content at all. In that case, we seem to have two options: we can either construe hallucinations as having general contents, or as having “gappy” contents.²¹

But assigning contents of either kind to hallucination might prevent us from capturing indistinguishability and rational equivalence. The first worry here arises from the singularist’s own claim that only an object-dependent content can explain object presentation. If that’s true, no hallucination with a general or gappy content can match any veridical experience or illusion.

Maybe most worrying is that it is very hard to see how content disjunctivism could account for rational equivalence. According to the first version – “singular/general disjunctivism” – a veridical experience has a singular content of the form $o \text{ is } F$ and a matching hallucination a general content of the form $\exists x Fx$. To see that two such experiences would not be rationally equivalent assume that you have a background belief that o is G . Does this, together with the experience, give you a reason to believe that o is F and G ? For the experience with the singular content $o \text{ is } F$, the answer would seem to be Yes. But for that with the general content $\exists x Fx$, it would seem to be No.²²

When it comes to the second version of content disjunctivism – “singular/gappy disjunctivism” – an hallucination matching a veridical experience with the content $o \text{ is } F$ has a gappy content of the form $_ \text{ is } F$. It is not immediately clear what inferences, if any, are licensed by something that, after all, is not a (complete) proposition, so it is not immediately

²¹One might also try “going second order”, a suggestion going back to McDowell:

[A] subject may be in error about the contents of his own mind: he may think there is a singular thought at, so to speak, a certain position in his internal organization although there is really nothing precisely there (McDowell 1986, 145).

But if experience has object-dependent content, so does belief about experience. Consequently, a belief about an experience without an object has a content lacking an object, which brings us back to Square One.

²²Note that construing experiences with objects as having *both* singular and general contents and experiences without object as having only general content, as suggested in Siegel 2011, ch. 6, would not achieve equivalence, either. Here, the answer to the question whether an experience (together with the background belief) would provide you with a reason for believing $o \text{ is } F$ and G would seem to be both Yes and No for experiences with objects, and No for hallucinations.

clear whether gappy hallucinations even have a rational role. But assume, for *reductio*, that there is rational equivalence. Note that the gappy proposition that results from removing o_1 from a content of the form o_1 is F is the same as that resulting from removing o_2 from o_2 is F . On the assumption that a veridical experience with the content o_1 is F is rationally equivalent to a matching hallucination with the gappy content $_$ is F , this would seem to have the consequence that any two experiences differing only with respect to their object are rationally equivalent. But by the singularist's own lights, this is absurd; o_1 is F and o_2 is F license very different inferences. For instance, in conjunction with the background belief that o_1 is G , an experience with the first content provides a reason for believing o_1 is F and G , while an experience with the second does not.²³ It is thus hard to see how either of these forms of disjunctivisms could accommodate rational equivalence.

Moreover, there seems to be a general dilemma here: Either general or gappy contents can be used to explain the indistinguishability and rational equivalence of matching experience, or they cannot. If they cannot, that's clearly bad. But if they can, that's bad, too, because it gives rise to worries about "screening off": If general contents could, after all, explain both why hallucinations are indistinguishable from, and rationally equivalent with, matching veridical or illusory experiences, this would seem to pre-empt the very need for singular contents.²⁴ And if gappy contents could explain this, this would seem to pre-empt the very need for the presence of the object in the content.²⁵

None of this is meant to show that standard intentionalism cannot account for non-veridical experience.²⁶ But it seems fair to conclude that its promise of easily satisfying all the most important desiderata on accounts of non-veridical experiences has turned out to be illusory. In the remainder of this paper, I shall investigate whether my own account of (visual) experience – phenomenal intentionalism – can do any better.

²³Note that an analogous *reductio* can, of course, be run against the singular/general disjunctivist.

²⁴Cf. Martin 2004 for a similar argument against so-called "positive" disjunctive relationalism.

²⁵Schellenberg's Fregean version of content disjunctivism construes hallucinations as having gappy Fregean contents. According to her, introspective indistinguishability and rational equivalence (sameness of "phenomenal evidence") are explained by sameness of Fregean sense. Here, too, there is a screening off worry: If the Fregean senses do all the explanatory work, the object itself seems threatened by explanatory idleness.

²⁶Something I haven't even considered, for instance, is Chalmers-style content pluralism (cf. Chalmers 2006).

