The Particularity of Visual Perception

Veridical Hallucination and Our Concept of Perception

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ABSTRACT

In the thesis it is argued that the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary concept of perception involves a commitment to disjunctivism – the view that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating.

A critique of the most promising non-disjunctive account of experience is provided. This theory of perception involves an acceptance of an intentional theory of experience together with the causal theory of perception. According to the intentional theory, an experience is a psychological state with an intentional content that represents the world as being a certain way. The causal theory of perception is the theory that it is part of our ordinary concept of perception that in order for a subject to perceive the world the subject’s experience must be appropriately caused by the objects he is perceiving.

It is argued that in order to avoid a commitment to disjunctivism, the intentional theorist needs to accept the generality thesis – the thesis that the content of successful perceptual experience is an existentially quantified one that is not to be specified by using terms that refer to the particulars of which one is aware in having the experience. An argument is provided to establish that the account of experience that best accommodates all that is involved in our concept of
perception involves a rejection of the generality thesis. It is argued that if one rejects the generality thesis, as one should, then the arguments that are used to support the causal theory of perception are undermined. The epistemological significance of rejecting the generality thesis is also explored.

Finally, objections to disjunctivism are considered and rejected.
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CHAPTER ONE

Preserving Our Common Sense View of Perception

Does philosophical reflection on the nature of sensory experience reveal something incoherent or problematic in our ordinary, pre-philosophical view of perception? Does it show that we cannot accept the account of experience that best accommodates all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception? In order to answer this question we need to uncover what is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception. We can then determine what commitments are incurred by the account of experience that best accommodates all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception, and we can assess whether there are reasons to think that we need to reject an account of experience that involves these commitments. This will be the task I shall be undertaking in this thesis.

It is generally assumed that an account of experience that preserves all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception will have to be one that allows that we can be in direct perceptual contact with the mind-independent objects in the world that we normally take ourselves to be perceptually aware of. However, there are other claims that have been made about what is involved in our
ordinary common sense view of perception that are more controversial. There is no universal agreement as to what answers should be given to the following questions: is it part of our ordinary concept of perception that in order for a subject to perceive an object in the world, the subject's experience must be appropriately caused by that object? Is it part of our ordinary concept of perception that successful perceptual experiences have a certain epistemological role to play? If we are to accept the account of experience that best accommodates all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception, do we have to accept that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating?

In the course of the thesis I shall be addressing the issues raised by these questions, and I shall be suggesting ways in which the issues raised are linked to one another. I shall go on to argue for the claim that the account of experience that best accommodates all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception involves a commitment to disjunctivism — it involves a commitment to the claim that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. I shall argue that the usual objections to disjunctivism do not succeed in establishing that a disjunctive account of experience is untenable. We have no reason to think that we cannot accept the
account of experience that best accommodates all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception.

In the first two chapters I shall introduce an alternative to the disjunctive account of experience that is supposed to preserve all that is involved in our common sense view of perception. This theory of perception involves an acceptance of an intentional theory of experience together with the causal theory of perception.

The Problem of Hallucination

David Hume famously claimed that ‘the slightest philosophy’ can show that our ordinary common sense view of perception must be wrong. Hume suggests that a bit of philosophical reasoning can undermine our common sense beliefs about the kinds of things that we can be directly or immediately aware of when we have perceptual experiences. According to Hume we are, in fact, never directly aware of the things that we normally take ourselves to be directly aware of. We are never directly aware of mind-independent objects like tables, trees, houses, and so on:

... the slightest philosophy ... teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception ... no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say, this house and this tree, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting images or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and independent. (Hume 1975, p. 152)
If a philosophical account of perception is to preserve our common sense views, it must put us in direct perceptual contact with the mind-independent world. It must show that Hume is wrong to claim that we are never directly aware of mind-independent objects, like tables and trees. In this chapter I shall be introducing a theory of perception that purports to do just that. The theory will be introduced as an attempt to show that our ordinary, 'naive' views about perception do not need to be revised. Throughout I shall primarily be focussing the discussion on visual perception.

Those who claim that our pre-philosophical view of perception must be wrong are often led to this conclusion through a consideration of the experiences one has when the world is different from the way that it seems to be. The possibility of hallucinatory experience, for example, is supposed to present some problem for our ordinary, common sense view of perception. Is it possible to provide an adequate account of hallucination that does not undermine our common sense view of perception?

Those who claim that we directly perceive objects in the external world should concede that not all experiences provide us with direct perceptual contact with the
world. When a subject has a complete hallucination we do not want to say that the subject is aware of any objects in the external world. So what should we say about such cases? There are two options open to us.

Option (I) is to claim that the subject is aware of objects that are not part of the external world.

Option (II) is to claim that there are no objects of which the subject is aware.

Each of these options will be considered as part of an attempt to determine whether the possibility of hallucinatory experience creates difficulties for our common sense view of perception.

Option (I)

Why claim that although during a hallucination we are not aware of objects in the external world, we are nevertheless aware of some other kind of objects – ‘sense-data’ – which are not part of the external world? It might be a commitment to the idea that when I seem to see an object possessing a particular quality it is just phenomenologically obvious that there is an object there which possesses that quality. This idea can be generalized into a principle that Robinson calls the Phenomenal Principle (in Robinson 1994, p. 32) which can be stated as follows: "If there sensibly appears to a subject to be an object which possesses a particular sensible quality then there is something of which the subject is aware which does
possess that sensible quality." The idea is that when you are having a hallucination it is just obvious to inspection that you are aware of something. On this view a subject's experience is partially constituted by the object that he appears to see - the object itself is part of the experience. What explains the appearance to a subject of something being an object which is F is the fact that there is an object which is F of which he is aware - whether the experience is genuine or hallucinatory.

The source of the appeal of the phenomenal principle will be investigated in a later chapter. For now I just want to consider what the consequences of accepting or rejecting it might be. Is an acceptance of the phenomenal principle compatible with the claim that a subject can be in direct perceptual contact with the external world? If one adopts option (I) can one consistently claim that a subject can be directly aware of objects in the external world? Does one have to reject option (I) if one is to offer a philosophical account of perception that preserves our common sense view of perception?

A theorist who took option (I) and yet retained the view that a subject can be in direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world, would have to claim that when a subject hallucinates he is aware of a different kind of object than the object he is aware of when he genuinely perceives the world. When a subject
hallucinates he is aware of internal objects - sense-data - not the normal external objects he is aware of when he successfully perceives the world. Are there any problems involved in making such a claim?

Austin claims that,

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\text{even if we make the prior concession ... that in 'abnormal' cases we perceive sense-data, we should not be obliged to extend this admission to 'normal' cases too. For why on earth should it \textit{not} be the case that in some few instances, perceiving one sort of thing is exactly like perceiving another? (Austin 1962, p. 52)}
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If we cannot tell what the ontological status of an object is purely by noting its visible properties, then perceiving an object from one ontological category may be exactly like perceiving an object from a different ontological category. So the fact that hallucinations can be subjectively indistinguishable from genuine perceptions may not prohibit us from claiming that when we hallucinate we are directly aware of sense-data, and in 'normal' cases we are directly aware of objects in the external world. Don Locke, in the same vein, claims that,

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\text{We can either allow that things that are, or at any rate could be, qualitatively alike are nevertheless ontologically distinct, or agree that we never perceive external objects. There seems no good reason for accepting the second alternative. (Locke 1967, p. 111-112)}
\]

However, Robinson offers the following argument as a challenge to those who
attempt to make compatible the claim that we are directly aware of sense-data when we hallucinate with the claim that we are directly aware of the external world in normal circumstances:

1. It is theoretically possible by activating some brain process which is involved in a particular type of perception to cause an hallucination which exactly resembles that perception in its subjective character.

2. It is necessary to give the same account of both hallucinatory and perceptual experience when they have the same neural cause. Thus, it is not, for example, plausible to say that the hallucinatory experience involves a mental image or sense-datum, but that the perception does not, if the two have the same proximate - that is to say, neural - cause. (Robinson 1994, p. 151)

These two propositions together entail that perceptual processes in the brain produce some object of awareness which cannot be identified with any feature of the external world - that is, they produce a sense-datum. (ibid, p. 151)

Premise (1) of the argument rests on the plausible empirical assumption that it is possible to cause a subject to have a hallucinatory experience subjectively indistinguishable from a successful perceptual experience by stimulating the relevant brain processes involved in the successful perceptual experience. If one accepts that all hallucinatory experiences involve an awareness of sense-data, and one accepts that one can cause a subject to have a hallucinatory experience by suitably stimulating relevant parts of the subject’s brain, then one will find plausible
the hypothesis that in stimulating relevant parts of a subject's brain so as to produce a hallucinatory experience, one thereby generates the existence of the sense-data which serve as the objects of the experience. This hypothesis offers the most natural explanation of why it should be the case that one can cause a subject to have an experience involving an awareness of sense-data by simply stimulating relevant parts of the subject's brain. However, if one accepts that the suitable stimulation of relevant parts of a subject's brain is sufficient to generate the existence of the sense-data which serve as objects of a hallucinatory experience, then one should accept that the same kinds of sense-data are also generated in the so-called 'normal' cases of perception too. For, *ex hypothesi*, the same brain parts and processes are also involved in the normal cases of perception. So one should accept that in so-called normal cases of perception, "perceptual processes in the brain produce some object of awareness which cannot be identified with any features of the external world – that is, they produce a sense-datum."

Robinson claims that to block his argument one would have to "deny that the relevant brain process produces more than a bare act of awareness in the case of normal perception, whilst allowing that the same process produces an internal object... when artificial stimulation produces an hallucination" (p. 152-3). He asks, "how would the brain state know when it is required to produce an image to act as
understudy for a genuine perception, and why should it bother to do so?"

Robinson rejects as *ad hoc* such implausible hypotheses.

Robinson's causal argument shows that adopting option (I) does create difficulties for those who want to claim that our experiences can put us in direct perceptual contact with the world. Adopting option (I) does undermine our ordinary, common sense view of perception. If a subject is aware of objects when he has a complete hallucination, then those objects cannot be the objects that we normally take ourselves to be directly aware of when we take ourselves to be perceiving the world. If the proximate causes of a hallucination are sufficient to produce an experience that is an awareness of these strange entities, then it seems reasonable that the proximate causes of a normal perceptual experience will also be sufficient to produce an experience that is an awareness of these strange entities, given that the proximate causes of a normal perceptual experience can be the same as the proximate causes of a hallucination. So if we adopt option (I) and claim that we are aware of objects when we hallucinate, then it seems that we are forced to concede that we are actually aware of the same kinds of objects when we take ourselves to be perceiving the world. The objects that we are in fact aware of when we take ourselves to be perceiving the world are not the objects that we normally take ourselves to be directly aware of.
If we are to provide an account of experience that preserves our common sense view of perception, we must reject option (I) and go for option (II). If we are to deny that a successful perceptual experience involves an awareness of strange entities that we do not normally take ourselves to be perceiving, then we must deny that a hallucinatory experience involves an awareness of such entities.

Option (II)

Option (II) is the claim that during a completely hallucinatory experience, there are no objects that the subject is aware of - there are no objects of experience. The first thing to note is that this claim involves a denial of the Phenomenal Principle. The Phenomenal Principle has the following form: If A then B, where A is "There sensibly appears to a subject to be an object which possesses a particular quality", and B is "There is an object of which the subject is aware which does possess that quality". The theorist going for option (II) must deny that the truth of A entails the truth of B. During a hallucination A is true but B is not true. So what explains the truth of A when a subject hallucinates if it is not the truth of B? The intentional theory of experience offers us an answer to this question. The intentional theory offers a positive account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates that does not involve the positing of some strange objects of
The Intentional Theory of Experience

According to the intentional theory a subject's hallucinatory experience is a psychological state with an intentional content that represents the world as being a certain way. The intentional content of the experience determines what seems to the subject to be the case in having the experience. According to this theory, when a subject hallucinates, it is the intentional content of the subject's experience which explains the truth of A. When a subject hallucinates, the fact that there sensibly appears to the subject to be an object which possesses a particular quality is explained by the fact that the subject is having an experience with an intentional content that represents the existence of an object possessing that particular quality. The intentional content of an experience can represent the existence of an object, \( x \), possessing the quality, \( F \), in the absence of any such object. The content of an experience can be 'incorrect' - non-veridical - just as the content of a belief can be false. We do not think that there has to be some principle for beliefs equivalent to

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{The way I introduce the intentional theory in this chapter is not the only way in which the theory can be introduced, and I do not consider all of the motives for adopting the theory. For a variety of versions of the intentional theory of experience, see Armstrong 1968, Searle 1983, Peacocke 1983 and 1992, Burge 1991, Harman 1990, Tye 1992.} \]
the phenomenal principle for experiences to the effect that if a subject believes that there is some object possessing a particular quality, then there is an object which does possess that quality to which the subject is cognitively related. So similarly with experiences on this account, we need not think of a subject's having an experience with the content that 'there is an x which is F' as entailing that there really is an x which is F to which the subject is cognitively related.

In explaining hallucination as akin to false belief, the intentional theory provides an account of hallucination that is compatible with option (II) - the claim that during complete hallucination there are no objects of experience. But can the intentional theory provide us with an adequate account of how it is that we are aware of objects that are part of the external world?

The intentional theory offers a positive account of the kind of mental state involved when a subject hallucinates. Consideration of Robinson's causal argument may persuade us that an acceptance of this positive account of hallucination incurs a commitment to, what I shall call, the common element thesis (after Millar 1996). This is the thesis that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating.
The intentional theory characterizes a hallucination as a mental state with an intentional content that represents the world as being a certain way. If one accepts that the proximate, neural causes of a subject's hallucination are sufficient to bring about a mental state of this kind, then, given the plausible assumption that the proximate causes of a normal perception can be the same as the proximate causes of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination, one might be convinced that the proximate causes of a normal perception are also sufficient to bring about a mental state of this kind. So when a subject perceives the world the subject's experience is of a kind that would occur if the subject were having a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. Robinson's causal argument shows that an acceptance of the positive account of hallucination offered by the intentionalist motivates an acceptance of the common element thesis.

If we are to offer a positive account of hallucinatory experience that is consistent with our common sense view of perception, then we need to deny that the kind of experience that occurs when a subject hallucinates is one that involves an awareness of objects that we do not normally take ourselves to be directly aware of. But a hallucinatory experience cannot involve an awareness of the objects that we normally take ourselves to be directly aware of, so we must claim that the kind of experience involved is not, in itself, an awareness of any objects. The virtue of
the intentional theory is that it provides a positive account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates that meets this constraint. However, given that the intentional theorist accepts the common element thesis, the intentionalist must also claim that the kind of experience involved when a subject perceives the world does not, in itself, involve an awareness of any objects.

If the intentionalist is to offer an account of experience that is consistent with our ordinary, common sense view of perception – one that puts us in direct perceptual contact with the world – then he needs to claim that the same kind of experience can be on one occasion an awareness of an object in the world and on another occasion an awareness of no object. How is this possible? What is it that allows a subject to have direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world in certain circumstances and not in others, if it is not a difference in the kind of experience that the subject is having? Is the difference between the experiences involved when a subject perceives the world and the experiences involved when a subject hallucinates simply a difference in the veridicality of the experiences? Is it the case that to be aware of an object is just to have a veridical experience? Does one see the world just in case one's visual experience represents the world as being the way it actually is? Someone who denied this would be claiming that it is possible that a subject has all the right kind of information about the world while
failing to see the world - it is possible that the world really is the way it seems to
the subject to be, and yet the subject does not see the world. In other words, they
would be claiming that veridical hallucination is possible.

Veridical Hallucination

Usually the possibility of veridical hallucination is not explicitly argued for. We are
supposed to be persuaded of the possibility of veridical hallucination by
considering the kind of thought experiment suggested by Grice in his paper 'The
Causal Theory of Perception'. In Grice's example a neuroscientist makes it look to
a subject as if there is a clock on the shelf in front of him by stimulating the
subject's visual cortex. Grice writes, "If such treatment were applied when there
actually was a clock on the shelf, and if [the subject's] impressions were found to
continue unchanged when the clock was removed or its position altered, then I
think we should be inclined to say that [the subject] did not see the clock that was
before his eyes" (p. 61, in Dancy 1988). This kind of example is supposed to
establish that there can be cases where the content of a subject's experience is
veridical - the world fully matches the content of the subject's experience - and yet
the subject fails to see the world - there are no objects of experience.

The thought experiment also shows that simply providing an account of experience
that gets rid of sense-data — those objects that are supposed to get in the way of our direct access to the world — is not, in itself, sufficient to put us in direct perceptual contact with the world. We do not need to think of an experience as being constituted by an object that the subject is aware of, getting in the way of his direct access to the world, in order for us to think of his experience as being "cut off" from the world. Providing an account of experience that does away with sense-data does not in itself preserve our common sense view of perception. As Snowdon notes,

... it is possible to hold that our experiences do not enable us to [directly] perceive external objects, not because, on reflection, we can discover an intruding object which acts as a screen between the subject and external objects, but because, on reflection, we form the view that experience does not quite reach far enough into the world to enable us to do so... This... means that arguments against the cogency of sense-datum theories are not as such arguments for Direct Realism. (Snowdon 1992, p. 61)

In his paper 'The Idea of Experience', Millar suggests that those philosophers who reject the common element thesis misunderstand the intentional theory of experience. He suggests that their arguments against the common element thesis depend on the claim that those who hold the thesis are committed to the idea of experiences as "interposing" between subject and world. He quite rightly points out that the intentional theorist is not committed to such an idea. However, the Grice thought experiment shows that one can think of a subject as being "cut off"
from the world without thinking of the subject’s experience as an object of which he is aware, interposing between subject and world. So there still remains the question as to whether the intentional theory can put us “in touch” with the world in an appropriate way. More work needs to be done by the intentional theorist if he is to claim that his account of experience is consistent with our common sense view of perception.

Summary

If we allow that hallucinatory experiences involve an awareness of objects, then our ordinary common sense view of perception is threatened. For if we make such an allowance, then Robinson’s causal argument makes it difficult to deny that in so-called normal cases of perception we are also aware of the same kinds of objects – objects that are quite different from the ones that we normally take ourselves to be directly aware of. If we are to preserve our common sense view of perception, then we need to deny that there actually exist objects of which we are aware when we have complete hallucinations. The intentional theory of experience provides an account of hallucinatory experience that meets this constraint. For this reason the intentional theory appears to offer an account of experience that may be capable of preserving our common sense view of perception. However, I have suggested that if one accepts the positive account of hallucinatory experience
offered by the intentionalist, then Robinson's causal argument should lead one to accept the common element thesis – the thesis that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. So if the intentional theorist is to offer an account of experience that preserves our ordinary common sense view of perception, then he needs to explain how the same kind of experience can be on one occasion an awareness of objects in the world, and on another occasion an awareness of no objects.

If we agree that on any adequate account of what it is to see an object the subject of the Grice thought experiment does not see the clock before him, then what adequate account of the concept of seeing can the intentional theory provide? If we accept that in the Grice thought experiment the subject's experience is veridical, then the intentional theorist cannot claim that to see the world - to be in direct perceptual contact with the world - is just for the subject to have the right kind of information about the world. Genuine perception cannot be equivalent to veridical experience. The difference between the experience a subject has when he perceives the world and the experience a subject has when he hallucinates, cannot simply be a difference in the veridicality of the experiences involved. So what over and above the veridicality of an experience is required if a subject is to perceive the world, and why? An answer to this question is suggested by the causal theory of
perception. The details of this theory will be considered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

The Causal Theory of Perception

Consideration of Grice's thought experiment has led some to adopt the Causal Theory of Perception. According to this theory it is part of the concept of "seeing" that necessarily if a subject 'S' sees an object in the world, then that object is causally responsible (in some appropriate way) for the experience undergone by 'S'. What is distinctive of this theory is the idea that it is a conceptual requirement that the causal condition hold if the subject is to see objects in the world. Someone who accepts that it is a general empirical truth that the causal condition holds when a subject sees objects in the world is not thereby committed to the Causal Theory of Perception (CTP). One might, for instance, accept that it is a general empirical truth that when we perceive the world our experiences are usually caused by the objects we perceive, and yet deny that it is a conceptual requirement that our experiences must be caused by the objects we perceive.

1 The experience must be caused "in some appropriate way" to rule out the possibility that an experience that is deviantly caused by the object it is of should count as a case of seeing. I discuss the problem of deviant causal chains later on in the chapter.

If the CTP is correct, then the intentional theorist can explain why the subject of the Grice thought experiment fails to see the objects before him. If the intentional theorist accepts that the subject in the Grice thought experiment is having a veridical experience, then he can explain why having a veridical experience is not sufficient to put a subject in direct perceptual contact with objects in the world. In Grice's thought experiment the subject's veridical experience does not count as a case of seeing, because the experience is not caused in the appropriate way. So the intentional theorist might claim that whenever a subject successfully perceives the world the subject is having an experience with a veridical intentional content which is caused, in the appropriate way, by the objects of experience. The suggestion would be that a conjunction of the intentional theory of experience and the CTP provides the best account of how an experiencing subject gets to be in direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world. Is this account of perception consistent with our common sense view of perception? Should we accept the CTP? Is the intentional theorist merely assuming that the CTP must be correct, because he is assuming, perhaps incorrectly, that his account of experience is consistent with our common sense view of perception?

Arguments for the CTP based on a consideration of the Grice thought experiment generally have the following form:
(1) The Grice thought experiment shows that there are possible cases of veridical hallucination where the subject fails to see the world even though the world really is as his experience represents it to be.

(2) In such cases the subject fails to see the objects that are before him because the subject's experience is not causally dependent (in the appropriate way) on those objects.

(3) Therefore, it is necessary that if a subject is to see an object in the world, then the subject's experience must be causally dependent (in an appropriate way) on that object.

A way of undermining the argument is to question the move from (1) to (2). It is not clear that (2) can be the only possible explanation of (1). What, then, gives us reason to believe that it is the best explanation of (1)? Another way of undermining the argument might be to question the account of experience assumed in the argument. Does the argument rest on assumptions about the nature of experience that are inconsistent with our common sense view of perception? If it does, then how can it elicit the correct intuitions about what our ordinary concept of perception involves?

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3 This line of objection is explored by Snowdon, 1981, and 1990.
One way of lending support to the CTP, and allaying these worries, is to seek a solution to a problem that Strawson sets himself (in Strawson 1974). Strawson attempts
to determine how the general notion of causal dependence of sensible experience on facts about material objects fits into, or finds a place in, the naive concept of perception of material objects. (p. 75)

If the notion of the causal dependence of experience on objects of experience is part of our ordinary concept of perception, then one question we can ask is 'what role is the notion supposed to be playing in that concept?' An answer to this question would provide what Strawson calls a "rationale" for the CTP. It would provide us with some sort of explanation of why the causal condition is part of our concept of perception, and such an explanation would lend support to the CTP. If we can provide a rationale for the CTP, then this may, in turn, lend support to the claim that the intentional theory of experience is consistent with our common sense view of perception. Can we provide such a rationale for the CTP?

**Strawson's Rationale for the CTP**

Strawson attempts to provide a rationale for the CTP after already having made use of a Gricean thought experiment to establish the conclusion that the notion of the causal dependence of experience on objects of experience is part of our naive concept of perception. His project is now "to inquire into the way [the notion] fits
into our general concept of perception” (p. 69). What is it about our concept of perception that entails that sensible experience should be causally dependent on the objects being perceived?

It might be suggested that the Grice thought experiment itself reveals a very simple answer to this question: the purpose of this causal notion is to distinguish the concept of perception from veridical hallucination. However, this solution to Strawson's problem will be inadequate until an account is offered of what it is about cases of so-called veridical hallucination that requires us to distinguish them from cases of genuine perception. If we want to explain how this notion of causal dependence fits into our concept of perception by claiming that the causal component is necessary to distinguish cases of perception from veridical hallucination, then we cannot explain the need to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination in terms of the claim that veridical hallucination lacks the causal component that is part of our concept of perception.

If the fact that we need to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination is going to be used to give an illuminating explanation of the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception, then we must provide an explanation of the distinction between veridical hallucination and perception that goes beyond the simple claim that veridical hallucination lacks the causal
component that is part of our concept of perception. If we do not provide such an explanation, then we will not have given an adequate solution to Strawson's problem. This is not just because the explanation of the place of the causal component in our concept of perception would be circular, it is because the circle would be so small: the explanation of the place of a causal component in our concept of perception is that it is needed to distinguish cases of perception from veridical hallucination, and the explanation of the need to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination is that veridical hallucination lacks the causal component that is part of our concept of perception.

A satisfactory solution to Strawson's problem is supposed to provide an explanation of, or "rationale" for, the CTP. But isn't that what the argument from Grice's thought experiment provides? If Grice's thought experiment does show us anything about the concept of perception, it should rather be seen as a way of making us realize that the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of seeing, but it does not show us what role this notion has in our concept of seeing. A solution to Strawson's problem should be seen as offering an explanation of why or how the argument from the Grice thought experiment works. As Child says, the argument from the Grice thought experiment

is sometimes presented as the claim that a causal element is needed in order to

distinguish seeing from veridical hallucination.... [But] the point of bringing out the
causal difference between vision and hallucination is not to allow us to distinguish states of affairs which were indistinguishable before. Rather, it is to yield a philosophical understanding of the distinction. Now a philosophical understanding of vision essentially involves a conception of what vision is. (Child 1993, p. 142)

An answer to Strawson's problem will provide an explicit characterization of this conception of vision.

With the CTP comes the problem of deviant causal chains, and an adequate solution to Strawson's problem may also be of relevance to this issue. In order for an experience to be a successful perception rather than a veridical hallucination, it must not only be caused by the state of affairs perceived, it must be caused in the "right way". It must not be caused in a deviant way. Philosophers have constructed thought experiments to show that a veridical experience might be caused by the state of affairs that the experience is of, and yet the experience would still not be a perception of that state of affairs. It would be another veridical hallucination. To give an example from Lewis: the scene before my eyes consists of a wizard casting a spell. His spell causes me to hallucinate at random, and the hallucination I have just so happens to match the scene before my eyes (Lewis 1980). In this case I do not see the wizard before my eyes even though my veridical experience was caused by the wizard.
Peacocke has said

The notion of perception is an everyday one, and as such, it is reasonable to require any elucidation of it to have an answer to the question 'what is the point of the distinction [between deviant and non-deviant chains]? Further, an adequate answer to this question should not appeal to or go beyond everyday nontechnical interests of those employing the concept. (Peacocke 1979, p. 108-9).

There have been many attempts to give an account that specifies the right, appropriate way in which an experience must be caused in order to be a perception⁴ - i.e. an account that gives a specification of the distinction between a deviant and a non-deviant causal chain – but less has been written on giving an answer to Peacocke's question, "what is the point of the distinction?" This is a question that Searle has echoed: "Why does it matter to us how the causal chain works? Why do we care whether or not it was caused in the right sort of way?" (Searle 1983, p. 139). An adequate solution to Strawson's problem may provide an answer to the question.

I now want to consider the response that Strawson gives to the problem that he sets himself. In 'Causation in Perception', Strawson seems to be arguing in the following way: the notion of causal dependence is needed to distinguish perception

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from veridical hallucination, and we need to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination because a veridical hallucination is an "undependable" experience. Strawson claims that "If we take [an experience which is not causally dependent in the appropriate way] to be the perception it seems to be then we will normally be mistaken in our [perceptual belief]" (p. 70). Since, for Strawson, the facts represented by a subject's veridical hallucination are not causally responsible, in an appropriate way, for the subject's experience, "it could be no more than a flukish coincidence or outsize piece of luck if, nevertheless, appropriate facts did happen to obtain". Strawson claims that any experience that is not causally dependent in the appropriate way is for this reason "an essentially undependable experience" (p. 70).

If an experience occurs for which the dependence condition does not hold, and if the subject of the experience believes [that things really are the way they seem to be], then he will normally be mistaken in that belief.... We would say in such a case that he is wrong in taking the experience to be the perception it seems to be, even if, by a fluke, he happens to be right in his belief in the appropriate facts. The concept of perception is too closely linked to that of knowledge for us to tolerate the idea of someone's being merely flukishly right in taking his experience to be the perception that it seems to be. Only those experiences that are in a certain way dependable are to count as the perceptions they seem to be. (p. 71).
Strawson seems to be arguing that the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception because it distinguishes those experiences that are, in a certain way, "dependable". A veridical hallucination is not a perception because it is undependable. Even if an experience gives the subject the right information about the way the world is, the experience does not count as a perception if it is not a dependable experience. The two questions that Strawson's account immediately give rise to are, (i) what is it for an experience to be dependable? and (ii) why should an experience be dependable if it is to count as a perception?

An experience is not dependable, in Strawson's sense, if it merely gives the subject the right information about the way the world is. This is why a veridical hallucination does not count as a perception. An experience that is dependable should not be "flukishly" or "coincidentally" right about the way the world is. An experience is flukishly right if it is produced in such a way that the subject would normally be mistaken if he believed that things really were the way they seemed to be. So what makes an experience dependable is the way it is produced - it must be produced in a way that will normally yield accurate representations of the world. This gives an answer to question (i). To turn to question (ii), why does Strawson think that it is part of our concept of perception that an experience should be dependable in this way?
Strawson suggests that this has something to do with the fact that "the concept of perception is closely linked to that of knowledge", but he does not elaborate on this point. Are we to assume that perceiving that $p$ is the same thing as knowing that $p$? If one assumes that in order to know that $p$ one must believe that $p$, then one can only accept that perceiving that $p$ is the same thing as knowing that $p$ if one accepts a belief theory of perception. A belief theory of perception identifies an experience with a belief. The usual way to object to this type of theory is to point out that we sometimes do not believe what we seem to see. For example, a subject can look at an example of the Mueller-Lyer illusion and reject the claim that the lines are of different lengths. This will not alter the fact that he experiences the lines as being of different lengths. One can have an experience and reject the content of the experience - i.e. one can deny that the world really is as it is represented to be. However, one cannot reject the content of a belief. To have a belief just is, by definition, to accept the content of that belief. Therefore, experiences should be distinguished from belief. The belief theorist's response that an experience is just a belief about how things appear seems inadequate, because we take our experiences to be about objects and events in the world, and not to be about appearances of objects and events in the world.

So if an experience is not a belief, and only a belief can have the epistemic status of knowledge, what then is the nature of the link between the concepts of perception
and knowledge that Strawson has in mind? How should we understand Strawson's claim that a subject is "wrong" in taking an undependable experience to be the perception that it seems to be, even if the experience gives the subject the right information about the way the world is? If the subject ends up with a correct belief about the way the world is, why is the subject "wrong" to take the experience to be the successful perception that it seems to be?

Strawson seems to be assuming that a successful perception is capable of contributing to the epistemic status of a connected, world-directed perceptual belief in a way that a veridical hallucination is not. When Strawson says that a subject is "wrong" to take a veridical hallucination to be the perception that it seems to be, he is making a comment about the epistemic status of the subject's world-directed perceptual beliefs. So it seems that Strawson's answer to his own problem (at least in 'Causation in Perception') is that the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception, because of the role that successful perceptions are supposed to play in our epistemology. It is part of our concept of perception that successful perceptions are capable of contributing in some way to the epistemic status of world-directed perceptual beliefs. And the claim is that the causal ancestry of a successful perception is in some way supposed to be capable of making this contribution to the epistemic status of such
perceptual beliefs. I now want to rule out one way in which this claim might be understood.

It might be thought that the causal ancestry of an experience contributes to the epistemic status of a world-directed perceptual belief by making true some belief about the origin of the experience, which justifies the perceptual belief. For example, it might be thought that my belief that there is a table in front of me is justified by my belief that my experience of the table is caused by the table. The fact that the table is causing my experience would then make true my belief about the origin of my experience, which is justifying my belief that the table is there. The suggestion would be that in the Grice thought experiment, the subject's belief that there is a clock in front of him is based on a false belief - the belief that his experience of the clock is caused by the clock. So the subject is "wrong" to take his experience to be the successful perception it seems to be. The subject's belief about the world is not knowledge because it is grounded in a false belief.

This cannot be the right way to understand Strawson's rationale for the CTP. To see why, consider the following thought experiment:

A subject knows that he is being experimented on by a neuroscientist, and he knows that the neuroscientist is making him have only veridical experiences. Any world-directed perceptual beliefs that the subject has are based on the belief that
the neuroscientist is trustworthy in his claim that he will engineer only veridical experiences, and that he is capable of so doing. The subject's world-directed beliefs are not based on the belief that the objects his experiences are of are causing his experiences, because the subject knows that it is the neuroscientist who is responsible for his experiences.

Do we want to say that the subject of this thought experiment is seeing the objects in front of him? Most causal theorists will answer 'no'. There is a sense in which the subject's experiences are causally dependent on the objects they are of, in that the objects are causally responsible for the neuroscientist's experiences, which in turn causally influence the neuroscientist's actions in engineering the subject's experiences. But the causal theorist will probably consider this to be a case in which the subject's experiences are only deviantly caused by the objects they are of. Strictly speaking, the subject's experiences are caused by the neuroscientist and are responsive to his intentions and abilities.

If we claim that the subject does not see the objects before him, in what way are this subject's experiences significantly different from those of a subject who does successfully see his environment? The subject in the above thought-experiment is not "wrong" in believing that things really are the way they appear to be, because the trustworthiness and ingenuity of the scientist make true the belief which
justifies his world-directed perceptual beliefs. So if Strawson's account of the way in which the role of the notion of causal dependence fits into our concept of perception is correct, then the way in which the causal ancestry of a successful perception contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief, cannot simply consist in making true some belief which justifies world-directed perceptual belief. So in what way must we understand the claim that the causal ancestry of perception contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief, if Strawson's account is to work?

To make Strawson's account work we must understand him as claiming that the causal ancestry of a perception contributes, in some way, to the epistemic status of a subject's non-inferential, world-directed perceptual beliefs. It is not that the causal ancestry of the perception makes true some belief which contributes to the justification of a world-directed perceptual belief. The suggestion is that an experience that is appropriately caused can contribute to the epistemic status of a non-inferential, world-directed belief, in a way that an experience that is not so caused cannot. This is because an experience that is not appropriately caused will be an 'undependable' experience, and an undependable experience cannot contribute to the epistemic status of a non-inferential, world-directed belief in the way that a dependable experience can. We might accept that a non-inferential, world-directed belief based on an 'undependable' hallucinatory experience can be
justified, but the belief cannot have the epistemic status of knowledge. It is part of our concept of perception that successful perceptual experiences can provide us with non-inferential, world-directed knowledge. So it is part of our concept of perception that successful perceptual experiences are dependable.

What makes an experience dependable is the way in which it is produced. An experience is dependable if it is produced in a way that normally gives rise to true belief. We can understand the claim that an experience needs to be dependable in order to be a successful perception, in terms of familiar reliabilist terminology: for an experience to be a successful perception, that experience must be produced by a mechanism that is a reliable indicator of the truth.\(^5\) Compare the following comments made by Strawson in a later paper:

> The idea of the presence of the thing as accounting for, or being responsible for, our perceptual awareness of it is implicit in the pre-theoretical scheme from the start. For we think of perception as a way, indeed the basic way, of informing ourselves about the world of independently existing things: we assume, that is to say, the general reliability of our perceptual experiences; and that assumption is the same as the assumption of a general causal dependence of our perceptual experiences on the independently existing things we take them to be of. (Strawson 1979, p.103)

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Strawson is arguing here that it is part of our concept of perception that our experiences are reliable, and the assumption that our experiences are reliable is "the same as" the assumption that the objects that our experiences are of are causally responsible for our perceptual experiences.

To summarize, what I am taking to be Strawson's account of the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception can be explained in the following way: the idea of the objects of experience being causally responsible for our experiences is part of our concept of perception, because this just is what it is for an experience to be reliable. And it is part of the concept of perception that an experience that is a successful perception will be reliable, because we think of perception as a "basic" way of informing ourselves about the world. We must read into this claim the idea that it is part of our concept of perception that a successful perception must be reliable because involved in the concept is the idea that non-inferential, world-directed beliefs based on perceptions can have the epistemic status of knowledge. We could say that a veridical hallucination is a "basic" way of informing ourselves about the world, if by this we just mean that it is a non-inferential way of gaining information about the world, but the beliefs thus acquired will not be knowledge.
So the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception is ultimately explained by the fact that it is part of our concept of perception that a successful perception can provide one with non-inferential, world-directed knowledge. What relevance does this account of the role of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception have to the problem of deviant causal chains?

