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Recall once again the Inconsistent Triad of claims about the nature of perceptual experience and its objects that I set out in ch. 1.

- (I) Physical objects are mind-independent.
- (II) Physical objects are the direct objects of perception.
- (III) The direct objects of perception are mind-dependent.

Physical objects are such things as stones, tables, trees, people and other animals: the persisting macroscopic constituents of the world that we live in. The entities of a given kind are mind-independent if and only if their nature is entirely independent of their appearance, of the way in which they do or might appear to anyone: it is not in any way a matter of how they do or might appear to anyone. More precisely, the mind-independence of physical objects consists in the individuating priority of their nature over the various appearance properties that show up in our perception of them. So an account of our perceptual experience of physical objects preserves realism if and only if it offers a characterization of the natures of physical objects themselves as the prior and independent basis on which it goes on to give a characterization of the relevant

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appearances that such objects may present in perception. According to the early modern approach to perception that I began with, the nature of perceptual experience is to be elucidated by reference to certain direct objects that are set before the mind in such experience. Thus, the most fundamental characterization of a specific perceptual experience is to be given by citing, and/or describing, specific such entities: the experience in question is one of acquaintance with just those things, which identify any given perceptual experience as the specific modification of consciousness that it is. Thus, the direct objects of perception are those objects, if any, that provide the most fundamental characterization of our perceptual experience in this way.

The arguments from illusion and hallucination seem to establish that any such direct objects of perception must be mind-dependent. Hence philosophers sympathetic to the early modern approach appear committed to (III) above and therefore obliged to choose between rejecting (I) and rejecting (II). In chs. 2 and 3 above, I considered these two options, taking off from the historical views of Berkeley and Locke respectively. I found in complete generality that neither option is acceptable. So I turned in ch. 4 to the current orthodox response of rejecting (III) by rejecting the early modern approach altogether. This Content View, (CV), according to which the most fundamental account of our perceptual relation with the physical world is to be given in terms of the representational content of perceptual experience, I also found unacceptable. I propose in chs. 5-7 to rehabilitate the early modern insight, as I see it, that the most fundamental characterization of perceptual experience is to be given in terms of a relation of conscious acquaintance with certain direct objects of perception. I argue that this insight is perfectly

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consistent with the thesis that the direct objects of perception are the persisting mind-independent physical objects that we all know and love.¹ I therefore reject (III) whilst remaining faithful to the early modern insight. This in my view provides the only fully adequate elucidation and defence of the empirical realist conviction that physical objects are both presented to us in perceptual experience and have a nature that is entirely independent of how they do or might appear to anyone: the very objects that are presented to us in perceptual experience are themselves mind-independent in nature.

I believe that the simple conjunction of (I) and (II) above provides the most stable and satisfactory framework for sustaining empirical realism. This is the core of my own positive position in the area: the Object View (OV). Accordingly, the most fundamental characterization of our perceptual relation with the physical world is to be given in terms of a relation of conscious acquaintance between perceiving subjects and the particular

¹ The other opponents of (CV) that I mentioned in ch. 4 above are sympathetic to these ideas too; but there are also significant differences between our views. See Campbell (2002a, 2002b), Martin (2002, 2010, forthcoming), Smith (2002), Travis (2004), Gupta (2006a, 2006b, forthcoming) and Johnston (2006). One major difference deserves mention right away. According to (OV) as developed in detail below, the only objects that are ever direct objects of perception in my early modern sense are mind-independent physical objects themselves, along perhaps with certain events involving them, parts or collections of physical objects and possibly other related phenomena like shadows too (see ch. 1). Smith (2002) and Gupta (forthcoming) introduce intentional or non-real objects as the objects of awareness or of presence in their senses respectively to accommodate cases of illusion and hallucination. The basic idea is that perception consists in a conscious relation with mind-independent physical objects in perfect cases when everything is as it seems, and in the same relation with something else in the various misleading cases in which things are not entirely as they seem. A major part of the point of (OV) is to avoid appeal to such shady entities and yet accommodate illusion and hallucination entirely satisfactorily anyway. Gupta's position is under construction. So I reserve any explicit assessment for another occasion. For critical discussion with which I am broadly sympathetic of Smith's appeal to intentional objects in cases where these are not simply identical with mind-independent physical objects themselves, see Siegel (2006, esp § 7).

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mind-independent physical objects that are presented to them in perception as genuine direct objects in the early modern sense. As I acknowledged from the opening pages of ch. 1, I take it to be agreed on all sides that we are presented with physical objects in perception; and it is without doubt our commonsense starting point that such physical objects are mind-independent. So the characterization our perceptual relation with the physical world as a presentation of mind-independent physical objects should be common ground between all the participants in the debate I have been conducting throughout except for the various anti-realists discussed in ch. 2. The (OV) thesis that the most fundamental characterization of our perceptual relation with the physical world is as a matter of conscious acquaintance between perceiving subjects and particular mind-independent physical objects is far stronger than this relatively uncontroversial claim in the following two respects. First, the point is that perceptual presentation irreducibly consists in conscious with mind-independent physical objects. It is not to be elucidated or further understood, either in terms of a relation of direct acquaintance with mind-independent entities that are suitably related to mind-independent things, or in terms of a relation with some kind of representational content that ‘concerns’ such things in the sense in which I introduced this term in ch. 4. Second, (OV) insists that this characterization of perceptual presentation as conscious acquaintance with mind-independent physical objects provides the most fundamental elucidation of which modification of consciousness any specific such experience is: the fundamental nature of perceptual experience is to be given precisely by citing and/or describing those very mind-independent physical objects of acquaintance: such objects really are direct objects in something very close to the early modern sense that I have been working with

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throughout. Every aspect of the position is clearly in need of further elucidation; but a central claim of the current chapter in developing (OV) in connection specifically with vision is as follows. From various points of view, and in various circumstances of perception, these mind-independent physical direct objects of acquaintance have certain evident similarities with paradigm exemplars of various kinds of such things, in virtue of which they look, very roughly, to be of those kinds. This is the basic form of the (OV) account of the ways that mind-independent physical objects look in perception.