4 Phenomenal intentionalism on illusion and hallucination

According to phenomenal intentionalism (PI), visual experience is a (peculiar) kind of belief – let’s call it “e-belief”. E-belief is the kind of belief that has (visual) sensory phenomenology and what I have called *Lp*- or looks-contents. According to PI, that is, an experience does not ascribe properties such as redness or roundness to ordinary material objects. While the objects of experience typically are ordinary material objects, the properties experience ascribes are “phenomenal properties” such as looking red or looking round.

Intuitively, how an object looks not only depends on its intrinsic properties, but also on all sorts of other factors – factors such as ambient lighting and surrounding environment, the object’s position in relation to the viewer, and the viewer’s sensory apparatus. When you walk around an object, halfway immerse it in water, or light it with red light, its look might change. Some objects, such as duckrabbits, are highly ambiguous – their looks easily change without any manipulation of either the object or its surroundings. In fact, all objects are ambiguous – with a little training, we can make pretty much any object have what is called a “painter’s look”. An object having its painter’s look has a “flattened Gestalt”, i.e. it looks like a very thin, very flat object perpendicular to your line of sight (see Noë 2004, Glüer 2016a for more on this). In light of the whole range of variability of an object’s looks, I find it most plausible to think of looks as mind-involving relational properties.²⁷

This, I think, is in line with how we talk about looks (cf. Glüer 2017). More precisely, it is in line with one of the uses of natural language ‘looks’ that it has become customary to distinguish: the so-called non-comparative or *phenomenal use*.²⁸ As I have argued elsewhere (cf. Glüer 2014, Glüer 2017), in its phenomenal use, ‘looks’ is not a propositional attitude operator. When we say that an object *o* looks *F*, we are not saying that we have an experience with the content that *o* is *F*. Rather, we are directly ascribing a certain look to *o* – the contextually salient look characteristic of *F*s.

An observation that is, I think, helpful for understanding this use of ‘looks’, is the following. When we say of an object *o* that it looks *F*, and especially when we say things like

²⁷But see e.g. Noë 2004; Martin 2010; Brewer 2011; Genone 2014; McGrath 2016a; McGrath 2016b for suggestions construing looks as mind-independent.

²⁸For more on the uses of looks, cf. Chisholm 1957; Jackson 1977; Maund 1986; Brogaard 2015; Martin 2010 and this volume; Glüer 2013. Note that even if there wasn’t any natural language counterpart to the looks-operator phenomenal intentionalism works with, I could just define one.

(1) That looks red to me,

we typically do seem to be, in a way, “reporting” on an experience, an experience that we are having at the time of utterance.²⁹ Moreover, as Kent Bach once noted commenting on Searle, the object that looks F is precisely the intuitive object of that experience:

Searle could avoid the cumbersome language of causal self-referentiality and just say that the content of an experience is, e.g. “this rubber duck looks yellow.” He could do this by arguing that the causal self-referentiality is built into the word ‘looks’. After all, to say that this rubber duck looks yellow is just another way of saying that one sees a certain thing as a yellow rubber duck (Bach 2007, 77).

This, I think, is at least on the right track. If we construe experiences as having phenomenal looks-contents, we automatically build a causal condition into the experience content, because

(LF) An object o looks _{p} F to a subject S at a time t only if o causes an experience of a certain kind k in S at t ,

where the subscript ‘ p ’ indicates the phenomenal use. The next question is: an experience of what kind? There seem to be two natural options for typing experiences here: by means of content or by means of phenomenal character. Phenomenal intentionalism cannot use the first option. If we try to analyze o ’s looking F in terms of causing an experience with the content o looks F , the result would be a non-wellfounded object, not a possible content.³⁰ Using Peacocke’s (1984) prime-notation for the phenomenal property F' shared by experiences as of something F , we then get:

(LF’) An object o looks _{p} F to a subject S at a time t only if o causes an F' experience in S at t .

²⁹Note that that does not favour the propositional attitude interpretation of phenomenal ‘looks’. If experience contents ascribe looks, and these are occurrent experience-involving properties, it would seem to be a side-effect that we “report” on experience by means of sentences like (1).

³⁰Presumably, this is what Boghossian and Velleman 1989 have in mind when they worry about dispositionalist accounts of color leading to infinite regress when combined with the idea that color experience ascribes colors to objects; cf. Glüer 2007; Glüer 2012a.