Recall that the suggestion was that an adequate rationale for the CTP might help provide an answer to the following question: "what is the point of the distinction between deviant and non-deviant causal chains?" If we accept Strawson's rationale, then the answer seems to be that in distinguishing those experiences that are non-deviantly caused by the objects they are of from those experiences that are deviantly caused by the objects they are of, we are distinguishing those experiences that are reliable from those experiences that are unreliable. A non-inferential, world-directed belief based on a reliable experience can be knowledge, whereas a non-inferential, world-directed belief that is based on an unreliable experience cannot be an instance of knowledge. So a non-inferential, world-directed belief that is based on an experience that is deviantly caused cannot be an instance of knowledge, whereas a non-inferential, world-directed belief that is based on an experience that is non-deviantly caused can be an instance of knowledge. If a non-inferential, world-directed perceptual belief is to be knowledge, the experience on
which it is based must be non-deviantly caused by the object it is of. In the example taken from Lewis, the experience is deviantly caused by the presence of the wizard, so a non-inferential belief about the presence of a wizard based on that experience cannot be an instance of knowledge.

Summary

In the first two chapters I have been outlining a theory of perception that is supposed to show that our common sense view of perception does not need to be revised. The theory is supposed to be consistent with our ordinary, pre-philosophical view of perception. The theory involves an acceptance of the intentional theory of experience together with the CTP. To be directly aware of an object in the world, under this account, is to have a veridical experience that is appropriately caused by that object.

Strawson's rationale for the CTP is supposed to lend support to the claim that this theory is consistent with our ordinary, common sense view of perception. For the rationale is supposed to help explain what role the notion of the causal dependence of experience on objects of experience is supposed to be playing in our ordinary, everyday concept of perception. So should we be happy that if we accept the intentional theory of experience together with the CTP we have an account of perception that preserves our common sense beliefs about perception? In the next
chapter I shall introduce an objection to Strawson's rationale for the CTP. I shall go on to consider whether this objection can be used to undermine the claim that the theory of perception outlined thus far is consistent with our ordinary, common sense view of perception.
CHAPTER THREE

An Objection to Strawson's Rationale

Strawson argues that the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception, is explained by the fact that it is part of our concept of perception that successful perceptual experiences are "reliable"/ "dependable". It is part of our concept of perception that successful perceptual experiences are reliable, because our concept of perception is "closely linked" with that of knowledge. We think of perception as a way of acquiring non-inferential world-directed knowledge. An experience must be reliable if it is to provide one with world-directed non-inferential knowledge. A non-inferential world-directed belief based on a hallucinatory experience cannot be knowledge even if the belief is true, for the experience on which it is based will be unreliable.

Strawson claims that the assumption of "the general reliability of our perceptual experiences" is "the same as the assumption of a general causal dependence of our perceptual experiences on the independently existing things we take them to be of" (Strawson 1979, p. 103, in Dancy 1988). Strawson says that the assumption of reliability is the same as the assumption of causal dependence, because it is the notion of reliability that is explaining the role of causal dependence in our concept of seeing. If an experience can be reliable without being causally dependent on its
objects, then we will either have to say that the notion of causal dependence is not after all part of our concept of perception, or we will have to give an alternative account of the role of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception. For Strawson's account to work it is not enough for him to say that the notion of causal dependence can be used to explain the reliability of successful perception - he must say that the idea that successful perceptions are causally dependent on their objects is the only possible explanation of their reliability. A possible line of objection to Strawson's account would, therefore, be to show that a perceptual experience can be "reliable" without being causally dependent on the objects the experience is of. I shall now consider an objection along these lines made by Dummett (1979).¹

Dummett can be interpreted as agreeing with Strawson that it is part of the concept of perception that a subject's successful perceptions should contribute to the epistemic status of the subject's world-directed perceptual beliefs. Dummett seems to be agreeing with Strawson that the concept of perception is linked in an important way with the concept of knowledge. However, Dummett does not agree that this idea needs to be explained in terms of the idea of causal dependence. He writes:

I do not believe that the notion of cause, as such, is integral to the concept of perception:

¹This objection is mentioned in Snowdon 1981, and discussed in detail in Child 1993.
all that is integral to the latter concept is that any perceptions should always afford some
ground, even if one that can in some cases be overridden, for supposing things to be as I
perceive them to be. (1979, p. 35).

In order to establish his claim, Dummett then offers an example where the subject's
experiences are not causally dependent on the state of affairs they are of and yet
they provide the subject with a reason to believe that things are as they seem:

If someone agrees with Malebranche, that the presence of the object and my perception
of it are joint effects of some further cause, his belief does not violate the concept of
perception, so long as he allows that my perception supplies a reason for taking the
object to be there. (p.35-36).^1

In what way does this subject's experience contribute to the epistemic status of his
world-directed beliefs? If it is the "reliability" of the experience which contributes
to the epistemic status of the subject's beliefs, then we have a counterexample to
Strawson's claim that the assumption about the reliability of successful perception
is the same as the assumption about the causal dependence of experience on its
objects. We have a case where the subject's experience is reliable, in the required
sense, without being causally dependent on the objects it is of. But does the
experience of a subject in the kind of occasionalist scenario that Dummett outlines
contribute to the epistemic status of world-directed beliefs in a way that is

^1Dummett credits this point to John Foster.

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significantly different from the way that the non-occasionalist subject's experiences contribute to the epistemic status of world-directed beliefs? Child seems to think so:

Now suppose that my experiences and material objects are indeed joint effects of a common cause. We can certainly allow that, *if I know that fact about the relation between my experience and material objects*, then my having this particular experience does give me a reason for taking there to be an appropriate object present. But this presupposes that I already have a way employed in gaining the general knowledge that occasionalism is true, which is an essential part of my reason for forming the specific belief. But what is this way? Recall Strawson's point that perception is a *basic way of informing ourselves about the world*. The possibility of perception's giving us reasons for forming beliefs about the world must be consistent with its basic part in epistemology. And whilst experiences conceived as occasionalism conceives it may give a reason for beliefs about the world to someone who already knew that occasionalism was true, it is entirely unclear how it could play the requisitely basic role. (Child 1993, p.175).

In the last chapter I discussed two ways in which we can understand the claim that the causal ancestry of a perception contributes to the epistemic status of world-directed perceptual belief: either (a) the causal ancestry of the perception just makes true some belief about the origin of the experience which justifies the world-directed perceptual belief; or (b) the causal ancestry of the perception *itself* contributes to the epistemic status of non-inferential, world-directed perceptual
belief. Child assumes that in the occasionalist scenario, the way in which the causal ancestry of the subject's experience contributes to the epistemic status of his world-directed perceptual beliefs, falls under (a). Child assumes that the causal ancestry of an occasionalist subject's experience can only make the requisite contribution to the epistemic status of his world-directed perceptual beliefs by making true a belief that justifies his world-directed perceptual beliefs. The suggestion is that the fact that the subject's experience and the material object are joint effects of a common cause makes true the subject's belief that occasionalism is true, which is justifying the subject's perceptual belief that the object really is there. Child then objects that "this presupposes that I already have a way of knowing about the world, a way employed in gaining the general knowledge that occasionalism is true." But it should be clear that this objection can be equally pressed against someone who claims that the causal ancestry of the normal non-occasionalist subject's experience contributes to the epistemic status of his world-directed perceptual beliefs by making true some belief about the origins of the experience - i.e. this objection can be pressed against anyone, whether occasionalist or not, who holds that the causal ancestry of successful perceptions contributes to the epistemic status of world-directed perceptual beliefs in way (a). Consider the claim of a casual theorist of perception who says that the fact that a subject's experiences are causally dependent on the objects of experience makes true the subject's belief about the causal origins of the experience, which justifies
his perceptual beliefs. We can echo Child's objection to the occasionalist and claim that this presupposes that the subject already has a way of knowing about the world, a way employed in gaining the general knowledge that the causal condition obtains, which is an essential part of the subject's reason for forming a specific perceptual belief.

In the last chapter I argued that if Strawson's account of the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception is to work, we should understand the claim that the causal ancestry of a perception contributes to the epistemic status of world-directed perceptual belief in way (b). So why can't we understand the claim that the causal ancestry of an occasionalist's experience contributes to the epistemic status of his world-directed perceptual belief in way (b)? On this understanding, the way an occasionalist's experience is produced itself contributes to the epistemic status of his non-inferential, world-directed perceptual belief. It is not that the way the occasionalist's experience is produced makes true some belief about occasionalism which justifies his perceptual belief.

The fact that the occasionalist subject's experiences and the objects they are of are joint effects of a common cause makes the experiences reliable indicators of the truth. It is the reliability of the occasionalist's experiences which allows them to contribute to the epistemic status of the subject's non-inferential, world-directed
perceptual beliefs. It is not that the causal ancestry of the subject's experiences makes true some belief about the experiences which justifies his world-directed perceptual beliefs. So we can understand the way in which the causal ancestry of an occasionalist's experience contributes to the epistemic status of his world-directed beliefs as the same as the way in which the causal ancestry of the non-occasionalist's experience contributes to the epistemic status of his world-directed beliefs. For the non-occasionalist and the occasionalist alike, it is the reliability of the experience which contributes to the epistemic status of the subject's non-inferential, world-directed perceptual belief. It is the reliability of the experience which allows that a non-inferential, world-directed belief based on the experience can be an instance of knowledge.

Child emphasizes Strawson's point that perception is a basic way of informing ourselves about the world, that perception has a basic role in epistemology, and then Child says that "it isn't entirely clear how the occasionalist's experiences can play the requisite basic role". However, Child needs to explain why, on Strawson's account, we can assign a "basic" role to a non-occasionalist's experience which we cannot assign to an occasionalist's experience. If the claim that perception has a basic role to play in epistemology is just to be understood as the claim that a perception can ground non-inferential knowledge about the world, then why can't an occasionalist's experience also ground non-inferential
knowledge about the world?

Dummett appears to have provided an example of a case where the subject's experience is reliable, in the required sense, without being causally dependent on the objects the experience is of. Therefore, Strawson cannot explain the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception solely in terms of the reliability of perception. Does this mean that we should abandon Strawson's account? Child has suggested an alternative way of defending Strawson's account against the Dummett counterexample.

**Child's Defence of the CTP**

Child claims that a response to Dummett's objection needs "to show that it is only if experiences are caused by things in the world that they can inform us about the world" (1993, p. 170). Child suggests that the causal theorist could show this "by arguing that a subject who was causally isolated from the world could not even possess concepts of the things and kinds in the world". The suggestion is that the occasionalist subject is causally isolated from the world and so his experiences are not about the material objects in the world. But why should we accept that a subject causally isolated from the world cannot be informed about the world?
Child writes,

The principle that the causalist needs is that, at some level, it is only if one is (or has been) in causal contact with Fs that one can have the concept of an F. (Child 1993, p. 170).

Child then points out that this principle needs to be restricted, because it is clearly possible to possess concepts of some properties with which one has had no causal contact, by having a specification of them in simpler terms (ibid, p. 171).

So Child thinks that an argument can be made against Dummett's counterexample to the CTP, by using the principle (A): In order to be informed about any material objects in the world, it is necessary that one is (or has been) in causal contact with some objects in the world. Child cites Davidson and Burge as making use of some version of the principle. Davidson writes

we must, in the plainest and methodologically most basic cases, take the objects of a belief to be the causes of that belief. (Davidson 1983, p317-8).

Burge claims,

we build up intentional type attributions by determining the types of objective entities whose instances regularly causally affect the creature's sense organs and are normally discriminated perceptually by the creature (Burge 1986, p. 130).

It should be noted that principle (A) is not uncontroversial. An issue that is relevant to the present discussion is whether those who accept something like principle (A) are doing so because they are assuming the truth of the CTP. If one
assumes that one must have perceived objects in the world if one is to have beliefs about objects in the world, and one also assumes that one’s experiences must be caused by objects in the world if one is to perceive them, then one will accept principle (A). Child is attempting to defend the CTP by appealing to something like principle (A), so he must be assuming that one can adequately defend principle (A) without assuming the truth of the CTP. I shall not be discussing whether this assumption is correct. For I shall be arguing that Child’s defence of the CTP based on an appeal to principle (A) is not successful even if one can establish that principle (A) is correct without assuming the truth of the CTP.

It should be clear that an acceptance of principle (A) does not in itself entail the truth of the claim that a subject can only see the objects his experience is of if those objects are causing the subject’s experience. For example, it is possible for there to be a theorist who accepts principle (A) and yet claims that the subject of the Grice thought experiment is in fact seeing the objects his experience is of. This theorist could claim that if the subject of the Grice thought experiment had previously been in causal contact with objects in the world, then the subject’s experience could concern the objects in the scene before him. Someone who accepts principle (A) does not sacrifice the ability to explain false belief or hallucination. Under the intentional theory of experience, a subject can have an experience with the same content whether or not he is successfully perceiving. So when a subject is having a
hallucination he is having an experience with a content that he could have in a case of successful perception. A subject can have an experience with a certain content when the objective entities the experience is of are not actually causing the experience, so long as the objective entities of that type have in the past been causally responsible for experiences of that type. Therefore, an acceptance of principle (A) is consistent with a denial of the claim that a subject's experience has to be caused by the object of experience in order for the subject to see the object.

Since an acceptance of principle (A) is consistent with the claim that the subject of the Grice thought experiment is seeing the world, perhaps the CTP can be defended by a conjunction of principle (A) and the claim that a successful perception must be "reliable". This seems to be Child's strategy. So one way of trying to show that Child's defence of the CTP is unsuccessful would be by giving an example of an experience that is, (a) not caused by the state of affairs that the experience is of, (b) reliable, and (c) one which did get its content through the subject's causal interaction with objective entities in his environment. Dummett's example, as it stands, does not satisfy (a) to (c) because it does not satisfy condition (c).

Consider the example of a subject for whom occasionalism is now true, but for whom occasionalism has not always been true. The subject had, in the past,
causally interacted with the objects in his environment, so the principle is not
violated. Does the change in the occasionalist's environment, from a non-
occasionalist one to an occasionalist one entail that the subject's experiences
immediately change their content to experiences as of whatever it is that is causing
them? Surely the theorist who accepts principle (A) will have to allow that at least
the first experiences the subject has after the change will have the same content as
they had before the change. If the theorist does not, then he will have trouble
trying to explain cases of misperception or hallucination, where the content of an
experience is not as of whatever it is that is causing it. So we seem to have, with
this thought experiment, an example that satisfies (a), (b) and (c), and thereby one
which constitutes an objection to Child's defence of the CTP.

One can, in principle, accept some version of the idea that a subject needs to
causally interact with the world in order for his experiences to have a content
concerning the world, and still be an anti-causalist. Child claims that,

the anti-causalist must deny every version of the principle; she holds that it is
conceptually possible for experiences to inform a subject about a world with no part of
which she has ever, or could ever, causally interact, however remotely. (Child 1993,
p. 171)

This claim is too strong. The anti-causalist need not deny every version of the
principle. The anti-causalist can accept the principle while remaining an anti-
causalist. The anti-causalist who uses Dummett's counterexample to distinguish between the notion of "reliability" and the notion of "causal dependence", can accept some version of the principle and just stipulate that occasionalism has not always been true for the subject of the occasionalist scenario - the subject has, in the past, interacted with the objects his experiences are of. So an acceptance of the claim that it is part of our concept of perception that principle (A) is true, and an acceptance of the claim that it is part of our concept of perception that a successful perception must be "reliable", do not together entail the CTP. An amended version of Dummett's example remains an objection to the claim that the idea that successful perceptual experience is reliable entails the idea that successful perceptual experience is causally dependent on the objects the experience is of.

There may, of course, be many objections to occasionalism, and it might be claimed that, given occasionalism is not true, our experiences must be causally dependent on the objects they are of in order to be reliable. But the point of using the occasionalist example is to make a claim about the concept of perception - what would and would not be a violation of the concept. So the usefulness of the example is its role in answering the question, if occasionalism were true would the subject be seeing the material objects? Can the occasionalist, in principle, see the material objects? If Dummett's example is successful in showing that a subject's experiences can be reliable without being causally dependent on the objects the
experiences are of, then Strawson's account of the place of the notion of causal
dependence in our concept of perception fails.

A New Problem For the CTP
The occasionalist thought experiment shows that Strawson's solution to the
problem of determining how the notion of causal dependence fits into our concept
of perception is inadequate. It shows that the assumption of the causal dependence
of experience on objects of experience is not the same as the assumption of the
reliability of successful perceptual experiences. So we cannot explain the role of
the notion of casual dependence in our concept of perception in terms of the role
of the notion of reliability in our concept of perception. But the objection to
Strawson's account also presents a further problem for the defender of the CTP. It
can also be used to undermine the original Gricean argument for the CTP. Recall
that the Gricean argument has the following form:
(1) The Grice thought experiment shows that there are possible cases of veridical
hallucination where the subject fails to see the world even though the world really
is as his experience represents it to be.
(2) In such cases the subject fails to see the objects that are before him because the
subject's experience is not causally dependent (in the appropriate way) on those
objects.
(3) Therefore, it is necessary that if a subject is to see an object in the world, then
the subject's experience must be causally dependent (in an appropriate way) on that object.

The move from (1) to (2) can be undermined. (2) is not the only possible explanation of (1), and we now have available an alternative, competing explanation of (1). This alternative explanation is:

(2*) In such cases the subject fails to see the objects that are before him, because the subject's experience is unreliable.

From the new premise, (2*), we can now draw the new conclusion,

(3*) Therefore, it is necessary that if a subject is to see an object in the world, the subject's experience must be reliable.

A consideration of the type of thought experiment suggested by Grice is here being used to argue for, what we might call, the Reliabilist Theory of Perception (RTP) instead of the Causal Theory of Perception. The occasionalist thought experiment shows that the RTP is a genuinely different theory from the CTP. A commitment to the RTP does not entail a commitment to the CTP. Dummett's occasionalist thought experiment shows that, contra Strawson, the assumption of "the general reliability of our perceptual experiences" is not "the same as the assumption of a general causal dependence of our perceptual experiences on the independently existing things we take them to be of". Furthermore, (2*), the new explanation of
(1), is not implausible. Strawson claims that we assume "the general reliability of our perceptual experiences" - it is part of our ordinary concept of perception that the experiences we have when we perceive the world are reliable, and not flukishly right. According to Strawson, the experiences we have when we perceive the world can contribute to the epistemic status of our non-inferential, world-directed, perceptual beliefs and this has something to do with the fact that "the concept of perception is closely linked to that of knowledge". If Strawson is right about this, then our intuitions will persuade us that a flukish, unreliable experience will not be a perception. So perhaps it is the flukishness - the unreliability - of the subject's experience in the Grice thought experiment that persuades us that the subject is not perceiving. Perhaps the unreliability of the subject's experience is the best explanation of (1).

In attempting to provide a rationale for the CTP we may have uncovered a flaw in the reasoning which lies behind an acceptance of the CTP. As Snowdon puts it, "providing a rationale for the supposed truth, that C entails D will amount, at least, to showing that C entails E and E entails D" (Snowdon 1998, p. 298). On Strawson's proposed rationale for the supposed truth that C entails D, it turns out that E does not entail D. Rather, it just so happens that in this world it is usually the case that when E is true, D is true. So perhaps it is the false assumption that E entails D which lies behind the assumption that C entails D. We have seen that the
RTP does not entail the CTP, so why should we not be content with adopting the RTP and abandoning the CTP? If we want a philosophical account of perception that preserves our common sense view of perception, why not simply accept a theory of perception that involves an acceptance of the intentional theory of experience together with the RTP? Why should we prefer a theory of perception that involves an acceptance of the intentional theory of experience together with the CTP?

One suggestion may be to offer a thought experiment in which the experience is reliable without being casually dependent on the object of experience. If we take this to be a case of hallucination then we will have reason to prefer the CTP to the RTP. However, this suggestion is unhelpful. The occasionalist example is just such a thought experiment. This thought experiment has been offered, by Dummett, as a counterexample to the CTP. So those, like Dummett, who make use of the thought experiment to provide a counterexample to the CTP will not be persuaded by the causal theorist's assertion that the thought experiment is actually a counterexample to their non-casual theory. Our intuitions about this kind of strange thought experiment may not be clear. If the CTP is correct, then providing an adequate solution to Strawson's problem - i.e. providing an adequate rationale for the CTP - should help clarify our intuitions. If we had an explanation of why the causal condition is part of our ordinary concept of perception we would be clearer about
why we should say that the subject of the occasionalist thought experiment does not perceive the objects before him. But before exploring the possibility of providing a more adequate rationale for the CTP, I want to consider an alternative argument for the CTP which is suggested by Child. If this argument works we may not need a rationale for the CTP in order to show why we should not remain content with the RTP and abandon the CTP.

The Defeating Conditions Argument

With this argument Child attempts to show that "grasp of the idea that something seen is causally affecting the subject is an essential part of mastery of the concept [of vision]" (Child 1993, p. 164). First of all Child makes the following comment:

I do not think that we can hold that there is a sharp distinction between mental and physical aspects of vision, so that one could have complete grasp of the mental concept of vision yet lack any idea that seeing is, or depends on, a physical process or that it is causal. There seems no prospect for an account of what it is to be a perceiver which does not include the fact that perception has a physical nature. (ibid, p. 164-5)

It should be clear that if we accept this claim we are not thereby automatically committed to the CTP. For instance, someone who accepts that the subject of the occasionalist thought experiment can perceive need not deny that the ability to perceive depends on a physical, causal process that occurs in the brain. However, Child goes on to make the stronger claim that,

There is no prospect for an understanding of vision which does not include the causal
notions that an experience cannot be a case of seeing \( o \) if it could not have been caused by \( o \), or if it was demonstrably caused by something other than \( o \). Mastery of the concept of vision, in other words, directly involves the mastery of causal notions and conditions. (\textit{ibid}, p. 165)

What is Child's argument for this stronger claim?

Child claims that,

If one has the concept of vision, one must know that \( S \) will stop seeing something if she shuts her eyes, or if we interpose something opaque between her and the object, or if the object is moved away; and to know that is to know that something cannot be seen if it is prevented from, or cannot be, causally affecting \( S \). (\textit{ibid}, p. 165)

Child anticipates the following non-causalist response,

The non-causalist says that the fact that \( S \)'s eyes were closed defeats the claim that \( S \) saw \( o \) because it is simply built into the concept of vision that one cannot see when one's eyes are closed: the concept of vision has various defeating conditions, of which this is one; and that is a basic fact about the concept which cannot, and need not, be explained. (\textit{ibid}, p. 166)

Child claims that this non-causalist response is inadequate for the following reason,

The concept of vision has a range of different defeating conditions. It is compelling to ask what unifies those conditions, and what explains why the concept has just the conditions of application it does. Now the non-causalist cannot give any answer to that question. For him, the defeating conditions of vision are defeating conditions simply in virtue of being built into the concept of vision; there is no further account to be given.
and nothing which unifies them. But it is implausible to think that all these conditions are separate and individually built into the concept, so that it is simply an arbitrary matter that our concept of vision has just the defeating conditions it does. And it is difficult to reconcile that idea with our ability to recognize new conditions as defeating the application of the concept of vision, or not, simply on the basis of our possession of the concept. By contrast, the causal theory offers a satisfying account of what unifies the various defeating conditions and allows to recognize new ones. (ibid, p. 166-7)

Child's argument for the claim that it is part of the concept of vision that seen objects causally affect us, rests on the claim that in order to master the concept of vision we must master certain of its defeating conditions and our mastery of these defeating conditions can only adequately be explained by our mastery of the idea that the objects seen are causally affecting us. For the idea that seen objects casually affect us provides the only adequate explanation of what unifies the defeating conditions of vision. The suggestion is that if one does not explain our mastery of the main defeating conditions of vision in this way, then one must accept the implausible view that the main defeating conditions of vision are “separate and individually built into” our concept of perception. What should we make of this argument?

It seems that Child has in mind just the main defeating conditions of vision. There will be various defeating conditions that many of us do not have mastery of - e.g. medical conditions that may prevent the optic nerve from functioning properly. But from the truth of this claim, we do not want to conclude that we cannot master the concept of seeing.
If the notion of the casual dependence of experience on objects of experience is indeed part of our ordinary concept of perception, then we will know that "something cannot be seen [by S] if it is prevented from, or cannot be casually affecting S". But knowing this does not entail knowing that "S will stop seeing something if she shuts her eyes, or if one interposes something opaque between her and the object, or if the object is moved away". In order to move from knowing that "something cannot be seen if it is prevented from causally affecting S", to knowing that "S will stop seeing something if she shuts her eyes, or if one interposes something opaque between her and the object, or if the object is moved away", one has to know the empirical truth that these conditions prevent the object from causally affecting S in the appropriate way. Someone who accepts the CTP, and so accepts that an object cannot be seen by S if it is prevented from causally affecting S, might hold that an object could be seen under these conditions if an empirical discovery was made about ways in which objects can causally affect a subject's experience (in the appropriate way) when these conditions obtain. So even if one accepts the causal theorist's account of the concept of perception, one is not thereby committed to the claim that it is necessarily true that "S will stop seeing something if she shuts her eyes, or if one interposes something opaque between her and the object, or if the object is moved away". One can be a causal theorist and maintain that these claims are contingently true - a counterexample to
them is not inconceivable.

If the casual theorist can maintain that it is not inconceivable that there could be an experiencing subject for whom these particular defeating conditions did not obtain, then he should not claim that a mastery of these particular defeating conditions is essential to mastery of the concept of vision. For it is not clear why the experiencing subject for whom these defeating conditions did not hold could not have mastery of the concept of vision. So perhaps the causal theorist should, rather, claim that if one has mastery of the concept of vision one will know that there are defeating conditions of vision and one will know what the main defeating conditions of vision are for one's own particular case and for those with perceptual mechanisms similar to one's own in environments similar to one's own. Is this something that the non-causalist can accept?

Recall that the non-causalist is not barred from conceding Child's claim that "there is no prospect for an account of what it is to be a perceiver which does not include the fact that perception has a physical nature". The non-causalist's concession that the ability to perceive the environment depends on physical processes which occur in the brain does not commit him to the CTP. If the non-causalist can accept that the ability to perceive depends on physical processes which occur in the brain, the non-causalist can also accept that there can be defeating conditions of vision. The
non-causalist can accept that if the physical processes in the brain on which a subject's ability to perceive depends are interfered with, then the subject may not be capable of exercising those abilities properly. So there seems to be no reason why the non-causalist cannot accept that if one has mastery of the concept of vision one will know that there are defeating conditions of vision and one will know what the main defeating conditions of vision are for one's own particular case and for those who possess perceptual mechanisms similar to one's own in environments similar to one's own. Furthermore, the non-causalist's acceptance of this claim does not depend on an acceptance of the claim that Child suggests the non-causalist will have to make, which is that the various particular defeating conditions of vision are simply built into the concept of vision "and that is a basic fact about the concept which cannot, and need not, be explained". The non-causalist can claim that it is the nature of the physical processes involved in vision that unifies the main defeating conditions of vision. He can accept that the nature of these physical processes is open to empirical investigation. So he can accept that the fact that there are these main defeating conditions for vision for creatures like us who inhabit environments like ours, is something for which an account can be given. It is a fact that can be explained with appropriate empirical investigation.

The defeating conditions argument does not establish the truth of the CTP. So let us return to the project of attempting to provide a rationale for the CTP which will
show why the CTP should not be abandoned in favour of the RTP. The correct account of the role of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception should make explicit the role that the notion of causal dependence can play in our concept of perception that the notion of reliability cannot.

A New Rationale for the CTP

It has been suggested that it is part of our concept of perception that if a subject sees an object then the subject’s experience makes possible certain kinds of demonstrative thought about the object of experience. In elucidating the notion of what it is to directly perceive ("d-perceive") an object, Snowdon makes the following suggestion:

What we can d-perceive is what we can fix on as objects of demonstrative thoughts in virtue of our experiences.

... x d-perceives y iff x stands, in virtue of x's perceptual experience, in such a relation to y, that, if x could make demonstrative judgements, then it would be possible for x to make the true demonstrative judgement 'That is y' (Snowdon 1992, p. 56)

In a later paper, Snowdon suggests that,

If someone genuinely thinks that he or she can see M, then they must be prepared to agree that amongst the array of possible demonstrative judgments they could, then and there, make, there will be a true one expressible in the words 'That is M'. If they failed to acknowledge that as a consequence of what they thought, then they do not understand seeing. (Snowdon 1998, p. 298)
What account of perception must we give if successful perceptual experience is going to be such as to make possible certain kinds of demonstrative reference to the objects of perception? In order to answer this question we need to determine what is distinctive of the kind of demonstrative reference that we are talking about. We can then try to determine what perception must be like if it is going to make this kind of reference possible.

It seems to be a fairly common assumption that a subject cannot demonstratively refer to an object unless that object is causally related, in some appropriate way, to the subject's mental states. Davies, for instance, claims that,

if a person is totally causally isolated from the object, then he can have no singular beliefs concerning it. (Davies 1981, p. 97)

If this assumption can be shown to be correct, then we may be able to provide a rationale for the CTP: it is part of our concept of perception that when we perceive an object our experience makes possible demonstrative reference to that object, and a causal relation between object and experience is necessary if such demonstrative reference is to be possible.

We need to examine what lies behind the assumption that a causal relation between an object and a subject's mental states is necessary if the subject is to be able to
have the kind of demonstrative thoughts about the object that perception makes possible. If the CTP is going to be defended by making use of the idea that successful perception must be such as to make possible demonstrative reference to the object of perception, then the following account of what lies behind the assumption will be inadequate: in order for a subject to be able to have these kinds of demonstrative thoughts about objects in the world, the subject has to be perceiving them, and in order for the subject to be perceiving them, the subject's experience must be caused by them.

An argument that is supposed to show why we should accept the CTP cannot make use of the idea that a causal relation between object and experience is necessary if perception is going to make possible demonstrative thoughts about that object, if the explanation of why the causal relation is necessary for this kind of demonstrative thought assumes the truth of the CTP. Could there be something more to the assumption that a causal relation between object and experience is necessary if perceptually based demonstrative thought is to be possible, than simply the claim that such a causal relation is necessary for successful perception? In order to determine whether an argument can be made for accepting the CTP based on the idea that successful perception makes possible demonstrative reference to the objects of perception we need to determine what is distinctive of such demonstrative reference, and we need to determine whether a causal relation
between object and experience is necessary to make possible what is distinctive of such reference, and we need to do all of this without assuming the truth of the CTP. So what is distinctive of the kind of demonstrative reference under consideration? The suggestion that a subject can demonstratively refer to an object if he "can pick out by sight or hearing or touch, or otherwise sensibly discriminate that object" (Strawson 1959, p.18) is unhelpful in this context, because our question concerns how it is that such perceptual experiences make possible this kind of reference. As Evans says, "we need an explanation of exactly how it is that perceiving something makes a thought of a certain kind possible" (Evans 1982, p.143).

Strawson contrasts demonstrative identification of a particular with descriptive identification of a particular in a way that may be of help here. Strawson argues that if we could only make reference to the world by describing it in purely general terms, then we would not be able to specify which particular object in the universe we were referring to, for there can be no guarantee that the description applies uniquely:

There might be another particular, answering to the same description, in another sector of the universe. Even if one enlarges the description so that it incorporates a description of the salient features of the sector of the universe concerned, one still lacks a guarantee that the description individuates. For the other sector might reproduce these features too. (Strawson 1959, p. 20).
When we demonstratively refer to the world, "There can be no question as to which scene we are talking about" (ibid, p. 20). If any adequate theory of perception must be such as to allow that a successful perception can make possible such demonstrative reference to a particular, then there may be certain constraints on what that theory of perception would have to be like. If a successful perception is going to make possible demonstrative reference to the object of perception, then that perception must be such as to ensure that there is no question as to which object in the universe is being perceived. If a theory of perception can allow that it is not, in principle, possible to determine which particular object in the universe is being perceived, then that theory will not allow for the possibility of demonstrative reference to an object of perception, and will, therefore, be inadequate.

It might be suggested that a problem involved with abandoning the CTP in favour of the RTP is that under the RTP it may not be, in principle, possible to determine which particular object is being perceived. But why think that a causal relation between object and experience is necessary to determine which particular object is being perceived? Why not simply claim that the content of the subject's experience determines which particular object is being perceived? Why not claim that the particular objects being perceived by a subject just are those objects which make the content of the subject's experience veridical? Under this proposal the objects being perceived just are those objects which 'match' or 'fit' the content of the
subject's experience.

One might hold that a consideration of the Grice thought experiment shows that this claim cannot be right, for such thought experiments show that veridical hallucination is possible. If there can be objects which fully match the content of the subject's experience but which are not perceived, then the content of experience cannot, in itself, determine which particular objects are perceived. However, if we accept the RTP then we have an explanation of why the Grice example is not a case of successful perception. The subject fails to perceive because the subject's experience is not reliable. If the subject's experience is not reliable then the subject fails to perceive the world, and there are no objects of experience. Under the RTP, an experience must not only have a sufficient degree of veridicality to be a successful perception, the experience must also be reliable. The reliability of an experience is not something that can be determined simply by looking to the content of the experience. Since, under the RTP, an experience must be reliable if it is to be a successful perception, it cannot be the content of the experience alone that determines which particular the experience concerns. The RTP is consistent with Putnam's claim that "what goes on inside people's heads does not fix the reference of their terms" (Putnam 1981, p. 25). This is because what goes on in people's heads does not in itself determine whether their experiences are reliable. Under the RTP, a veridical experience will concern a
particular iff the experience is reliably produced. So why not say that when a subject's experience is reliably produced, the content of the subject's experience determines which particular objects are being perceived?

One might object to such a proposal for the following reason: if perceptual experience has a purely general descriptive content, then there can be nothing in the content itself that guarantees that the experience is an experience of one particular object in the universe. Strawson's comments show that with such a content one "lacks a guarantee that the description individuates". So if a successful perception is going to make possible demonstrative reference to the object of perception, then in a case of successful perception we need something other than the content of the experience to determine which particular is being perceived. A similar line of thought is outlined by McDowell:

The gist of the attack is that the materials available in the minds of subjects for constructing the envisaged specifications are insufficient to secure the right particular-directedness for their mental states... If we formulate a specification by making explicit, in general terms, how the visual experience represents the object as being... the result will often be too unspecific even to seem to stand a chance of individuating something: and even if the content of the experience is highly specific, a specification constructed by making that content explicit in purely general terms will fit the right object no better than it fits a Twin Earth Doppelganger. (McDowell 1991, p. 216).

Searle claims that,
If you think of Intentional Content solely on the model of Frege's conception of *Sinn*, then it looks like any number of possible objects could satisfy any *Sinn* and nothing in the Intentional Content could determine that it could only be satisfied by a *particular* object. (Searle 1983, p.64).

How can the non-causalist respond to this problem?

It might be suggested that the content of visual experience should reflect the fact that the objects of experience are located egocentrically (See Peacocke 1992, ch. 3). The egocentric origin and axes are "primitively grasped" (Campbell 1994, p. 12), and the egocentric origin and axes that a subject is grasping are those that the subject "immediately" uses in the direction of action (Campbell 1994, p. 14). Under this account, the content of my experience may be capable of individuating a particular, and the particular my experience individuates will be different from the particular that my twin's type-identical visual experience individuates, on Twin Earth. The objects that are located by the content of my visual experience are located relative to an egocentric frame of reference that is different from that of my twin.

This account allows that the reference of perceptually based demonstrative thought will be context sensitive. When my twin thinks 'That x is F' of the object he is perceiving, his thought will have different truth conditions to the thought I have
when I think 'That x is F' of the object I am perceiving. Which object in the world I refer to when I entertain a perceptually based demonstrative thought will depend on which object I am perceiving, and which object I perceive will be sensitive to the context of my perceptual experience (i.e. where I am, my orientation, and the way the world is when I perceive). Under the proposed account, my location and orientation are relevant to determining which objects my experience individuates.

However, this proposal faces difficulties in accounting for the possibility of non-veridical perception. Our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception. If we want a theory of perception that is consistent with our ordinary, common sense view of perception, then that theory must allow for the possibility of misperception. We want to say that there can be cases where there are objects of experience which fail to fully match the content of the subject's experience. The fact that our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception was highlighted by Austin in *Sense and Sensibilia* (p. 8-9). There Austin points out that when we come to realise that the object we take ourselves to be perceiving is not exactly as it seems to us to be we do not conclude that we cannot be perceiving that object. Consider, for example, the Mueller-Lyer illusion. The lines, which are in fact of equal length, appear to be of unequal lengths. When we realise that the lines are not as they appear to be, we do not conclude that we are not perceiving them. We want to say that there can be an object of experience
which does not have all of the properties that the content of experience represents it as having. As McGinn writes,

> a misrepresenting experiential content does not automatically prevent the misrepresented object from being the object perceived: you do not cease to see a thing just because your experience credits it with properties it does not objectively have.