This outline sketch of (OV) is obviously in need of major elaboration and defence at every point. I aim to provide this below in what remains of the present chapter. First (§ 5.1), I consider an immediate objection to (OV) along with a closely related source of concern and a kind of converse objection too. Second (§ 5.2), I explain the (OV) accounts of illusion and hallucination. Third (§ 5.3), I develop the (OV) account of the way in which particular mind-independent physical objects look certain ways to us in perception. In ch. 6 below I address the epistemological commitments and ambitions of (OV) as I intend them; and ch. 7 considers the question to what extent the truth of (OV) is evident from the perceiver's own perspective.

5.1 Presentation

According to the early modern approach, the direct objects of perception provide the most basic categorization of an experience of acquaintance with those objects as the specific modification of consciousness that it is. The identity and nature of such entities

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serves to elucidate what it is to be in that very conscious experiential condition. An immediate objection to the (OV) proposal that the mind-independent physical objects that are presented in perception themselves constitute its direct objects in this early modern sense is that there can be quite different perceptual experiences – had by the same subject or by different subjects – with identical such physical direct objects. For example, I may view a coin head on and then from a wide angle and have significantly different experiences as a result; experiences of its head side are different from those of its tail side; I may view the coin on the day it is minted and then again a few years later when it is tarnished and battered; I may view it in bright light and in dim light; I may see it and then feel it, again with quite different experiences as a result.

The key to my reply on behalf of (OV) is that perceptual experience is a matter of a person's conscious acquaintance with various mind-independent physical objects from a given spatiotemporal point of view, in a particular sense modality and in certain specific circumstances of perception (such as lighting conditions in the case of vision). These factors effectively conjoin to constitute a third relatum of the relation of conscious acquaintance that holds between perceivers and the mind-independent physical direct objects of their perceptual experience. Thus the experiential variations noted above, and any others along similar lines, may all perfectly adequately be accounted for by variations within this third relatum.² For example, head-on vs wide-angle experiences, and those of the head side vs. the tail side involve different spatial points of view. Experiences of the

² See Campbell (2009) for related discussion of this idea of consciousness as a three-place relation. Notice, though, that the control on Campbell's third relatum – 'standpoint' – comes from the requirements upon Fregean sense (Frege, 1993) rather than any more basic notion of perceptual presentation.

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newly minted vs. tarnished and battered coin involve different temporal points of view. Seeing vs. feeling it clearly involve different sense modalities; and bright light vs. dim light viewings involve different circumstances of perception. Still these are all cases of conscious acquaintance with the very same mind-independent physical coin – with variations in the third term of the perceptual relation. The basic idea of (OV) is that these complex specifications of my overall perceptual relation with the particular coin in question constitute the most fundamental characterization of my experiential condition in each case.

Appeal to this third relatum is also crucial to understanding another feature of perceptual experience that may initially appear in tension with (OV). According to (OV) the most fundamental characterization of our perceptual relation with the physical world is to be given in terms of a relation of conscious acquaintance between perceiving subjects and the particular mind-independent physical objects that are presented to them in perception as genuine direct objects in the early modern sense. There is a certain symmetry with respect to the objects themselves between their shape, their colour and their mass, say, at least to the extent that these are all equally properties of those objects.³ Our perceptual experience is not likewise symmetric with respect to these properties. Although we can sometimes tell how massive objects are by sight, there are many cases in which this is simply not possible even though their colour and shape clearly do show up somehow in the nature of our experience of them. No satisfactory account can possibly be given of the

³ Of course there are numerous controversies surrounding various distinctions sometimes made between such properties: primary vs. secondary, intrinsic vs. extrinsic and so on. These may all be ignored for the purposes of the issue currently under discussion.

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nature of our perceptual experience of physical objects that fails to respect this asymmetry at least on those occasions. Yet (OV) may seem designed precisely so as to be incapable of giving it any respect whatsoever. Experience is acquaintance with the object, and the object has shape, colour and mass equally, not to mention the atomic number of its constituent material that plausibly never shows up in perception at all. Indeed it is surely part of the point of (CV) precisely to respect this kind of distinction, between the ways that objects are actually represented as being in perception and ways that they may be alright but that they are not represented as being in perception.