This makes looks properties akin to Shoemakerian “occurrent appearance properties” (cf. Shoemaker 1994; Shoemaker 2000). And that, I think, is almost right. But not quite – for precisely Shoemakerian reasons: if we want phenomenal intentionalism to allow for spectrum inversion, we will have to use what could be called “functional phenomenal types” instead of phenomenal types. But this further complication can, I think, be safely ignored in the present context, and I shall just go on using the prime-notation for the relevant types of experience.³¹

With our causal condition built into our looks-contents, we can construe experience contents as general (with respect to the object of the experience). Treating ‘looks’ as a predicate modifier, as we have done so far, a first idea would then be to construe experience content as of the form $\exists x LFx$. This is true (as e-believed, or “e-tokened”, by a subject S at a time t) iff there is an object looking F to S at t , and a condition on being such an object is causing an F' experience in S at t . It is pretty clear, I think, that this will get the intuitive object of the experience right.³² Nevertheless, PI cannot adopt this idea. As it is a belief theory, the most basic experiential contents have to be free of existential commitments with respect to their seeming objects.³³

This can be achieved by taking the analytically primary use of ‘looks’ not to be that of a predicate modifier, but that of a sentential operator $L_1(p)$ – *it looks as if p* . If we then construe the most basic content of experience as of the form $L_1(\exists x(Fx))$ – *it looks as if there is*

³¹Based on a suggestion for sensation terms in Pagin 2000, I have spelled out what these types really are in Glüer 2012a (for the case of color experience). Relevant circularity worries are also discussed in Glüer 2007.

³²Note that here, no (potentially problematic) “causal self-reference” or token-reflexivity is required for getting the intuitive object right. Looks-contents perform exemplary in mirror scenarios: the object “doing the looking” is bound to be the intuitive object, not the one behind the mirror (which, in the relevant sense of ‘looks’, does not look any way at all to the mirror subject). What bears thinking about, though, is whether we might end up with an object that indeed is the intuitive object of *some* experience, but *not* of the experience whose content we are evaluating. Here, we do *not* need to worry about experiences of other subjects or at other times, as subject and time are built into the truth conditions of looks-contents. But what if a subject, for instance, has two experiences as of a red bird at the same time, and there are two red birds in the vicinity, each causing precisely one of these experiences? Intuitively, each of these experience has precisely one object, but which? Assuming that the looks-contents of these two experiences are the same, it looks as if we don’t get any answer to this. Fortunately, the assumption is bound to be false: Experience content is too determinate to allow for this possibility. A bird, for instance, never just looks to be red – without also looking to be at a certain distance and angle from me. It is thus at least very hard to see how there could be two objects looking exactly the same to a single subject at a single time.

³³If the content of hallucinations had the form $\exists x LFx$, phenomenal intentionalism would have trouble with “known hallucinations”. Simultaneously having an experience and knowing (or believing) it to be an hallucination would amount to having outrightly contradictory beliefs. This is a consequence to be avoided (for more on this, see. Glüer 2009).

an F – we get a content of the desired kind, a content free of existential commitment regarding the object of experience. The next step is to tie the sentential operator interpretation and the predicate modifier interpretation of ‘looks’ together. This can be done by defining the predicate modifier L_2 in terms of the sentential operator $L_1(p)$:

$$(LL) \quad \exists x ((L_2(F))(x)) \equiv_{df} \exists x L_1(Fx),$$

defining L_2 for the case where the existential quantifier has been exported out of the scope of the sentential operator L_1 . That is, we define L_2 in terms of what *follows* in case an experience as of an F in fact has an object: that that object looks F . This way, we avoid commitment to the experience’s having an object in the basic content of experience, while retaining the idea that if there is an object, this is the object “doing the looking” (and causing the experience). Moreover, if it looks as if there is an F , it looks just as it does when there is something that looks F . What ‘looks’ in both cases carries is thus (implicit) commitment to the existence of an F' experience. This, too, is very much as desired.

With this much of an understanding of looks, and ‘looks’, in place, we can now look at how phenomenal intentionalism fares with respect to our desiderata on accounts of non-veridical experience. Let’s start with indistinguishability. According to PI, experiences are beliefs with both characteristic phenomenal character and propositional contents of the form Lp . PI thus has no problem with world presentation: Like standard intentionalism, it can explain the felt veridicality of experience by means of attitudinal phenomenology.