(McGinn 1982, p. 50)

So we cannot claim that when a subject perceives the world it is simply the content of the subject's experience that determines which particular objects are being perceived. If we accept the RTP, then we can explain why having a veridical experience is not sufficient to perceive the world, for we can claim that if a subject is to perceive the world, the subject's experience must be reliably produced. But we cannot claim that when a subject does perceive the world, the particulars represented by the subject's experience just are those objects which fully match the content of the subject's experience. For our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception - a subject can perceive objects which do not fully match the content of his experience. If a subject's experience and an object, o, are joint effects of some common cause involving object o*, and the experience matches o, then the experience is a reliable, veridical experience. So, according to the RTP, the experience should be a perception. But what determines which particular object is being perceived by the subject? Is the subject perceiving o, or is
the subject misperceiving o*? The content of the subject's experience does not in itself determine which object the subject is perceiving. If, when a subject perceives the world, it is not simply the content of the subject's experience that determines which particular objects are being perceived, then what does determine which particular objects are being perceived? The causal theorist has an answer to this question: it is the causal relation between object and experience.

To summarise, the causal theorist might offer the following defence of the CTP. It is part of our concept of perception that when we perceive the world our experience makes possible demonstrative reference to objects of experience. If a successful perceptual experience is going to make possible demonstrative reference to objects of experience, then it must, in principle, be possible to determine which particular objects are being perceived. There must be some fact that determines which particular objects are being perceived. When a subject perceives the world it cannot simply be the content of the subject's experience that determines which particular object is being perceived, for our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception - we can perceive objects which fail to fully match the content of experience. So if one does not accept the CTP, then one allows that a subject can have an experience that is appropriate for perceiving an object, o, yet there be nothing to determine whether o is being perceived by the subject. For the experience may also be appropriate for perceiving (or misperceiving) a different
object, o*, instead. If o has to cause the subject’s experience in order for the subject to perceive o, then there is some fact that determines whether or not o is being perceived by the subject – i.e. the obtaining, or the failure to obtain, of the appropriate causal relation. If o does not have to cause the subject’s experience in order for the subject to perceive o, then there is nothing to determine whether or not the subject is perceiving o. For the fact that there is a causal relation between o and the subject’s experience, or the fact that there is no such causal relation, cannot be cited as the facts that determine whether or not o is being perceived by the subject. Since it is part of our concept of perception that when a subject perceives the world, there are particular objects in the world of which the subject is aware, we should accept the CTP. For if we reject the CTP, we allow that when a subject has a perceptual experience, there is nothing to determine which particulars are being perceived by the subject. Therefore, it must be the causal relation between object and experience that determines which particular object is being perceived. The causal relation between object and experience gives a successful perceptual experience its particularity.

We have here a new rationale for the CTP - an alternative explanation of the role of the notion of the causal dependence of experience on objects of experience in our concept of perception. Armed with this new rationale we should be able to see why the CTP should not be abandoned in favour of the RTP. We should be able to
see why an experience which is reliable but which is not causally dependent on the supposed object of experience is not really a case of genuine perception. An occasionalist subject's experience is reliable, but there is nothing to determine which particular objects the subject is perceiving. The content of the subject's experience cannot, in itself, determine which particular objects he is perceiving, because our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception. There is nothing to determine whether the subject is perceiving the objects which fully match the content of his experience, or whether the subject is, rather, misperceiving other objects which fail to fully match the content of his experience. Since there is no fact that determines which particular objects the subject is perceiving, the subject's experience lacks particularity. If the subject's experience lacks particularity, then it cannot be a genuine case of perception, for if the subject's experience lacks particularity, then it cannot make possible demonstrative reference to objects of experience. The causal theorist can claim that the subject of the Grice thought experiment does not perceive the objects before him because there is no fact that determines that it is those objects that the subject is perceiving. The subject's experience cannot be a case of genuine perception because the experience lacks particularity.

Summary

In this chapter I have argued that Strawson's rationale for the CTP is inadequate.
Strawson’s rationale seems to lend support to the RTP and not the CTP. Dummett’s objection shows that the two theories are distinct. Given that we are looking for an account of perception that preserves our common sense views, this raises the question as to why we should prefer an account of perception that involves an acceptance of the intentional theory of experience together with the CTP. Why shouldn’t we instead accept a theory of perception that involves an acceptance of the intentional theory of experience together with the RTP?

The new rationale for the CTP offered in this chapter appears to answer this question. The suggestion is that we need to accept the CTP and not the RTP if we are to accommodate two crucial aspects of our ordinary concept of perception. These are: (a) the fact that it is part of our concept of perception that successful perceptual experience involves an awareness of particulars, and (b) the fact that our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception.

In the next chapter I shall be considering these aspects of our ordinary concept of perception in more detail. In particular I shall be focusing on the issue of how these two aspects of our ordinary concept of perception should be accommodated by the intentional theory of experience.
CHAPTER FOUR

The Particularity of Perception

The defence of the CTP outlined in the last chapter relies on the assumption that it is part of our ordinary concept of perception that when a subject perceives the world there are particular items in the world of which the subject is aware. The subject's experience is an experience *of* particulars in the world. To this extent we may say that the assumption is that successful perceptual experiences have particularity. How should the particularity of a successful perceptual experience be accommodated by the intentional theory of experience? Should the particularity of a successful perceptual experience be reflected in the intentional content of the experience? Should the intentional content of a successful perceptual experience be specified by using terms that refer to the particulars of which the subject is perceptually aware? So far, the assumption that Grice's thought experiment involves an example of *veridical* hallucination has not been challenged. But should we accept the assumption that an experience can be veridical and yet lack particularity?

The notion of veridical hallucination and talk of objects 'matching' or 'fitting' the content of experience involve the implicit assumption that the content of experience is an existentially quantified one. The assumption is that the content of experience represents the existence of items (e.g., objects or surfaces) in the external world possessing certain properties. The
content of the experience is veridical just in case there exist items in the world which
possess all of the properties specified by the content. The items in the world that possess
all of the properties specified by the content of the experience are said to 'match' or 'fit' the
content of the experience. This assumption which, following McGinn I shall call the
'generality thesis', is the assumption that when a subject successfully perceives the world,
the content of experience is not to be specified by using terms that refer to the object of
experience. (McGinn 1982, p. 51)

The assumption is explicitly endorsed by McGinn and also Davies, who claims that the
content of experience is not "object-involving.... we can take perceptual content to be
existentially quantified content. A visual experience may present the world as containing
an object of a certain size and shape, in a certain direction, at a certain distance from the
subject" (Davies 1992, p. 26). Others who make use of the notion of veridical
hallucination and thereby implicitly endorse the assumption include Lewis, Millar and
Owens.¹

If the generality thesis is correct, then an experience can be veridical and yet lack
particularity, because the objects which match the content of experience are not
necessarily the objects of experience. The existentially quantified content of an experience
does not, in itself, determine which particular objects are being perceived, as the possibility
of misperception shows. If there is no appropriate causal relation between an object in the

¹ See Lewis 1980; Millar 1991, ch. 1; Owens 1992, ch. 7.
world and the subject's experience, then there is no fact of the matter that determines which particular objects are being perceived, and the experience lacks particularity. The absence of an appropriate causal relation does not prevent the existentially quantified content of the experience from being made veridical. So veridical hallucination is possible.

Searle's account of the content of experience is somewhat unusual. He endorses the generality thesis, insofar as under his account the content of experience is an existentially quantified one which is not to be specified by using terms that refer to the objects of experience, but his account does not allow for the possibility of veridical hallucination. According to Searle, if an experience is veridical then the experience has particularity. Under Searle's account of the content of experience, the experience of the subject in the Grice thought experiment is not veridical.

Searle's Account of the Content of Visual Experience

According to Searle the content of an experience can be specified by stating what he calls its "conditions of satisfaction". These are the conditions which must obtain if the experience is to be veridical. What is unusual about Searle's theory, is what he includes as part of the these conditions of satisfaction. Searle claims that,

The Intentional content of the visual experience requires as part of the conditions of satisfaction that the visual experience be caused by the rest of its conditions of satisfaction, that is, by the state of affairs perceived. (1983, p. 48)
what the Intentional content requires is not simply that there be a state of affairs in the world, but 
rather the state of affairs in the world must cause the very visual experience which is the 
embodiment or realization of the Intentional content" *(ibid p. 45)*

So Searle includes a causal and self-referential component within the content of every 
visual experience. Searle claims that,

If I see that the F is G then the representation is:

**Vis Exp** (that the F is G and the fact that the F is G is causing this visual experience). (Searle 
1991, p. 228)

When I see a flower, part of the content of the experience is that the experience is caused by the 
fact that there is a flower there. (Searle 1983, p. 123)

If Searle's account of the content of experience is correct, then the experience of the 
subject in the Grice thought experiment is not an example of veridical hallucination. The 
content of the subject's experience is not veridical because the clock before the subject is 
not causally responsible for his experience. The world is not as it appears to the subject to 
be, for it appears to the subject as if there is a clock which is causally responsible for his 
experience, and in reality there is not. Under Searle's account, if an experience is veridical, 
then there is an appropriate causal relation between an object in the world and the 
experience. There is some fact that determines which particular object is being perceived. 
So if an experience is veridical, the experience does not lack particularity.
It should be clear that if Searle's account of the content of experience is correct, it does not follow that we can analyze the concept of perception simply in terms of the notion of veridicality. As was pointed out in the last chapter, our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception. There are cases of illusion where the world is not exactly as it is represented as being, yet, nevertheless, the subject is successfully perceiving many of its objects and features. So we cannot analyze the concept of perception in the following way: an experience is a genuine perception iff it is totally veridical. But we cannot analyze the concept of perception in the following way either: an experience is a genuine perception iff it is partially veridical. For under Searle's account the experience of the subject in the Grice thought experiment is partially veridical, and we want to say that the subject does not perceive any objects in the world. The content of the subject's experience is partially veridical because that part of the content of the experience which represents the existence of a clock possessing certain properties, occupying a certain location, is veridical. However, it is a consequence of Searle's account that the question of whether the content of an experience is totally veridical cannot be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived.

There are a number of critics who are hostile to this idea of making the causal condition part of the content of visual experience. I shall return to these criticisms of Searle's account later. But for those who are unhappy with the idea of making the casual condition part of the content of
experience in the way that Searle suggests, there remains the following question: should we accept what I shall call 'Searle's Assumption' - that is the assumption that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether there is an object being perceived?

Millar claims that Searle is wrong to make the assumption and he suggests that it is Searle's implicit endorsement of the assumption that leads him to his unusual account of the content of experience. He writes,

A plausible suggestion about what leads Searle to his contrary position is that he fails to distinguish between veridical experience and perception... he seems to tacitly assume that [a subject's] experience will not be veridical unless he perceives [an object] before him. Indeed I am inclined to think that Searle actually equates having a veridical experience of an F with perceiving an F. (1991, p. 16)

Millar claims that,

There is no good reason to accept this assumption. (ibid, p. 16)

Burge is another philosopher who rejects Searle's claim that the content of visual experience represents a causal relation between an object and the experience, but he, on the other hand, claims that,

Searle seems to me entirely right and extremely insightful in his claim that the content of a visual experience is satisfied only if the experience is caused by entities of the sort represented as present by the experience.
He claims that,

It is not enough for the satisfaction of the intentional content that there be some entity in the vicinity that has the visible properties presented by the experience... The intentional content must somehow reflect the causal condition of its satisfaction. Searle emphasizes the point and is entirely right to do so. Many have failed to see the point at all, and many others have not seen it as clearly. (Burge 1991, p. 201-2)

Burge suggests that we can reject Searle's account of the content of experience and yet retain his insight by including a demonstrative element in the content of experience:

by including a demonstrative element in the content of experience we may reflect in the intentional content the condition that to be veridical the experience must be caused by an entity that is (say) F. An account of the semantic or intentional nature of the visual demonstrative should require that the demonstrative fails to apply to anything unless the experience is appropriately caused. (ibid, p. 202)

If one accepts Searle's assumption that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived, and one accepts the generality thesis, then one must also accept that the content of experience represents a causal relation between an object in the world and the experience itself. For if one accepts the generality thesis and one rejects Searle's claim that the content of experience represents such a causal relation, then one's account of the content of experience allows for the possibility of veridical hallucination, as the Grice thought experiment shows. If an account of the content of experience allows for the possibility of veridical hallucination, then that account
allows that the question of the veridicality of an experience can be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived. If the conditions which must obtain for an experience to be veridical do not include conditions which, when realised, entail that an object is perceived, then veridical hallucination is possible and Searle’s assumption is false.

Burge shows that by rejecting the generality thesis one can reject Searle’s claim that the content of experience represents a causal relation between object and experience, and still maintain that Searle is right to assume that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived. So if one has reason to accept Searle’s assumption that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived, and one also has reason to reject Searle’s claim that the content of experience represents a causal relation between object and experience, one will thereby have reason to reject the generality thesis.

But why assume that an experience cannot be veridical if no object is being perceived? Is Millar right to claim that "There is no good reason to accept this assumption"? Although Burge endorses the assumption, he does not provide a supporting argument for it. I now want to suggest that by looking to the case of misperception we can see that, contra Millar, there is a good reason to accept Searle’s assumption.
Defending Searle’s Assumption

When a subject, S, perceives an object, o, we want to say that o seems / looks / appears to be (some way) F to S. This assumption has been endorsed by a number of philosophers:

If I see something it looks somehow to me. (Shoemaker 1975, p. 299)

I am quite willing to admit that, in a certain sense, D must look some way to S (not to be read as must look like something to S) in order for S to see D. (Dretske 1969, p. 9)

The content of the experience is a matter of how things seem to you, while the perceptual object is the actual external thing that seems that way. (McGinn 1982, p. 50)

The use of the term ‘looks’ (‘appears’ / ‘seems’) is the phenomenal use of the term, distinguished by Jackson from the epistemological and comparative uses of the term. The examples Jackson gives of the phenomenal uses of the term are like those mentioned in the quotes above:

‘It looks blue to me’, ‘It looks triangular’, ‘The top line looks longer than the bottom line’. (Jackson 1977, p.32)

The claim that, whenever S sees an object, o, then o (phenomenally) looks to be some way, F, to S, might be challenged on the grounds that instances of blind sight provide a counterexample to it. This particular challenge need not concern us here, for we need only note that in most usual, non-blind sight cases, the claim that the object perceived (phenomenally) seems to be some way F to S, holds.
In cases of misperception which are not like the blind sight cases, when S misperceives o, then o (phenomenally) seems to be some way to S. The misperceived object does not have all of the properties that it (phenomenally) seems to the subject to have. So when a subject misperceives o, the following two claims can both be true: (a) o (phenomenally) seems F to S, and (b) o is not F. If o (phenomenally) seems F to S, then o is represented as being F. If an experience is a perception, then that experience has particularity. There is some fact that determines which particular object is represented by the subject’s experience. When a subject misperceives the world, then there is also some fact that determines which particular object is represented by the subject’s experience, but the particular represented by the subject’s experience is not as it is represented to be – e.g. the particular object represented by the subject’s experience seems to be F – it is represented as being F – but it is not F.

According to the intentional theory of experience, the content of a subject’s experience represents his environment as being a certain way. If the content of the subject’s experience is veridical, then his environment really is as it is represented to be, and if the content of the subject’s experience is non-veridical, then the subject’s environment is different from the way that it is represented to be. To assess the veridicality of a subject’s experience is to assess whether his environment really is as it is represented to be. We should accept that if some part of the environment is different from the way that it is represented to be, then there is a non-veridical representation of the environment, just as we should accept that if some part of the
environment is different from the way that it is believed to be, then there is a false belief about the environment.

When a subject misperceives an object, that object is different from the way that it (phenomenally) seems to the subject to be. The object represented by the subject’s experience is different from the way that it is represented to be. Given that the relevant object of experience is part of the external world – part of the subject’s environment - we should say that when a subject misperceives an object, then some part of the subject’s environment is different from the way that it is represented to be. Remember that the content of the subject’s experience determines how the subject’s environment is represented to be, and when we are assessing the veridicality of an experience we are assessing whether the subject’s environment really is as it is represented to be. So if we want to say that in all cases of misperception some part of the subject’s environment is different from the way that it is represented by the subject’s experience to be, then we should say that in all cases of misperception the content of the subject’s experience is non-veridical. For we should accept that if some part of the environment is different from the way that it is represented to be, then there is a non-veridical representation of the environment, just as we accept that if some part of the environment is different from the way it is believed to be, then there is a false belief about the environment. However, if we allow that the question of the veridicality of a subject’s experience can be settled independently of the question of whether there is an object being perceived, we thereby allow that the question of
the veridicality of an experience can be settled independently of the question of which particular object is being perceived. And if we allow that the question of the veridicality of an experience can be settled independently of the question of which object is being perceived, we thereby allow for the possibility of veridical misperception.

If we allow that the question of the veridicality of an experience can be settled independently of the question of whether or not there is an object of experience, then we thereby allow for the possibility of veridical perception, non-veridical perception, veridical hallucination, and non-veridical hallucination. As the following table illustrates, we can classify an experience by asking the following two questions of it: 'is the experience veridical?', and 'is there an object of experience?'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object of experience?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience veridical?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Veridical Perception</td>
<td>Veridical Hallucination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Non-veridical Perception</td>
<td>Non-veridical Hallucination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cases of successful perception and cases of misperception both involve experiences which have particularity (i.e. they both have objects), but we want to say that the difference between them is that in the former kind of case the subject's experience is veridical, and in
the latter kind of case the subject's experience is non-veridical. So that all cases of successful perception should fall into the box in the top left-hand corner of the table, and all cases of misperception should fall into the box in the bottom left-hand corner of the table. But if one rejects the assumption that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether there is an object being perceived then this cannot be right. For if one rejects the assumption one leaves open the possibility that there could be cases where the subject misperceives an object but where the subject's experience is veridical. One leaves open the possibility of veridical misperception. So if one rejects the assumption that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether there is an object being perceived, the box in the top left-hand corner of the table should more accurately read 'veridical perception or veridical misperception'.

The possibility of veridical misperception can be illustrated by the following kind of example. A subject may misperceive the location of an object - say the subject is wearing displacing glasses. The content of the subject's experience is such that it (phenomenally) seems to him as if there is a red, round object before him. The object which the subject is perceiving - the object which is causally responsible for the subject's experience - is in fact to the subject's left. In such a case we would say that the subject is misperceiving the object of experience. The object being

\[ \text{Discussions with Mike Martin helped me to realise that this kind of example of veridical misperception would be possible under certain accounts of the content of experience.} \]
perceived is different from the way that it seems to the subject to be, and the subject's experience is non-veridical.

However, without touching the object of experience, and without interfering with the causal dependence of the subject's experience on the object of experience, we could arrange things in such a way that the subject's experience becomes veridical. We could place a red, round object in front of the subject which exactly matches that aspect of the content of the experience for which the object of experience is causally responsible. The introduction of the new object onto the scene before the subject may make it now seem to the subject as if there is another red, round object to his right. This aspect of the content of the subject's experience can also be matched by introducing a further red, round object onto the scene to the right of the subject. So the subject will be misperceiving two red, round objects but the content of the subject's experience will be completely veridical.

If we want to maintain that in all cases of misperception the content of the subject's experience is non-veridical, then we should not allow that the question of the veridicality of an experience can be settled independently of the question of whether there is an object being perceived. We need to determine which particular objects in the subject's environment are being perceived if we are to determine whether the subject's environment really is as it seems to him to be. We need to determine which particular objects in the subject's environment are represented by his
experience if we are to determine whether the subject's environment really is as it is represented to be. So we need to determine which particulars are being perceived if we are to determine the veridicality of the subject's experience. Contra Millar, we do have reason to accept the assumption that the question of the veridicality of a subject's experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether there is an object being perceived by the subject.

Recall that to make the generality thesis compatible with Searle's assumption, we would have to adopt Searle's account of the content of experience – i.e. we would have to claim that the content of experience represents a causal relation between object and experience. Under Searle's account, the case we have been considering would not be an example of veridical misperception. The subject's experience is not veridical, for the object that is supposedly 'matching' the content of the experience and thereby making the content veridical, is not an object that is causally responsible for the subject's experience. So, given that we do have reason to accept Searle's assumption, the following options are open to us: (a) reject the generality thesis, or (b) hold on to the generality thesis and accept Searle's account of the content of experience. If we have reason to reject Searle's claim that the content of experience represents a causal relation between object and experience, then we will thereby have reason to reject the generality thesis.
Rejecting the Generality Thesis

Critics of Searle's account of the content of experience include Armstrong, Burge, McDowell, Millar and McCulloch. A common complaint is that Searle's account is implausible and unmotivated. When we have a visual experience it just does not seem to us as if we are aware of a causal relation between the apparent object of experience and our experience. Searle's account mischaracterises the phenomenology of experience. The complexity involved in Searle's account of the content of experience is unmotivated for we can adequately capture the phenomenology of experience and explain our mental abilities by postulating a content that does not have the causal component and the self-referential component that Searle suggests. Note that the argument that I have outlined for the claim that we do have reason to accept Searle's assumption does not suffice to motivate Searle's account of the content of experience. For, as Burge shows, one can hold Searle's assumption and yet reject Searle's account of the content of experience.

Searle replies to the charge that his account of the content of experience is too complex by saying that,

I am not saying that the perceiver has any consciousness of these conditions at all... In the theory of Intentionality we are uncovering complexities in the actual content which may be unavailable to the agent. He may, in fact, be unconscious of the actual complexities of his own Intentional phenomena. (1991, p. 228)

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The agent himself need have no “knowledge of the causal relation.” The causal feature is simply a feature of the unreflexive visual experience. (ibid, p. 234,)

In his most recent defence of his position, Searle gives an example of tactual perception in order to show that there is nothing so unusual about the idea of an experience of a causal relation in which the experience itself is one of the causal relata. Searle writes,

Suppose that I feel a sharp object pressing into my back. Suppose I can’t see it, but I can feel it.... What exactly is the perceptual character of my experience and what exactly is its intentional content?... Here it seems pretty clear that the "mode of presentation" is such that there is a sharp object pressing into my back and the fact that there is a sharp object pressing into my back is causing me to have this very sensation. I feel the object as causing me to have this sensation. But now what the example shows is that it is at least possible that there can be a causally self-referential mode of presentation contained in the content of the perceptual experience. Notice that in this case we did not feel that we were ascribing any special sophistication to the agent...

Notice, furthermore, that we do not have any hesitation here about supposing that one can have these sorts of feelings without being able to theorise about them. A small child or an animal could have sensations with exactly these features. (ibid, p. 236).

It might be thought that the charge that Searle’s account is over-complex would only be successful if we accept the principle that the experiential content that we ascribe to a subject should be limited to the concepts that the subject possesses. So if we have reason to reject this principle and accept that experience can have a non-conceptual content, we could abandon this
line of objection. However, even if we accept that experience can have a non-conceptual content we still need to maintain that the content that we ascribe to a subject should serve some explanatory purpose. Take, for example, the argument for the claim that experience can have a non-conceptual content, that is based on the thought that we need to attribute experiential contents to non-concept-possessing subjects like infants and animals. The thought is that we need to attribute experiential contents to these subjects in order to explain their abilities and yet, as subjects who do not possess a language and who do not think about their own mental states, they are not concept-possessors. So in specifying the contents of their experiences we should not be restricted to using concepts that they possess. Even if we accept this argument, and so accept that such subjects have experiences with non-conceptual contents, we should still maintain that the contents that we ascribe to the subjects should not involve a complexity that is superfluous in explaining the abilities they appear to possess.

The claim that the content of experience must be richer and more fine-grained than one that can be captured by using concepts that the subject possesses has also been supported by the claim that a subject’s visual experience enables him to discriminate particular shapes and shades of colour that he does not have concepts for. Here it is the subject’s discriminatory abilities that are appealed to in order to motivate the claim that experience has a non-conceptual content. So

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4 For the idea that experience has a non-conceptual content see Dretske 1981, ch. 6; Evans 1982, ch. 5; Peacocke 1992, ch. 3. For an objection to the claim that experience has a non-conceptual content see McDowell 1994, ch. 3 and appendix 3.
the ascription to the subject of such a non-conceptual content is not explanatorily redundant. If we are to accept Searle’s account we need to be given reason to believe that the ascription of the causal condition as part of the content of the subject’s experience is serving some explanatory purpose. Appealing to the fact that the ascription of such a content avoids the problem of veridical misperception does not suffice to motivate Searle’s account, for Burge’s account of the content of experience also avoids the problem of veridical misperception. The ascription to a subject of the more complex content that Searle suggests should be motivated by an appeal to the phenomenology of experience or the subject’s discriminatory abilities.

In the example of tactual perception that Searle gives, he is appealing to the phenomenology of the experience in order to persuade us that there is a causal component in the content of the experience. The appeal to the phenomenology of the experience is a legitimate consideration when we come to give an account of the content of the experience. But obviously an appeal to the phenomenology of a tactual perception will not provide us with grounds for ascribing a particular content to the subject’s visual experience. One can accept that a causal, self-referential component can be part of the content of a subject’s experience even if the subject does not possess causal, self-referential concepts, and one may also accept that the example of tactual perception that Searle gives is a case where the causal, self-referential component is part of the content of the subject’s experience. However, one will still not have reason to hold that the causal, self-referential component is part of the content of visual experience if the ascription
of such a content to a subject serves no explanatory purpose. What aspect of the
phenomenology of visual experience is left unexplained if one does not include the causal
component in the content of visual experience? What discriminatory abilities are left
unexplained if one does not include the causal component in the content of visual experience?
Unless we have answers to these questions we will not have reason to accept Searle’s account
of the content of experience.

If we can adequately capture the phenomenology of experience and explain our mental abilities
without including the causal ingredient in the content of experience, then we should reject
Searle’s account of the content of experience. However, we have seen that we do have reason
to accept Searle’s assumption that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be
settled independently of the question of whether there is an object being perceived, and if we
accept Searle’s assumption and also accept the generality thesis then we will have to accept
Searle’s account of the content of experience. Therefore we should reject the generality thesis.
We should reject the assumption that when a subject perceives the world, the content of
experience is not to be specified by using terms that refer to the object of experience.

The strategy of the argument against the generality thesis can be summarised in the following
way: I have attempted to argue that,

(i) Those who accept an intentional account of experience should say that when a subject
misperceives the world, the subject is having an experience with an intentional content that is non-veridical.

(ii) If one rejects Searle’s assumption that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived, one allows for the possibility of veridical misperception.

(iii) Therefore, given (i) and (ii), the intentionalist should accept Searle’s assumption.

(iv) If one accepts Searle’s assumption and one also accepts the generality thesis, then one will have to accept Searle’s account of the content of experience – i.e. one will have to accept that the experience represents a causal relation between an object and the experience itself.

(v) Searle’s account of the content of experience should be rejected.

(vi) Therefore, the intentionalist should reject the generality thesis.

Contra McGinn and Davies, the content of the experience a subject has when he perceives the world should be specified by using terms that refer to the objects of experience. By including a demonstrative element in the content of experience in the way that Burge suggests, we can claim that when a subject perceives an object the demonstrative element in the content of the subject’s experience applies to the object of experience. So in any putative example of ‘veridical misperception’ we should specify the content of the subject’s experience by using a term that refers to the object of experience. The content of the experience is of the form ‘That F is G’, where the demonstrative applies to the object perceived. To determine the veridicality of the
content of the subject's experience we have to determine how things are with the object to which the demonstrative element applies - the object of experience. The subject's experience will be non-veridical if the object to which the demonstrative applies does not have all of the properties that it is represented as having. So by including a demonstrative element in the content of experience we rule out the possibility of veridical misperception, for if the object of experience is different from the way that it seems to the subject to be, then the experience is non-veridical. Are there any problems involved in including a demonstrative element in the content of experience?

If the content of an experience contains a demonstrative element, then when a subject perceives the world, the truth-evaluable content of the subject's experience is object-involving. When a subject perceives an object, the veridicality of the subject's experience is dependent on how things are with the object being perceived. The condition required for the content of the subject's experience to be veridical involves the particular object being perceived. If the subject were perceiving a different object, then the truth-evaluable content of the subject's experience would not be the same, for the veridicality of the subject's experience would be dependent on how things were with a different particular object. The condition required for the content of the subject's experience to be veridical would involve a different object.

Both Davies and McGinn have raised an objection to the idea that the truth-evaluable content
of an experience is object-involving. Davies writes,

...in the case of perceptual content, it is plausible that if two objects are genuinely indistinguishable for a subject, then a perceptual experience of the one has the same content as a perceptual experience of the other. The source of this plausibility is in the thought that perceptual content is a phenomenal notion: perceptual content is a matter of how the world seems to the experiencer. If perceptual content is, in this sense, 'phenomenal content' then, where there is no phenomenological difference for a subject, then there is no difference in perceptual content.

(1992, p. 26)

The idea here might be expressed as follows: If two objects are genuinely indistinguishable for a subject, then those two objects (phenomenally) seem the same to the subject. If the two objects (phenomenally) seem the same to the subject, then the content of the experience the subject has when he perceives the one object must be the same as the content of the experience the subject has when he perceives the other object, for the content of the subject's experience is a matter of how things (phenomenally) seem to the subject to be. If the contents of the two experiences are different then the way things (phenomenally) seem to the subject to be is different, and if the way things (phenomenally) seem to the subject to be is different then the two objects do not (phenomenally) seem to the subject to be the same.

In a similar vein, McGinn claims that,

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5 For a rebuttal of this objection on which my response is based, see Martin 1997, p. 91-9.
The content of experience is not to be specified by using any terms that refer to the object of experience on pain of denying that distinct objects can seem precisely the same. (1982, p. 51)

However, the claim that two objects can be indistinguishable for a subject should not be a problem for those who claim that the truth-evaluable content of experience is object-involving. When we say, in this context, that two objects are indistinguishable for the subject, we mean that they are qualitatively indistinguishable - all the properties that the one object seems to have are properties that the other object seems to have. So why can't we just say that when a subject perceives two objects on separate occasions, the subject's two experiences can have contents that refer to distinct objects but which also represent those objects as having exactly the same properties. The fact that the subject cannot distinguish the objects by the properties they (phenomenally) seem to possess can be reflected in the contents of the two experiences, because both experiences can have contents which represent the objects of experience as having exactly the same properties.

We can accept that when there is no difference in what (phenomenally) seems to the subject to be the case, there is no difference in the content of experience. But from the claim that two objects seem to the subject to have all the same properties, it does not follow that what (phenomenally) seems to the subject to be the case when he perceives the one object is the same as what (phenomenally) seems to the subject to be the case when he perceives the other object. When the subject perceives the first object it seems to him as if 'That object 1' has properties F,G,H, and when the subject perceives the second object it seems to him as if
That object [i.e. object 2] has properties F,G,H'. So there is a difference in what seems to the subject to be the case when he perceives the two objects, but this is compatible with the claim that the properties the objects seem to have are the same, and so compatible with the claim that the subject cannot recognize that the objects are distinct on the basis of his experience alone. The contents of the two experiences are of the same type, in that both experiences demonstratively present an object possessing properties F,G,H, but the experiences have different particular truth-evaluable contents.

Summary

The claim that the truth-evaluable content of experience does not in itself determine which particular objects are being perceived is motivated by an appeal to our intuitions concerning our ordinary concept of perception. It is suggested that our ordinary concept of perception allows for the possibility of both non-veridical perception and veridical hallucination. An assumption that seems to have been made is that those who think that the question of the veridicality of an experience cannot be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived must think that there is something inherently wrong with the notion of veridical hallucination. Pointing out that the notion of the casual dependence of experience on objects of experience is part of our concept of perception is supposed to show why our concept of perception does allow for the

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6 This assumption is implicit in Millar 1991, p. 16-17.
possibility of veridical hallucination.

However, the problem is that if one allows that veridical hallucination is possible, one also allows that veridical misperception is possible. If intentionalists are to offer an account of experience that best fits with our ordinary concept of perception, then they should say that whenever a subject misperceives an object, the subject's experience is non-veridical. This is why I argue that if they are to offer an account of experience that best fits with our ordinary concept of perception, the intentionalists should reject the generality thesis. For if they want to rule out the possibility of veridical misperception and yet still hold on to the generality thesis, they will have to adopt Searle's implausible account of the content of experience. If intentionalists are to pay careful attention to our intuitions concerning our ordinary concept of perception, they should not claim that the truth-evaluable content of experience does not in itself determine which particular objects are being perceived. Rather, they should more accurately claim that which particular objects are being perceived determines (in part) the truth-evaluable content of experience. How does this conclusion affect the status of the claim that the theory of perception that involves an acceptance of the intentional theory of experience together with the CTP is consistent with our common sense view of perception?

The defence of the CTP outlined in the last chapter involved the claim that the truth-
evaluable content of an experience does not, in itself, determine which particular objects
the subject is perceiving. This claim rests on the assumption that the generality thesis is
correct. So a concern that needs to be addressed is whether a rejection of the generality
thesis undermines the CTP. There is also a further concern that needs to be addressed.
Recall that the intentional theory of experience purports to offer a positive account of the
kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates. In chapter one I suggested that
Robinson's causal argument shows that this commits the intentional theorist to the
common element thesis – i.e. the thesis that the experience a subject has when he
perceives the world is one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. Does the
intentional theorist have to accept the generality thesis if he is to hold on to the common
element thesis? Does a rejection of the generality thesis commit one to a rejection of the
common element thesis? If a rejection of the generality thesis commits one to a rejection
of the common element thesis, then the intentional theorist may, after all, have to accept
the generality thesis. However, in this chapter I have argued that we should reject the
generality thesis if we want to offer an account of experience that best fits with our
ordinary, common sense view of perception. If the intentional theorist has to accept the
generality thesis, then the intentional theory of experience may not, after all, be one that
fits neatly with our ordinary, common sense view of perception.

These are concerns that I shall be addressing later on. But before I do so, I want to return
to the epistemological issues raised by Strawson’s rationale for the CTP. Recall that Strawson’s rationale for the CTP rests on the claim that the concepts of perception and knowledge are “closely linked”. In this chapter I have argued that the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary common sense view of perception involves a rejection of the generality thesis. Can this fact be used to help throw new light on the link between the concepts of perception and knowledge that Strawson alludes to? Is the rejection of the generality thesis epistemologically significant? I shall start to explore these epistemological issues in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

Perception and Knowledge

In chapter two I outlined Strawson’s rationale for the CTP. Strawson’s rationale is an attempt to elucidate the role of the notion of the causal dependence of experience on objects of experience in our ordinary concept of perception. This rationale was rejected. A new rationale for the CTP was offered based on the thought that it is part of our ordinary concept of perception that successful perceptual experiences have particularity – i.e. successful perceptual experiences involve an awareness of objects and features in the world. Further consideration of the particularity of perception in the last chapter led to the conclusion that those who hold an intentional account of experience should hold that the content of experience is particular. I argued that the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary common sense view of perception involves a rejection of the claim that the content of experience is general. With this conclusion in mind, I now want to re-consider a claim that Strawson makes in his rationale for the CTP. Strawson notes that the concept of perception and the concept of knowledge are closely linked. The argument offered for rejecting Strawson’s rationale did not depend on a rejection of this claim. There does seem to be an important link between the concepts of perception and knowledge. Does the fact that we now have a clearer view of the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary concept of
perception enable us to appreciate more fully the nature of the link between the
two concepts?

Recall that in chapter two the suggestion was that the experience one has when
one perceives the world can put one in a position to gain non-inferential
knowledge about the world. Our intuition is that a non-inferential, world-directed
belief based on a perception can be an instance of knowledge, whereas a non-
inferential, world-directed belief based on a complete hallucination cannot be an
instance of knowledge. The experience one has when one perceives the world can
contribute to the epistemic status of non-inferential, world-directed belief in a way
that a hallucinatory experience cannot. If a subject is to acquire world-directed
knowledge on the basis of a hallucinatory experience, then that knowledge has to
be inferred from beliefs about the experience and beliefs about the way in which
the experience was produced. A belief need not be so inferred in order to be
knowledge if it is based on a successful perceptual experience.