Of course I agree that on any specific occasion physical objects look some ways and not others; and perhaps there are ways that physical objects may be that they never, or at least very rarely, look. I give a detailed and extended account of how these phenomena arise within (OV) in §§ 5.2 and 5.3 below. For the moment I simply mention some of the materials that this account employs in order to move forward in developing the position. The key to the (OV) account of the ways things look is the notion of certain relevant similarities between the direct objects of perception themselves and the paradigms of various kinds of physical objects that play a central role in our understanding of what those kinds are. (OV) construes the most fundamental perceptual condition as a relation of conscious acquaintance between a subject and certain mind-independent physical objects from a given spatiotemporal point of view, in a particular modality and in certain specific circumstances of perception. The similarities that are relevant to the ways that such things look are specific to the visual modality and also to the spatiotemporal point of view and other circumstances in question. The same goes for the other modalities. Thus,

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for example, although the similarities that a coin has with a paradigm circle may be relevant from head on, these similarities are not relevant when viewed from edge on – rotated by 90°. Again, its similarities with our paradigms of silver colour are relevant in vision in good lighting conditions, but less so in dim lighting conditions and not at all in touch. Finally, its similarities with paradigms of a certain mass are rarely relevant in vision at all. Thus, I claim, and will go on to explain further below, the uncontroversial data concerning how physical objects do and do not, can and cannot, look in perception do not constitute an insurmountable obstacle to (OV).

Before moving on to consider illusion and hallucination in § 5.2 below, it is worth addressing a kind of converse to the initial immediate objection set out at the start of this section. There the difficulty was supposed to be that perceptual experiences with the same direct objects may nevertheless be quite different; and the response was to stress the importance of a third relatum consisting of spatiotemporal point of view, sense modality and relevant circumstances of perception. Here the challenge to (OV) is to explain the manifest similarity between experiences with distinct direct objects. For the most obvious and straightforward kind of example, consider visual experiences of two numerically distinct but qualitatively identical apples from corresponding points of view and in the same perceptual circumstances. (OV) characterizes these as relations of conscious acquaintance with distinct objects, yet surely the experiences are identical? Absolutely not! Just as the apples cannot possibly be distinguished by looking, so the visual experiences cannot possibly be distinguished by introspection either; and just as their visual indistinguishability does not entail that the apples are one and the same, so it does

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not follow from their introspective indistinguishability either that the experiences are one and the same. Just because a person may be unable to distinguish two experiential conditions it absolutely does not follow that these have to be characterized as one and the same experiential condition. Indeed, the introspective indistinguishability of the two visual experiences follows, according to (OV), from the qualitative identity of their numerically distinct direct objects. So this can hardly be an objection to the view.

There are really two points here. First, the proponent of (OV) simply denies that introspective indistinguishability entails identity in the fundamental theoretical characterization of perceptual experiences. A full account of introspection is governed by many and various constraints and requirements. Any assumption from the outset that it must deliver the result that introspection is infallible concerning experiential identity in this way, though, is certainly not axiomatic, and arguably leads to very serious epistemological and metaphysical problems.⁴

The second point is that identity in the fundamental characterization of experiences is not even the best, and certainly not the only, explanation of their introspective indistinguishability in the cases in question. (OV) offers a perfectly adequate alternative. Experiences are most fundamentally to be construed as relations of conscious acquaintance with particular mind-independent physical objects, from a given point of view, in a particular sense modality and in certain specific circumstances of perception.

⁴ See McDowell (1982) and Williamson (1996) for epistemological and metaphysical objections to this principle that have been very influential; and see Evans (1982, ch. 7) for the outlines of a far more promising and plausible approach to introspection.

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Those objects look various ways, in the visual case, in virtue of the visually relevant similarities that they have relative to the point of view and perceptual circumstances in question with various paradigms of certain physical kinds. As a direct and perfectly explicable consequence of this, numerically and qualitatively distinct objects may look the same in various respects from appropriate points of view in appropriate circumstances. For such objects may have the same visually relevant similarities with the same paradigms from the points of view and in the circumstances in question. The resultant experiences may indeed therefore be introspectively indistinguishable; but that is no reason to regard them as one and the same experiential condition. They are cases of conscious visual acquaintance with particular distinct mind-independent physical objects from various points of view in various circumstances of perception. As will become clear in what follows below in § 5.3, similar points may be made in relation to other kinds of case, for example, in which a circular coin viewed from an angle looks in certain respects similar to an elliptical disc viewed from head on, or a white piece of chalk in red lighting conditions looks like a red piece of chalk in white lighting conditions.

The whole point of (OV) is to insist that, with the exception of hallucination, which is addressed directly in § 5.2 below, we can only properly understand the ways things look in perception as the product of a fundamental relation of conscious acquaintance between subjects and the particular mind-independent physical direct objects that are presented in their experience from a given point of view and in certain circumstances. In a slogan, the ways things look are the ways (perceptually presented) things look from that point of view in those circumstances. The ways things are for the subject in perception are certain

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of the ways that the objects of perception are from the subject's point of view. This approach, I claim, has a relatively straightforward and compelling explanation of the various experiential similarity data raised in objection to it.⁵ In contrast to the (OV) approach, (CV) effectively attempts to provide the most fundamental characterization of our perceptual relation with the physical world simply in terms of the looks of things themselves, the various ways that things are represented as being in perceptual experience. We saw in ch. 4 above, though, that this has the fatal consequence that it is impossible subsequently to reclaim the crucial basic datum of a conscious experiential presentation of particular mind-independent physical objects themselves in perception.

I end the present section by addressing explicitly a final closely related line of objection.⁶

I hope that this serves further to clarify the content, aims and ambitions of (OV).