When it comes to object presentation, phenomenal intentionalism accommodates Searle’s assumption by means of the semantics of phenomenal ‘looks’. Whenever an experience intuitively does have an object, the presence of the looks-operator secures that object as the object of the experience. Moreover, the looks-operator also takes care of the relationality experience seems to have. That there seems to be a dependence relation between experience and its object can be explained by looks-contents requiring the object of the experience, if any, to be its cause. That what is required is a causal relation, and not some other dependence relation, is, however, not explicit in the “surface form” of the representation. Rather, it is implicit in the ‘looks’, and needs to be brought out by analysis.³⁴ Thus, PI looks well-

³⁴With respect to causality, PI is therefore precisely as “intellectualized” as Burgean singularism. In either case, an idea would be to use the simplicity of the *representation* of the item carrying the causal condition (the perceptual demonstrative or the looks-operator) to explain how subjects unable to provide an analysis of, or even to fully grasp, the concept of causality can nevertheless plausibly be modelled as having states with contents con-

equipped for explaining indistinguishability. According to PI, matching experiences (of a subject at a time) are propositional attitudes of the same kind – e-belief – towards the same contents.

When it comes to rational equivalence, phenomenal intentionalism does not have an attitude problem. Rather, it simply surfs on belief's capacity to motivate, explain, and justify action and further belief. When modelling belief's rational or reason-providing role, we take it to essentially be a function of both components of belief: attitude and content. PI extends belief's rational or reason-providing role to experience. Thus, PI should be well-equipped for explaining rational equivalence in terms of sameness of content.³⁵

As I have spelled out in greater detail elsewhere, PI is quite naturally combined with an epistemology according to which experience provides *prima facie* justification in the Pollockian sense of providing reasons that, when there are no defeaters, are good by themselves (cf. Pollock 1974). The basic idea is this: How things look is a strong indicator of how they are. In the absence of defeaters, an experience telling us how things look gives us a good reason to believe that that is how they are. More precisely, if it looks as if there were an *F* in front of you, and you have no reason to be suspicious of your senses, you have good reason to believe that there is something in front of you that not only looks *F*, but in fact is *F*. What results, or so I have claimed, is a neat, natural picture of experience as providing its subject with defeasible *prima facie* reasons or justification for (further) first order, empiri-

taining it. The looks-operator might, however, give rise to a further worry. One might feel that looks-contents at least require understanding that looks can be deceptive, an understanding that small children and most animals might plausibly be taken to lack. On the assumption that the experiences of small children and animals aren't relevantly different from our own, this might be an argument for simplifying the contents we construe our own experiences as having. But if accounting for the the role our experiences play in our psychology requires them to have more complicated contents, it might equally well be an argument for construing the experiences of small children and animals as having the same complicated contents as ours. These contents endow the experiences with powers that are not (yet) made full use of by the cognitive systems of small children or animals, powers that will, however, be picked up on in the course of growing up or evolution.

³⁵One might worry, however, that PI actually prevents experience from ever (directly) motivating or explaining action. Imagine that you desire a sandwich. The e-belief that it *looks* as if there were a sandwich on the plate in front of you just does not seem quite sufficient to explain your reaching for it. To explain that we would need to cite your belief that there *is* a sandwich there. But if that seems right (which it does) wouldn't it generalize? (Thanks to Christiana Olfert for raising this concern.) Action explanation will indeed often involve belief that something is *F*, rather than just that it looks *F*. But not always. In cases where we have reason not to trust our senses, for instance, e-beliefs themselves can motivate and explain action. Imagine that you are in a store looking at a necktie. You need one that is a particular shade of green *G* and the tie looks *G*, but the lighting is strange. Knowing this, you take the tie to the window to look at it in daylight. Here, your e-belief (together with your background belief about the lighting, and the desire to be sure about the tie's color) explains your taking it to the window.

cal belief. No matter the details (see esp. Glüer 2012b; 2016; 2016 for those), it should be fairly clear that if this works at all, it will secure the justificatory equivalence of veridical and non-veridical experience.

On PI, the importance of the justificatory role of experience goes well beyond the desideratum of rational equivalence, however: it is essential to drawing the veridicality distinctions. In fact, the most pressing question facing PI's account of non-veridical experience is how it can draw the veridicality distinctions at all. Doesn't phenomenal intentionalism have the immediate, and totally counterintuitive consequence that all experiences are veridical? What is true, of course, is that on PI at least most, if not all, experiences have true contents.³⁶ Therefore, PI has to look to other resources for drawing the veridicality distinctions.

The ideas I shall recruit here are in fact neither particularly new nor particularly counterintuitive. For starters, note that we in fact do not call experiences true or false. Here is Searle on how we actually talk about illusions and hallucinations:

In such cases we say that "our senses deceive us" and though we do not describe our visual experiences as true or false (...) we do feel inclined to describe failure to achieve fit in terms such as "deceive", "mislead", "distort", "illusion", and "delusion"; and various philosophers have introduced the word "veridical" to describe success in achieving fit (Searle 1983, 43).