Strawson's suggestion seems to be that the epistemological difference between a
non-inferential, world-directed belief based on a perception and a non-inferential,
world-directed belief based on a hallucination, is due to a difference in the
reliability of the experiences involved. A successful perceptual experience is
reliable / "dependable", and a hallucinatory experience is unreliable /
"undependable". That is to say, a successful perceptual experience is produced in
way that will normally yield true beliefs about the world, and a hallucinatory experience is produced in a way that will not normally yield true beliefs about the world. A non-inferential, world-directed belief that is based on a hallucinatory experience will be a belief that is based on an unreliable experience. Even if such a belief is true, then, according to Strawson, it will be a belief that is flukishly or coincidentally right about the way the world is, and a belief that is flukishly or coincidentally right about the way the world is cannot be an instance of knowledge.

There is a problem with this suggestion if one allows that the content of experience is purely general. In chapter three it was argued that if one accepts that the content of experience is purely general, then one cannot accept Strawson's claim that "the assumption of the general reliability of our perceptual experiences" is the same as "the assumption of the general causal dependence of our perceptual experiences on the independently existing items we take them to be of". One will have to accept that an experience can be reliable without being caused by the object it is of. If one is to maintain that in order for a subject to perceive an object the subject's experience must be appropriately caused by that object, then one will have to allow that an experience can be reliable without being a genuine perception. One will have to allow that a veridical hallucination can, in certain circumstances, be reliable. So one will not be able to maintain that the epistemological difference between a non-inferential, world-directed belief based on a perception and a non-
inferential, world-directed belief based on a hallucination can always be simply due
to the difference in the reliability of the experiences involved. Can the account of
experience that involves a rejection of the generality thesis be used to throw any
new light on the link between the concepts of perception and knowledge? Can it be
used to offer a better explanation of the epistemological difference between world-
directed beliefs based on perceptions, and world-directed beliefs based on
hallucinations? I shall be arguing that it can.

I have argued that one needs to reject the generality thesis if one is to adequately
accommodate, what I have been calling, the particularity of perception – i.e. the
fact that a successful perceptual experience involves an awareness of objects in the
world and their features. As part of an attempt to determine whether the rejection
of the generality thesis is epistemologically significant, I now want to focus on the
following question: is the particularity of perception epistemologically significant?
If the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant, then we can
consider whether an account of experience that involves an acceptance of the
generality thesis can adequately accommodate the epistemological significance of
the particularity of perception. If we can establish that the particularity of
perception is epistemologically significant, and we can also establish that one needs
to reject the generality thesis if one is to adequately accommodate the
epistemological significance of the particularity of perception, then we can thereby
establish that a rejection of the generality thesis is epistemologically significant. We
can establish that the account of experience that I have argued fits best with our ordinary concept of perception can be used to throw new light on the link between the concepts of perception and knowledge.

The Epistemological Significance of the Particularity of Perception

There are two main issues that need to be addressed if we are to determine whether the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant:

(1) Is the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion relevant to the justificatory status of the subject’s beliefs about the world on that occasion? If so, in what way?

(2) Is the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion relevant to the status of the subject’s beliefs about the world as knowledge on that occasion? If so, in what way?

In this chapter I shall be concentrating on the first issue. I shall go on to consider the second issue in the next chapter.

Should we accept the following claim: (A) the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the justificatory status of the subject’s beliefs about the world on that occasion? Some philosophers have suggested that to accept this claim is to fall prey to the myth of the given. It is to be attracted by the following kind of picture: in being aware of objects and features in the world one possesses evidence for beliefs about the
world, for in being so aware, one can compare and match one’s beliefs with the reality with which one is confronted.

Certain critics of this kind of picture have argued that in simply being aware of objects in the world one does not possess evidence for beliefs about the world. They argue that one’s evidence for beliefs about the world consists, rather, in the perceptual judgements one makes about the objects of which one is aware. These critics hold a doxastic theory of justification. They deny that experiences can justify beliefs. They hold that only beliefs can justify other beliefs. Davidson is an example of such a critic. He writes,

There is no clear meaning to the notion of comparing our beliefs with reality... This is not, of course, to deny that there is an ordinary sense in which we perform experiments and note the results, and discover in our everyday pursuits that some of our beliefs are true and others false. What should be denied is that these mundane events are to be analysed as involving evidence which is not propositional in character – evidence which is not some sort of belief. (Davidson 1986b, p. 324)

I now want to look at the arguments that are used to support a doxastic theory of justification, in order to determine whether these arguments show that (A) should be rejected.

Doxastic Theories of Justification

Why accept Davidson’s claim that “nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief” (Davidson 1986a, p. 310)? We need to determine
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what lies behind the claim that evidence must be propositional in character, and what lies behind the claim that a subject's evidence must be a proposition that the subject accepts.

Williamson clearly articulates the reasoning behind the claim that evidence must be propositional in character. In order to support the claim, Williamson singles out theoretical functions that are central to the concept of evidence, and asks what serves them. Williamson argues that,

When evidence does enable us to answer a question, a central way for it to do so is by inference to its best explanation. Thus evidence is the kind of thing which hypotheses explain. But the kind of thing which hypotheses explain is propositional. Therefore, evidence is propositional.

...inference to the best explanation concerns why-explanations, which can only be put in the form "... because...", which is ungrammatical unless a declarative sentence, complements for "that", replace the blanks. (Williamson 1997, p 725)

Williamson argues that it cannot be particular objects that hypotheses explain.

We cannot explain Albania, for "Albania because..." is ill-formed.

..Even in court, the bloodied knife provides evidence because the prosecution and defence offer competing hypotheses as to why it was bloodied, or how it came to be in

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1 Williamson goes on to argue for the claim that the only propositions that are a subject's evidence are those that the subject knows. This claim is not accepted by all doxastic theorists. The significance of this point will be considered later on. However, many of the considerations that Williamson appeals to simply rely on the idea that a subject's evidence must be propositional and accessible to the subject. These considerations are ones that can be used by all doxastic theorists.
the accused's possession; the evidential proposition is *that* it was bloodied, or *that* it was in the accused's possession. (*ibid*, p. 726)

This echoes a point that Davidson makes in his discussion of whether an object – a black raven in his example – can be evidence for a law – the law that all ravens are black:

- Perhaps it is not strange to call a black raven – some actual bird – an instance of a law, but it does seem odd to say that the bird is *evidence* for the law. At best this seems to be shorthand for saying it is the *fact* that this bird is a black raven that constitutes the evidence; or we could speak of the truth of the proposition, or some appropriate sentence. (Davidson 1986b, p. 323)

Williamson goes on to argue that a subject's evidence for his beliefs must not only be propositional, it must consist in propositions that the subject grasps:

- One can use a hypothesis to explain why... only if one grasps the proposition that... .
- Thus only propositions one grasps can function as evidence in one's inferences to the best explanation. By this standard only propositions one grasps can count as part of one's evidence. (1997, p. 726)

The claim that one's evidence must consist in propositions one grasps needs some further elucidation. If one imagines or supposes that *p*, then it may be said that one 'grasps' the proposition that *p*. But just because one grasps the proposition that *p* in this loose sense, it does not follow that the proposition that *p* is part of one's evidence. The propositions that one uses a hypothesis to explain are those propositions that one holds true – those propositions one accepts. So we can add that the propositions that one grasps, in the loose sense, will only function as
evidence in one’s inferences to the best explanation if they are propositions one accepts. Compare Davidson’s comments on “what it means for someone to have a reason to accept [a] law, to possess evidence”:

Neither the existence of the black raven nor the truth of the proposition or sentence that says that there is a black raven itself gives anyone a reason to believe that there is a black raven, much less a reason to believe all ravens are black. For someone to have a reason to believe all ravens are black, it is necessary for him to believe, for example, that here is a black raven. (Davidson 1986b, p.323)

Williamson provides further support for the claim that one’s evidence must consist in propositions one grasps:

Our evidence sometimes rules out some hypotheses by being inconsistent with them. If evidence $e$ is inconsistent with hypothesis $h$ ... it must be possible to deduce $\neg h$ from $e$. The premises of a deduction are propositions. Moreover, the subject who deduces $\neg h$ from $e$ must grasp $e$. (Williamson 1997, p. 727)

Again, we can add that the propositions that rule out a hypothesis for a subject can only be the propositions that the subject grasps, and accepts. The subject who deduces $\neg h$ from $e$ must grasp $e$, and he must also accept that $e$. The inconsistency of a proposition $e$ with a hypothesis $h$ will only rule out hypothesis $h$ for a subject if the proposition $e$ is one that the subject accepts.

Williamson sums up his argument for the claim that a subject’s evidence for beliefs can only consist in propositions that the subject grasps:
Suppose we are choosing between hypotheses according to which best explains our evidence, or is most probable on our evidence, or is not ruled out by the evidence. The argument so far claims that non-propositional evidence would be irrelevant to our choice. Moreover, in choosing between hypotheses in these ways, we can only use propositions we grasp. In this respect, any evidence other that propositions we grasp would be irrelevant. (ibid, p. 727)

We can add that any evidence other than propositions we accept would be irrelevant. We can only use propositions we grasp, we should only use propositions we accept.

Evidence may well have central features additional to those considered above; the point is that genuine evidence would make a difference to the serving of the functions considered above, whatever else it makes a difference to. Since only propositions we grasp can make a difference of the requisite kind, only propositions we grasp are our evidence. (ibid, p. 727-8)

Again, we can add that since only propositions we accept can make a difference of the requisite kind, only propositions we accept are our evidence.

Here we have a clear argument in support of Davidson’s claim that, “nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief”. There is a positive as well as a negative aspect to this claim, and we are now in a position to appreciate both. Evidence must be propositional in character, and the propositions that are a subject’s evidence consist in only propositions the subject accepts. In simply being aware of an object in the world one does not thereby possess evidence for beliefs about the world. One’s evidence can only consist in propositions one accepts, and
to simply be aware of an object is not to accept a proposition about that object. If one accepts that it is only one’s evidence, in Williamson’s sense of the term, that contributes to the justificatory status of one’s beliefs, one will accept a doxastic theory of justification.

Do the arguments in support of a doxastic theory, outlined above, show that (A) is false? Do they show that the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion is not relevant to the justificatory status of the subject’s beliefs about the world on that occasion? There are two ways in which one might deny that they do. One might argue that the arguments outlined above do not actually succeed in establishing that a doxastic theory of justification is correct, or one might claim that although the arguments show that a doxastic theory is correct, they do not, in themselves, show that (A) is false. I now want to briefly comment on the second strategy.

Consider the theorist who accepts that one’s evidence can only consist in propositions one accepts, and who holds that it is only one’s evidence that is relevant to the justificatory status of one’s beliefs. It might be thought that such a theorist will only hold that the question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the justificatory status of one’s beliefs on that occasion, if he also holds that the question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to determining what beliefs
one holds (and not simply whether those beliefs are true).\(^2\) However, such a theorist might also hold that the question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to determining the justificatory status of one’s beliefs on that occasion if he also holds a further claim that Williamson argues for. This is the claim that one’s evidence can only consist in propositions one knows.

Williamson argues that the propositions that are a subject’s evidence must not only be believed by the subject, they must also be known by the subject. In arguing for this claim Williamson considers an example of watching on video an earlier event of coloured balls being drawn from a bag.

I have seen draws 1 to N, each was red. I reason probabilistically and form a justified belief that draw N+1 was red too. My belief is in fact true. But I do not know that N+1 was red. Consider two false hypotheses:

\(h\): Draws 1 to N were red; and draw N+1 was black.

\(h^*\): Draw 1 was black; draws 2 to N+1 were red.

It is natural to say that \(h\) is consistent with my evidence and \(h^*\) is not. In particular, it is consistent with my evidence that draw N+1 was black; it is not consistent with my

\(^2\) Under certain accounts of perceptually based demonstrative thought it is claimed that the demonstrative belief one has when one refers to a perceived object is not one that could be had in the absence of that object. It is claimed that the belief one has when one refers to a perceived object is object-dependent (e.g. see Evans 1982, ch. 6). If a doxastic theorist accepts such an account of demonstrative thought then he may have to accept that the question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the justificatory status of one’s beliefs on that occasion. For under such an account the question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to determining what beliefs one can have on that occasion, and this, in turn is relevant to determining what evidence one possesses on that occasion.
evidence that draw 1 was black. Thus my evidence does not include the proposition that N+1 was red. Why not? The obvious answer is that I do not know that draw N+1 was red; the unsatisfied necessary condition for evidence is knowledge. (ibid, p. 731)

If one accepts this line of reasoning, so one accepts that a subject's evidence for his beliefs consists in only the propositions he knows, then one must accept that the question as to whether a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the justificatory status of the subject's beliefs about the world on that occasion. The question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the question as to what propositions one knows on that occasion, if only because certain beliefs may be false if one is not aware of objects in the world, and a belief needs to be true if it is to be knowledge. If the question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the question as to what propositions one knows on that occasion, then the question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the question as to what evidence one possesses on that occasion. So if one accepts that the question as to what evidence one possesses is relevant to the justificatory status of one's beliefs, then one must accept that the question as to whether one is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the justificatory status of one's beliefs on that occasion.
If one accepts that the only evidence that a subject possesses for his beliefs are the propositions the subject knows, then one can claim that a subject’s awareness of objects in the world can provide him with evidence that he would not possess if he were not aware of objects in the world. For a subject’s awareness of the world can put him in a position to know propositions about the world that he would otherwise not be in a position to know.

Under this account, in simply being aware of objects in the world one does not thereby possess evidence for beliefs about the world, but in being so aware, one’s experience provides one with evidence which one would not possess if one were not aware of objects in the world. If one is hallucinating, so one is not aware of objects in the world, one may still possess evidence for beliefs about the world, for one may still know, for example, that it appears that there is an F which is G. But one’s belief that ‘that F is G’ is not knowledge, for it is not true – the demonstrative fails to refer. Although one may possess evidence for beliefs about the world when one is hallucinating, the evidence one possesses is less than the evidence one would possess if one were actually aware of objects in the world.

So under such an account, there is a sense in which it is correct to claim that the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant. For there is a sense in which it is correct to claim that the particularity of perception is relevant to the justificatory status of a subject’s beliefs about the world. In being aware of objects
in the world, a subject can be in a position to know propositions that he would not, otherwise, be in a position to know. The subject can thereby possess evidence he would not otherwise be in a position to possess. So a subject’s awareness of objects in the world – the particularity of his perceptual experience – can affect the justificatory status of his beliefs about the world. The fact that a subject is aware of objects in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the justificatory status of his beliefs about the world on that occasion.

Establishing that a doxastic theory of justification is correct is not, in itself, sufficient to establish that (A) is false. If one is to use arguments for a doxastic theory of justification in order to show that (A) is false, one needs to argue that Williamson’s account of evidence is incorrect. One needs to argue that the propositions that are a subject’s evidence do not need to be known by the subject, they merely need to be believed by the subject.\(^3\) I shall not be attempting to pursue this strategy. Such a strategy will not work if a doxastic theory of justification is incorrect, and I now want to suggest that we have reason to reject a doxastic theory of justification.

Two Conceptions of Justification

Those who hold a doxastic theory of justification generally hold, what I shall call, an intellectualist conception of justification. They hold that when we are

\(^3\) One also needs to reject the claim that the beliefs one has when one refers to a perceived object are object-dependent. See footnote 2.
attempting to determine the justificatory status of a subject's belief, we are simply attempting to determine what evidence the subject possesses for, or against, that belief. They hold that evidence must be propositional in character, and they hold that the evidence a subject possesses, can only consist in propositions that the subject accepts.

On an alternative view of justification, when we are attempting to determine the justificatory status of a subject's belief, we should not simply be trying to determine what evidence the subject possesses for that belief, we should be looking to the way in which the belief was acquired. The suggestion is that we can adjudicate between those ways of acquiring a belief that are epistemically permissible, or appropriate, and those ways of acquiring a belief that are epistemically impermissible, or inappropriate. If a subject's belief is to be justified, the subject must have acquired the belief in an epistemically permissible way. To hold this alternative view of justification, is to accept, what I shall call, an acquisition conception of justification.⁴

⁴ This way of making a distinction between theories of justification was suggested to me by Mike Martin. The label 'acquisition conception of justification' perhaps oversimplifies the view of justification I have in mind. Those who hold what I am calling an acquisition conception of justification should not hold that the only consideration relevant to the justificatory status of a belief is the way in which the belief is acquired. They should also hold that the mechanisms involved in sustaining beliefs and settling doubts are relevant to the justificatory status of beliefs. However, I shall stick with the label as a way of contrasting the position with an intellectualist conception of justification.
It does seem intuitively plausible to hold that there are epistemological distinctions to be made among the ways in which beliefs can be acquired. As Pollock notes,

There are a number of natural processes that lead to belief formation. Among these are such "approved" processes as vision, inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, and memory, and some "unapproved" but equally natural processes such as wishful thinking. ... Wishful thinking is a natural belief forming process, but we do not accord it the same status as some other belief forming processes such as vision. (Pollock 1986, p. 128)

If a subject's belief is reached via an "unapproved", epistemologically inappropriate belief forming process, then we want to say that the subject's belief lacks warrant – the belief is unjustified. This seems to be so even when the subject possesses evidence for the belief in question. Consider, for example, the following case. It is possible to deduce proposition \( p \) from propositions \( e_1 \ldots e_n \). A subject, \( S \), knows that \( e_1 \ldots e_n \). \( S \) realises that it is possible to work out whether or not \( p \) is entailed by \( e_1 \ldots e_n \), but \( S \) also realises that it would take a great deal of effort and concentration on his part. \( S \) cannot be bothered to work out whether or not \( p \) is entailed by \( e_1 \ldots e_n \), so \( S \) asks his astrologer whether or not \( p \) is true. \( S \) has an unjustified belief in the astrologer's reliability. However, on this occasion the astrologer guesses correctly and says that \( p \) is true. So \( S \) on that basis believes that \( p \), and \( S \) also now believes that \( p \) must be entailed by \( e_1 \ldots e_n \).

We do not want to say that \( S \)'s belief that \( p \) is justified in this case, even though \( S \) possesses evidence for his belief that \( p \), and even though, if pressed, \( S \) can show that his belief is entailed by his evidence – \( S \) can show that \( p \) is entailed by
propositions _e1.. en_. This shows that when we are attempting to determine the justificatory status of a subject’s belief, we should not simply be attempting to determine what evidence the subject possesses for that belief. Even if a subject possesses evidence for a belief, we may not want to say that the belief is justified if the subject’s evidence was not operative in the subject’s acquisition of the belief, or if the subject’s evidence was not operative in an appropriate way. When we are attempting to determine the justificatory status of a subject’s belief, we do need to look to the way in which the belief was acquired. So we should accept an acquisition conception of justification. In the example given above, S’s belief that _p_ is not justified, because S has not acquired the belief that _p_ in an epistemically appropriate way.

Once we concede that we should accept an acquisition conception of justification, we can appreciate that there may, after all, be a sense in which it is correct to claim that a subject’s experiences can justify his beliefs. Under an acquisition conception of justification, a subject’s belief is justified if it is the outcome of an epistemically permissible belief forming process. A subject need not hold beliefs about which belief forming processes are epistemically permissible and which are not in order for his beliefs, which are the outcome of such processes, to be justified. As Van Cleve notes,

_We can say in general that a subject need not know that an epistemic principle is true in order for the circumstances mentioned in its antecedent to give him knowledge. ... An epistemic principle has the form ‘If ..., then _p_ is justified for S’. ... It says that the_
obtaining of whatever is specified in its antecedent is sufficient for p’s being justified for S. ... Knowledge of an epistemic principle is not necessary for knowledge to arise in accordance with it. (Van Cleve 1979, p. 778)

If a subject’s experiences can serve as input to an epistemically permissible belief forming process, then we may say that the subject’s experiences justify the beliefs that are the output of the belief forming process. If we can establish that experiences can serve as input to an epistemically permissible belief forming process, we will have reason to reject the doxastic theorist’s claim that “all that can count as evidence or justification for a belief must come from the same totality of belief to which it belongs” (Davidson 1986a, p. 319). Ultimately, the aim is to determine whether the particularity of perception is relevant to the justificatory status of a subject’s beliefs under an acquisition conception of justification. In order to do this, we need to determine what it is that makes a belief forming process an epistemically permissible one.

Process Reliabilism

One suggestion is that a mode or way of arriving at a belief is epistemically permissible if it is reliable – i.e. if it can be relied on, at least in general, to reach the truth. This suggestion is one that Goldman has developed:

Consider some faulty processes of belief-formation, i.e. processes where belief outputs would be classified as unjustified. Here are some examples: confused reasoning, wishful thinking, reliance on emotional attachment, mere hunch or guesswork, and hasty generalization. What do these faulty processes have in common? They share the feature
of unreliability.: they tend to produce error a large proportion of the time. By contrast, which processes of belief-forming (or belief-sustaining) processes are intuitively justification-conferring? They include standard perceptual processes, remembering, good reasoning, and introspection. What these processes seem to have in common is reliability: the beliefs they produce are generally reliable. (Goldman 1979, p. 9-10)

Goldman recommends a form of process reliabilism. Very roughly, the idea behind process reliabilism is that a belief is justified if, and only if, it is acquired by means of an epistemically permissible belief forming process, and a belief forming process is an epistemically permissible one if, and only if, it is a reliable cognitive process. Under such an account, a belief forming process that takes experiences as input can be an epistemically permissible one if the cognitive processes involved in perception are generally reliable. Should we accept such an account of justification?

One line of objection to such an account is based on the thought that the fact that a belief is acquired via a reliable belief forming process is not, in itself, sufficient to make the resultant belief justified. This is a line of objection that Bonjour pursues. Bonjour notes that, under such an account,

... a person may be highly irrational and irresponsible in accepting a belief, when judged in light of his own subjective conception of the situation, and may still turn out to be epistemically justified. ... His belief may in fact be reliable, even though he has no reason for thinking that it is reliable — or even has good reason to think that it is not reliable. But such a person seems nonetheless to be thoroughly irresponsible, from an
epistemic standpoint, in accepting such a belief, and hence not in fact justified.

(Bonjour 1985, p. 38)

The thought here is that if a belief is to be justified, the belief must be rationally held, and Bonjour objects that, "external or objective reliability is not enough to offset subjective irrationality" (ibid, p. 41).

Bonjour provides a number of examples to support his claim. He considers a subject who has a completely reliable clairvoyant power. The beliefs that this clairvoyant power yields are the outcome of a reliable belief forming process. One such belief is the belief that the President is in New York. Such a belief would be counted as justified under a basic form of process reliabilism. However, Bonjour objects that our intuitions are that such a belief is not justified if either (a) the subject has a great deal of evidence against the belief that the President is in New York and none in its favour; or (b) the subject has a great deal of evidence against his possessing a clairvoyant power; or (c) the subject has no evidence for or against the possibility of a clairvoyant power, and the subject does not possess any evidence for or against the belief that the President is in New York. The suggestion is that in each of these cases the subject's belief is not justified, because the subject's belief is not rationally held, even though the subject's belief is acquired via a reliable belief forming process.

John Foster is another philosopher who, for similar reasons, rejects a basic form of process reliabilism. In Foster's suggested counterexample to process reliabilism, a
subject has reliable telepathic powers. These telepathic powers yield a true belief, but the subject has evidence against the proposition believed. Foster claims that the belief is not justified, because the subject “lacks an adequate rational basis” for his belief (1985, p. 112). Foster argues that if a subject is to be justified in holding a belief, the subject must have an adequate rational basis for holding the belief – the belief must be rationally held – and the suggestion is that a subject will only have an adequate rational basis for holding a belief if his current state of mind furnishes him with an adequate reason for holding the belief. A basic form of process reliabilism can yield counterintuitive results, because a belief can be acquired via a reliable belief forming process even in a case where the subject’s current state of mind fails to furnish him with an adequate reason for holding the belief:

Normally, evaluating the reliability of the mode of arrival involves appealing to factors extraneous to the subject’s current mental condition; and sometimes it involves only an appeal to such factors. In such cases, a subject may be justified in being sure, by the criterion of truth-reliability even if his current state of mind fails to furnish him with an adequate reason for being sure – or, indeed, with an adequate reason for believing. (Foster 1985, p. 107)

... at the time when he acquires a belief, a subject must be furnished with an adequate reason for being sure if he is to have the right to be sure, and with an adequate reason for believing if he is to be justified in his belief. (ibid, p. 112)

Do we have to accept an intellectualist account of justification if we are to adequately accommodate these intuitions? If one is to accept an acquisition
conception of justification, then in order to accommodate these intuitions, one needs to provide an account that ensures that the beliefs that result from an epistemically permissible belief forming process are rationally held. One has to provide an account that ensures that when a belief is reached via an epistemically permissible belief forming process, the subject’s current state of mind furnishes him with an adequate reason for holding the belief. Peacocke offers an account of justification which he claims meets these constraints. It is to his account of justification that I shall now turn.

**Peacocke’s Account of Justification**

Peacocke accepts that “there is a requirement of *rationality* for knowledge: externalist conditions alone are not enough” (Peacocke, 1986, p. 155). If a subject’s belief is to be justified, then the belief must be rationally held. Peacocke suggests that in order to determine whether a belief is rationally held we need to look to the content of the belief in question. The suggestion is that a belief is rationally held if, and only if, the belief is reached by a method that is appropriate to its content. A belief forming process will only be an epistemically permissible one if the resultant beliefs are rationally held. So a belief forming process will only be an epistemically permissible one if the beliefs that are the output of the process are reached by a method that is appropriate to their contents.
Peacocke suggests that in order to determine whether a belief is reached by a method that is appropriate to its content we need to look to, what he calls, the ‘possession conditions’ of the concepts which constitute the content of the belief.\(^5\)

According to Peacocke, a concept is individuated by its possession conditions. These are conditions that a thinker must meet if he is to have full mastery of the concept. The possession conditions for a concept will mention the kinds of transition between mental states that a thinker should make if he is to have full mastery of the concept. For example, the possession conditions for the concept *red* include a clause to the effect that the thinker who possesses the concept will find it primitively compelling to judge that something is red when he has an experience as of something red, in conditions he takes to be normal, when he takes his perceptual mechanisms to be working properly. The possession conditions of the concepts that constitute the content of a belief help to determine whether the belief is reached by a method that is appropriate to its content. They help to determine whether the transitions between mental states involved in the acquisition of the belief are epistemically appropriate. The transitions involved will only be

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\(^5\) It should be noted that there has been a change in the terminology that Peacocke has employed in developing his views. In 1986 Peacocke does not talk of looking to the possession conditions of concepts in order to determine whether a belief is reached by a method that is appropriate to its content. He talks, instead of looking to the ‘canonical acceptance conditions’ of the content of the belief. The relevance to his account of the notion of the possession conditions of concepts is discussed in Peacocke 1992. Throughout I shall be exploiting this notion of the possession conditions of concepts in outlining Peacocke’s account of justification, as I believe that this is the most effective way of bringing out those aspects of Peacocke’s views that are relevant to the present discussion.
epistemically appropriate if they are ones that a thinker who has full mastery of the concept should make.

Take the case of a non-inferential, world-directed belief that is acquired because the subject is having a certain experience. If the method by which the belief is reached is to be appropriate to its content, then at least the following condition has to be met: certain concepts that are involved in the content of the belief have to be individuated by possession conditions that mention the kind of experience that the subject is having. If the concepts which constitute the content of the belief are not individuated by possession conditions that mention perceptual experience, or if they are individuated by possession conditions that mention perceptual experience of a kind that the subject is not having, then the subject's belief will not have been reached by a method that is appropriate to its content – the subject's belief will not be rationally held. The subject's belief will also not be rationally held if the subject has reason to believe that his perceptual mechanisms are not working properly. For the correct possession conditions for observational concepts will state that the subject who has full mastery of these concepts should not find it primitively compelling to accept a non-inferential, world-directed belief involving those concepts if he has reason to believe that his perceptual mechanisms are not working properly.
Under Peacocke's account, it is not simply the _reliability_ of a belief forming process that makes it an epistemically permissible one. A belief that is the output of a reliable belief forming process will only be a belief that is acquired via an epistemically permissible belief forming process, if the belief is reached by a method that is appropriate to its content. This affords Peacocke an explanation of why the beliefs of the subjects in the examples that Bonjour and Foster consider are not justified. He can claim that although the subjects' beliefs are the output of reliable belief forming processes, they are not the output of epistemically permissible belief forming processes, for they are not reached by methods that are appropriate to their contents. The correct account of the possession conditions of the concepts that constitute the subjects' beliefs should reveal why the beliefs are not reached by methods that are appropriate to their contents. It should show that the subjects' acceptance of the contents in question does not involve an epistemically appropriate transition between mental states. It should show that the subject's acceptance of the contents does not involve a transition between mental states that a subject who has full mastery of the concepts should make.

Peacocke's account seems to meet Foster's requirement for a belief to be justified. Foster claims that if a belief is to be justified the subject's current state of mind should furnish him with an adequate reason for holding the belief. Under Peacocke's account, a subject's belief is justified if it is reached via an epistemically permissible belief forming process. A belief is only acquired via an
epistemically permissible belief forming process if the subject’s acquisition of the belief involves an appropriate transition between mental states, and the mental states involved in the appropriate transition should furnish the subject with an adequate reason for holding the belief.

Under Peacocke’s account, a subject’s experience can, in the right circumstances, furnish the subject with an adequate reason for holding a belief. A subject’s experiences can justify his beliefs. For experience can serve as input to an epistemically permissible belief forming process – a belief forming process that yields rationally held beliefs. This is because certain beliefs are constituted by concepts that are individuated by possession conditions which mention the role of perceptual experience in the acquisition of beliefs involving those concepts. Non-inferential beliefs involving such concepts can be directly justified by experience.

According to Peacocke, not all reliable belief forming processes are epistemically permissible ones. Under Peacocke’s account it is not simply the reliability of a belief forming process that makes it an epistemically permissible one. However, even under Peacocke’s account, the notion of the reliability of perception does have some role to play in an explanation of why perception is an epistemically permissible belief forming process. This point is worth clarifying.
Peacocke claims that the epistemic permissibility of a belief forming process is determined by the possession conditions of the concepts involved in the belief. But we might then raise the following question: what makes it the case that the belief forming processes mentioned in the concepts' possession conditions are, epistemically speaking, the correct ones? Peacocke provides an answer to this. It is supplied by, what he calls, the 'determination theory' for a concept.

The determination theory for a given concept (together with the world in empirical cases) assigns semantic values in such a way that the belief forming practices mentioned in the concept's possession conditions are correct. That is, in the case of belief formation, the practices result in true beliefs. (Peacocke 1992, p.19)

If our senses are unreliable, then the belief forming processes that take experience as input will not be epistemically permissible, for the belief forming processes mentioned in the possession conditions of our observational concepts will not be ones that "result in true beliefs". It is the reliability of our senses that ensures the truth of the determination theories for our observational concepts, for it is the reliability of our senses that ensures that the belief forming processes mentioned in the possession conditions of our observational concepts are ones which result in true beliefs. The fact that our senses are reliable does, then, have some role to play in an explanation of why our belief forming processes that take experience as input are epistemically permissible.
Pollock holds an account of the justificatory role of experience that is similar to Peacocke’s in certain respects, but he claims that his account is an internalist one, and he would reject Peacocke’s account as an externalist one. Under Pollock’s account, ‘epistemic norms’ are those norms that describe “when it is epistemically permissible to hold various beliefs” (Pollock 1986, p. 124). They “describe which cognitive processes are correct and which are incorrect, and being justified consists in ‘making the right moves’” (p.122). According to Pollock, non-doxastic states such as perceptual experiences can serve as input to ‘correct’ cognitive processes, and under his account, “our epistemic norms are constitutive of the concepts we have”(p. 168).

Pollock claims that “externalism is the view that the justification of a belief is a function in part of external considerations”. On one kind of externalism, which he labels ‘norm externalism’,

It might be granted that epistemic norms can only appeal to internal considerations, but it might be insisted that external considerations are relevant to determining which set of internalist norms are correct. (Pollock 1986, p. 125)

Pollock rejects norm externalism as well as other varieties of externalism. He claims that on his internalist view,

... the correctness of a cognitive process is an essential feature of that process and is not affected by contingent factors such as the reliability of the process in the actual world.

(ibid, p.122)
Pollock would consider Peacocke’s account to be a version of norm externalism, and he would reject it as such. Under Pollock’s account the reliability of the senses does not play a role in explaining why a cognitive process that takes experience as input is an epistemically ‘correct’ one. However, if the reliability of the senses is not playing a role in explaining why a belief forming process that takes experience as input is a correct one, what is explaining the correctness of such a cognitive process? It is not sufficient to respond, as Pollock does, by pointing out that “our epistemic norms are constitutive of the concepts we have”, for we will need some account of why our concepts are, epistemically speaking, the correct ones.

Peacocke’s determination theory provides an answer to this question. The truth of a determination theory for a given concept explains why the norms which constitute the concept are epistemically correct. It explains why the norms are ones that, if conformed to, lead to true beliefs. Pollock fails to note that the truth of something like a determination theory for a given concept needs to be part of an explanation of why it is that a norm that is constitutive of the concept is an epistemically correct norm. It is the truth of a determination theory for an observational concept that explains why it is that the norms that constitute the concept are epistemically correct, and it is the fact that our senses are reliable that ensures the truth of a determination theory for an observational concept. So the correctness of the cognitive process that takes experience as input is, after all, affected by contingent facts such as the reliability of the process in the actual
world. Peacocke's account of justification accommodates this point. Peacocke's account can explain why the reliability of perception is relevant to the justificatory status of perceptual beliefs. The explanation does not depend on the claim that a basic form of process reliabilism is correct. Peacocke's account appears to be able to accommodate many of the intuitions that are appealed to by those who object to a basic form of process reliabilism. For Peacocke's account offers us the promise of explaining why a belief is only the outcome of an epistemically permissible belief forming process if the belief is rationally held.

With Peacocke's account of the justificatory role of experience in mind, we can now return to our original concern: is the particularity of perception epistemologically significant? Is the particularity of perception relevant to the justificatory status of a subject's beliefs?

The Particularity of Perception and the Justificatory Role of Experience

Earlier on in the chapter I raised the question as to whether we should accept the following claim: (A) the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the justificatory status of the subject’s beliefs about the world on that occasion. I have argued that the considerations that are used to support a doxastic theory of justification do not succeed in establishing that (A) is false. They do not succeed in establishing that experience cannot have a justificatory role to play. Recognizing the legitimacy of an acquisition conception
of justification allows us to appreciate that experience can have a justificatory role
to play. Peacocke relies on such a conception of justification in his account of the
justificatory role of experience. Is claim (A) true under Peacocke's account of the
justificatory role of experience?

Someone who accepts that hallucinations can justify beliefs in the way that
perceptions can will reject (A). They will hold that the fact that a subject is aware
of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion is not relevant to the
justificatory status of the subject's beliefs about the world on that occasion. For
they will hold that the justificatory status of the subject's beliefs would be the same
if he were having a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination — an experience that
does not involve an awareness of objects and features in the world. Can
hallucinations justify beliefs in the way that perceptions can under Peacocke's
account?

Under Peacocke's account, a belief is justified if it is acquired via an epistemically
permissible belief forming process. An experience justifies a belief if it serves as
input to an epistemically permissible belief forming process that yields that belief as
output. Hallucinations can justify beliefs in the way that perceptions can if
hallucinations and perceptions can serve as input to the same epistemically
permissible belief forming processes. To claim that hallucinations cannot justify
beliefs in the way that perceptions can is to claim that there are some belief
forming processes that are epistemically permissible when they take perceptions as input, but epistemically impermissible when they take hallucinations as input.

Under Peacocke’s account this is to claim that there are certain transitions between an experience and a belief that are only appropriate to the content of the belief if the experience is a perception and not a hallucination. If one accepts Peacocke’s account of justification one will only make this claim if one holds that there are concepts with possession conditions that state that a subject who possesses the concept ought to find certain judgements primitively compelling if his experience is a perception, but not if his experience is a hallucination.