Consider visual experiences of two qualitatively identical but numerically distinct objects from corresponding points of view in relevantly similar circumstances. The objector may grant that these are not exactly the same in all respects – not least because they have distinct worldly objects. Still, they have identical phenomenal characters: what it is like for a subject to have the two experiences may be exactly the same. Yet according to (OV), the fundamental nature of an experience is a relation between a perceiving subject

⁵ The key idea here is to highlight the importance to (OV) of a third component in its account of perceptual experience as a relation of conscious acquaintance between a person and the particular mind-independent physical objects around him that consists of the point of view, modality and perceptual circumstances involved. This has the effect of integrating what may often be regarded as factors to be cited in explanation of why a person has the specific perceptual experience that he does on certain occasions into the constitutive account of the nature of his perceptual experience itself. This deliberate and motivated integration of the explanatory and the constitutive is a feature of the position that recurs below in ch. 6 and especially ch. 7.

⁶ This formulation of the objection is due to an anonymous reader for OUP.

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and a particular mind-independent physical direct object from a given spatiotemporal point of view, in a particular sense modality and in certain specific circumstances of perception. This supposedly provides the most basic characterization of the conscious condition that having that experience is. So the two experiences in question are distinct conscious conditions, and this fails to capture their identical phenomenal character.

Although put in different terms, I regard this objection as a close variant of one that I addressed above. (OV) is perfectly compatible with, and indeed explains, the significant similarities between many different pairs of experiences that it characterizes as distinct at the most fundamental level of relations between subjects and objects from points of view in modalities and circumstances. Some such pairs have very striking similarities indeed: crudely, things look F to the subject in each of them for all and only the same relevant predicates 'F'. Still, the experiences themselves are the subjects' relations with the numerically distinct but qualitatively identical particular objects that look F for all these various 'F's in the two cases. This qualitative identity of their direct objects explains the correlation in the ways things look between the two experiences. According to (OV), though, we cannot make proper theoretical sense of the facts about the ways things look in either case, and so cannot even begin to understand the correlation between the two cases, without regarding such looks as the way those particular presented mind-independent objects themselves look, given their natures and the specific points of view and circumstances in question. So we absolutely have to register the numerical distinctness of the two direct objects in giving the most fundamental theoretical characterization of the experiences of them. Still, that insight is perfectly consistent with,

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and indeed explanatory of, the possibility of experiential relations with numerically distinct objects have the same phenomenal character in this sense: for all relevant predicates 'F', α_1 looks F iff α_2 looks F.

Once again, then, I claim that (OV) is perfectly compatible with the genuine data concerning the various similarities and differences between perceptual experiences.

5.2 Illusion and Hallucination

(OV) construes empirical realism as the simple conjunction of (I) and (II) above. It rejects (III) within the context of the early modern approach to the characterization of perceptual experience in terms of its direct objects: perception consists most fundamentally in a relation of conscious acquaintance with mind-independent physical objects themselves, from a given spatiotemporal points of view, in a particular sense modality and in specific circumstances of perception. In ch. 1 above I set out the arguments from illusion and hallucination as objections to precisely this combination of claims. The evident existence of illusions and hallucinations appears to establish that the direct objects of perception in the early modern sense must be mind-dependent items distinct from any mind-independent physical objects. This appearance is in my view mistaken; and in the present section I begin to explain how (OV) may perfectly adequately account of the existence of illusion and hallucination. The explanation is completed in the course of my general elucidation of the (OV) account of the ways physical objects look in perception in § 5.3 below. In keeping with my discussion

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throughout so far, I focus on the case of vision, and I begin with the characterization that I gave in ch. 1 of a visual illusion as an experience in which a physical object, o, looks E, although o is not actually E.

As I sketched above, the (OV) strategy exploits the fact that the mind-independent physical objects that are the direct objects of our perceptual experience have, relative to a given spatiotemporal point of view, particular sense modality and specific circumstances of perception, various similarities with the our paradigms of general kinds of such things. Very crudely, illusions come about in cases in which the direct objects of experience have such similarities with paradigm exemplars of kinds of which they are not in fact instances.⁷

Consider once again the Müller-Lyer illusion, (ML), in which two lines that are actually identical in length are made to look different in length by the addition of misleading hashes. The (ML) diagram, in normal viewing conditions in which the illusion is evident, has relevant similarities with a pair of lines, one longer and more distant than the plane of the diagram, one shorter and less distant; and those lines in themselves are a paradigm of inequality in length. In this sense the two lines look unequal in length: it is perfectly intelligible how someone seeing it might therefore take that very diagram as consisting of unequal lines, regardless of whether or not she actually does so.

⁷ See below for clarification concerning ‘similarities’ and ‘paradigms’.

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Which similarities are relevant in this sense, though? For anything has unrestricted similarities with everything. The first thing that has to be specified in determining relevance is the sense modality involved; and in line with my general policy here I focus in what follows on vision. The spatiotemporal point of view of the subject and various other circumstances of perception also make certain similarities relevant and not others; but which, why and how? There are no simple answers here, and the determinants of relevance are many, varied and largely empirical. All I can offer here and in § 5.3 below is a series of pointers and examples.

An important preliminary point, though, is that the relevant similarities, in our case, visually relevant similarities, cannot simply be defined as identities in the ways that the relevantly similar relata are visually represented as being, or else (OV) clearly collapses into a version of (CV). That is to say, we cannot simply say that two objects have visually relevant similarities, from a given point of view and in specific circumstances just when there are sufficiently many common properties amongst those that each is visually represented as having from that point of view and in those circumstances. For the purpose of introducing the notion of visually relevant similarities is to provide an explanation, within the context of the (OV) conception of perception as most fundamentally a matter of conscious acquaintance with mind-independent physical objects, of what grounds the truth of claims to the effect that a particular such object, o, looks F (to a subject, S, on a particular occasion). Yet the elucidation of visually relevant similarity just given in terms of the way that such objects are represented as being in experience simply presupposes the (CV) account.