There are many ways to mislead. Here are two: I can tell you something false. Or I can tell you something true that will lead you to form further, but false beliefs. I suggest that non-veridical experiences are misleading in a way analogous to the second. As I said, understanding experiential non-veridicality as misleadingness is not new, but those championing it today are usually found on the relationalist side of the debate. Here is Travis directly connecting this idea with the looks of things:

In the Müller-Lyer, two lines are contrived (...) to have a certain look. They do not just *seem* to have that look; that is actually the way they look. (...) Two lines may well have that look because one *is* longer than the other. That is a familiar

³⁶According to Antony 2011, who also construes experience content in terms of appearance properties, all experiences have true contents. By contrast, I tend to think that it is possible for experience to have false contents. But as an experience on PI is analyzed as a belief partly about an experience's phenomenal character, i.e. a belief about one's own sensations, the space for mistake is limited. I take it to be limited to mistake resulting from misapplying sensation concepts to one's own sensations, which I think is very limited indeed.

way for things to be. Depending on circumstances, that look may thus *indicate* that it is two lines of unequal length that one confronts. Or one might take it to. (...) *Thus* may someone be misled by a Müller-Lyer. False expectations arise here in the wrong view of what something (a look) means (...) (Travis 2004, 68).

Brewer also endorses a “conception of perceptual illusion as experience of physical objects themselves, which is apt to *mislead* us” (Brewer 2006, 168), and explicitly draws the “Epicurean” conclusion that all error comes downstream of experience:

The intuitive idea is that, in perceptual experience, a person is simply presented with the actual constituents of the physical world themselves. Any errors in her worldview which result are products of the subject’s responses to this experience (...). *Error*, strictly speaking, given how the world actually is, is never an essential feature of experience itself (Brewer 2006, 169).³⁷

For the relationalist, error would not be an “essential feature of experience itself” because experience, not having any content, cannot be false. Phenomenal intentionalism’s “Epicureanism” is different, of course: According to PI, non-veridical and veridical experiences alike (usually) have true contents. Nevertheless, the non-veridical ones mislead us: The truths they “tell us” are *prima facie* reasons for believing something false. That is why PI can use the epistemology of perception to draw the veridicality distinctions.

As an experience e with the content Lp provides a *prima facie* reason for believing p , a first idea as to how to do that would be the following: e is non-veridical iff p is false. Things are a bit more complicated, however. To draw the veridicality distinctions in the right places, we have to both dig deeper into the content of e and to carefully distinguish the different inferential steps in which experiential reasoning can be modelled as progressing.

The most basic looks content is of the form $L_1(\exists x(Fx))$ – *it looks as if there is an F* . This, I suggest, is a *prima facie* reason for believing $\exists x((L_2(F))(x))$ – *that there is something that looks F* . This is inferential step 1. If step 1 is taken, and a belief that there is something that looks F is formed, this belief in turn provides a *prima facie* reason for believing $\exists x((L_2(F))(x) \& (F)(x))$ – *that there is an object that looks F and is F* .

³⁷For discussion, and a different suggestion, cf. Genone 2014.

These two basic steps of experiential justification can, I think, be used to draw the distinction between illusion and hallucination. If the experience is already misleading with respect to the first step, i.e. the very existence of an object looking *F*, it is an hallucination. And if it is not misleading in step 1, but misleading in the second step, i.e. with respect to the properties it provides prima facie reason for ascribing to its object, then it is an illusion. Note in particular that the “causal hook” that looks-contents have on the intuitive object of experience is preserved across the two steps.

Of course, that causal hook can be lost in the course of further inferences. On occasion, a non-veridical experience therefore will provide you with a prima facie reason for believing something true. But not directly, so to speak. Think of the two red birds in the mirror scenario again. Here, your experience does provide you with a reason for believing that there is a red bird right in front of you. Which there is: bird₁. But it is bird₂ that is the object of the experience, and bird₂ is not right in front of you. So what happens is this: The experience provides you with a prima facie reason for believing that there is an object that looks to be red, a bird, and right in front of you. That is true. And it, in turn, is a prima facie reason for believing that the object that looks to be a red bird right in front of you in fact is a red bird right in front of you. Which is not true. Thus, the experience is correctly diagnosed as an illusion. However, you now in a sense have an excellent reason for believing that there is a red bird right in front of you. After all, the inference is logically valid. Moreover, what is entailed is true. Your experience in a mirror-scenario thus does provide you with a reason for believing something (that happens to be) true. But not before step 3.³⁸