If one accepts that one ought to find certain judgements primitively compelling when one has a perception of a certain kind, then it is plausible to maintain that one ought to find the same kind of judgements primitively compelling when one is having an experience that is subjectively indistinguishable from such a perception. For if one is having an experience that is subjectively indistinguishable from such a perception, one has no way of telling that one’s experience is not a perception of that kind. A hallucination can be subjectively indistinguishable from a perception. So if one accepts that one ought to find certain judgements primitively compelling when one has a perception of a certain kind, it is plausible to maintain that one ought to find the same kind of judgements primitively compelling when one is having a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. Under Peacocke’s account of justification, there appear to be no compelling reasons to hold that there are certain
transitions between an experience and a belief that are only appropriate to the content of the belief if the experience is a perception and not a hallucination. There appear to be no compelling reasons to deny that hallucinations and perceptions can serve as input to the same epistemically permissible belief forming processes, and so no compelling reasons to deny that hallucinations can justify beliefs in the way that perceptions can. It appears to be open for someone who accepts Peacocke’s account of justification to simply reject claim (A).  So should we conclude that the particularity of perception is not relevant to the justificatory status of beliefs?

Even if one rejects (A), one might still claim that there is a sense in which it is correct to claim that the particularity of perception is relevant to the justificatory status of a subject’s beliefs. For one might claim that the fact that a subject is normally aware of objects and features in the world is relevant to the justificatory status of his beliefs. A consideration of the role of experience in grounding demonstrative judgements should lead one to such a conclusion.

In introducing the notion of the particularity of perception in chapter three, I noted that successful perceptual experiences can make possible certain kinds of singular thought about the objects of experience. When one successfully perceives an object and its features, one is usually in a position to make demonstrative

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6 I have not tried to argue that Peacocke’s account of justification is inconsistent with an acceptance of claim (A). I am merely suggesting that there are no compelling reasons to think that an acceptance of (A) is forced on one if one accepts Peacocke’s account of justification.
judgements about the object – one is not merely in a position to make the existential judgement that there exists an object possessing certain properties. It is plausible to hold that experience can directly ground such judgements. Experience can justify non-inferential demonstrative beliefs about the objects of experience. Such beliefs need not be inferred from, and justified by, non-inferential existential beliefs.

If one is to acknowledge that experience can justify non-inferential demonstrative beliefs about perceived objects, then one must accept that there are transitions between experiences and such beliefs that are epistemically permissible. Under Peacocke’s account a transition between an experience and a non-inferential, world-directed demonstrative belief will only be an epistemically permissible one if the concepts which constitute the belief have possession conditions that legitimize such a transition. The concepts involved will only have possession conditions that legitimize such a transition if the concepts have true determination theories that assign semantic values in such a way that the belief forming processes mentioned in the concepts’ possession conditions generally yield true beliefs. So, under Peacocke’s account, the transition between an experience and a non-inferential, world-directed demonstrative belief will only be an epistemically permissible one if the transition generally results in true beliefs.
If a subject’s experiences do not generally involve an awareness of objects and features in the world, then the transition between experience and non-inferential, world-directed, demonstrative belief will not generally result in true belief. If a subject’s experience does not involve an awareness of objects, the demonstrative fails to refer and the subject’s belief is not true. So under Peacocke’s account there is a sense in which it is correct to say that the particularity of perception is relevant to the justificatory status of a subject’s beliefs. For the fact that a subject is normally aware of objects and features in the world when he has a perceptual experience is relevant to the justificatory status of the subject’s beliefs. It is relevant to the justificatory status of the subject’s non-inferential, world-directed demonstrative beliefs. The transition between experience and non-inferential, world-directed demonstrative belief is only an epistemically permissible one if the subject is normally aware of objects and features when he has an experience. A subject’s experiences can only justify non-inferential, world-directed demonstrative beliefs if the subject’s experiences normally involve an awareness of objects and features in the world.

I have been pursuing the question as to whether the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant as part of an attempt to determine whether a rejection of the generality thesis is epistemologically significant. Earlier on in the chapter I suggested that if it turns out that the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant, we can then consider whether an account of
experience that involves an acceptance of the generality thesis can adequately accommodate the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception. I have now suggested that there is at least one sense in which it is correct to claim that the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant, for there is a sense in which it is correct to claim that the particularity of perception is relevant to justificatory status of a subject's beliefs. The fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world when he has a successful perceptual experience needs to be part of an explanation of how experiences can justify non-inferential, world-directed demonstrative beliefs. Can one adequately accommodate this aspect of the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception if one accepts the generality thesis?

If one accepts the generality thesis then one must concede that the subject who holds demonstrative beliefs about perceived objects is not simply accepting some aspect of the content of his experience. If the generality thesis is correct, then to accept some aspect of the content of experience is to hold an existential belief, not a demonstrative one. Does this present those who hold the generality thesis with a problem in explaining why the transition between experience and demonstrative belief is an epistemically permissible one? Does it present them with some problem in explaining why a demonstrative belief about a perceived object is reached by a method that is appropriate to the content of the belief?
Recall that under Peacocke’s account of justification, in order to determine whether a belief is reached by a method that is appropriate to its content, we need to look to the possession conditions of the concepts which constitute the belief. If the possession conditions for perceptually based demonstrative concepts state that there are beliefs involving such concepts that (cet. par.) a subject ought to find primitively compelling when he is having an experience of a certain kind, then the transition between experience and demonstrative belief is epistemically permissible. Those who accept the generality thesis can claim that the transition between an experience with an existentially quantified content and a belief with a demonstrative content is an epistemically permissible one, for they can claim that the possession conditions for perceptually based demonstrative concepts state that there are certain beliefs involving such concepts that (cet. par.) a subject ought to find primitively compelling when he is having an experience with an existentially quantified content. Those who accept the generality thesis may insist that even though the content of experience is purely general, a subject’s experience usually involves an awareness of objects and features in the world. So they may claim that the kinds of belief forming processes mentioned in the possession conditions for perceptually based demonstrative concepts are correct. For they may claim that there are true determination theories for such concepts that assign semantic values in such a way that the belief forming processes generally yield true beliefs.
The challenge of explaining why the transition between experience and demonstrative belief is epistemically permissible, does seem to be one that those who accept the generality thesis can meet. Peacocke’s account of justification offers them a way of explaining why non-inferential demonstrative beliefs about perceived objects are reached by a method that is appropriate to their contents.

Summary
At the beginning of the chapter I raised the following question: can the account of experience that I have argued fits best with our ordinary concept of perception be used to throw any new light on the link between the concepts of perception and knowledge? The account of experience that I have argued fits best with our ordinary concept of perception involves a rejection of the generality thesis. So is a rejection of the generality thesis epistemologically significant? As part of an attempt to answer this question I have been attempting to determine whether the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant. For if we can establish that the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant, and we can establish that the we need to reject the generality thesis if we are to adequately accommodate the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception, we can thereby establish that the rejection of the generality thesis is epistemologically significant. We can establish that the account of experience that I have argued fits best with our ordinary concept of perception can be used to throw new light on the link between the concepts of perception and knowledge.
In this chapter I have been focusing on whether the particularity of perception is relevant to the justificatory status of a subject's beliefs. I have argued that the considerations that are used to support a doxastic theory of justification fail to establish that the particularity of perception is not relevant to the justificatory status of a subject's beliefs. They fail to establish that experience cannot have a justificatory role to play. Recognizing the legitimacy of an acquisition conception of justification allows us to appreciate that experience can have a justificatory role to play. I have argued that under Peacocke's account of justification, which relies on an acquisition conception of justification, there is a sense in which it is correct to claim that the particularity of perception is relevant to the justificatory status of a subject's beliefs. The fact that a subject's successful perceptual experiences involve an awareness of objects and features in the world is relevant to the justificatory status of the subject's beliefs about the world. I have not argued that hallucinatory experiences, which do not involve an awareness of objects and features in the world, cannot justify beliefs in the way that perceptions can. I have merely been arguing that the fact that a subject is normally aware of objects and features in the world when he has an experience needs to be part of an explanation of how experiences can justify non-inferential demonstrative beliefs about perceived objects.
I have suggested that this aspect of the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception is one that can be accommodated by those who accept the generality thesis. The challenge of explaining how experiences with existentially quantified contents can justify non-inferential demonstrative beliefs about perceived objects is one that those who hold the generality thesis can meet. So far, then, we have seen no reason to think that one needs to reject the generality thesis if one is to adequately accommodate the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception. However, earlier on in the chapter I suggested that there are two main issues that need to be addressed if we are to determine whether the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant. We not only need to uncover the ways in which the particularity of perception may be relevant to the justificatory status of a subject’s beliefs, we also need to uncover the ways in which the particularity of perception may be relevant to the status of a subject’s beliefs about the world as knowledge. Is the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion relevant to the status of the subject’s beliefs about the world as knowledge on that occasion? If so, in what way? Does one need to reject the generality thesis if one is to adequately accommodate the ways in which the particularity of perception is relevant to the status of a subject’s beliefs about the world as knowledge? These questions will be addressed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER SIX

The Particularity of Perception and Perceptual Knowledge

In the last chapter I was examining the ways in which the particularity of perception is relevant to the justificatory status of a subject’s beliefs. This is part of an attempt to uncover the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception. The task of this chapter is to determine whether there are other ways in which the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant – to determine whether there are other ways in which the particularity of perception is relevant to the status of a subject’s beliefs as knowledge.

A conclusion reached in the last chapter was that if one accepts Peacocke’s account of justification one can reject the following claim: (A) the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the justificatory status of the subject’s beliefs about the world on that occasion. The suggestion was that if one accepts Peacocke’s account of justification one can allow that a complete hallucination – which does not involve an awareness of objects and features in the world – can justify belief in the same way that a perception can. Establishing that (A) is false is not sufficient to establish that the following claim is false: (B) the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the status of the subject’s beliefs about the world as knowledge on that occasion. On the
assumption that a justified belief can fail to be knowledge, the falsity of (A) is compatible with the truth of (B). Should we accept (B)? Is the fact that a subject is aware of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion relevant to the status of the subject’s beliefs about the world as knowledge on that occasion? If so, in what way?

The immediately obvious answer is that we should accept (B), because a subject’s beliefs can fail to be true if the experience on which they are based does not involve an awareness of objects and features in the world. In order to determine whether a belief is an instance of knowledge, we need to determine, amongst other things, whether the belief is true. In order to determine whether a perceptually-based demonstrative belief of the form ‘That F is G’ is true, we need to determine whether the subject’s experience actually involves an awareness of an F which is G. A perceptually based demonstrative belief of the form ‘That F is G’ will not be true if it based on a hallucination of an F which is G, for the demonstrative will fail to refer. A perceptually based demonstrative belief of the form ‘That F is G’ will also fail to be true if the subject is misperceiving an F as being G. So there is at least one obvious way in which the fact that a subject’s experience involves an awareness of objects and features in the world on a particular occasion is relevant to the status of the subject’s beliefs about the world as knowledge on that occasion.
While it is clear that we should say that a world-directed demonstrative judgement based on hallucinatory experience cannot be an instance of knowledge, because such a judgement will not be true, it is less clear what we should say about existential judgements that are in some way based on hallucinatory experience. An existential judgement that is based on a hallucinatory experience can, in principle, be true. Consider once again the subject of the Grice thought experiment which was originally used to introduce the notion of veridical hallucination. The subject is having an experience that is subjectively indistinguishable from the experience he would be having if he were perceiving the clock in front of him. The subject’s experience occurs because a neuroscientist is stimulating his visual cortex. Our intuition is that the subject is not actually aware of the clock in front of him – the subject’s experience is a hallucination. If on the basis of his experience the subject comes to believe that there is a clock in front of him, the belief will be true. If the subject has no knowledge of the unusual circumstances in which his experience is produced, then our intuition is that the subject does not know that there is a clock in front of him. The fact that the subject is not aware of a clock in front of him does not prevent his existential belief that there is a clock in front of him from being true. So if the fact that the subject is not aware of a clock in front of him is to be part of an explanation of why the subject’s existential belief is not knowledge, then this cannot be due to the way in which it affects the truth value of the belief.
An existential judgement that is in some way based on a misperception can also be true. Chisholm introduces the example of a subject who is misperceiving a large furry dog as a sheep (Chisholm 1975, p. 105). On the basis of his experience the subject comes to believe that there is a sheep in the next field. The subject’s belief happens to be true, because, unknown to him, there is a sheep in the next field hiding behind a hedge. Again, we do not want to say that the subject’s existential belief is knowledge. The subject does not know that there is a sheep in the next field. The fact that the subject is not aware of a sheep in the next field does not prevent his existential belief from being true. So if the fact that the subject is not aware of a sheep in the next field is to be part of an explanation of why his existential belief is not knowledge, then, again, this cannot be due to the way in which it affects the truth value of the belief.

What explains the subject’s lack of knowledge in these two examples? Is the subject’s lack of knowledge somehow explained by the fact that the subject is not aware of an appropriate object in each case? Do the examples show that there is a more interesting way in which the particularity of perception is relevant to the status of a subject’s beliefs about the world as knowledge? I shall argue that they do. I shall argue that such examples reveal an important aspect of the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception that can only be properly accommodated if one rejects the assumption that the content of experience is general.
**Existential Belief and Perceptual Knowledge**

We will have an adequate explanation of why the subject's existential beliefs in the examples given above are not knowledge if we can establish that the beliefs are not justified. In the last chapter I suggested that if one accepts Peacocke's account of justification one can maintain that hallucinations and misperceptions can justify beliefs in just the same way that successful perceptions can. If one maintains that hallucinations and misperceptions can justify beliefs in just the same way that successful perceptions can, then one will only have reason to claim that the subject's beliefs are unjustified if one also has reason to claim that the subject's beliefs would have been unjustified if the experiences on which they were based had been successful perceptions. One way of trying to defend the claim that the subject's beliefs would have been unjustified even if his experiences were successful perceptions, would be to argue that the beliefs in question do not contain observational concepts. However, the examples that have been given can be suitably amended so there is no question that the beliefs contain only observational concepts. For example, we can amend the second case in the following way: the subject is misperceiving the colour of a round object in front of him. The object is in fact white but it appears to the subject to be red. The subject comes to believe, on the basis of his experience, that there is a red round object in front of him. The subject's belief happens to be true, because, unknown to him there is a red round object directly behind the white object that he is misperceiving,
but the subject does not know that there is a red round object in front of him. There appears to be no reason to deny that the subject’s experience would be justified if it were based on a successful perception of a red round object. So if one holds that hallucinations and misperceptions can justify beliefs in just the same way that successful perceptions can, one should not explain the subject’s lack of knowledge by claiming that the belief is unjustified.

It appears that world-directed existential beliefs that are in some way based on a hallucination or a misperception can be true and justified and yet fail to be knowledge. The possibility of a justified true belief failing to be knowledge has become widely accepted since Gettier’s famous attack on the tripartite analysis of propositional knowledge. The cases outlined simply appear to be further examples of Gettier-like counterexamples to the tripartite analysis of propositional knowledge (Gettier 1963). The beliefs in question are true and justified but there are other conditions required for a belief to be knowledge that are not met. An adequate explanation of why the beliefs are not knowledge should specify what these conditions are.

An assumption that is often made is that an adequate explanation of why a belief is not knowledge should mention conditions that the belief in question fails to meet but which need to be met by all beliefs if they are to be knowledge. The assumption is that it is possible to provide a unified account of propositional
knowledge. It is an implicit endorsement of this assumption that leads many to reject certain causal theories of knowledge. According to such causal theories, a true belief that \( p \) is knowledge only if the belief has the right sort of causal connection to the fact that \( p \). It has been pointed out that this cannot be a condition that all beliefs have to meet if they are to be knowledge. It is claimed that one can know certain facts that cannot enter into causal relations. It is claimed, for example, that one can know mathematical facts and other necessary facts, and one can know facts that are expressed by universal generalizations – e.g. the fact that all men are mortal – and such knowable facts cannot be the literal causes of a subject’s beliefs. Those who assume that it is possible to provide a unified account of propositional knowledge will hold that an adequate explanation of why a true belief that \( p \) is not knowledge should not simply rest on the claim that the belief is not appropriately caused by the fact that \( p \), even if the fact that \( p \) is one that can enter into a casual relation with the belief. For they will hold that an adequate explanation of why the belief is not knowledge should mention conditions that the belief fails to meet but which need to be met by all beliefs if they are to be knowledge, and not all beliefs have to meet the causal condition if they are to be knowledge.

Unless we are to reject the assumption that it is possible to provide a unified account of propositional knowledge, we need to point to conditions which the beliefs in the examples given above fail to meet, but which need to be met by all
beliefs if they are to be knowledge. So unless we are to reject the assumption that it is possible to provide a unified account of propositional knowledge, we cannot simply claim that the beliefs in the examples given above are not knowledge because they are not appropriately caused by the facts they concern. We also cannot claim that the beliefs in question are not knowledge because the subject is not actually perceiving the facts that make them true. The facts that can be known by a subject on a given occasion are not restricted to those facts that the subject is perceiving. An adequate account of propositional knowledge should allow that one can know a proposition without perceiving the fact that makes the proposition true. The condition that a subject be perceiving the fact that makes his belief true cannot be a condition that all beliefs have to meet if they are to be knowledge. So pointing out that the beliefs in the examples given above fail to meet this condition will not be considered to be an adequate explanation of why the beliefs are not knowledge by those who assume that it is possible to provide a unified account of propositional knowledge. So what conditions are not met by the beliefs in the examples given above, but which need to be met by all beliefs if they are to be knowledge? If one can answer this question one will not leave oneself open to the objection that one is merely providing an ad hoc explanation of why the beliefs are not knowledge.

Responses to Gettier-like counterexamples to the tripartite analysis of propositional knowledge often point to the fact that in such examples the subject’s
belief, although justified and true, is somehow accidentally or coincidentally right about the way the world is. In each of the examples given above, the subject's existential judgement depends on an element of luck. In each of the examples the subject is flukishly right about the way the world is. As Strawson points out in his rationale for the CTP, our intuition is that if one is to gain knowledge, one must not be flukishly right in the opinions one forms. There have been various attempts to adequately reflect this intuition in a unified account of propositional knowledge. One such attempt, which has gained some prominence, is Nozick's counterfactual analysis of propositional knowledge. It is to the details of this account that I shall now turn.

A Counterfactual Analysis of Propositional Knowledge

Nozick suggests that the reason why we take the beliefs of the subjects in the usual Gettier cases not to be knowledge, is that the subjects would have held the beliefs in question even if they had been false. In each of the examples the subject's belief that \( p \) is only luckily or coincidentally true, because the subject acquires the belief in such a way that the subject would have believed that \( p \) even if \( p \) had been false. Nozick claims that a condition that needs to be met if a true belief that \( p \) is to be knowledge, is that the subject would not have believed that \( p \) if \( p \) had been false. A further condition that Nozick claims needs to be met if a true belief that \( p \) is to be knowledge, is that the subject would have believed that \( p \) if \( p \) had remained true in slightly different circumstances. Nozick includes this last condition in order to
accommodate the case of a subject who is in a tank and who is being brought to believe, by direct stimulation of his brain, that he is in such a tank. Our intuition is that the subject does not know that he is in a tank, but the subject’s belief is true, and if he were not in such a tank, the subject would not have come to believe that he was. Nozick claims that the subject’s belief is not knowledge, because the last condition is not met. The subject would not have believed the proposition that he is in a tank if the proposition had remained true in slightly different circumstances. Under Nozick’s account of propositional knowledge, a true belief that \( p \) is knowledge only if the belief is sensitive to \( p \)’s falsity, and to \( p \)’s truth.

Nozick’s full exposition of his account of propositional knowledge is relativized to methods of reaching beliefs:

Let us define a technical locution, \( S \) knows, via method (or way of coming to believing) \( M \), that \( p \):

1. \( p \) is true
2. \( S \) believes, via method or way of coming to believe \( M \), that \( p \).
3. If \( p \) weren’t true and \( S \) were to use \( M \) to arrive at a belief whether (or not) \( p \), then \( S \) wouldn’t believe, via \( M \), that \( p \).
4. If \( p \) were true and \( S \) were to use \( M \) to arrive at a belief whether (or not) \( p \), then \( S \) would believe, via \( M \), that \( p \). (Nozick 1981, p. 179)

According to Nozick’s account of propositional knowledge,

\( S \) knows that \( p \) iff there is a method \( M \) such that (a) he knows that \( p \) via \( M \), his belief that \( p \) via \( M \) satisfies conditions (1)-(4), and (b) all other methods via which he believes that \( p \) which do not satisfy (1)-(4) are out weighed by \( M \). (ibid, p. 182)
Before applying Nozick's account to the examples which are our main concern, I want to consider an objection to the account as it stands that has been raised by Peacocke. Although Nozick's account appears to be equipped to explain why subjects lack knowledge in many of the standard Gettier cases, as Peacocke points out, the account seems to face difficulties in handling so-called Gettier cases with a counterfactual twist. In one of the standard Gettier cases a subject infers from much suitable evidence the belief that his friend Smith owns a Ford. Although the belief is justified, the belief is in fact false. Smith does not own a Ford, he has just hired one. From his justified false belief the subject infers that one of his friends owns a Ford. This belief happens to be true, because, unknown to him, one of his other friends owns a Ford. The subject does not know that one of his friends owns a Ford, but the subject's belief is justified and true. Nozick's account can explain why the subject lacks knowledge in this case. The subject would have believed that one of his friends owns a Ford even if his belief had been false. However, we can add a counterfactual twist to the story. As Peacocke notes,

> It could have been that if none of his friends had owned a Ford, then he would not have come to the conclusion that Smith owns a Ford: perhaps Smith hired a Ford because some of the subject's friends own Fords. This modification – a Gettier case with a counterfactual twist – does not incline us to say that the case is one of knowledge.

(De Cock 1986, p. 129)
Nozick explicitly considers this kind of Gettier case. He notes that in such examples the subject is still inferring a truth from a (justifiably believed) falsehood. The examples violate Harman’s requirement that the lemmas be true (Harman 1965). Nozick suggests a way in which his account may be able to accommodate Harman’s no false lemmas requirement:

Perhaps our account can yield this result by treating “infers it from q” as the method the person uses to arrive at his belief that p. When q is false, the person using this method will not satisfy 3; for if p were false and the person arrived at his belief about the truth value of p, by inferring it from q, he still would believe p. Therefore, he does not know p unless he also uses some method M1 satisfying 3 and 4 that outweighs the defective one. In the case imagined, however, the person would not use the method if p were false. Nevertheless, we are holding the method fixed and asking what the person would believe, via this method, if p were false. (Nozick 1981, p. 189)

Peacocke notes that there are problems with this suggestion. He claims that to accept the suggestion is, in effect, to “rule out ever obtaining knowledge from known premises by known principles of inference” (Peacocke 1986, p. 130). Under Nozick’s suggestion the method for reaching the belief that p that is being held fixed is inferring p from q. Nozick claims that when q is false the person using this method will not satisfy condition 3. However, even in a case where q is true the person using this method will still not satisfy condition 3. For even in a case where q is true, if p were false and the person arrived at his belief about the truth
value of \( p \) by inferring it from \( q \), he would still believe that \( p \). As Peacocke points out,

Nozick seems in effect to be appealing to the condition (3’) which he takes as a consequence of his (3):

(3’) If it had been the case that (not-\( p \) and \( S \) infers \( p \) from \( q \)), it would have been the case that not-(\( S \) believes that \( p \)).

But no subject can ever meet (3’) since it is \emph{a priori} false: given that infers here is a matter of reaching beliefs, no one can infer \( p \) from \( q \) without believing \( p \). (Peacocke 1986, p. 120)

Peacocke suggests a way of refining Nozick’s account so as to more adequately accommodate Harman’s no false lemmas requirement. He initially offers the following condition that needs to be met if a belief is to be knowledge:

(U) A belief is knowledge only if it is reached by a total method such that use of any of its proper or improper initial sub-methods yield in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds a belief true in the world in which it is used. (\emph{ibid}, p. 134)

There are a number of different methods that one might use in reaching a belief – e.g. taking one’s experience at face value, applying various rules of inference, trusting the testimony of another. Each of these methods used for reaching a belief can be sub-methods used in a total method for reaching a belief. For example, if one reaches the belief that \( p \) by inferring it from \( q \) and \( r \), one reaches the belief that \( q \) by taking one’s experience at face value, and one reaches the belief that \( r \) by trusting the testimony of another, then one can say that the total method used for
reaching the belief that $p$ involves the sub-methods of taking one’s experience at face value, trusting the testimony of another, and applying certain rules of inference. According to Peacocke’s condition (U), if the total method used for reaching a belief that $p$ involves a sub-method that does not yield in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds a belief that is true in the world in which it is used, the belief that $p$ is not knowledge. If one reaches the belief that $p$ by inferring it from the false belief that $q$, then one’s belief that $p$ not does not meet Peacocke’s condition for knowledge. Since $q$ is false the method used for reaching the belief that $q$ does not yield in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds a belief that is true in the world in which it is used. So the total method used for reaching the belief that $p$ involves a sub-method that does not yield in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds a belief that is true in the world in which it is used.

Peacocke’s modification of Nozick’s counterfactual analysis of propositional knowledge manages to incorporate Harman’s no false lemmas requirement.\footnote{Both Nozick and Peacocke offer accounts of propositional knowledge that mention conditions which need to be met if propositional knowledge is to be acquired. It should be noted that under such an approach one will also need to supply conditions which need to be met if knowledge is to be preserved, if one is to have a complete and unified account of propositional knowledge.}

Peacocke goes on to clarify what he takes to be the boundaries of the method relevant to the status of a belief as knowledge. He suggests that they should be determined by the thinker’s operative reason for forming the belief. For example, when a subject believes that ‘that is a table’ on the basis of his experience as of a table, the method used for reaching the belief should not simply be characterised as
taking one's experience at face value. The method used for reaching the belief should, rather, be characterised as taking one's experience as of a table at face value, for the subject's operative reason for forming the belief that 'that is a table' is the fact that his experience is as of a table. Peacocke goes on to add that a belief meeting (U) will only be an instance of knowledge if the method used for reaching the belief is appropriate to its content. For the reasons outlined in the last chapter, Peacocke holds that if a belief is not reached by a method that is appropriate to its content, the belief will not be rationally held. The belief will not have been acquired in an epistemically permissible way, so it will not be justified, and such a belief cannot be knowledge.

With Peacocke's modified version of Nozick's counterfactual analysis in mind, let us return to the examples of existential beliefs based on experience given earlier. Can Peacocke's account adequately explain why the beliefs are not knowledge? In order to answer this question one needs to have specified the methods used for reaching the beliefs. For one needs to specify the methods used for reaching the beliefs if one is to determine whether they meet Peacocke's condition (U).
The Perceptual Grounds of Existential Belief

I have so far claimed that in the examples under consideration the subject’s existential beliefs are somehow based on his experiences. This claim is somewhat ambiguous. In each of the cases under consideration, the subject’s experience plays a rational role in the acquisition of his existential beliefs, but should one understand the cases as being ones in which the subject’s existential beliefs are directly grounded in his experiences – that is, should one understand the cases as being ones in which the subject’s existential beliefs are non-inferential beliefs that are justified by his experiences, or should one, rather, understand them as being cases in which the subject’s existential beliefs are grounded in non-inferential demonstrative beliefs that are justified by his experiences? Need one be committed to the claim that in each of the examples, a belief about a particular must have been operative in the subject’s acquisition of his existential belief?^2

One’s answer to this question should depend on whether one holds that the content of experience is particular or general. If one holds that the content of experience is particular, then one should accept that any world-directed existential belief one acquires via the method of taking some aspect of one’s experience at face value (i.e. a belief about what there is in the immediate environment) must be

^2 For a discussion of the claim that our perceptual demonstrative beliefs are fundamental to the acquisition of our existential beliefs about our immediate environment, see Snowdon 1992, p. 65-7
grounded in a belief about a particular. One should accept that if a world-directed existential belief is acquired via the method of taking some aspect of one's experience at face value, then a belief about a particular must have been operative in the acquisition of the belief. To take some aspect of one's experience at face value is to be committed to it being the case that some aspect of the content of one's experience is correct. If the content of one's experience is particular, then one will only be committed to it being the case that some aspect of the content of one's experience is correct if one holds a belief about a particular. So if one holds that the content of experience is particular, one should hold that any world-directed belief one acquires by the method of taking some aspect of one's experience at face value must either be a belief about a particular, or one that is ultimately grounded in a belief about a particular (i.e. a belief about a particular must play some role in grounding the belief).

If, on the other hand, one holds that the content of experience is general, then it seems one should have no reason to claim that the world-directed existential beliefs one acquires via the method of taking some aspect of one's experience at face value need be grounded in beliefs about particulars. For one should have no reason to deny that world-directed existential beliefs can be directly grounded in experience. If one holds that the content of experience is general, one will hold that an existential belief can be one that simply involves accepting some aspect of the content of one's experience. One should have no reason to deny that an existential
belief can be one that is acquired through simply taking at face value some aspect of the content of one’s experience. So one should have no reason to claim that if one reaches a world-directed belief via the method of taking some aspect of one’s experience at face value, then a belief about a particular must have operative in the acquisition of the belief. Those who claim that the content of experience is general may be able to hold that a belief about a particular can be directly grounded in experience, as we saw in the last chapter, but it seems that they should have no reason to claim that the world-directed existential beliefs one acquires via the method of taking one’s experience at face value need be grounded in such beliefs.

As far as the examples that have been introduced so far are concerned, Peacocke’s account appears to be able to explain why the subject’s existential beliefs are not knowledge whether we take the beliefs to be grounded in beliefs about particulars, or whether we take them to be directly grounded in experience.³ Take the case of the subject who reaches the belief that there is a clock in front of him on the basis of his hallucination as of a clock. Let us assume that the subject’s existential belief is grounded in the non-inferential demonstrative belief that ‘that clock is in front of

³ Snowdon supports the claim that our perceptual demonstrative beliefs are fundamental to the acquisition of our existential beliefs about our environment, by suggesting that it helps explain why a Gettier case involving an existential belief about the immediate environment is not knowledge (Snowdon 1992). However, Peacocke’s counterfactual account of knowledge also appears to be able to explain why the existential belief in the Gettier case Snowdon considers is not knowledge, whether or not we take the existential belief to be grounded in a demonstrative belief.
me' – a belief justified by his experience. The demonstrative belief is not true, for the demonstrative fails to refer. So the total method used for reaching the belief involves a sub-method that does not yield in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds a belief that is true in the world in which it is used. So the subject’s belief that there is a clock in front of him does not meet Peacocke’s condition (U).

Now let us assume that the subject’s existential belief is directly grounded in his experience – it is a non-inferential belief justified by his experience. The method used for reaching the belief is that of taking his experience as of a clock at face value. The subject’s experience would have occurred if no clock were present. So the method used for reaching the belief does not yield in some nearby possible worlds a belief that is true in the world in which it is used. The belief fails to meet Peacocke’s condition (U). We can explain why the subject lacks knowledge in both instances by pointing to the fact that the belief fails to meet condition (U), a condition that all beliefs have to meet if they are to be knowledge.

Take the case of the subject who reaches the belief that there is a red round object in front of him on the basis of his misperception of a white round object. Let us assume that the subject’s existential belief is grounded in the non-inferential demonstrative belief that ‘that round object in front of me is red’ – a belief justified by his experience. The demonstrative belief is false, for the object he is referring to is white. So the subject’s total method for reaching the belief involves a sub-method that does not yield in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds a
belief that is true in the worlds in which it is used. The subject’s existential belief that there is a red round object in front of him does not meet Peacocke’s condition (U). Now let us assume that the subject’s existential belief is directly grounded in his experience. The method used for reaching the belief is that of taking his experience as of a red round object at face value. The subject’s experience would have occurred if there were no red round object in front of him. So the method used for reaching the belief does not yield in some nearby possible worlds a belief that is true in the world in which it is used. The belief fails to meet Peacocke’s condition (U). Again, in both instances we can explain why the subject’s belief is not knowledge by pointing to the fact that the belief fails to meet condition (U).

In these particular examples Peacocke’s account yields the same verdict on the status of the existential beliefs as knowledge whether we take the beliefs to be inferential or non-inferential. Our decision as to whether we take the beliefs to be directly grounded in experience or grounded in demonstrative judgements does not seem to make a difference to the epistemological status conferred by Peacocke’s account on the beliefs. However, there are other examples for which such a decision does make a difference. One such example is introduced by Nozick. Nozick considers the case of a subject who comes to believe that there is a vase in a certain box. The subject in fact sees an illuminated hologram of a vase, part of a machine that alternates between displaying the hologram and the real vase contained in the box. Nozick notes that the example can be set up in such a way
that it is only because there is a real vase contained in the box that an illuminated hologram of a vase is sometimes displayed. It could be that the machine only displays an illuminated hologram of a vase when a vase is in the box pressing down on a lever - the machine somehow detects a vase and not another thing. So in this case, if there were no vase in the box, the subject would not have a visual experience as of a vase (caused by the hologram) and so would not believe that there is a vase in the box, and in nearby possible worlds in which there is a vase in the box the subject would come to believe, by looking, that there was.

In this case, if we assume that the subject’s existential belief that ‘there is a vase in the box’ is grounded in the demonstrative belief that ‘that vase is in the box’, then we should accept that the existential belief does not meet Peacocke’s condition (U). The demonstrative belief is not true, for the demonstrative does not refer to the vase. So the total method used for reaching the existential belief involves a sub-method that does not yield in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds a belief which is true in the world in which it is used. If, on the other hand, we assume that the subject’s existential belief is a non-inferential belief that is directly grounded in his experience, then we must accept that the belief does meet Peacocke’s condition (U). The method used for reaching the belief is that of taking an experience as of a vase in a box at face value. The method by which the belief is reached yields in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds a belief that is true in the worlds in which it is used. In this case our decision as to whether we take
the existential belief to be grounded in a demonstrative judgement, or directly
grounded in experience, does make a difference to the epistemological status
conferred by Peacocke’s account on the belief. The verdict that the belief is not
knowledge fits better with our intuitions about the case. If we assume that the
belief is a non-inferential belief that is directly grounded in experience, then
Peacocke’s account yields a counterintuitive verdict.

Nozick is willing to accept the verdict that the subject’s belief is knowledge.
Nozick accepts that the subject’s belief meets his conditions for knowledge. Note
that this implies that Nozick is assuming that the subject’s existential belief is a
non-inferential belief that is directly grounded in the subject’s experience. Recall
that Nozick claims that his account can incorporate Harman’s no false lemmas
requirement. Since Nozick claims that the subject’s belief meets his conditions for
knowledge, Nozick must be assuming that Harman’s no false lemmas requirement
is not violated. Harman’s no false lemmas requirement would be violated if the
subject were inferring the existential belief that ‘there is a vase in the box’ from the
false demonstrative belief that ‘that vase is in the box’. The case would be like
other Gettier cases with a counterfactual twist in which Harman’s no false lemmas
requirement is not met. Nozick concedes that his verdict that the belief is
knowledge might appear somewhat counterintuitive. He claims that this is because
the subject has false beliefs about the process via which he acquires the belief. The
subject knows that there is a vase in the box even when he is seeing a hologram but thinks he is seeing a vase. Nozick then remarks,

... however, we certainly do not want to hold that a person knows that $p$ only if he has no false beliefs about the process via which he acquires the belief that $p$. The Greeks had many false beliefs about the visual process. (Nozick 1981, p.190)

Nozick is surely right to suggest that the false beliefs the Greeks held about the visual process did not prevent them from gaining perceptual knowledge. This is because those false beliefs were not operative in producing many of their perceptual beliefs. Their beliefs that were inferred from the false beliefs they had about the visual process will not have been knowledge, because they will have violated Harman’s no false lemmas requirement. But most of their perceptual beliefs will not have been inferred from those false beliefs, so most of their perceptual beliefs will have been knowledge. Nozick is therefore right to claim that we do not want to hold that a subject’s belief can only be knowledge if the subject has no false beliefs about the process via which he acquires the belief. This might, then, lead one to question whether Nozick has given the correct diagnosis of what is counterintuitive about the claim that the subject knows that there is a vase in the box. What seems to be driving our intuition that the subject does not know that there is a vase in the box is not the fact the subject has false beliefs about the

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4 For an objection to Nozick’s analysis of the example along these lines, see Peacocke 1986, p. 128-9.
process via which he acquires the belief, rather, it is the fact that the subject does not actually see that there is a vase in the box.

We have the following intuition concerning perceptual knowledge:

(INT) a non-inferential, world-directed, perceptually-based belief that \( p \) can only be knowledge if the subject is actually perceiving that \( p \).