The (OV) alternative, then, is that visually relevant similarities are those that ground and explain the ways that the particular physical objects that we are acquainted with in perception look. That is to say, visually relevant similarities are similarities by the lights of visual processing of various kinds. Objects have visually relevant similarities when they share sufficiently many common properties amongst those that have a significant involvement in the various processes underlying vision. Thus, and very crudely, visually relevant similarities are identities in such things as, the way in which light is reflected and transmitted from the objects in question, and the way in which stimuli are handled by the visual system, given its evolutionary history and our shared training during development.⁸

⁸ This is absolutely not intended as a complete explicit definition of the notion as it figures in the (OV) account of looks. See § 5.3 below for further extended elucidation and clarification concerning visually relevant similarities. It is worth emphasizing right away, though, the occurrence of ‘sufficiently many’ in the formulation given in the text. This is not simply a numerical matter; but rather concerns the appropriateness of the visually relevant similarities involved to the concepts occurring in the looks ascription in question. For example, suppose that I am looking at a rectangular figure directly in front of me in good viewing conditions. It has some visually relevant similarities with paradigm squares; but it does not look square. According to the proponent of (OV), this is because it does not have sufficiently many, or, better, all the appropriate such similarities. Thanks to Marcus Giaquinto for the problem example and its solution. A similar point goes some way towards explaining the differences in the ways that a regular square and a regular diamond normally look according to (OV) (see Peacocke, 1992, ch. 3 for seminal discussion; I was urged to consider this contrast by Chris in discussion). For the paradigms here have distinct canonical orientations that have implications for which visually relevant similarities are the appropriate ones in direct objects of perception that look square and diamond-shaped respectively. Further important differences between the ways that these two figures look also enter at the level of their thick looks, that is to say, in the subject’s recognition or registration of such visually relevant similarities with the paradigms in question. See § 5.3 below for introduction and discussion of the distinction between thin and thick looks.

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(OV) also appeals here to our paradigms of various physical kinds: what are these supposed to be? Again very roughly, they are instances of the kinds in question, whose association with the terms for those kinds partially constitutes our understanding of those terms, given our training in the acquisition of the relevant concepts. They are paradigm exemplars of the kinds in question relative to our grasp of the concepts for those kinds.⁹

This suggestion opens up a major philosophical topic that I cannot possibly engage with satisfactorily here: the nature of concept possession. I confine myself to a brief presentation of the key issue and an acknowledgement of my own commitments.

Berkeley (1975a, 1975b) read in Locke (1975) the claim that our grasp of general terms consists in our association with them of a peculiar kind of abstract idea that somehow determines the extension of the term in question. He argues within the shared assumption of an imagistic conception of ideas that no such idea is possible; and the same arguments in my opinion also demonstrate that no finite collection of determinate imagistic ideas could possibly succeed in any such unique determination of the extension of a general term. Closely related arguments are also developed and articulated powerfully and influentially by Kripke (1982) on behalf of Wittgenstein (1958).

Many philosophers take these arguments to establish that conscious awareness of particular exemplars plays no role whatsoever in our grasp of general terms; and they adopt a theory on which such understanding consists simply in our appropriate use of the

⁹ Pictures or images (perhaps based on description) may play the role of paradigm exemplars in certain cases, specifically, for example, in connection with non-existents or kinds with respect to which we have no experience of actual instances.

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terms in question, perhaps in the context of the similar use of others in our linguistic community.¹⁰ I believe that this is an overreaction that misses the point of Berkeley's own insistence as I read him that a particular imagistic idea is still crucial to our grasp of general terms in constraining and guiding the use that we make of such terms on particular occasions. Particular ideas do not, and cannot, serve this purpose by uniquely determining in advance for every possible object whether or not the term applies. Their role is rather one of grounding and prompting our natural inclinations to apply or withhold the term on the basis of what strike us in the context of our experience and education as relevant similarities and differences with the paradigms that such ideas offer, and of providing retrospective confirmation of the appropriateness of our use of the terms in question.

My own favoured account of concept possession likewise insists upon an essential role for our conscious confrontation with paradigm instances in our acquisition and application with genuine understanding of our most basic empirical concepts. Only in the light of this do we have the crucial appreciation of what we are up to in deploying them as we do in connection with the particular mind-independent physical objects in the world around us. Paradigms, as I invoke them above and in what follows below in explaining the ways that such objects look in perception, are precisely the instances of various kinds that do, or are apt to, play this crucial role in our possession of the relevant concepts for such kinds. Of course this immediately raises a number of pressing questions: which concepts, exactly, are to be handled in this way; might these same

¹⁰ For significant early examples see Wright (1981) and Kripke (1982).

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concepts also be acquired and properly deployed otherwise than on the basis of consciousness apprehension of paradigms, more theoretically perhaps; what precisely is the role of our awareness of paradigms in guiding and constraining application of the concepts in question; and so on? I cannot answer these questions here. The fact is that I commit myself without defence to a controversial account of concept possession, on which this normally involves, at least in the case of concepts for the most basic kinds of mind-independent physical objects, some conscious association with the term for the concept in question of various paradigm exemplars, or of images derived from experience thereof.¹¹

Thus, according to (OV), in a case of visual illusion in which a mind-independent physical object, o, looks F, although o is not actually F, o is the direct object of visual perception from a spatiotemporal point of view and in circumstances of perception relative to which o has visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of F although it is not itself actually an instance of F. This is perfectly possible, as we have already seen in the case of (ML). So the existence of illusion is entirely compatible with (OV). Indeed, I claim that this account covers many of the most standard cases of visual illusion. Here are two further examples for illustration.