All in all, it thus seems to me that phenomenal intentionalism can provide an account for non-veridical experience that does quite well with respect to the desiderata considered in this paper. Before closing, I would like to take up an interesting objection Boyd Millar has raised against (relationalist) characterizations of non-veridical experience in terms of misleading looks:

Typical examples of perceptual constancy illustrate the difficulty. On any pertinent account of looks, when you view a tilted penny it will instantiate a look

³⁸For a veridical hallucination scenario, the pattern would be falsity in step 1, falsity in step 2, and truth in step 3. PI thus provides for the feeling, voiced in Tye 2009 and Siegel 2011, of there being something true in veridical illusion or hallucination scenarios. Siegel calls that “weak veridicality”. In a mirror scenario, weak veridicality corresponds to PI’s step 3 truth.

that paradigm elliptical objects instantiate; but, even assuming that you perceive this look you do not misperceive the penny. You perceive the penny to be circular rather than elliptical (which it is) and you perceive it to have a certain look, one that is shared by elliptical objects viewed head on (which it has). (...) These cases involve perfectly veridical experiences, yet the present account classifies them as illusions (Millar 2015, 621).

The objection might seem to work equally well against phenomenal intentionalism. But I don't think it does. As I have argued in detail elsewhere (Glüer 2016a), I think that the kind of look I am talking about, the look things have once they have taken on their full phenomenal Gestalt, is finer-grained than the kind of look Millar is using to raise his objection. For careful phenomenological observation shows that the way a tilted penny (most naturally) looks is different from the way in which an elliptical object viewed head on (most naturally) looks. This is easily illustrated by looking at a diagram like this:



This is in fact an ambiguous figure: you can easily see it as an elliptical object seen head on. But it is equally easy to see it as a tilted circular object. And the resulting looks are quite different – there is a very noticeable Gestalt switch involved in going from one to the other. I have called the first look an “elliptical-and-perpendicular” look, and looks of the second kind “circular-at-an-angle” looks. The looks that experiences ascribe to objects need to be understood as “fully Gestalted looks” like these. Natural language descriptions of these looks tend to be rather selective – thus, we might well say of the tilted penny that it looks both circular and, in some sense, elliptical. What we are getting at, I think, is that the penny has the look, or one of the looks, circular objects seen at an angle have. But even this is not yet quite right. For not only diagrams like the one above can be made to switch Gestalt. It is easy to do it to ambiguous figures lacking depth cues. But, as I said earlier, a little training will enable you to make pretty much any object have its “painter’s look”, i.e. the look of a very thin, very flat object perpendicular to your line of sight. Most objects, however, do not have that look as their “natural” look – where the natural look of an object is the look that

the visual system produces under given circumstances when left to its own devices.

So, a tilted penny naturally has a circular-at-an-angle look – but you can make it to have an elliptical-and-perpendicular look. If it has the latter look, the experience actually *is* an illusion: it has a content that does provide a prima facie reason for believing that the penny is elliptical. Fortunately, this is not a problem, but rather the intuitively right outcome. After all, were the penny to naturally look like that, i.e. without your wilfully having switched its Gestalt, you might very well be misled into believing it to be elliptical. Neither visual constancies nor Gestalt switches therefore threaten the veridicality distinctions drawn by phenomenal intentionalism.³⁹

In this paper, I have elaborated three clusters of desiderata on satisfactory accounts of non-veridical experience. Such accounts need to capture the intuitive notion of the object of an experience to draw the veridicality distinctions in the right places, they need to account for the introspective indistinguishability of matching experiences, and for their rational equivalence. I have argued that despite its great initial promise, it is surprisingly difficult for standard intentionalism to satisfy these desiderata. And finally, I have provided some support for the claim that phenomenal intentionalism works quite well for non-veridical experience. This support derives from its ability to quite neatly satisfy the desiderata considered in this paper.⁴⁰

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³⁹These phenomena do not raise problems for the epistemology of perception, either: If the penny has an elliptical-and-perpendicular look that indeed is a prima facie reason for believing it to be elliptical. Even if that look was brought about by a wilful Gestalt switch. But its having that look is a *good* reason for believing it to be elliptical only in the absence of defeaters. And a wilfully effected Gestalt switch is a strong defeater.

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