If a subject’s experience is not a successful perception that \( p \), then a non-inferential belief that \( p \) based on that experience cannot be knowledge. An adequate account of propositional knowledge should be able to accommodate (INT). A potential problem for the kind of counterfactual analysis we have been considering is that it appears to be unable to accommodate (INT) if one assumes that world-directed existential beliefs can be directly grounded in experience. So if one assumes that world-directed existential beliefs can be directly grounded in experience it is possible to provide counterexamples to the account. As the example that Nozick considers shows, it is possible to come up with certain Gettier cases with a counterfactual twist that do not violate Harman’s no false lemmas requirement. The counterfactual analysis of knowledge is unable to explain why such Gettier cases do not involve instances of knowledge. One can only use the counterfactual analysis to explain why such beliefs are not knowledge if one holds that world-directed existential beliefs cannot be directly grounded in experience. One needs to hold that any justified world-directed belief one acquires via the method of taking
one's experience at face value must either be a belief about some particular, or one that is ultimately grounded in a belief about a particular.

As I mentioned earlier, this is a natural assumption to make if one holds that the content of experience is particular, but not if one holds that the content of experience is general. If one holds that the content of experience is general, it seems odd to deny that a world-directed existential belief can be directly grounded in an experience with an intentional content that represents the existence of objects in the world possessing certain properties. Those who hold that the content of experience is particular can make use of the kind of counterfactual analysis of propositional knowledge suggested by Peacocke in order to explain why the subject lacks knowledge in the case that Nozick considers. But what explanation of the subject's lack of knowledge can be given by those who hold that the content of experience is general? If they are to provide an adequate explanation of the subject's lack of knowledge, those who hold that the content of experience is general must either (a) specify some other condition that is not met by the subject's belief but which needs to be met by a belief if it is to be knowledge, or (b) explain why they are warranted in rejecting the assumption that a world-directed existential belief can be directly grounded in experience.
If one is to take option (a) one must accommodate (INT) in one's specification of the conditions that a belief needs to meet if it is to be knowledge, while still allowing that world-directed existential beliefs can be directly grounded in experience. The conditions required for a belief to be knowledge should be such that they are only met by a non-inferential, world-directed, perceptually-based belief that \( p \), if the subject is actually perceiving that \( p \). What could such conditions be if one allows that world-directed existential beliefs can be directly grounded in experience?

The inclusion of a condition specifying that a belief has to be produced in way that makes it reliable if it is to be knowledge does not achieve what is required. The conditions necessary for a belief to be knowledge should be such that they are only met by a non-inferential, world-directed, perceptually-based belief that \( p \) if the conditions necessary for the subject to be perceiving that \( p \) are also met. A non-inferential, world-directed, perceptually-based belief that \( p \) can meet the reliability condition without it being the case that the conditions necessary for the subject to be perceiving that \( p \) are also met. This point was discussed in chapter three, where it was argued that one should reject the claim that the CTP should be abandoned in favour of the RTP. According to the CTP, the conditions necessary for a subject to be perceiving that \( p \) include the causal condition that the subject's experience be appropriately caused by objects in the world. If one is to accept the CTP then one must accept that the conditions required for a belief to be knowledge should be
such that they are only met by a non-inferential, world-directed, perceptually-based belief that \( p \) if this causal condition is also met. It might be thought that one should, therefore, include in the conditions required for a belief to be knowledge, some condition that concerns the causal ancestry of the belief – e.g. one should include the condition that if a belief that \( p \) is to be knowledge, then the belief should be appropriately causally related to the fact that \( p \). However, as we saw earlier, there is a problem with this suggestion. Such a condition is not one that all beliefs have to meet if they are to be knowledge. It is possible to provide counterexamples to the claim that such a condition is required for propositional knowledge.

The problem is that if one allows that world-directed existential beliefs can be directly grounded in experience one appears to be unable to provide a unified account of propositional knowledge that can accommodate (INT) – the intuition that a non-inferential, world-directed, perceptually-based belief that \( p \) can only be knowledge if the subject is actually perceiving that \( p \). If one allows that world-directed existential beliefs can be directly grounded in experience one cannot explain the subject’s lack of knowledge in the example that Nozick considers by pointing to a condition that the belief in question fails to meet but which needs to be met by all beliefs if they are to be knowledge.
A defeasibility analysis of propositional knowledge will not be of any help in overcoming this problem. The basic idea behind a defeasibility approach to an analysis of propositional knowledge is that in order to determine whether a justified true belief is knowledge, one needs to consider whether there are truths which would have destroyed the believer’s justification if he had believed them. The simplest defeasibility analysis requires that if a justified true belief that \( p \) is to be knowledge, then the following condition has to be met:

There is no true proposition \( q \) such that if \( q \) were added to the subject’s beliefs he would no longer be justified in believing that \( p \).

If one could accept such a straightforward defeasibility analysis of propositional knowledge, then one could explain why the subject does not know there is a vase in the box, in the case Nozick considers, without having to assume that the belief is grounded in some other belief. One could claim that there is some true proposition \( q \) such that if \( q \) were added to the subject’s beliefs he would no longer be justified in believing that there is a vase in the box – the proposition \( q \) being the proposition that the subject is not seeing a vase. However, one cannot accept such a straightforward defeasibility analysis.

Lehrer and Paxson have come up with the following counterexample to such an account:
Suppose I see a man walk into a library and remove a book from the library by concealing it beneath his coat. Since I am sure that the man is Tom Grabit, whom I have often seen before when he has attended my classes, I report that I know that Tom Grabit has removed the book. However, suppose further that Mrs. Grabit, the mother of Tom, has averred that on the day in question Tom was not in the library, indeed, was thousands of miles away, and that Tom's identical twin brother, John Grabit, was in the library. Imagine, moreover, that I am entirely ignorant of the fact that Mrs. Grabit has said these things. The statement that she has said these things would defeat any justification I have for believing that Tom Grabit removed the book, according to our present definition of defeasibility....

The preceding might seem acceptable until we finish the story by adding that Mrs. Grabit is a compulsive and pathological liar, that John Grabit is a fiction of her demented mind, and that Tom Grabit took the book as I believed. Once this is added it should be apparent that I did know that Tom Grabit removed the book. (Lehrer and Paxson 1969, p.228)

It has been suggested that in order to avoid such counterexamples, a defeasibility analysis of propositional knowledge should be modified so that it somehow incorporates the following kind of requirement for a justified true belief that \( p \) to be knowledge:

If there is a true proposition \( q \) such that if \( q \) were added to the subject's beliefs he would no longer be justified in believing that \( p \), then there is also a true proposition
Such that if \( q \) and \( r \) were both added to the subject's beliefs his justification for believing that \( p \) would be restored.

If one is to accept such a modified defeasibility analysis of propositional knowledge, then one can no longer explain why the subject does not know that there is a vase in the box if one assumes that the subject's belief is directly grounded in experience. For although there is a true proposition \( q \) such that if \( q \) were added to the subject's beliefs he would no longer be justified in believing that there is a vase in the box, there is also a true proposition \( r \) such that if \( q \) and \( r \) were both added to the subject's beliefs his justification for holding the belief would be restored — proposition \( q \) being the proposition that the subject is not seeing the vase, proposition \( r \) being the proposition that the subject would not be having an experience as of a vase in the box if there were no vase in the box.

If one is to provide an adequate explanation of the subject's lack of knowledge in the case that Nozick considers, one needs to reject the assumption that world-directed existential beliefs can be directly grounded in experience. Nozick's example shows that if one is to have a unified account of propositional knowledge that can accommodate (INT) — the intuition that a non-inferential, world-directed, perceptually-based belief that \( p \) can only be knowledge if the subject is actually perceiving that \( p \) — one needs to accept the following claim: any justified world-directed belief one acquires by taking one's experience at face value must either be
a belief about a particular or one that is ultimately grounded in a belief about a particular. This brings out an important aspect of the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception. If the only world-directed beliefs that can be directly grounded in experience are beliefs about particulars, then the only world-directed knowledge that can be directly grounded in experience is knowledge about particulars. The only world-directed knowledge about particulars that experience can provide one with is knowledge that concerns the particulars one is aware of in having the experience. So the only world-directed knowledge that can be directly grounded in experience is knowledge that concerns the particulars one is aware of in having the experience. If a world-directed existential belief is to be perceptual knowledge, it must be grounded in knowledge that concerns some particular one is aware of in having the experience. This aspect of the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception presents a serious challenge to those who hold that the content of experience is general.

In the last chapter I mentioned a challenge that those who accept the generality thesis face – namely that of explaining how a belief about a particular can be directly grounded in experience. I suggested that this challenge is one that they appear to be able to meet. The discussion of this chapter has now led to a new and, I suggest, more serious challenge that those who accept the generality thesis face – namely that of explaining why existential beliefs cannot be directly grounded in experience.
Those who hold that the content of experience is particular have available an explanation of why world-directed existential beliefs cannot be directly grounded in experience that is not available to those who hold that the content of experience is general. This explanation was mentioned earlier. To take some aspect of one’s experience at face value is to be committed to it being the case that some aspect of the content of one’s experience is correct. If the content of one’s experience is particular, then one will only be committed to it being the case that some aspect of the content of one’s experience is correct if one holds a belief about a particular. So if one holds that the content of experience is particular, one should hold that any world-directed belief one acquires by the method of taking some aspect of one’s experience at face value must either be a belief about a particular, or one that is ultimately grounded in a belief about a particular. How can those who hold that the content of experience is general explain why world-directed existential beliefs cannot be directly grounded in experience?

They might explain why world-directed existential beliefs cannot be directly grounded in experience in either of two ways. They might explain why such beliefs cannot be non-inferential, perceptually-based beliefs, or they might accept that such beliefs can be non-inferential, perceptually-based beliefs, and explain why they are not directly justified by experience. A non-inferential, world-directed,
perceptually-based belief is one that is acquired by the method of taking at face value some aspect of one's experience. If one holds that the content of experience is general one will hold that an existential belief can be one that involves simply accepting some aspect of the content of one's experience - accepting some aspect of what phenomenally seems to one to be the case. So if one holds that the content of experience is general, one's claim that the method used to reach such a belief cannot be that of simply taking at face value some aspect of one's experience will be unwarranted. One will not have a satisfactory explanation of why existential beliefs cannot be non-inferential, perceptually-based beliefs. If those who accept the generality thesis cannot explain why a world-directed existential belief cannot be a non-inferential, perceptually-based belief, then in order to explain why such a belief cannot be directly grounded in experience, they will need to explain why such a belief cannot be directly justified by experience. They will have an adequate explanation of why such a belief cannot be directly justified by experience if they can explain why the transition between an experience and such a belief is not an epistemically permissible one. However, any explanation of why the transition between an experience with an existentially quantified content and a belief with an existentially quantified content cannot be epistemically permissible, is going to look *ad hoc*. One will only have an adequate explanation of why such beliefs cannot be directly grounded in experience if one holds that the content of experience is particular. If one has reason to hold that any world-directed belief one acquires by the method of taking some aspect of one's experience at face value must either be
a belief about a particular or one that is ultimately grounded in a belief about a particular, then this gives one reason to hold that the content of experience is particular.

Summary

In chapter four I argued that the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary concept of perception involves a rejection of the generality thesis. I argued that one needs to reject the claim that the content of experience is general if one is to adequately accommodate the particularity of perception - i.e. the fact that successful perceptual experiences involve an awareness of particulars in the world. At the beginning of the last chapter I raised the question as to whether this conclusion is epistemologically significant. Can the account of experience that I have argued fits best with our ordinary concept of perception be used to throw any new light on the link between the concepts of perception and knowledge? In order to answer this question I have been exploring the ways in which the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant. For if one can establish that the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant, and one can establish that one needs to reject the generality thesis if one is to adequately accommodate the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception, one can thereby establish that the rejection of the generality thesis is epistemologically significant. One can establish that the account of experience that I have argued fits best with
our ordinary concept of perception can be used to throw new light on the link between the concepts of perception and knowledge.

In this chapter I have been arguing that there is an aspect of the epistemological significance of the particularity of perception that can only be properly accommodated if one rejects the generality thesis. Those who accept the generality thesis may be able to accommodate the fact that experience can directly ground demonstrative knowledge that concerns the particulars one is aware of in having the experience, as we saw in the last chapter, but they cannot adequately accommodate the fact that the only world-directed knowledge that experience can directly ground is knowledge that concerns the particulars one is aware of in having the experience. For although those who hold the generality thesis may be able to explain how experience can directly ground world-directed demonstrative judgements, they cannot adequately explain why experience cannot directly ground world-directed existential judgements. This presents them with a problem. For one needs to reject the assumption that experience can directly ground world-directed existential judgements if one is to adequately accommodate the following intuition we have concerning perceptual knowledge: (INT) a subject’s non-inferential, world-directed, perceptually-based belief that $p$ can only be knowledge if the subject is actually perceiving that $p$. If one does not reject the assumption that world-directed existential judgements can be directly grounded in experience, then one cannot provide a unified account of propositional knowledge that adequately
accommodates (INT). So one cannot provide an adequate explanation of why certain Gettier cases that violate (INT) do not involve instances of knowledge.

Strawson’s rationale for the CTP depends on a claim concerning the link between the concepts of perception and knowledge that is entailed by (INT). The claim is that one’s experience must be a perception if it is to provide one with non-inferential world-directed knowledge – a hallucinatory experience cannot provide one with such knowledge. Strawson argues that one needs to accept the CTP if one is to preserve this common sense link between the concepts of perception and knowledge. In light of the discussion of this chapter, I now want to briefly comment on this claim.

Strawson suggests that the epistemological difference between a perception and a hallucination is to be explained in terms of the reliability of the experiences involved. The suggestion is that an experience which is a perception is reliable / “dependable”, and an experience which is a hallucination is unreliable / “undependable”. A non-inferential world-directed belief based on an unreliable experience cannot be knowledge, so it is only perceptions that can provide one with such knowledge. Strawson goes on to claim that the assumption that an experience is reliable is the same as the assumption that the experience is appropriately caused by the objects being perceived. So the notion of the causal
dependence of experience on objects of experience is needed to preserve the common sense link between the concepts of perception and knowledge.

In chapter three we saw that we have reason to reject this rationale for the CTP. The assumption that an experience is reliable is not the same as the assumption that the experience is appropriately caused by the objects being perceived. Furthermore, an experience can be reliable without being a perception. A new rationale for the CTP was suggested based on the idea that one needs to accept the CTP if one is to accommodate the fact that successful perceptual experiences have particularity. In this chapter I have been arguing that the particularity of perception is epistemologically significant. An experience must have particularity if it is to provide one with non-inferential world-directed knowledge. An experience that does not have particularity cannot provide one with such knowledge, no matter how reliable the experience may be. For an experience can only directly ground world-directed knowledge that concerns the particulars one is aware of in having the experience. So if one can defend the claim that one needs to accept the CTP if one is to accommodate the particularity of perception, one may be able to defend the claim that one needs to accept the CTP if one is to preserve the common sense link between the concepts of perception and knowledge – i.e. the fact that an experience must be a perception if it is to provide one with non-inferential, world-directed knowledge. However, the defence of the claim that one needs to accept the CTP if one is to accommodate the particularity of perception that was offered
in chapter three, involved the claim that the truth-evaluable content of an experience does not, in itself, determine which particular objects the subject is perceiving. This claim rests on the assumption that the generality thesis is correct. So an issue that remains to be resolved, is whether a rejection of the generality thesis undermines the CTP.

Before dealing with this issue, however, I want to address the question of whether one has to reject the common element thesis if one holds that the content of a successful perceptual experience is particular and not general. The intentional theory of experience, as I am defining it, involves the claim that it is possible to provide a positive account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates. In chapter one I suggested that Robinson’s causal argument shows that this commits the intentional theorist to the common element thesis – i.e. the thesis that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. If the intentional theorist has to accept the generality thesis in order to hold on to the common element thesis, then the intentional theorist may have to maintain that the content of experience is general and not particular. However, we have seen that we should reject the generality thesis if we want to offer an account of experience that best fits with our ordinary, common sense view of perception, and one that preserves the common sense link between our concepts of perception and knowledge. If the intentional theorist has to accept the generality thesis, then the intentional theory of experience may not,
after all, be one that fits neatly with our ordinary, common sense view of perception. I shall be addressing this concern in the next chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Disjunctivism and the Content of Experience

Those philosophers who reject the common element thesis – i.e. the thesis that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating – accept, what has been called, a disjunctive account of experience. The disjunctivist does not deny that a hallucinatory experience can be subjectively indistinguishable from a successful perceptual experience. The disjunctivist claims that it can be true of both the subject who perceives an F and the subject who hallucinates an F, that it seems to the subject as if an F is present. But the disjunctivist rejects the assumption that its seeming to the subject as if an F is present need be made true by one kind of experiential state. Under the disjunctivist’s account, the fact that it seems to the subject as if an F is present can be made true either by the subject having an experience of the kind which occurs when he is perceiving an F, or its merely seeming to the subject as if he is having such an experience.

The disjunctive theory was first introduced by Hinton, and has been developed in various ways by Snowdon, McDowell, and Martin.¹ The differences between the varieties of disjunctivism need not concern us. The important thing to note is that what is common to them all is a rejection of the common element thesis. Do those

who hold an intentional theory of experience have to accept the generality thesis if they are to reject a disjunctive account of experience?

As we saw in the last chapter, Burge rejects the generality thesis. Burge holds that the content of visual experience contains a demonstrative element. According to Burge, when a subject visually perceives an object, the demonstrative element in the content of the subject’s experience applies to the object of which the subject is aware. So, under Burge’s account, the content of the experience a subject has when he visually perceives the world is to be specified by using terms that refer to the particulars of which the subject is aware in having the experience. Burge also rejects disjunctivism. Burge holds that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. Is Burge’s position tenable?

In this chapter I shall be arguing that it is not. I shall argue that in rejecting the generality thesis Burge incurs a commitment to a disjunctive account of experience. The conclusion of the argument I shall be offering is that if one claims that the content of experience contains demonstrative elements that apply to perceived objects, then one will have to accept that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. Before introducing the argument, I want to make clear that the argument does not rely on a certain account of demonstrative thought.
Burge on Demonstrative Thought

Under Burge's account of the content of visual experience, the truth-evaluable content of the experience a subject has when he visually perceives the world is object-involving. When a subject visually perceives an object, the veridicality of the subject's experience is dependent on how things are with the object being perceived. The condition required for the experience to be veridical involves the particular object being perceived. If the subject were perceiving a different object, or if the subject were hallucinating, then the condition required for the subject's experience to be veridical would not involve the same object. The truth-evaluable content of the subject's experience would not be the same. So, under Burge's account, a successful visual experience and a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination do not have the same truth-evaluable content. If one assumes that the truth-evaluable content of a mental state that involves a demonstrative element is essential to the type of mental state it is, then one will accept that adopting Burge's account of the content of visual experience commits one to disjunctivism.

One might be led to accept that the truth-evaluable content of an experience that contains a demonstrative element is essential to it, if one accepts the kind of account of demonstrative thought that is outlined by Gareth Evans in *The Varieties of Reference*. In that work Evans argues that the truth-evaluable content of a demonstrative or indexical thought is essential to it. On his view, the thought a subject has when he demonstratively refers to a perceived object is not one the
subject could have in the absence of the object. According to Evans, in explaining the nature of such a thought one must appeal to the object that the thought is of. Under Evans' account, it is not just that the truth-evaluable content of such a thought is object-involving, the thought itself is object-dependent.

In the argument I shall offer for the claim that Burge's account of visual experience commits him to disjunctivism, I shall not be assuming that Evans' account of demonstrative thought is correct. In a number of places, Burge has elaborated a plausible alternative to the account of demonstrative thought offered by Evans. On Burge's view, the thought that a subject has when he demonstratively refers to an object is one that the subject could have had if he were referring to a different object, or if he were failing to refer. The very same thought could have had a different truth-evaluable content if the context in which the thought occurred had been different.²

Burge posits an object-independent element to a *de re* thought, which is essential to it, in addition to the truth-evaluable content of the thought, which is inessential to it. According to Burge, the object-independent element of a *de re* thought can be common to thoughts with different particular truth-evaluable contents. The object-independent element of the thought and the context in which the thought

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² See, for example, Burge 1977.
occurs provide a truth-evaluable content, but the two elements are separable.

Burge claims that,

To be *de re*, a thought should both contain a primitive demonstrative element in its content and involve successful reference (application) through the demonstrative element to an object or *re*.

... The two requirements for being a *de re* thought are separable... It is possible for an applied demonstrative element to fail to have a referent... Moreover, since some demonstrative token applications that in fact have a referent might have failed to have had one (if the contextual circumstances had been different), some thought tokens that are in fact *de re* are not essentially *de re*. The very same demonstrative thought might have lacked a referent if the world beyond the thought had been different. (Burge 1991, p. 208)

Burge offers an elegant account of the truth conditions of demonstrative thoughts that lack a referent. Burge uses a negative free logic in giving the truth conditions of statements. On his account, atomic predications containing empty terms are false. So, according to Burge, when a subject entertains a demonstrative thought that fails to refer to anything, the subject’s thought has a truth-evaluable content that is false.³

Burge’s account of demonstrative thought, and his account of the truth conditions of demonstrative thoughts which lack a referent, are not the targets of the argument in this chapter. The argument I shall offer for the claim that one incurs a

³ See Burge 1974.
commitment to disjunctivism if one holds that the content of experience contains a
demonstrative element is not one that can be used to establish an equivalent claim
in the case of demonstrative thought – i.e. it cannot be used to establish that the
type of demonstrative thought a subject has when he successfully refers to an
object is not one the subject could have if he were failing to refer. An acceptance
of the argument I shall offer is consistent with an acceptance of Burge's account of
demonstrative thought. The argument I shall offer makes use of considerations that
apply only to sensory experience.

The Classification of Sensory Experience

There are considerations relevant to the classification of sensory experiences into
fundamental kinds that are not in the same way relevant to the classification of
other non-sensory mental states into fundamental kinds. When we classify sensory
experiences into fundamental kinds, the notion of the phenomenal character of the
mental states involved plays a role which it does not play in the classification of
other non-sensory mental states.

When one has a sensory experience, there is something it is like for one to have the
experience. This aspect of an experience – what it is like for one to have the
experience – is what I am referring to in talking of the phenomenal character of
experience. If what it is like for one to have a particular experience is the same as
what it is like for one to have another distinct experience, then the two experiences
share the same phenomenal character. The phenomenal character of an experience is determined by its phenomenal properties – the what-it-is-like properties of the experience. Two distinct particular sensory episodes have the same phenomenal character if they share the same phenomenal properties. A guiding assumption in the classification of sensory experiences into fundamental kinds is that if two experiences are of the same fundamental kind, then they have the same phenomenal character – i.e. what it is like for the subject to have each experience is the same. If what it is like for one to have a particular experience is not the same as what it is like for one to have another, distinct experience, then the two experiences are not of the same fundamental kind.

Sensory experiences are episodic aspects of the mind. Other episodic aspects of the mind include bodily feelings, sensations, and imaginings. These episodic aspects of the mind can be contrasted with other aspects of the mind such as states of knowledge, belief, intention and desire, which are non-episodic. While it makes sense to talk of what it is like for a subject to be having some mental episode, it is not clear that it makes sense to talk of what it is like for a subject to be in a non-episodic mental state. For example, while it makes sense to talk of what it is like for a subject to have a certain visual experience, it is not clear that it makes sense

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4 The useful distinction between episodic and non-episodic aspects of the mind is made by Mike Martin. There is an excellent discussion of the distinction and its relevance to issues of phenomenal consciousness in a draft of ch. 2 of his forthcoming *Uncovering Appearances*. My discussion of the distinction is very much derived from Martin’s discussion of the distinction in that draft.
to talk of what it is like for a subject to believe that two plus two equals four. So one should not expect that a classification of beliefs into fundamental kinds should appeal to what it is like for the subject to hold those beliefs.

There are, of course, episodes of thinking and not just episodes of sensing. It makes sense to talk of what it is like for a subject to consciously entertain a thought on a particular occasion. So we might say that episodes of thinking have a conscious character, just as episodes of sensing have a phenomenal character. However, the conscious character of an episode of thinking is not relevant to the classification of the thought entertained by the subject, in the way in which the phenomenal character of an episode of sensing is relevant to the classification of the experience had by the subject. We do not expect that what it is like for a subject to consciously entertain a thought on a particular occasion need be the same as what it is like for the subject to consciously entertain the same thought on a different occasion. Different episodes of thinking the same thought may have different conscious characters. We do, however, expect that what it is like for a subject to have an experience on a particular occasion will be the same as what it is like for the subject to have the same kind of experience on a different occasion.

The phenomenal character that an experience has is essential to the type of mental state it is. The claim that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is one that the subject could have if the object of experience were not present, is
true only if that experience could have the same phenomenal character if the object of experience were not present. Given that the phenomenal character of an experience is essential to it, the following claim made by Martin Davies seems, on the face of it, to present a challenge to Burge's account of experience. Davies claims that,

for the experiences of a given subject a difference in perceptual content requires a difference in intrinsic phenomenal character. (Davies 1992, p. 43)

In talking of 'perceptual content' here, Davies is referring to the truth-evaluable content of experience. So the claim is that if two experiences of a given subject have different truth-evaluable contents, then those two experiences must have different phenomenal characters.

Under Burge's account of the content of experience, the truth evaluable content of the experience I have when I perceive an object is dependent on the object perceived. That is to say, I could not have an experience with the same truth-evaluable content if I were not perceiving that object. If Davies' claim is correct, it would follow that I could not have an experience with the same phenomenal character if I were not perceiving that object. So, given that the phenomenal character of an experience is essential to the kind of mental state it is, it would follow that the kind of experience I have when I perceive an object is not one that I could have if I were hallucinating. This is the claim made by the disjunctivist. Since Burge rejects disjunctivism, Davies' claim seems to threaten Burge's account of experience.
But why should we accept Davies’ claim? Why should we accept that there is such a close connection between the truth-evaluable content of an experience and the phenomenal character of the experience? I first want to examine why one might think that Davies’ claim would hold if the generality thesis were true.

**General Content and the Phenomenal Character of Experience**

The phenomenal character of an experience is determined by the experience’s phenomenal properties – the what-it-is-like properties of the experience. If two experiences have the same phenomenal properties, then what it is like for the subject to have each experience is the same. Determining what the phenomenal character of an experience is, involves determining what the phenomenal properties of the experience are.

It has been noted that when one perceives the world and one is asked to attend to what one’s experience is like – to attend to the phenomenal properties of one’s experience – it seems that the only items available for one to directly attend to are the objects of experience and the properties that they seem to possess. The properties that the objects in the world seem to one to possess are not themselves the phenomenal properties of the experience. If an object before one seems to be red and round one does not want to say that the experience itself has the phenomenal properties of seeming to be red and seeming to be round. Even when
one knows that one’s experience is a hallucination, so one knows that one is not
directly attending to any objects in the world, one cannot conceive of the
properties that appear to be available for one to directly attend to, to be properties
of the experience itself.

The intentionalist will say that the properties that appear to be available for one to
directly attend to in having an experience, are the properties represented by the
experience. The properties represented by an experience are not themselves
properties of the experience. However, it is to these represented properties that
one must attend if one is to determine what one’s experience is like. So it seems
that one can only attend to what one’s experience is like – one can only attend to
the phenomenal properties of one’s experience – through attending to things which
are not taken to be properties of one’s experience.\footnote{For a discussion of this claim see Martin 1999.} One attends to what one’s
experience is like through attending to the objects of experience (or the putative
objects of experience) and the properties that one’s experience represents those
(putative) objects as having.

This suggests that one acquires knowledge about what one’s experience is like by
first acquiring knowledge about how one’s experience represents the world to be.
By attending to the objects of experience (or putative objects of experience) and
noting how they seem to me to be, I can discover what properties are represented
by my experience, but I can also thereby discover what my experience is like. I can discover that my experience seems to me to be one that represents the existence of an object as possessing those properties. If I have a second, distinct experience that has different representational properties, then the properties represented by my experience are different and so the way the world seems to me to be is different, but what my experience is like for me – the phenomenal character of my experience – is also different. My experience no longer seems to me to be one that represents the existence of an object as possessing those same properties.

So a difference in the representational properties of two experiences of a given subject is sufficient for a difference in the phenomenal characters of the subject’s experiences – it is sufficient for a difference in what the experiences are like for the subject. So if the generality thesis is correct, then it seems that Davies’ claim does hold. If two experiences of a given subject have different truth-evaluable contents, then those two experiences must have different phenomenal characters. For if the two experiences have different truth-evaluable contents, then the two experiences have different representational properties, and a difference in the representational properties of two experiences is sufficient for a difference in the phenomenal characters of the experiences. Does Davies’ claim still hold if we reject the generality thesis and accept Burge’s account of the content of experience?
Demonstrative Content and the Phenomenal Character of Experience

Under Burge's account, if the difference in truth-evaluable content of two experiences of a given subject is due to a difference in the properties represented by those two experiences, then the two experiences will have different phenomenal characters. For a difference in the properties represented by two experiences is sufficient for a difference in the phenomenal characters of the experiences. But under Burge's account, two experiences that represent the same properties can have different truth-evaluable contents. Should we also accept that two such experiences have different phenomenal characters, or should we say that the experiences have the same phenomenal character?

Consider two experiences of a given subject, both having a perceptual content of the form 'that F is G'. If the object to which the demonstrative element in the content of experience 1 applies is not the same as the object to which the demonstrative element in the content of experience 2 applies, then the two experiences have different truth-evaluable contents. When the subject has experience 1 and attends to the object of experience, all of the properties that that object seems to him to have will be the same as the properties that the object of experience 2 seems to him to have when he attends to that object. The way each object of experience seems to the subject to be will be the same. The properties represented by the two experiences will be the same. But the claim that the two
experiences thereby have the same phenomenal properties does not automatically follow.

When we are trying to determine what the phenomenal character of an experience is, we are not simply trying to determine what properties are represented by the experience, we are trying to determine what the phenomenal properties of the experience are. The properties represented by an experience are not identical with the phenomenal properties of the experience. So to establish that two experiences represent the same properties is not, in itself, to establish that the two experiences have the same phenomenal properties. So far it has merely been suggested that a difference in the properties represented by two experiences is sufficient for a difference in the phenomenal characters of the experiences.

If one holds the generality thesis one can say that experience 1 and experience 2 have the same phenomenal character, for both experiences seem to the subject to be ones that represent the existence of an F which is G. However, if Burge’s account of the content of experience is correct, then experience 1 does not seem to the subject to be one that represents the existence of an F which is G. For when the subject has the experience it does not seem to him as if ‘there is an F which is G’, rather, it seems to the subject as if ‘that F is G’. We would be misdescribing the phenomenal character of the experience if we said that the experience seems to the subject to be one that represents the existence of an F which is G. This would be
the phenomenal character of the experience if the generality thesis were true. So how are we to characterise the phenomenal character of the experience under Burge’s account?

If, when the subject has the experience, it seems to him that ‘that F is G’, then perhaps we should say that the experience seems to the subject to be one that represents that F as being G (where the demonstrative ‘that F’ is used to refer to the object to which the demonstrative element in the content of the experience applies). Recall that the phenomenal character of an experience – what an experience is like for the subject – is determined, at least in part, by what seems to the subject to be the case in having the experience. Under Burge’s account, one has to refer to the object of experience 1 if one is to specify what seems to the subject to be the case in having the experience. So perhaps one needs to refer to the object of experience 1 if one is to adequately characterise what the experience is like for the subject. Perhaps one has to refer to the object of experience 1 in order to adequately characterise the phenomenal character of the experience – i.e. what phenomenal properties it has. Can we accept this suggestion and also claim that experience 2 has the same phenomenal character as experience 1?

Let us call the object to which the demonstrative element in the content of experience 1 applies ‘object 1’, and the object to which the demonstrative element in the content of experience 2 applies ‘object 2’. The suggestion is that one has to
refer to object 1 in order to adequately characterise the phenomenal character of experience 1 – one has to refer to object 1 in order to specify what the phenomenal properties of the experience are. We specify the phenomenal character of experience 1 by saying that the experience seems to the subject to be one that represents that F [i.e. object 1] as being G. If one accepts that one has to refer to object 1 in order to specify what the phenomenal properties of experience 1 are, and one also accepts that experience 2 has the same phenomenal properties as experience 1, then one must accept that one has to refer to object 1 in order to specify what the phenomenal properties of experience 2 are. One must accept that experience 2 seems to the subject to be one that represents that F [i.e. object 1] as being G. However, experience 2 will only seem to the subject to be one that represents that F [i.e. object 1] as being G if the demonstrative element in the content of experience 2 applies to object 1. The demonstrative element in the content of experience 2 does not apply to object 1, it applies to object 2. So experience 2 does not seem to the subject to be one that represents that F [i.e. object 1] as being G. One does not need to refer to object 1 in order to specify what the phenomenal properties of experience 2 are. If one does need to refer to object 1 in order to specify what the phenomenal properties of experience 1 are, and one does not need to refer to object 1 in order to specify what the phenomenal properties of experience 2 are, then experience 1 and experience 2 do not have the same phenomenal properties – they do not share the same phenomenal character.
If the subject of experience 1 has an experience with a truth-evaluable content that is not the same as the truth-evaluable content of experience 1, then either the properties represented by that experience are not the same as those represented by experience 1, or the object to which the demonstrative element in the content of the experience applies is not object 1. Either way, the experience will not seem to the subject to be one that represents that F [i.e. object 1] as being G. If we accept that under Burge’s account we do need to refer to object 1 in order to adequately characterise what experience 1 is like for the subject, then we should accept the claim that an experience which has a different truth-evaluable content will have a different phenomenal character.

It should be noted, however, that a further claim that Davies makes does not automatically follow from this claim. Davies claims that “if there is no difference between two experiences for a given subject, then those two experiences have the same perceptual content” (Davies 1992, p.41). This can be understood as the claim that if two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, then they have the same truth-evaluable content. To establish the claim that experiences with different truth-evaluable contents have different phenomenal characters, is not to establish that experiences which are subjectively indistinguishable have the same truth-evaluable content. For two experiences could have different truth-evaluable contents and so have different phenomenal characters, and yet be subjectively indistinguishable.
If experience 1 seems to the subject to be an experience that represents that F [i.e. object 1] as being G, and experience 2 seems to the subject to be one that represents that F [i.e. object 2] as being G, then how experience 1 seems to the subject to be is not the same as how experience 2 seems to the subject to be. The two experiences will have different phenomenal characters. But the two experiences may still be subjectively indistinguishable – i.e. the subject may be unable to tell that the experiences do not share the same phenomenal character. In order for the subject to be able to tell that how experience 1 seems to him to be is not the same as how experience 2 seems to him to be, the subject would have to be able to tell that the object to which the demonstrative element in the content of experience 1 applies is not the same as the object to which the demonstrative element in the content of experience 2 applies. This may not be something that is manifest to the subject on the basis of his experiences alone.

Experience 1 allows the subject to demonstratively refer to object 1. So when the subject has the experience he can be aware that his experience seems to him to be one that represents that F [i.e. object 1] as being G. He can be fully aware of what the phenomenal properties of his experience are – they are not in any way hidden from him. Likewise, experience 2 allows the subject to demonstratively refer to object 2, so when the subject has experience 2 he can be aware that his experience seems to him to be one that represents that F [i.e. object 2] as being G. When the
subject has the experience he can be fully aware of what the phenomenal properties of his experience are. Since the ability to demonstratively refer to an object is distinct from the ability to recognise that object in all other contexts, the fact that the subject can be fully aware of the phenomenal properties of his experience when he has the experience does not entail that the subject is able to recognise when he is having an experience with the same phenomenal properties. So two experiences may have different, but subjectively indistinguishable phenomenal properties.

If Burge is to claim that the truth-evaluable content of an experience is not essential to the type of mental state it is, then he needs to reject Davies' claim that a difference in truth-evaluable content requires a difference in phenomenal character. If Burge is to reject this claim, he needs to reject the claim that one has to refer to the object of a visual experience in order to adequately capture the phenomenal character of the experience – i.e. what the phenomenal properties of the experience are. Is there a way that Burge can allow that we can adequately describe the phenomenal character of an experience without referring to the object of experience?

What Burge needs to do is to capture the phenomenal character of experience 1 in a way that leaves open the question as to which particular F is represented by the subject's experience. But Burge cannot claim that experience 1 seems to the subject to be one that represents the existence of an F which is G. This is what the
experience would be like for the subject if the generality thesis were true. Burge needs to say that the experience seems to the subject to be one that represents some particular F as being G, where this is not to be understood as the claim that the experience seems to the subject to be one that represents the existence of some particular F which is G.