First, a half submerged straight stick looks bent. Here the direct object of perception is that very (straight) stick itself. Nevertheless, it looks bent in virtue of its visually relevant

¹¹ See Fodor (1998, esp. ch. 5) for a helpful bibliography of proponents of this kind of approach to concept possession and strong opposition on his own behalf. See Brewer (1995) for more on the rule-following context for this issue.

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similarities with an unsubmerged bent stick that has its top half coincident with the unsubmerged half of the stick seen and its bottom half in the position of the relevant virtual image of the bottom half of the latter from the subject's point of view and given the refractive index of the liquid in question. In what sense are these two things similar? In the region of space in the vicinity of the eye – that is to say in the region above the refracting surface of the liquid as things actually are – light from corresponding parts of the two sticks travels, or would travel, along the same paths. Given the way that the liquid actually refracts light from the submerged portion of the stick seen, the visually relevantly similar stick described is a paradigm bent stick. Thus, the partially submerged stick looks bent. This is a direct result of the (OV) characterization of experience as conscious acquaintance with the relevant mind-independent physical object – the half submerged straight stick – along with its visually relevant similarities with a paradigm bent stick. So it can hardly be an objection to (OV) that it is unable to accommodate the illusion in question.

Second, a white piece of chalk illuminated with red light looks red. Again, the (OV) proposal is that the perceptual experience in question is most fundamentally a matter of the subject's conscious acquaintance with that very piece of chalk itself: a particular persisting mind-independent physical object. From the viewpoint in question, and, most importantly in this case, given the relevant perceptual circumstances – especially, of course, the abnormally red illumination – it has visually relevant similarities with a paradigm red piece of chalk, of just that size and shape. Their visually relevant similarity consists in the similarity of the light reflected from both. Thus the white chalk looks red;

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and again (OV) provides a perfectly adequate explanatory account of the illusion in question rather than being in any way in tension or incompatible with it.

It may be objected at this point that similarity is symmetrical. So (OV) has the unacceptable consequence, in connection with the (ML), for example, that the relevant paradigm pair of lines of unequal lengths at different depths look equal in length, for the very same reason. Similarly (OV) may seem to be committed to the claim that a bent unsubmerged stick looks straight and that a red piece of chalk in normal lighting conditions looks white.¹²

I would make two points in reply to this line of objection. First, o looks F, according to (OV), in virtue of its visually relevant similarities relative to the spatiotemporal point of view and other circumstances of perception with paradigm exemplars of F. The (ML) diagram does not constitute a paradigm case of lines that are equal in length. Given the misleading hashes, it would certainly be an inappropriate exemplar to use in manifesting or acquiring the concept of equality in length. So, although plain similarity is symmetrical, the relevant condition of similarity to a paradigm is not. Similarly, a half submerged straight stick is not a paradigm straight object; and a white piece of chalk illuminated with red light is not a paradigm white object. It may be questioned, though, in the case of the (OV) account of (ML), whether the pair of lines of different lengths at different distances from the perceiver with which the diagram is said to have visually relevant similarities are themselves a paradigm of inequality in length as the account

¹² Thanks to Tim Williamson for this objection.

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requires. Provided that their difference in depth is absolutely clear and not masked or obscured in any way, then I would say that they are. They constitute a perfectly appropriate exemplar for the acquisition of that concept and for guidance in its subsequent application. This connects directly with my second point: that misleading cues could no doubt be added to unequal lines at different depths to bring about an inverse to the (ML) illusion from a suitably chosen point of view. Notice, though, that which such cues should be added, and from which point of view the illusory construct should be viewed, would be ascertained precisely on the basis of knowledge of the physical processes involved in vision: the combination of cues and point of view should be precisely that relative to which the resultant figure has visually relevant similarities with an appropriate paradigm of lines of equal length.

Recall my presentation of the argument from illusion in ch. 1 above. This is supposed to establish that the early modern approach to perceptual experience as our conscious acquaintance with certain direct objects is forced to admit that such direct objects are always mind-dependent. Hence claim (III) of the inconsistent triad that forms the framework for my whole discussion. The argument has two phases. The first is intended to establish that the direct object of an illusion is bound to be mind-dependent. The second is supposed to generalize this result to all perceptual experience, including that involved in veridical perception. The sub-argument of the first phase is as follows. A visual illusion may be characterized as a perceptual experience in which a physical object, o, looks F, although o is not actually F. According to the early modern empiricist approach, the way to account quite generally for the fact that something looks F in an

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experience is to construe that experience as the subject's acquaintance with a direct object that provides the most fundamental characterization of that very conscious condition and that must therefore, presumably, itself be F. In cases of illusion, then, any such direct object is bound to be distinct from the physical object, o, which is not F, although it looks to be so. For one is F and the other is not. The occurrence and nature of such an illusion is manifestly independent of the accidental presence of any mind-independent object in the vicinity that happens to be F. So its direct object must be mind-dependent.