The claim that an experience represents an F as being G is ambiguous. It can be understood in either of two ways – as either claiming that (i) the experience represents it to be the case that ‘an F is G’ – i.e. ‘there is an F which is G’ –, or as claiming that (ii) there is an F which is represented by the experience as being G. So the claim that an experience seems to the subject to be one that represents an F as being G is also ambiguous. To help avoid the ambiguity I shall borrow some terminology from Wollheim. As Wollheim defines the term, if a representation, R, is a ‘portrait’ of an F, then there must be some particular F such that R represents it. If an experience ‘portrays’ an F as being G, then there is an F which is represented by the experience as being G.\(^6\)

Instead of saying that experience 1 seems to the subject to be one that represents an F as being G – which leaves open the possibility that the experience seems to the subject to be one that represents it to be the case that ‘there is an F which is G’ – we can say that the experience seems to the subject to be one that ‘portrays’ an F

as being G. If we can characterise the phenomenal character of the experience in this way we can leave open the question as to which particular F seems to be represented by the subject’s experience, and we can still ensure that the phenomenal character that we ascribe to the experience is not one that the experience would have if the generality thesis were true. So it seems that there is a way to adequately characterise the phenomenal character of experience 1 without referring to the object of experience. If we can adequately characterise the phenomenal character of the experience without referring to the object of experience, there is no reason why we cannot ascribe the same phenomenal character to experience 2, even though it is not an experience of the same object.

We can say that experience 2 also seems to the subject to be one that portrays an F as being G.

Both experience 1 and experience 2 seem to the subject to be the same, for both experiences seem to the subject to be ones that portray an F as being G. But since the experiences are portraits of different F’s, the experiences have different particular truth-evaluable contents. So Burge can say that two experiences can have different truth-evaluable contents and yet have the same phenomenal character. He can reject Davies’ claim that “for the experiences of a given subject a difference in perceptual content requires a difference in intrinsic phenomenal character.” If Burge can reject Davies’ claim, then he can consistently hold both that, (a) the phenomenal character of an experience is essential to the type of
mental state it is, and (b) the truth-evaluable content of an experience is not essential to the type of mental state it is. He can claim that what it is like for a subject to have a particular sensory episode can be the same as what it is like for the subject to have a distinct sensory episode with a different truth-evaluable content.

If Burge can hold that the truth-evaluable content of an experience is not essential to the type of mental state it is, it might be thought that he can reject the disjunctivist’s claim that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. However, the claim that Burge can hold that the truth-evaluable content of an experience is not essential to the type of mental state it is has so far been made on the grounds that Burge can hold that the phenomenal character of the experience a subject has when he perceives an object can be the same as the phenomenal character of the experience the subject has when he perceives a different object. It has been made on the grounds that Burge can hold that the experience a subject has when he perceives an object is one that the subject could have if he were perceiving a different object. But note that this is not something that the disjunctivist need be committed to denying. The disjunctivist need not be committed to the claim that the experience a subject has when he perceives an object is not one that the subject could have if he were perceiving a different object. The disjunctivist is merely committed to the claim that the kind of experience a subject has when he perceives
an object is not one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. So although Burge has to be able to hold that the truth-evaluable content of an experience is not essential to the type of mental state it is if he is to reject disjunctivism, showing that Burge can hold that the truth-evaluable content of an experience is not essential to the type of mental state it is does not suffice to show that Burge can reject disjunctivism.

Suppose that experience 2 is a hallucination. If experience 1 seems to the subject to be an experience that portrays an F as being G, and experience 2 is subjectively indistinguishable from experience 1, then experience 2 also seems to the subject to be an experience that portrays an F as being G. So experience 2 seems to the subject to be a portrait of an F. Recall that if a representation, R, is a portrait of an F, then there must be some particular F such that R represents it. If experience 2 is a hallucination then it is not the case that there is some particular F such that the experience represents it. A hallucination is not a portrait. A hallucination cannot be an experience that portrays an F as being G. A subject’s experience can only be one that portrays an F as being G if the subject is perceiving an F.

If an experience seems to a subject to be a portrait of an F and there is no F present, then it is not just the world that is different from the way that it seems to the subject to be, the experience itself is also different from the way that it seems to the subject to be. For the experience seems to the subject to be a portrait of an
F, and it is not. If a hallucination seems to a subject to be a portrait of an F, then
the experience does not have the phenomenal character that it seems to the subject
to have. The experience seems to the subject to have the phenomenal character of
a portrait of an F, and this is the kind of experience the subject could only be
having if he were perceiving an F. To accept that one can only adequately
characterise what a hallucination is like for a subject by saying that the experience
seems to the subject to be a portrait of an F, is to accept that one can only
adequately characterise what the hallucination is like for the subject by saying that
the experience seems to the subject to have the kind of phenomenal character that
only a genuine perception of an F could have. This is a claim that is associated with
disjunctivism. 7

The disjunctivist claims that one cannot give an adequate account of what a
hallucinatory experience is like for a subject without implicitly referring to the kind
of phenomenal character that only a genuine perception of the world could have. If
what it is like for a subject to have a hallucination can be adequately accounted for
by the fact that the experience possesses certain properties (perhaps
representational properties) that can be common to both perceptual and
hallucinatory experiences, then one does not need to refer to the kind of
phenomenal character that only a genuine perception could have, in order to
adequately explain what the hallucination is like for the subject. The phenomenal

7 For a discussion of the claim and its connection with disjunctive accounts of
experience see Martin 1997.
character of the perceptual case does not have a fundamental explanatory role with respect to explaining what the hallucination is like for the subject. For the experience can have the relevant properties when no object is being perceived. If one *does* need to refer to the kind of phenomenal character that only a genuine perception could have in order to capture what a hallucination is like for the subject, then the fact that the experience has certain properties that can be common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences cannot adequately account for what it is like for the subject to have the experience.

If one accepts that what it is like for a subject to have a hallucination cannot be adequately accounted for by the fact that the experience has certain properties that can be common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences, then one will have to accept disjunctivism. If the properties of an experience that can be common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences can adequately account for the phenomenal character of the experience a subject has when he perceives an object, then those properties should be capable of adequately accounting for what it is like for the subject to have a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. So if one accepts that the properties of an experience that can be common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences cannot adequately account for what it is like for the subject to have a hallucination, then one should accept that those properties cannot adequately account for the phenomenal character of the experience a subject has when he perceives the world. If the properties that can be
common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences cannot adequately account for the phenomenal character of the experience a subject has when he perceives the world, then the experience a subject has when he perceives the world must have some further properties (properties that a hallucination does not possess) that explains the experience’s phenomenal character. If the phenomenal character of the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is explained by the fact that the experience has certain properties that are not present when the subject hallucinates, then the phenomenal character of the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that a hallucination can have. If the phenomenal character of the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that a hallucination can have, then the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating.

In order to reject disjunctivism, Burge needs to reject the claim that what it is like for a subject to have a hallucination cannot be adequately accounted for by the fact that the experience possesses certain properties that can be common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences. To be able to claim that what it is like for a subject to have a hallucination can be accounted for by the fact that the experience possesses certain properties that can be common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences, Burge needs to reject the claim that the way to characterise what a hallucination is like for a subject is to say that the experience seems to the subject to be one that portrays an object as being a certain way.
If experience 2 is a hallucination, and one accepts that the fact that the experience possesses certain properties that can be common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences can adequately account for what the experience is like for the subject, then one should not need to refer to the kind of phenomenal character that only a genuine perception can have in order to explain what the experience is like for the subject. So one should not need to say that experience 2 seems to the subject to be one that portrays an F as being G, in order to explain what experience 2 is like for the subject. Does Burge need to say that experience 2 seems to the subject to be one that portrays an F as being G if he is to adequately explain what the experience is like for the subject? If he does, then he cannot claim that it is the experience’s possession of certain properties that are common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences that accounts for what it is like for the subject to have the experience. If Burge cannot claim that it is the experience’s possession of certain properties that can be common to both perceptual and hallucinatory experiences that accounts for what it is like for the subject to have the experience, then he will have to accept disjunctivism.

In order to reject disjunctivism, Burge needs to be able to offer a non-derivative account of the phenomenal character of hallucinatory experience. He needs to be able to adequately explain what a hallucination is like for a subject without referring to the kind of phenomenal character that only a genuine perception of the
world could have. It might be thought that Burge's free logic does allow him to do this.

Under Burge's account, the subject of experience can report what phenomenally seems to be the case, even when the demonstrative element in the content of his experience fails to apply to any object – i.e. even when the subject is hallucinating. The subject can do this by referring to the putative object of experience. Even if experience 2 is a hallucination, the subject of the experience can still report what phenomenally seems to him to be the case when he has the experience by saying that 'it seems to me that that F is G' – where the demonstrative 'that F' is used to refer to the putative object of experience. If a subject can report how his hallucinatory experience represents things to be, then it should be possible for him to give a non-derivative account of what the experience is like for him. The subject can report what his experience is like for him by saying that his experience seems to him to be one that represents that F as being G – where the demonstrative 'that F' is used to refer to the putative object of experience.

However, as we saw earlier, Burge needs to deny that a subject has to refer to the object of experience (or putative object of experience) in order to adequately characterise the phenomenal character of his experience. Burge wants to claim that the truth-evaluable content of an experience is not essential to the type of mental state it is. Therefore, Burge needs to be able to say that the phenomenal character
of the experience a subject has when he perceives an object can be the same as the phenomenal character of an experience the subject has when he perceives a different object. In order to make this claim, Burge must allow that it is possible to specify the phenomenal properties of a perceptual experience without referring to the object of the experience. However, Burge needs to ensure that the phenomenal properties that are assigned to an experience are not ones an experience would have if the generality thesis were true. Burge cannot claim that when the subject perceives an object his experience seems to him to be one that represents the existence of an object as being a certain way, for this is what the experience would be like for the subject if the generality thesis were true. So in order to explain what a perceptual experience is like for a subject without referring to the object of experience, Burge must say that such an experience seems to the subject to be one that portrays an object as being a certain way. If Burge has to say that a perceptual experience seems to the subject to be one that portrays an object as being a certain way, then Burge will have to say that a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination also seems to the subject to be one that portrays an object as being a certain way. He will have to offer a derivative characterisation of the phenomenal character of hallucinatory experience, and accept a disjunctive account of experience.

The problem for Burge is that if he is to reject disjunctivism he needs to do two things. He needs to be able to offer a non-derivative account of what the phenomenal properties of a hallucinatory experience are, and he also needs to be
able to claim that experiences with different truth-evaluable contents can have the same phenomenal character. But Burge’s rejection of the generality thesis makes it impossible for him to do both things. If Burge is to claim that experiences with different truth-evaluable contents can have the same phenomenal character, he needs to claim that a subject does not need to refer to the objects of his experiences (or putative objects of his experiences) in order to adequately characterise what the phenomenal properties of his experiences are. But under Burge’s account, if a subject is to provide a non-derivative account of what the phenomenal properties of a hallucinatory experience are, the subject does need to refer to the putative objects of experience. So if one accepts Burge’s account of the content of experience, one cannot accept the common element thesis. One cannot claim that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. Those who hold an intentional theory of experience will have to accept the generality thesis if they are to avoid a commitment to a disjunctive account of experience. In order to avoid a commitment to disjunctivism, the intentionalist must hold that the particularity of a successful perceptual experience is not to be reflected in the intentional content of the experience.

**Summary**

I have argued that we should reject the generality thesis if we want to accept the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary, common sense view of
perception. In this chapter I have argued that if one rejects the generality thesis one incurs a commitment to a disjunctive account of experience. This suggests that it is a disjunctive account of experience that best fits with our ordinary common sense view of perception.

The intentional theory of experience was introduced as a theory that purports to offer a positive, non-derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates. According to the intentional theory, when a subject hallucinates the subject is having an experience with an intentional content that represents the world as being a certain way. If we accept the intentional theory’s positive account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates, then we should accept that the same kind of experience is involved when a subject perceives the world. Robinson’s causal argument should lead us to accept this conclusion. If one accepts that the proximate causes of a hallucination are sufficient to produce a certain kind of experience – an experience with an intentional content of a certain kind – then one should accept that the proximate causes of a perception are sufficient to produce the same kind of experience. For it is plausible to assume that the proximate causes of a perception can be the same as the proximate causes of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. So if we accept the intentional theory’s positive account of hallucinatory experience, then we must reject disjunctivism and accept the common element thesis. To accept the intentional theory’s positive account of hallucination is to give up the account of
experience that best fits with our ordinary common sense view of perception. To reject the intentional theory’s positive account of hallucination is to reject the intentional theory of experience, as I am defining it. So if we want an account of experience that best fits with our ordinary, common sense view of perception, we must reject the intentional theory of experience. The intentional theory of experience does not posit the existence of sense-data – those entities that are supposed to get in the way of our direct access to the world – but simply providing an account of experience that does away with sense-data is not, in itself, sufficient to preserve our ordinary, common sense view of perception.

At the beginning of chapter one I raised the following question: does philosophical reflection on the nature of sensory experience show that we cannot accept the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary, common sense view of perception? If philosophical reflection can show that we must reject a disjunctive account of experience, then philosophical reflection can show that we cannot accept the account of experience that fits best with our common sense view of perception. We may not need to posit the existence of sense-data – objects that interpose between us and the external world – but we will not be able to accept the account of experience that best accommodates all that is involved in our ordinary, common sense view of perception.
I shall be discussing the issue of whether the disjunctive account of experience is ultimately tenable in chapter nine. Before addressing that issue, I want to consider how the claim that disjunctivism offers the best account of our ordinary common sense view of perception affects the status of the CTP. This is the topic of the next chapter.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Disjunctivism and the Causal Theory of Perception

The fact that our concept of perception involves the notion of the particularity of successful perceptual experience, and the fact that our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception were both cited in an attempt to offer the best defence of the CTP. They were both cited in an attempt to provide a rationale for the CTP – they were supposed to help explain what role the notion of the causal dependence of experience on objects of experience is supposed to be playing in our concept of perception. However, further consideration of these facts has led to a rejection of the generality thesis, and I have now argued that a rejection of the generality thesis incurs a commitment to disjunctivism. I now want to consider how an acceptance of disjunctivism affects the status of the CTP.

It has been suggested that disjunctivism poses a threat to the CTP. On one view an acceptance of disjunctivism (or the consistency of the disjunctive conception with our ordinary concept of perception) undermines the CTP by leaving an acceptance of the theory essentially unmotivated\(^1\). On a more extreme view, the claim is that the disjunctive conception of experience is inconsistent with the CTP – i.e. the claim is that a statement of the CTP presupposes the falsity of disjunctivism. First let us consider the more extreme view. Is it possible to state the CTP in a way that does not presuppose the falsity of disjunctivism?

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\(^1\) This is the view put forward by Snowdon in Snowdon 1981 and 1990.
The Question of Compatibility

Coates states the CTP in a way that makes it explicit that an acceptance of the theory is incompatible with an acceptance of disjunctivism. Coates schematically expresses his version of the CTP in the following way:

A subject S perceives x iff

1. x is an existing physical object.
2. S has a logically distinct sensory experience E.
3. x causes E (in the appropriate way). (Coates 1998, p. 6)

Coates claims that,

What distinguishes this version of the CTP from the disjunctivist account is that on the former account the sensory experience and the physical object are treated as distinct existences, in the sense that the experience does not necessarily involve the perceived object. The causal theorist thus treats perceptual experience and hallucinatory experience as ontologically on a par with one another. They do not differ intrinsically but are differentiated by virtue of their different casual ancestries. (ibid, p.6)

Is there a reason why all casual theorists have to treat perceptual experience and hallucinatory experience as "ontologically on a par with one another"? Why can't a causal theorist say that if a subject is to perceive an object the subject's experience must be caused, in an appropriate way, by that object, without committing himself on the question as to whether that experience is one that could occur if the subject were hallucinating? Is there reason to think that if an experience is caused by an object in the world, then that experience must be one that can, in principle, occur in the absence of the object, and so one that can
occur when the subject hallucinates? Such a line of thought can be found in Robinson's causal argument. Robinson presents the argument as an argument against disjunctivism. So let us re-consider that argument.

Robinson's argument against disjunctivism involves the assumption that when a subject perceives an object, the event of light bouncing off the object of experience is the distal cause of the subject's experience, and the immediate, proximate cause of the experience is the event of some brain state of the subject being activated - some neural event. Robinson makes the plausible empirical assumption that by activating the relevant brain state when the object of experience is not present, we can make the subject have a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. He writes,

It is theoretically possible by activating some brain process which is involved in a particular type of perception to cause a hallucination which exactly resembles that perception in its subjective character. (Robinson 1994, p. 151)

Robinson goes on to claim that,

It is necessary to give the same account of both hallucinatory and perceptual experiences when they have the same neural cause. Thus, it is not, for example, plausible to say that the hallucinatory experience involves a mental image or sense-datum, but that the perception does not if the two have the same proximate - that is, neural - cause. (ibid, p.151)

So Robinson's conclusion is that we should give the same account of both hallucinatory and perceptual experiences. We should reject disjunctivism.
By exploiting Robinson's argument against disjunctivism it may be possible to challenge the compatibility of disjunctivism and the CTP with the following argument:

(1) If one accepts the CTP, then one should accept that an event involving the object of experience is the *distal* cause of the experience a subject has when he perceives the world. If one accepts that an event involving the object of experience is the distal cause of the experience a subject has when he perceives the world, then one must accept that the proximate cause of the experience is some event that occurs after the event involving the object of experience. Therefore if one accepts the CTP one should accept the plausible empirical assumption that the proximate cause of a perceptual experience is the activation of some brain state of the subject.

(2) The event of the brain state being activated is one that can, in principle, occur without the presence of the object of experience. Such an event can, in principle, be the cause of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucinatory experience. Therefore, if one accepts the CTP, one should accept that the proximate cause of the experience a subject has when he perceives an object is one that can, in principle, be the cause of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucinatory experience.

(3) If one accepts that the proximate cause of a successful perceptual experience can be the same as the proximate cause of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucinatory experience, then one should accept that the kind of experience that would occur if the subject were having the subjectively indistinguishable hallucination also occurs when the subject has the successful perceptual experience. For the event which is the proximate cause of the hallucination is
sufficient to bring about a certain kind of experience – one which does not involve an object
in the external world, and one which involves, for example, a mental image or content.

(4) Therefore, if one accepts the CTP, one should accept that there is a common element to
perceptual and hallucinatory experience - one should reject disjunctivism.

How should one respond to this kind of argument? Can the first premise be challenged? The
option of accepting the CTP and rejecting the claim that the object of experience is the distal
cause of a successful perceptual experience is not one that the disjunctivist should pursue.
The disjunctivist would have to claim that an event involving the object of experience - the
event of light bouncing off the object of experience - is the immediate, proximate cause of
the experience a subject has when he perceives an object. If one accepts this claim, then one
is in danger of being committed to the claim that some experiences we have last a lot longer
then we think they do. Some experiences we have started years before we were born. When
I look at certain stars I am having an experience that started many years ago. This just seems
to be a counterintuitive claim to have to make. If one is going to accept the CTP, then one
should accept that an event involving the object of experience is the distal cause of the
experience a subject has when he perceives the object. If the event of light bouncing off the
object is the distal cause of the experience a subject has when he perceives the object, then it
seems plausible that the proximate cause of the experience is the event of some brain state of
the subject being activated. So if disjunctivism and the CTP are to be compatible it should be
possible for the disjunctivist to accept premise (1) and challenge some other assumption
involved in the argument.
If one accepts that the proximate cause of the experience a subject has when he perceives an object is the event of some brain state of the subject being activated, then one should accept premise (2) of the argument. For premise (2) just involves the additional plausible empirical assumption that such an event is one that can, in principle, be the cause of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. If one is to challenge the argument against the compatibility of disjunctivism and the CTP, then one should target premise (3).

One way of challenging the premise would be to claim that when a subject perceives an object, there is some action at a distance. This suggestion was mentioned in chapter one. The claim would be that the object of experience can have some further effect that turns up in the immediate cause of the experience. Recall that Robinson considers the possibility of this kind of response to his argument against disjunctivism. He asks,

> Does the brain state mysteriously know how it is being produced; does it, by some extra sense, discern whether [the object of experience] is really there or not and act accordingly, or does [the object of experience] when present, inhibit the production of an image by some sort of action at distance? (1994, p. 154)

Robinson rejects as "implausible" such "ad hoc hypotheses", and he is right to do so. One needs to find a better way of challenging premise (3) if one is to challenge the argument against the compatibility of disjunctivism and the CTP.

The disjunctivist should reject the assumption in premise (3) that there is a general kind of experience – a kind of experience that does not involve an object in the external world - for
which the proximate cause of a hallucination is sufficient. The disjunctivist should claim that it is not possible to give a positive, non-derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates. The disjunctivist should deny, for instance, that a hallucination is the kind of experience which involves a certain kind of mental image or content.

The disjunctivist should agree with Robinson's claim that,

It is not... plausible to say that the hallucinatory experience involves a mental image or sense-datum, but that the perceptual experience does not, if the two have the same proximate - that is, neural - cause. (ibid, p.151)

The disjunctivist should not claim that a hallucinatory experience involves a mental image or sense-datum and perceptual experience does not, for the disjunctivist should not claim that a hallucinatory experience involves a mental image or sense-datum. The disjunctivist should not offer such a positive, non-derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates. If the disjunctivist does offer such a positive, non-derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates, and he accepts that the suitable stimulation of the brain processes involved when a subject perceives the world can cause the subject to have an experience of this 'hallucinatory' kind, then he is left with a problem in explaining why the stimulation of the brain processes does not cause the subject to have an experience of this 'hallucinatory' kind when he perceives the world. Note that this is a problem that faces the disjunctivist who holds that it is possible to provide a positive, non-derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates, even if the disjunctivist can maintain that the proximate cause of a successful perceptual experience is not the activation of some brain processes. For even if the disjunctivist can maintain that the
proximate cause of a successful perceptual experience is not the activation of some brain processes, the relevant brain processes do, nevertheless, occur when a subject perceives the world, so the disjunctivist is still left with the problem of explaining why these brain processes do not cause an experience of the 'hallucinatory' kind when a subject perceives the world. To make his account tenable, the disjunctivist should claim that it is only possible to provide a derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates. The disjunctivist should claim that it is only possible to characterise the phenomenal character of a hallucinatory experience derivatively, as one which seems to the subject to have the phenomenal character of a certain kind of perceptual experience.²

The disjunctivist can only ever claim that the stimulation of some brain state of the subject is a sufficient causal condition for an experience which seems to the subject to have the phenomenal character of a certain kind of successful perceptual experience. But both a successful perceptual experience and a hallucinatory experience can seem to the subject to have such a phenomenal character. Whether or not the experience produced really is a perception depends on what is going on in the world beyond the brain. So for the disjunctivist, stimulation of the brain state is not a sufficient causal condition for an experience of either kind.

² I shall be discussing whether there is a problem for the disjunctivist in making this claim in the next chapter, where I shall be considering in further detail possible objections to the disjunctive account of experience.
The assumption in premise (3) that there is a general kind of experience – a kind of experience that does not involve an object in the external world – for which a neural event can be causally sufficient, is one that the disjunctivist rejects. The disjunctivist denies that there is a general kind of experience - hallucination - for which a positive, non-derivative account can be given. For the disjunctivist, a hallucinatory experience can only be characterised derivatively, as one which seems to the subject to have the phenomenal character of a certain kind of perceptual experience. The argument against the compatibility of disjunctivism and the CTP should be rejected, for the argument rests on an assumption that the disjunctivist should reject.

Since the disjunctivist rejects the assumption that it is possible to give a positive, non-derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates, the disjunctivist will reject the claim that the proximate cause of a hallucination is sufficient to produce an experience of a kind which does not involve objects in the world – i.e. a 'hallucinatory' kind of experience. Since the disjunctivist rejects the claim that the proximate cause of a hallucination is sufficient to bring about a hallucinatory kind of experience, the disjunctivist can allow that the kind of event which is the proximate cause of a hallucination can also be the proximate cause of a successful perceptual experience. The disjunctivist can allow that the event of some brain state of the subject being activated can on certain occasions be the proximate cause of a hallucination, and on other occasions be the proximate cause of a successful perceptual experience. If the disjunctivist can allow that the event of some brain state of the subject being activated can be the proximate cause of a successful
perceptual experience, there seems to be no reason why the disjunctivist cannot allow that an event involving the object of experience can be the distal cause of a successful perceptual experience. Therefore, there is no reason to suppose that a statement of the CTP need presuppose the falsity of disjunctivism. The disjunctivist can allow that the object of experience can be the distal cause of a perceptual experience, and the CTP simply states that whenever a subject perceives an object, the object of experience is the distal cause of the subject's experience.

If a statement of the CTP does not presuppose the falsity of disjunctivism, should one be happy to accept the CTP even if one has reason to accept that a disjunctive account of experience is the one that best fits with our ordinary concept of perception? It has been suggested (e.g. by Snowdon) that the disjunctive conception undermines the motivation for accepting the CTP. So let us return to the problem cases that were initially used to motivate the CTP, and see how an adoption of disjunctivism affects what one should say about those problem cases.

**The Question of Motivation**

The CTP was initially motivated in chapter one by a consideration of Grice's thought experiment. Recall that in Grice's thought experiment a neuroscientist makes it look to a subject as if there is a clock on the shelf in front of him by stimulating the subject's visual cortex. Grice writes,

> If such treatment were applied when there was a clock on the shelf, and if [the subject's] impressions were found to continue unchanged when the clock was removed, then I think we should be inclined
to say that the [subject] did not see the clock that was before his eyes. (Grice 1964, p. 61 in Dancy 1988.)

Many have taken Grice’s thought experiment to show that veridical hallucination is possible. A subject can have a veridical experience – an experience that matches the environment – and yet the subject can fail to perceive the objects in his environment. The puzzle then becomes, what in addition to the veridicality of an experience is required if a subject is to perceive his environment? The veridicality of an experience is not sufficient to put a subject in direct perceptual contact with the world, so what extra conditions must be fulfilled if a subject is to be in direct perceptual contact with the world? The CTP is introduced as a solution to the puzzle. The suggestion is that an appropriate causal relation between an object and the subject’s experience is required if the subject is to directly perceive the world. The fact that there is no such causal relation between the clock and the subject’s experience in the Grice thought experiment is supposed to explain our intuition that the subject of the Grice thought experiment fails to see the clock even though his experience is veridical.

However, we can now see that we should not describe the experience of the subject in the Grice thought experiment as a case of veridical hallucination. The Grice thought experiment is supposed to show us something about our ordinary concept of perception. We have now seen that if we are to offer an account of experience that best fits our ordinary concept of perception, we should not allow that the question of the veridicality of an experience can be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived – we should not allow that veridical hallucination is possible.
If we do not accept that the experience of the subject in the Grice thought experiment is a veridical hallucination, then what is the puzzle supposed to be for which the CTP is a suggested solution? The puzzle can no longer be: what in addition to the veridicality of an experience is required if a subject is to perceive the world? Such a puzzle is only pressing if we concede that veridical hallucination is possible. If an experience can only be veridical if the subject is perceiving the world, then it no longer makes sense to ask, ‘what in addition to the veridicality of an experience is required if a subject is to perceive the world?’

This particular puzzle that is used to motivate the CTP – the puzzle that relies on the notion of veridical hallucination – presupposes the falsity of the disjunctivist position that has been argued for. It is not the suggested solution to the puzzle – the CTP – that presupposes the falsity of disjunctivism, it is the puzzle itself that presupposes the falsity of disjunctivism. If one accepts disjunctivism, then it becomes unclear what the puzzle is that is supposed to motivate an acceptance of the CTP.

In his discussion of the compatibility of disjunctivism and the CTP Child seems to assume that both the disjunctivist and non-disjunctivist agree that the Grice thought experiment introduces a puzzle that needs to be explained. The non-disjunctivist offers the CTP as a solution to the puzzle, and Child suggests that the disjunctivist might try to undermine the CTP by offering an alternative, non-causal solution to the puzzle – the idea being that the disjunctivist could then claim that the CTP is not the only, or perhaps best, solution to the puzzle that is used to motivate
the CTP. For Child, the puzzle to be explained is why the subject of the Grice thought experiment does not see the object before him. Child writes,

> According to the disjunctivist, when S sees o, there is a state of affairs of type, o’s looking F to S. And that allows us to give a satisfying explanation of why, in the problem cases, S’s experience is not a case of seeing, without appeal to causation. The explanation is this: we know in these cases that if o were removed or occluded, S would still seem to see it; that shows that the experience in such a case cannot be an instance of o’s looking F to S, for, if it were, S would stop having the experience when o was removed. The availability of that alternative explanation undermines the claim that the causal theory gives the best (or only) explanation of why there is no seeing in the problem cases: so there is no need to suppose a causal element in vision. (Child 1993, p. 154)

The first thing to note is that the alternative, non-causal solution to the puzzle that Child suggests the disjunctivist might offer is not one that the disjunctivist should offer. Child suggests that the fact that S would still seem to see o if o were removed provides the disjunctivist with an adequate, non-causal explanation of why o is not seen by S in the Grice thought experiment. Child is assuming here that the disjunctivist holds that if a subject does not notice any change in his experience when an object is removed, then the subject cannot be perceiving that object. But this is not something that the disjunctivist holds. The disjunctivist claims that if a subject is perceiving an object, then the subject will stop having an experience of the same kind if the object is removed (providing the object of experience is not replaced by a relevantly similar object). But the disjunctivist does not claim that it will always be possible for the subject to tell when he has stopped having an experience of the same kind. For the disjunctivist allows that it is possible for a subject to have hallucinations that are subjectively indistinguishable from successful perceptual
experiences. The disjunctivist holds that if a subject, S, is perceiving an object, o, then S will stop having an experience of the same kind when o is removed, but if the removal of o coincides with S having a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination, S will not notice that he has stopped having an experience of the same kind. Disjunctivism is consistent with the possibility that a subject can be perceiving an object, and yet fail to notice any change in his experience when the object is removed. So the fact that in the Grice thought experiment S would fail to notice any change in his experience if o were removed, does not in itself provide the disjunctivist with an explanation of why S cannot be perceiving o.

The disjunctivist should not try to undermine the CTP by offering Child’s suggested non-causal solution to the puzzle introduced by Grice’s thought experiment. This does not mean that the disjunctivist should accept the CTP as a solution to the puzzle. The correct response from the disjunctivist should be to question what the puzzle is that stands in need of a solution. Child claims that the puzzle to be explained is: why does the subject of the Grice thought experiment fail to see the objects before him? But why should the subject’s failure to perceive be puzzling to the disjunctivist? Why should the disjunctivist think that the subject’s failure to perceive is something that needs explaining? If one thought that the experience of the subject in the Grice thought experiment was veridical, then one would think that the Grice thought experiment presents a puzzle to be explained – i.e. why doesn’t the subject of the Grice thought experiment perceive the objects before him, given that his experience is veridical? Why isn’t the veridicality of an experience sufficient to put a subject in direct perceptual contact with the world? What extra conditions, in addition to the veridicality of
an experience, are required if a subject is to perceive the world? The disjunctivist does not accept that the experience of the subject in the Grice thought experiment is veridical, so these are not questions that he needs to answer.

If one is to use the Grice thought experiment to introduce a puzzle that motivates the CTP, one needs to be careful about how one describes the thought experiment. The thought experiment is supposed to reveal something about our ordinary concept of perception. In describing the thought experiment one should not rely on assumptions that already violate or distort our ordinary concept of perception. One should not assume that the question of the veridicality of an experience can be settled independently of the question of whether an object is being perceived. So one should not assume that veridical hallucination is possible. One should also question the assumption that an experience, whether hallucinatory or perceptual, is a mental state that can 'match' the world. If talk of an experience 'matching' the world cannot be cashed out in terms of the veridicality of the experience, then it becomes unclear what sense we can make of such talk. To describe the experience of the subject in the Grice thought experiment as one which 'matches' the world is unhelpful and misleading.

If the Grice thought experiment is supposed to motivate both the disjunctivist and non-disjunctivist to accept the CTP, then the thought experiment should not be described in a way that presupposes the falsity of disjunctivism. In setting up the puzzle for which the CTP is supposed to be a solution, one should not assume that the common element thesis is correct. Consider the way that Grice introduces his thought experiment. He writes,
Suppose that it looks to x as if there is a clock on a shelf; what more is required if it is to be true to
say that x sees a clock on the shelf? There must, one might say, actually be a clock on the shelf
which is in x’s field of view, before x’s eyes. But this does not seem to be enough. (1964, p. 69 in
Dancy 1988)

In this passage Grice is assuming that there is a kind of experience that is not “enough” for
perception – an experience of which one can ask, “what more is required” to make it a
perception? This assumption presupposes the falsity of disjunctivism.

If one is going to use the Grice thought experiment to motivate the disjunctivist to accept the
CTP, one should not assume that stimulation of a subject’s visual cortex is sufficient to
produce an experience of the kind which can occur when the subject perceives the world. So
one cannot take the subject’s failure to perceive in the Grice thought experiment to show that
there must be a certain condition, in addition to the subject’s having a certain kind of
experience, that needs to be fulfilled if the subject is to perceive the world.

According to the disjunctivist, if one is told that it looks to a subject as if he is perceiving an
object, o, then we are not being told that a certain condition obtains. Rather we are being
told that one of two possible conditions obtains. Either the following condition obtains: the
subject is perceiving an object that seems to him to be an o; or the following condition
obtains: the subject is having a hallucination that is subjectively indistinguishable from that
kind of perceptual experience. If the first condition obtains, then there are no other
conditions that are required to make the subject’s experience a perception. If the second
condition obtains then there are no other conditions that can make the subject’s experience a
perception. So, according to the disjunctivist, if a subject is having an experience that seems to him to be a perception of an o, then there can be no further conditions that are required to make the subject’s experience a perception of the world.

What puzzle is the Grice thought experiment supposed to generate for the disjunctivist? We have a case where a neuroscientist stimulates a subject’s visual cortex and the subject fails to perceive the objects before him. But what is puzzling about the subject’s failure to perceive if it is not the fact that the experience is veridical, it is not the fact that the experience matches the world, and it is not the fact that the experience is one the subject could have if he were perceiving the world? We already know that a subject can have a hallucinatory experience and fail to perceive the objects before him, so what is special about the experience of the subject in the Grice thought experiment that is supposed to generate a puzzle concerning the subject’s failure to perceive?

For the disjunctivist, the Grice thought experiment does not present a puzzle concerning why certain conditions are not sufficient for perception. All the Grice thought experiment shows is that it is possible for a subject to have a hallucination that is subjectively indistinguishable from the experience he would be having if he were perceiving an o, while there is an o in front of him. The presence of an o before the subject does not prevent the subject from having a hallucination that is subjectively indistinguishable from the experience he would be having if he were perceiving the o. Why should this fact present a puzzle that motivates the CTP? I shall now turn to an alternative argument that has been used to motivate the CTP –
one that centres more specifically on the notion of the particularity of successful perceptual experience.

In chapter three I outlined a defence of the CTP that involved the notion of the particularity of successful perceptual experience and the fact that our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception. That defence of the CTP involved the following claims: the truth-evaluable content of a subject’s experience does not in itself determine which particular objects are being perceived by the subject, for misperception is possible. A subject can perceive an object that fails to fully match the content of his experience. So if one does not accept the CTP, then one allows that a subject may have an experience that is appropriate for perceiving an object, o, yet there be nothing to determine whether o is being perceived by the subject. For the experience may also be appropriate for perceiving (or misperceiving) a different object, o*, instead. If o has to cause the subject’s experience in order for the subject to perceive o, then there is a fact that determines whether or not the o is being perceived by the subject – i.e. the obtaining or the failure to obtain of the appropriate causal relation. If o does not have to cause the subject’s experience in order for the subject to perceive o, then there is nothing to determine whether or not the subject is perceiving o. For the fact that there is a causal relation between o and the subject’s experience, or the fact that there is no such causal relation cannot be cited as the fact that determines whether or not o is being perceived by the subject. Since it is part of our concept of perception that when a subject visually perceives the world, there are particular objects in the world of which the subject is perceptually aware, we should accept the CTP. For if we reject the CTP, we allow that when
a subject has a perceptual experience there is nothing to determine which particulars are being perceived by the subject.

We can now see that this particular defence of the CTP will not work, for we have seen that we have reason to reject the claim that the truth-evaluable content of a subject's experience does not in itself determine which particular objects are being perceived by the subject. We have seen that we should, more accurately, claim that the truth-evaluable content of a subject's experience is, in part, determined by the fact that certain particulars are being perceived by the subject. However, a similar argument for the CTP can perhaps be framed without invoking the claim that the truth-evaluable content of experience does not in itself determine which particulars are being perceived. The claim might rather be that a subject's experience does not in itself determine which particulars are being perceived by the subject.