The (OV) response is quite clear. It does not follow from the fact that perceptual experience involves conscious acquaintance with certain direct objects, that the direct object of any such experience in which something looks F must itself actually be F. For I have just explained how a perceptual experience with a mind-independent physical object, o, as its direct object that is not itself F – not actually constituted by two lines of unequal length, not actually bent, or not actually red, in my three examples so far – may nevertheless be an experience in which that very object, o, looks F. The argument from illusion therefore fails to establish, even in the case of illusion itself, that the direct objects of perception are mind-dependent. So, even though I also find serious problems with any version of phase two of the argument that I know, that point is dialectically unnecessary. The evident existence of illusions of the kinds that I have been discussing is perfectly compatible with the (OV) rejection of (III) as outlined above.

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Of course there are very many quite different kinds of visual illusion. I cannot possibly consider representatives of all such kinds here. I turn next instead to consider how (OV) accounts for hallucination. This generates a related explanation for cases of illusion of a rather different kind that may initially appear more problematic for (OV) than those that I have considered so far. Further materials to fill out the overall (OV) account of illusion, and, indeed, of ‘veridical’ looks too, also emerge in § 5.3 below. First of all though, how is (OV) supposed to acknowledge the evident existence of hallucination?

The intuitive category that I have in mind consists of purely inner phenomena, in the following sense. Nothing in the mind-independent world is presented in hallucinatory experiences. They have no mind-independent direct object. (OV) also rejects any attempt to characterize hallucination in terms of purportedly mind-dependent direct objects. Rather, according to the version of (OV) that I myself endorse, hallucinatory experiences have to be characterized by giving a qualitative description of a more or less specific mind-independent scene, and saying that the subject is having an experience that is not distinguishable by introspection alone from one in which the constituents of such a scene are the direct objects. No more positive characterization of the experience may be given.¹³ Thus, for example, I once had an experience that was not distinguishable by introspection alone from one in which a large pink elephant in a desert was the direct object of my perception.

¹³ I rely heavily here upon Martin (2004).

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This approach to the theoretical characterization of hallucination raises many issues and has become quite controversial in recent philosophy of perception.¹⁴ I hope that what follows gives a fair impression of the main lines of objection and at least indicates the ideas that I would pursue in order to defend it. I do not claim exhaustive completeness, though. Furthermore, the positive core of (OV) itself is plausibly compatible with alternative approaches to the incorporation of hallucination, and my own concern is certainly primarily with non-hallucinatory cases. So, although I personally prefer the introspective indistinguishability approach to hallucination, (IIH), described above, those who find this unsatisfactory and yet see the broader merits of (OV) may be free to take another tack. In any case, my subsequent discussion of (IIH) proceeds as follows. First, I consider potential counterexamples that lead to a refinement and clarification of the embedded notion of introspective indistinguishability. Second, I respond to an objection from the potential role of hallucinatory experience in explaining our acquisition of empirical concepts. Third, I outline the responses made available by (IIH) to the argument from hallucination as presented in ch. 1. Fourth, I derive further useful materials for accounting for illusion.

The basic idea of (IIH) is set out above: hallucinatory experiences have to be characterized by giving a qualitative description of a more or less specific mind-independent scene, and saying that the subject is having an experience that is not distinguishable by introspection alone from one in which the constituents of such a scene are the direct objects. Thus, in characterizing a specific hallucinatory experiential

¹⁴ For important representative debate see the following. Martin (2004, 2006), Johnston (2004), Siegel (2004, 2008), Kennedy (forthcoming), Pautz (forthcoming).

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condition, we first specify a type of perceptual experience, such as seeing a mind-independent physical object that is E_1, E_2, \dots and E_n , say, in good lighting conditions directly before one; and then we characterize the hallucination in question as one of being in a condition that is not distinguishable by introspection alone from that perceptual condition, where condition A is not distinguishable by introspection alone from condition B iff in condition A nothing is knowable by introspection alone that rules out being in condition B. (In what follows I assume the qualification ‘by introspection alone’ unless otherwise indicated.)¹⁵

An obvious source for potential counterexamples comes from the experience of subjects incapable of any introspective knowledge at all, either because they are entirely unconscious or because they lack the required conceptual or other cognitive resources. Such subjects are in a condition in which they know nothing by introspection that rules out their seeing a mind-independent physical object that is E_1, E_2, \dots and E_n in good lighting conditions directly before them – because they know nothing or nothing of the relevant kind at all. But they are not, or may well not be, in the target hallucinatory condition. Martin (2006) offers what seems to me to be correct response here. This is to invoke an impersonal notion of introspective indistinguishability. The idea is that specific hallucinatory experiences are those that are not introspectively distinguishable from

¹⁵ I also assume throughout the idea of introspective knowledge. I do not pretend to have an adequate account of introspection. All I mean by this is the means that we all have of coking to know the nature of our own mental and especially experiential states directly, without drawing on any extraneous information. I certainly intend the notion to be used sufficiently liberally to include various ascent routines derived from Evans’ (1982, ch. 7, esp. 7.4) ‘outer judgement model’ of self-knowledge to qualify as accounts of introspection.

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specified perceptual conditions: nothing is knowable in them that rules out the corresponding perceptual condition. This is not a matter of what would or could be known by the subject in question, or by any other specific subject, if only things were different in such and such specific ways, for example, in the presence of superior conceptual and/or other cognitive capacities and appropriate attention to the task at hand etc. It is a more basic, unanalysable, and genuinely impersonal notion, grounded in what is knowable by introspection alone in the condition in question simpliciter.