Recall that the disjunctivist holds that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one the subject could have if he were hallucinating. This claim is consistent with the claim that the experience a subject has when he perceives an object in the world is one the subject could have if he were perceiving a different object. If the experience a subject has when he perceives an object is one that he could have if he were perceiving a different object — perhaps a relevantly similar unperceived object in the subject's environment — then the claim might be that there can be nothing about the subject's experience itself that determines which particular object the subject is perceiving. A subject could have an experience of a kind that is appropriate for perceiving an object, o, and that is also appropriate for perceiving
a distinct object, o*. There is nothing about the subject’s experience itself that determines which particular object the subject is perceiving. So the claim might be that if one rejects the CTP, then one allows that there is nothing to determine which particular object the subject is perceiving. If o has to cause the subject’s experience in order for the subject to perceive o, then there is a fact that determines whether or not o is being perceived by the subject – i.e. the obtaining or the failure to obtain of the appropriate causal relation. If o does not have to cause the subject’s experience in order for the subject to perceive o, then there is nothing to determine whether or not the subject is perceiving o. For the fact that there is a causal relation between o and the subject’s experience, or the fact that there is no such causal relation between o and the subject’s experience cannot be cited as the fact that determines whether or not o is being perceived by the subject. So if one does not accept the CTP one allows that a subject can have an experience that is appropriate for perceiving an object, o, and yet there be no fact to determine whether or not o is being perceived by the subject. Does this argument show that even the disjunctivist should accept the CTP?

According to the disjunctivist, if a subject is having a hallucinatory experience, then the subject’s experience is not one that the subject could be having if he were perceiving an object. If a subject is having an experience that is appropriate for perceiving some object, o, then the subject is perceiving the world. If the subject is perceiving the world, then there must be some fact that determines which particular objects the subject is perceiving. So if a subject is having an experience that is appropriate for perceiving some object, o, then there is some fact that determines whether or not o is being perceived by the subject. For the
disjunctivist, it is inconceivable that a subject could be having an experience that is appropriate for perceiving an object, and there be no fact to determine whether or not that object is being perceived by the subject. The disjunctivist account of experience does not allow for the possibility that there may be no fact that determines which particular objects are being perceived by the subject. Furthermore, the disjunctivist does not need to appeal to the CTP in order to explain why his account of experience does not allow for this. It just follows from his disjunctive conception of experience. Since the disjunctive account of experience does not allow that a subject can be having an experience appropriate for perceiving o while there is no fact that determines whether or not o is being perceived by the subject, the causal theorist cannot motivate the disjunctivist to accept the CTP by arguing that if the disjunctivist does not accept the CTP he allows that a subject could be having an experience that is appropriate for perceiving o while there is no fact to determine whether or not o is being perceived by the subject.

Summary

The defence of the CTP outlined in chapter three involved the claim that we need to accept the CTP if we are to accommodate two crucial aspects of our ordinary concept of perception: (a) the fact that it is part of our concept of perception that successful perceptual experiences have particularity, and (b) the fact that our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception. It now turns out that a further consideration of these two aspects of our ordinary concept of perception actually ends up undermining the CTP. For if we are to adequately accommodate the particularity of successful perceptual experience and
the fact that our concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception, we need to reject the generality thesis. And if we reject the generality thesis, we incur a commitment to a disjunctive account of experience. The fact that a disjunctive account of experience is the one that best fits with our ordinary, common sense view of perception undermines the CTP by leaving an acceptance of the theory unmotivated. The arguments and puzzles that are used to motivate the CTP presuppose the falsity of disjunctivism.

In the next chapter I shall be addressing the issue of whether the disjunctive account of experience, which I have argued fits best with our ordinary common sense view of perception, is ultimately tenable. However, even if the disjunctive account of experience turned out to be ultimately untenable, this would not lend support to the CTP. The CTP is supposed to be a theory about what is involved in our ordinary, everyday concept of perception. Arguments for the theory therefore need to be consistent with an account of experience that fits in with our ordinary, common sense view of perception. Arguments for the theory cannot assume an account of experience that is in any way inconsistent with our common sense view of perception. If an argument for the CTP is to succeed it needs to be consistent with the assumption that a disjunctive account of experience is correct. But there seem to be no good arguments for the CTP that are consistent with this assumption. So we do not have any reason to accept the CTP.
Defending Disjunctivism

I have argued that the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary common sense view of perception involves a commitment to disjunctivism – i.e. it involves a commitment to the claim that the experience a subject has when he perceives the world is not one that the subject could have if he were hallucinating. To accept this much is not to accept that a disjunctive account of experience is correct. For it may turn out that the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary common sense view of perception is ultimately untenable. In this final chapter I shall be considering objections that might be raised by someone who accepts that the disjunctive account of experience is the one that fits best with our ordinary common sense view of perception, but who, nevertheless, claims that we cannot accept disjunctivism. According to this person, philosophical reflection can show that we are forced to reject the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary common sense view of perception.

Robinson’s Causal Argument and Sense-Datum Theories

In the last chapter I mentioned that Robinson takes his causal argument to be an argument against disjunctivism. The fact that suitable stimulation of the brain processes involved when a subject perceives the world can cause the subject to have a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination, is taken by Robinson to present
a serious challenge to disjunctivism. According to Robinson, the problem that the argument raises for the disjunctivist, is that the disjunctivist is unable to provide an adequate explanation of why the activation of the brain processes involved during a so-called normal case of perception does not also cause the subject to have an experience of the ‘hallucinatory’ kind – an experience involving, say, a “mental image, or sense-datum”. I suggested that the disjunctivist should respond to the argument by rejecting the implicit assumption that there is a general kind of experience which occurs when a subject hallucinates, for which a positive, non-derivative characterisation can be given. The disjunctivist should maintain that we need to characterise the kind of experience which occurs when a subject hallucinates derivatively, as one which seems to have the phenomenal character of a certain kind of successful perceptual experience. The disjunctivist can then deny that the activation of the brain processes involved during a normal case of perception is sufficient to produce an experience of a ‘hallucinatory’ kind. The disjunctivist can maintain that we are only entitled to the claim that the activation of the subject’s brain processes is a sufficient causal condition for the occurrence of an experience which seems to the subject to have the phenomenal character of a certain kind of successful perceptual experience. Both a hallucinatory experience and a successful perceptual experience can seem to the subject to have such a phenomenal character. Whether or not the experience produced really is a successful perceptual experience depends on what is going on in the world beyond the subject’s brain. So the disjunctivist can maintain that the activation of a
subject’s brain processes cannot in itself be a sufficient causal condition for an
experience of either kind.

Robinson’s causal argument can only be used to establish that a disjunctive
account of experience is untenable if it is possible to provide a positive, non-
derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject hallucinates.
One can use Robinson’s argument to show that disjunctivism is wrong if one can
establish that a certain positive, non-derivative account of hallucinatory experience
is correct. Robinson takes his argument to show that disjunctivism is wrong
because he does assume a certain positive account of hallucinatory experience. He
is explicit about the kind of account of hallucinatory experience he is assuming in
‘An Argument for Berkeleian Idealism’. In that paper, before presenting the first
premise of his causal argument, Robinson writes,

> It is a necessary truth that without an object in some sense there cannot be an
experience, for any experience must be of something. ... in the case of pure hallucination
the object of the experience must be something generated internally by the brain, and not
an external thing, for there is no appropriate external thing involved. (1985, p. 172)

If Robinson can establish that these assumptions are correct then he can use his
causal argument to show that disjunctivism is ultimately untenable, and he can also
establish the further conclusion that he draws from the argument: “perceptual
processes in the brain produce some object of awareness which cannot be
identified with any feature of the external world, that is, they produce a sense-
datum” (Robinson 1994, p. 151).
Why assume that when one has an experience there must actually exist some object of which one is aware in having the experience? If one is having a hallucination that is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perception, then it will seem to one as if there is some object before one to which one can demonstratively refer, but why assume that there must actually exist such an object before one of which one is aware in order for things to seem that way? It is often suggested that those who hold that all sensory experiences must involve an awareness of some object are simply assuming the truth of some unwarranted general principle - they are assuming the truth of something like Robinson’s ‘phenomenal principle’: “if there sensibly appears to a subject to be an object that possesses a particular sensible quality, then there is an object of which the subject is aware which does possess that sensible quality”. It is suggested that those who are assuming some such principle are simply failing to acknowledge that the world can be different from the way that it sensibly appears to one to be just as the world can be different from the way that one believes it to be. The suggestion is that if one is happy to accept that the world can be different from the way that one believes it to be, then one can have no reason to deny that the world can be different from the way that it sensibly appears to one to be. And if one accepts that the world can be different from the way that it sensibly appears to one to be, then one can have no reason to assume that there must be some object of which one is aware whenever one has an experience.
Snowdon suggests that to dismiss the standard arguments for sense-datum theories of perception in this way is to fail to capture the "psychological source of the appeal" of the arguments. It is to fail to address the underlying motive which leads their proponents to assume something like the phenomenal principle:

For most people, the general principle, if accepted, is itself an implication of, or generalisation from, a more fundamental conviction that, for a particular value of $F$ (say apparent colour or shape), it is just obvious to inspection that there is something which is $F$. The more fundamental conviction is that to which a critic must speak. (Snowdon 1992, p. 73-74)

The suggestion here is that those who claim that there must actually exist some entity one is aware of when one has an experience, are grounding their claim in the phenomenology of experience. They hold that if one reflects on the phenomenal character of one's experience one will discover that one could not be having such an experience if one were not aware of some entity. This seems to be the view held by Price. Price holds that the claim that there must exist some entity one is aware of when one has an experience is beyond justification, but it is absolutely evident to one when one attends to one's own experience.

When I say 'This table appears brown to me' it is quite plain that I am acquainted with an actual instance of brownness.... This cannot indeed be proved, but it is absolutely evident and indubitable. (Price 1932, p. 63)

It is impossible from the nature of the case to prove that there are sense-data or data of any other sort. The utmost we can do is remove misunderstandings which prevent
people from searching for them and acknowledging them when found. After that, we can only appeal to every man's own consciousness. (*ibid*, p. 6)

According to Price, when one reflects on what one's experience is like, it will be evident to one that there must exist some entity of which one is aware in having the experience. For Price, sense-data just are those entities one is aware of whenever one has a sensory experience. Why think that one can establish that there must exist some entity of which one is aware in having an experience, by simply reflecting on what it is like for one to have the experience? There appear to be two assumptions in play here. The first assumption is that if one attends to what it is like for one to have an experience one will discover that one's experience seems to be one that requires the presence of an object of experience. The assumption is that if one's experience is to be the way that it seems to one to be, then there must exist some entity of which one is aware in having the experience. If one is not aware of something in having the experience then it is not just the world that is different from the way that it appears to one to be, the experience itself is different from the way that it appears to one to be. The second assumption is that one's experiences must actually be the way that they appear to one to be.

If one accepts the disjunctive account of experience that I have been arguing for, then one will accept the first assumption. To accept the disjunctive account of experience that I have been arguing for is to deny that experience has an intentional content that is purely general in character. According to the disjunctive
account, when one perceives the world, one must refer to the particulars one is aware of if one is to adequately specify what seems to one to be the case in having the experience. I have argued that if particulars figure in the phenomenology of experience in this way, then when one has an experience the experience will seem to be one that portrays particulars as being a certain way. If one’s experience seems to be one that portrays particulars as being a certain way, then there must exist particulars of which one is aware in having the experience if the experience is to be the way that it seems to one to be. If one is not aware of some particular in having the experience, it is not just the world that is different from the way that it seems to one to be, the experience itself is also different from the way that it seems to one to be. To claim that one’s experience seems to be one that requires the presence of an object of experience is to deny that one can adequately capture the phenomenal character of one’s experience by ascribing to the experience an intentional content that is purely general in character. The inadequacy of the generality thesis can be used to explain the “psychological source of the appeal” of the standard arguments for sense-datum theories of perception. It can be used to explain why the proponents of such arguments hold that one’s experience seems to require the presence of an object of experience. If the way one’s experience seems to one to be is such that it seems to require the presence of an object of experience, then one cannot dismiss Robinson’s claim that all experiences must involve an awareness of some object, by simply pointing out that the world can be different from the way that it sensibly appears to one to be just as the world can be
different from the way that one believes it to be. For to allow that one can have an experience without being aware of some object is not simply to allow that the world can be different from the way that it sensibly appears to one to be, it is to allow that one's experience can be different from the way that it appears to one to be. Price seems to assume that one cannot have reason to doubt that one's experience really is as it seems to one to be. This is why he claims that if one attends to one's own experience it will be "absolutely evident and indubitable" that there exists some entity one is aware of in having the experience. Should we accept this assumption? Can we make sense of the idea that one can have reason to doubt that one's experience really is as it seems to one to be?

Although Price assumes that an appeal to the phenomenology of experience is sufficient to ground the claim that sense-data exist, other philosophers have held that an appeal to the phenomenology of experience can undermine sense-datum theories. These philosophers claim that to hold a sense-datum theory is to hold a theory of perception that goes against the phenomenological evidence. If these philosophers are correct, then sense-datum theorists will have to accept that one's experiences can be different from the way that they appear to one to be. They will have to accept that a defence of their theory cannot rest on the assumption that one's experiences must really be the way that they seem to one to be.
Certain critics of sense-datum theories point out that when one has an experience, the only items that appear to be available for one to directly attend to are the mind-independent objects and features that one normally takes oneself to be aware of when one perceives the world. When one has an experience there do not appear to be any subjective, mind-dependent entities available for one to attend to. The fact that one does not appear to encounter any subjective, mind-dependent entities when one has an experience, and the fact that one does appear to encounter entities that exist independently of one's awareness of them are taken to provide phenomenological evidence against sense-datum theories. The claim is that if one attends to what it is like for one to have an experience one will discover that one does not seem to be having the kind of experience which one would be having if a sense-datum theory of perception were correct. The sense-datum theorist might respond by claiming that there are theoretical considerations which should lead one to accept that when one has an experience and one takes oneself to be attending to mind-independent entities before one, one is in fact attending to subjective, mind-dependent entities. However, the sense-datum theorist cannot simply dismiss these phenomenological observations in this way if he is appealing to the phenomenology of experience in order to ground his claim that sense-data exist. The phenomenological observations present a genuine problem for those sense-datum theorists who hold both that (a) the existence of sense-data is evident to one

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when one reflects on the phenomenal character of one’s experience, and (b) sense-
data are mind-dependent, subjective entities.

Although Price accepts (a), he rejects (b). Price holds that sense-data are mind-
independent entities:

It has often been thought that sense-data ‘exist only for a mind’. My sense-data, it is
said, exist only for me, and yours only for you. The phrase may be taken in two ways. It
may mean that sense-data depend for their existence or for their qualities upon our
awareness of them; this proposition is a gross absurdity, incompatible with the very
connotations of the terms ‘existence’, ‘awareness’, and qualities... (Price 1932,
p.126)

If a sense-datum theorist holds, as Price does, that sense-data are mind-
independent entities, then the fact that one does not appear to encounter any
subjective, mind-dependent entities when one has an experience, and the fact that
one does appear to encounter entities that exist independently of one’s awareness
of them, cannot be taken to provide phenomenological evidence against the theory.
However, if one holds that the phenomenal character of one’s experience is such
that it seems to require the presence of an object of experience – a sense-datum –
and one also holds that the sense-data one’s experiences seem to require are mind-
independent entities, one thereby leaves open to question the assumption that one
cannot have reason to doubt that one’s experiences really are as they seem to be.
This is an assumption that one needs to hold on to if one is to claim that when one
reflects on the phenomenal character of one's experience it is "absolutely evident, and indubitable" that there is an object one is aware of in having the experience.

If it is correct to claim that there must exist some mind-independent entity that one is aware of if one's experience is to be the way that it seems to be (a claim that Price appears to be committed to), then one can make sense of the notion that one can have reason to doubt that one's experience really is the way that it seems to be. One will have reason to doubt that one's experience really is as it seems to be, if one has reason to believe that there is no suitably placed appropriate mind-independent entity to serve as the object one is aware of.

Robinson's argument for a sense-datum theory of perception rests on the plausible empirical assumption that the suitable stimulation of relevant parts of a subject's brain is sufficient to produce a sensory experience subjectively indistinguishable from the kind of experience one would normally take to be a perception of the world. If one accepts that one's sensory experiences seem to require the presence of mind-independent entities serving as objects of awareness, and one also accepts that all experiences really are as they seem to be, one should accept the hypothesis that whenever the relevant parts of a subject's brain are suitably stimulated so as to produce a sensory experience, there will exist appropriately placed mind-independent entities to serve as objects of awareness. If one has reason to reject such a hypothesis, then one will have reason to hold that one's experiences can be
different from the way that they seem to one to be. The hypothesis is one that we
do have reason to reject.

The hypothesis can be most plausibly maintained by holding that the suitable
stimulation of relevant parts of a subject’s brain is sufficient to produce the
existence of, or the appropriate location of, the mind-independent entities that are
serving as objects of awareness. To accept this picture is to posit a realm of mind-
independent entities that are causally affected by the physical causes of sensory
experiences. If this picture were correct, one would expect that it should be
possible for there to be a scientific investigation of the real nature of these mind-
independent entities, and one would also expect that it should be possible to gain
evidence of further instances of causal interactions between physical events and the
posed realm of mind-independent entities. In other words, it should be possible to
gain further empirical evidence supporting the picture. However, there is no such
evidence. The total lack of empirical evidence supporting the picture should lead
one to question its plausibility. We have reason to reject such a picture because it
appears to be too extravagant in its empirical commitments. There is an absence of
empirical evidence supporting the picture where one would expect to find evidence
supporting it if it were correct. So we have good reason to reject the hypothesis
that whenever the relevant parts of a subject’s brain are suitably stimulated so as to
produce a sensory experience, there will exist appropriately placed suitable mind-
independent entities to serve as objects of awareness. This gives one reason to
hold that one's experiences can be different from the way they seem to be, if one holds that one's experiences seem to require the presence of mind-independent entities serving as objects of awareness.

In order to accommodate Robinson's plausible empirical assumption about the possible causes of sensory experiences, sense-datum theorists sometimes claim that the sense-data which serve as objects of awareness whenever one has an experience, are subjective, mind-dependent entities. In making such a claim the sense-datum theorist is not left with the problem of explaining away the lack of empirical evidence supporting the hypothesis that there is this realm of mind-independent entities, the members of which are causally affected by the physical causes of sensory experiences. However, once the sense-datum theorist commits himself to the claim that sense-data are mind-dependent, subjective entities, the claim that the existence of sense-data is obvious to one when one reflects on the phenomenal character of one's experience, is compromised. The sense-datum theorist leaves himself open to the complaint that the existence of such subjective sense-data is not evident to one when one attends to what it is like for one to have an experience.

If a sense-datum theorist is appealing to the phenomenology of experience in order to ground the claim that sense-data exist, then he must be assuming that (a) when one reflects on the phenomenal character of one's experience one will discover
that one's experience seems to require the presence of an object of experience -- a
sense-datum, and (b) all of one's experiences really are the way that they seem to
one to be. However, problems arise for the sense-datum theorist when he tries to
say more about the nature of the sense-data he is positing. In particular,
assumption (b) starts to look questionable. If the sense-datum theorist holds that
the sense-data one's experiences seem to require are mind-independent entities,
then he has reason to reject (b) -- he has reason to hold that one's experiences can
be different from the way that they seem to be. For under such an account, to
accept that all experiences really are as they seem to be is to accept a hypothesis
that appears to be too extravagant in its empirical commitments. If the sense-
datum theorist tries to overcome these problems by claiming that sense-data are
subjective, mind-dependent entities, then assumption (b) is still compromised. In
making such a claim the sense-datum theorist leaves himself open to the complaint
that if we really are aware of subjective, mind-dependent entities whenever we
have a sensory experience, then our experiences are different from the way they
seem to be.

Robinson's causal argument would be a threat to disjunctivism if one could
establish that that the positive, non-derivative account of hallucinatory experience
offered by the sense-datum theorist were correct. The disjunctivist can
acknowledge that there is a psychological source to the appeal of the account of
hallucination offered by the sense-datum theorist, and yet he can still maintain that
this is not enough to establish that the account is correct. The disjunctivist can accept that a hallucinatory experience that is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perception will seem to the subject to be one that requires an object of awareness. Yet the disjunctivist can reject the assumption that such experiences actually do involve an awareness of objects. For the disjunctivist can claim that we have good empirical reasons to hold that such experiences are different from the way that they seem to one to be. This claim also has an important role to play in the response a disjunctivist might give to a further objection to his account that I now want to consider. The objection is based on the thought that the disjunctive account of experience is threatened by the fact that hallucinatory experiences can be subjectively indistinguishable from genuine perceptions.

The Subjective Indistinguishability Objection

The idea behind this objection is that there is a problem involved in denying that subjectively indistinguishable experiences are of the same fundamental kind. The reasoning behind the objection can be summarised as follows. Our guiding assumption in our classification of experiences into fundamental kinds is that two experiences are of the same fundamental kind if, and only if, they have the same

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2 I benefitted greatly from reading Martin's illuminating discussion of this issue in Martin 1997. The discussion of the response I suggest that the disjunctivist can give to the sense-datum theorist is also influenced by reading a draft of Martin's forthcoming Uncovering Appearances.
phenomenal character. We should accept that (i) if two experiences have the same
phenomenal character, then they are of the same fundamental kind. We must
accept that (ii) if two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable then they have
the same phenomenal character. Therefore, we should accept that (iii) if two
experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, then they are of the same
fundamental kind.

If the disjunctive account of experience I am considering is to be tenable, it must
be possible for one to consistently accept (i) and reject (iii). According to the
disjunctive account of experience under consideration, perceptions and
hallucinatory experiences are not of the same fundamental kind, because they do
not have the same phenomenal character. One can only accept this disjunctive
account if it is possible to reject (ii). Can we make sense of the claim that
subjectively indistinguishable experiences can fail to have the same phenomenal
character?

I first want to consider why one might find plausible the claim that if two
experiences are subjectively indistinguishable then they must have the same
phenomenal character. It is natural to assume that introspection has a special role
to play in grounding the claims we make about the phenomenology of our
experiences. The following claim seems compelling: the positive claims we make
about the phenomenology of our experiences must somehow be grounded in
introspective evidence if they are to be warranted. Accepting this claim might lead one to accept the following line of reasoning: if two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, then introspection alone cannot reveal to one that they do not have the same phenomenal character. So if two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, then there can be no introspective evidence that can be appealed to that will establish that the two experiences have different phenomenal characters. If there can be no introspective evidence one can appeal to that will establish that two experiences have different phenomenal characters, then one can have no legitimate reason to deny that the two experiences have the same phenomenal character. So if two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, then there can be no legitimate reason for one to deny that they have the same phenomenal character. How should the disjunctivist respond to this line of reasoning? Does the disjunctivist have to reject the compelling assumption that the positive claims we make about the phenomenology of our experiences must somehow be grounded in introspective evidence if they are to be warranted?

It might be thought that the disjunctivist can adequately respond to the intuitions supporting the claim that subjectively indistinguishable experiences must have the same phenomenal character, if he can simply establish that the judgements one makes about the phenomenology of one’s experiences can be mistaken. The suggestion is that if the disjunctivist can establish that the judgements we make about the phenomenology of our experiences are fallible, then he can thereby show
that we can make sense of the idea that a subject can judge that two of his experiences have the same phenomenal character even in a case where they do not actually have the same phenomenal character. The disjunctivist can then concede that a subject will be inclined to judge that his subjectively indistinguishable experiences have the same phenomenal character, and yet maintain that this does not in itself establish that the experiences actually do have the same phenomenal character. He can claim that the judgements the subject is inclined to make about the phenomenology of the experiences need not be correct, for the judgements we make about the phenomenology of our experiences are fallible. However, if the disjunctivist responds in this way, it is not clear that he is engaging with the intuitions that are appealed to in the line of reasoning outlined above leading to the conclusion that there can be no legitimate reason for one to deny that subjectively indistinguishable experiences have the same phenomenal character. This can be shown by looking to the kind of example that is usually exploited in attempts to show that the judgements we make about the phenomenology of our experiences are fallible.

The following case, introduced by Armstrong, has been presented as a challenge to the view that the judgements we make about the phenomenology of our experiences are infallible:

... suppose that we have three samples of cloth, A, B, and C, which are exactly alike except that they differ very slightly in their colour. Suppose further, however, that A and B are perceptually completely indistinguishable in respect of their colour, and B and C
are perceptually completely indistinguishable in respect of their colour. Suppose that \(A\) and \(C\) can be distinguished from each other in this respect. (Armstrong 1968, p. 136 in Dancy 1988)

If a subject compares the colours of samples \(A\) and \(B\), then he will be inclined to judge that the colour that \(A\) seems to have is the same as the colour that \(B\) seems to have, and if the subject compares the colours of samples \(B\) and \(C\) he will be inclined to judge that the colour that \(B\) seems to have is the same as the colour that \(C\) seems to have. However, when the subject compares the colours of \(A\) and \(C\), he will be inclined to judge that the colour that \(A\) seems to have is not the same as the colour that \(C\) seems to have. Not all of these judgements can be correct. The example illustrates that the judgements one is inclined to make concerning the properties that putative objects of experience seem to possess are fallible.

Furthermore, it illustrates that when one has a particular experience one may be unable to tell that a judgement one is inclined to make concerning the properties that the putative objects of experience seem to possess is incorrect. The truth of a judgement one is inclined to make about the phenomenology of one’s experience is dependent on the truth of a judgement one is inclined to make concerning the properties that a putative object of experience seems to possess. For, as was argued in chapter six, one acquires knowledge about the phenomenology of one’s experience through attending to the putative objects of experience and the properties that they seem to possess. So the example also illustrates that the judgements one is inclined to make about the phenomenology of one’s experiences are fallible, and it shows that when one has a particular experience one may be
unable to tell that a judgement one is inclined to make about the phenomenology of one’s experience is incorrect.

This particular example might be thought to provide strong support for the disjunctivist’s claim that subjectively indistinguishable experiences can fail to have the same phenomenal character. For the example appears to show that one can make sense of the idea that a subject may be unable to tell that two successive experiences do not have the same phenomenal character. However, someone might accept that the example does establish that we are fallible in the judgements we make about the phenomenology of our experiences, and also accept that the example shows that a subject may be unable to tell that two successive experiences do not have the same phenomenal character, and yet still accept the line of reasoning outlined earlier leading to the conclusion that there can be no legitimate reason for one to deny that a perception and a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination have the same phenomenal character.

The example shows that the judgements we are inclined to make about the phenomenology of our experiences can be incorrect, by showing that there can be introspective evidence giving one reason to hold that a judgement one is inclined to make about the phenomenology of one’s experience cannot be correct. If one were presented with samples A and B, one would be inclined to judge that the colour that A seems to have is the same as the colour that B seems to have, and if
one were presented with samples B and C, one would be inclined to judge that the
colour that B seems to have is the same as the colour that C seems to have. The
fact that the colours of samples A and C are subjectively distinguishable shows that
there can be introspective evidence giving one reason to show that such
judgements cannot be correct. Although the example shows that the judgements
one makes about the phenomenology of one's experiences are fallible, it does so by
showing that there can be introspective evidence giving one reason to correct the
judgements one makes about the phenomenology of one's experiences. Although
the example shows that a subject may be unable to tell that two successive
experiences do not have the same phenomenal character, it does so by showing
that there can be introspective evidence giving a subject reason to hold that the
phenomenal properties of two experiences are not identical which may be
unavailable to the subject when he has the two experiences. It might then be
objected that the example does nothing to undermine the intuition that there can be
no legitimate reason to deny that two experiences have the same phenomenal
character if there can be no introspective evidence one can appeal to in order to
establish that the two experiences do not have the same phenomenal character.
Someone might still complain that there can only be a legitimate reason to claim
that a perception and a hallucination do not have the same phenomenal character if
there can be introspective evidence that can be appealed to in order to establish
this claim. They may object that if there can be introspective evidence that can be
appealed to in order to establish the claim that a perception and a hallucination do
not have the same phenomenal character, then the two experiences are not genuinely subjectively indistinguishable. If a perception and a hallucination are genuinely subjectively indistinguishable, then there can be no introspective evidence that can be appealed that will establish that the two experiences have different phenomenal characters. So there can be no legitimate reason for one to claim that the two experiences have different phenomenal characters, given the assumption that the positive claims we make about the phenomenology of our experiences must somehow be grounded in introspective evidence if they are to be warranted. So if the disjunctivist is to defend the claim that a perception and a subjectively indistinguishable experience do not have the same phenomenal character, does he have to reject the assumption that the positive claims we make about the phenomenology of our experiences must somehow be grounded in introspective evidence if they are to be warranted?

The response that I earlier suggested that the disjunctivist can give to the sense-datum theorist who holds that sense-data are mind-independent entities, helps provide an answer to this question. I suggested that the disjunctivist can acknowledge the psychological appeal of the positive account of hallucinatory experience offered by such a sense-datum theorist. The disjunctivist can accept that when a subject has a hallucinatory experience that is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perception, the experience will seem to the subject to be one that requires a mind-independent object of awareness. The
disjunctivist can nevertheless deny that this fact is sufficient to establish that the
sense-datum theorist’s account of hallucinatory experience is correct, for he can
point out that we have good empirical reasons to hold that such experiences do not
actually involve an awareness of mind-independent entities. This response shows
that we can make sense of the idea that there can be non-introspective evidence
giving one reason to hold that an experience is different from the way that it seems
to be. If one’s experience seems to require the presence of a mind-independent
object of awareness, then one can have non-introspective evidence for the claim
that the experience is different from the way that it seems to be, for one can have
non-introspective evidence for the claim that there is no appropriately placed mind-
independent entity to serve as the object of awareness. The disjunctivist’s response
to the sense-datum theorist shows that one can make sense of the idea that there
can be non-introspective evidence for the claim that one’s experience is different
from the way that it seems to be, while still maintaining that the positive claims we
make about the phenomenology of our experiences must somehow be grounded in
introspective evidence if they are to be warranted. For it shows that the evidence
which can give one reason to reject a claim one is inclined to make about the
phenomenal character of one’s experience, need not be evidence giving one reason
to hold a distinct positive claim about the phenomenal character of the experience.
With this in mind, let us return to the line of reasoning outlined earlier leading to
the conclusion that there can be no legitimate reason for one to deny that
subjectively indistinguishable experiences have the same phenomenal character.

The following claims were involved:

(1) The positive claims we make about the phenomenology of our experiences must somehow be grounded in introspective evidence if they are to be warranted.

(2) If two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, then introspection alone cannot reveal that the two experiences do not have the same phenomenal character. So if two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, then there can be no introspective evidence that can be appealed to that will establish that the two experiences have different phenomenal characters.

(3) If there can be no introspective evidence that can be appealed to that will establish that two experiences have different phenomenal characters, then there can be no legitimate reason for one to deny that the two experiences have the same phenomenal character. Therefore,

(4) If two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, then there can be no legitimate reason for one to deny that the two experiences have the same phenomenal character.

The disjunctivist's response to the sense-datum theorist who holds that sense-data are mind-independent entities, shows that one can accept (1) and yet still allow that one can make sense of the idea that there can be non-introspective evidence giving one reason to hold that an experience is different from the way that it seems to be. This shows that (3) and (4) do not follow from (1) and (2). If we can make
sense of the idea that there can be non-introspective evidence giving one reason to hold that an experience is different from the way that it seems to be, then we can make sense of the idea that there may be evidence giving one reason to hold that an experience is different from the way that it seems to be, which is not evidence giving one reason to hold that a distinct subjectively indistinguishable experience is different from the way that it seems to be. If we can make sense of the idea that there can be evidence giving one reason to hold that an experience is different from the way that it seems to be, which is not evidence giving one reason to hold that a distinct subjectively indistinguishable experience is different from the way that it seems to be, then we can make sense of the idea that there can be a legitimate reason for one to deny that two subjectively indistinguishable experiences have the same phenomenal character.

The disjunctivist claims that we have non-introspective evidence for the claim that certain experiences (i.e. hallucinations) are different from the way that they seem to be. These experiences seem to require the presence of mind-independent objects of awareness, but we have non-introspective evidence for the claim that they do not actually involve an awareness of such objects. The non-introspective evidence giving us reason to hold that hallucinations are different from the way that they seem to be is not evidence giving us reason to hold that subjectively indistinguishable perceptions are different from the way that they seem to be. We have evidence giving us reason to hold that hallucinations are different from the
way that they seem to be, which is not evidence giving us reason to hold that subjectively indistinguishable perceptions are different from the way that they seem to be, so we have a legitimate reason to deny that perceptions and subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations have the same phenomenal character. The disjunctivist can accept that the positive claims we make about the phenomenology of our experiences must somehow be grounded in introspective evidence if they are to be warranted – he can accept (1), and yet he can still reject the claim that there can be no legitimate reason for one to deny that subjectively indistinguishable experiences have the same phenomenal character – he can reject (4). For the disjunctivist can claim that the introspective evidence which inclines one to make certain positive claims about the phenomenal character of a hallucinatory experience is defeated by non-introspective evidence, and this non-introspective evidence does not defeat the introspective evidence which inclines one to make the same positive claims about the phenomenal character of a subjectively indistinguishable perception.

Summary

The fact that we can have hallucinatory experiences that are subjectively indistinguishable from genuine perceptions does not show that we need to reject the disjunctivist account of experience. The disjunctivist can accept that experiences are of the same fundamental kind if they have the same phenomenal character, and he can still reject the claim that subjectively indistinguishable
experiences must be of the same fundamental kind. There is nothing incoherent in
the disjunctivist’s claim that subjectively indistinguishable experiences can fail to
have the same phenomenal character. The disjunctivist can also accept that the
kind of event which is the proximate cause of a genuine perception of the world
can be the proximate cause of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination.
Robinson’s causal argument does not establish that we need to reject disjunctivism.
Robinson’s argument rests on the assumption that it is possible to provide a
positive, non-derivative account of the kind of experience involved when a subject
hallucinates. We have seen no reason to think that this assumption must be correct.
So the disjunctivist can block the argument by simply rejecting the assumption.

We have seen no reason to think that a disjunctive account of experience is
untenable. An assumption that is often made is that even if the disjunctivist’s
account of experience turns out to be coherent and consistent with our best
empirical evidence, we should not accept it, for a disjunctive account of experience
is unmotivated. The assumption has been that we can preserve all of the aspects of
our ordinary common sense view of perception perfectly well, without being
committed to a rejection of the common element thesis. So we have no reason to
accept disjunctivism, even if we cannot establish that disjunctivism must be false.
The intentional theory of experience – a theory that does not involve a rejection of
the common element thesis – is put forward as an account of experience that can
adequately preserve all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of
perception. The intentional theorist offers a positive, non-derivative account of hallucinatory experience that does not involve the positing of sense-data – objects that we are actually aware of when we have hallucinations. So the intentional theorist can maintain that one does not need to reject the common element thesis in order to avoid the idea that there are these strange entities – sense-data – that we are aware of whenever we have sensory experiences, and which get in the way of our direct perceptual access to the world. However, if one is to provide an account of experience that preserves all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception, one must do more than simply provide an account of experience that does away with sense-data.

If an account of experience is to preserve all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception, it must be able to accommodate the two aspects of our ordinary concept of perception that were uncovered in the attempt to provide a rationale for the CTP. These are, (a) the fact that it is part of our ordinary concept of perception that successful perceptual experiences have particularity – i.e. successful perceptual experiences involve an awareness of particular items in the world, and (b) the fact that our ordinary concept of perception allows for the possibility of misperception. I have argued that the account of experience that best accommodates these two aspects of our ordinary concept of perception involves a rejection of the generality thesis. It involves the claim that when one perceives the world, one needs to refer to the particulars one
is aware of if one is to specify what seems to one to be the case in having the experience. I have also argued that if one rejects the generality thesis, and one holds that the content of a successful perceptual experience is particular, then one incurs a commitment to disjunctivism. So the account of experience that best accommodates all that is involved in our ordinary common sense view of perception, does, after all, involve a commitment to disjunctivism. So the burden of proof is on those who claim that we should reject a disjunctive account of experience. Those who claim that we should reject disjunctivism need to show why we cannot accept the account of experience that fits best with our ordinary common sense view of perception.
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