No doubt this is a contentious notion; but I make two points by way of preliminary clarification.¹⁶ First, a similar impersonal epistemic notion is common currency in mathematics. When it is asserted that in a certain context it is unknowable whether the continuum hypothesis is true, this is not based upon a view about what a particular mathematician, George, could or would know in that context under such and such specific intellectual idealizations. It is a matter of what is knowable simpliciter in that context. Similarly, I claim, we have a fairly clear conception of what introspection can and cannot bring to light in various conditions, and therefore of what it is for two experiential conditions to be introspectively distinguishable or indistinguishable, in the required sense, without having to get hold of any specific subject to try to distinguish them for us, or to list specific conditions in which that or some other subject could or could not do so. Indeed, and this is my second point, this impersonal notion of introspective indistinguishability is at the heart of discussions of scepticism throughout the history of epistemology. The whole point of Descartes' dreaming and malicious

¹⁶ I acknowledge that a great deal more could be said in giving a full treatment.

demon scenarios (1986, Med I), for example, and indeed their modern ‘brain-in-a-vat’ counterparts, is that the experiences of their unfortunate subjects are impersonally introspectively indistinguishable from our normal perceptual experiences. Of course there is controversy over whether it follows from the fact that experiences in such scenarios are indistinguishable from normal perceptual experiences that our normal perceptual experiences are likewise indistinguishable from them – and this is what the sceptical arguments standardly turn on. I myself believe that it does not follow.¹⁷ But my point in the current context stands unaffected. Such familiar epistemological discussions are driven by a perfectly clear comprehensible sense of impersonal introspective indistinguishability; and this is all that (IIH) requires.

My second clarification of (IIH) concerns a rather different line of objection.¹⁸ For certain more or less ‘observable’ empirical concepts at least, e.g. F, say, perception of particular instances plausibly plays a role in explaining our capacity for beliefs whose content contains those concepts. Similarly, it may be said, hallucination as of an F equally explains the subject’s capacity for beliefs whose content contains the concept F. Simply being in a condition that is indistinguishable by introspection alone from seeing an F, though, cannot plausibly explain anyone’s capacity for beliefs whose content contains the concept F. So (IIH) is incorrect as an account of the nature of hallucination.

¹⁷ See Williams (1978, ch. 7 and esp. appendix 3) and Williamson (2000, esp. chs. 8 & 9) for very helpful discussion and elaboration. I would similarly endorse an asymmetry in distinguishability between normal perception and corresponding hallucination.

¹⁸ Again this is due to Adam Pautz (forthcoming and written comments on draft MS), although he may still doubt the success of my response to it. There are many substantive further issues raised by these considerations that I cannot address fully here.

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The obvious immediate reply would simply be to deny that (IIH) is incapable of meeting the explanatory requirement in the case of hallucination. Insofar as it is intelligible how seeing F's explains the capacity for beliefs whose content contain F, then what is the obstacle in principle to the same being true of conditions in which nothing is knowable by introspection alone that rules out that F's are being seen? Perhaps the difficulty is in seeing how a 'negative condition' like failing to know anything incompatible with seeing an F could explain anything. I think that this would be a mistake. First, 'negative conditions' are often perfectly explanatory, as, for example, when an accident is explained by a driver failing to spot a cyclist. Making out a genuine necessary condition on explanation that is clearly failed by (IIH) here would be a serious undertaking to say the least. Second, hallucinatory conditions are not blank according to (IIH). Having a hallucination as of an F is being in some condition or other, the only unifying theoretical characterization of which is that it is indistinguishable from seeing an F. If it is perfectly clear how, had the subject's condition been one of actually seeing an F instead this would have explained her capacity for beliefs whose contents contain F, then why would a condition indistinguishable from this not have served equally well? After all, this just is the intuition behind the current objection to (IIH) that hallucination as of an F is equal to perception of an F in explaining the capacity for beliefs whose content contains F.

A familiar and powerful source of resistance at this point comes from the insight that our capacity for beliefs whose content contains determinate concepts of specific mind-independent properties depends on far more than mere experience up to introspective indistinguishability, as it were. That is to say, the explanation that seeing F's plausibly

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provides of our capacity for beliefs whose contents contain F is far from simple or straightforward. It may well be that, insofar as F really is a concept of a way mind-independent things objectively are, the relevant explanation crucially involves the role of seeing F's in attentional tracking of actual mind-independent F's in the world, as unchanging in the relevant respects – in being F's, that is – across variations in viewing conditions, and thus the role of seeing F's in successful demonstrative reference to that very way that such things may be. So it may well turn out that hallucinations do not equally explain our capacity for such beliefs at all. In that case the motivating claim behind the current objection to (IIH), that hallucination as of an F is equal to perception of an F in explaining the capacity for beliefs whose content contains F, is simply false.

This certainly suggests a refinement to (IIH). Great care is required with the notion of a hallucination as of an F, correlative with the cognitive sophistication of the corresponding perceptual condition relative to which it is introspectively indistinguishable. On the one hand, hallucination as of an F may be a hallucinatory correlate of simply being faced in perception with what happens to be an F, in the absence of any capacity to make any sense of the idea of variations in viewing conditions upon a single unified worldly condition. This is plausibly insufficient on its own to explain the capacity for beliefs whose contents contain the concept of mind-independent F-ness itself. So the current line of objection to (IIH) does not get started. On the other hand, hallucination as of an F may be a hallucinatory correlate of explicit perceptual categorization of something as an F, which involves actualization of that very concept – in the hallucinatory case of course only in some judgement to the effect that it looks as though there is an F present, rather

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than any objectual predication of F-ness. This presupposes possession of the concept and so provides at best a degenerate explanation of the capacity for beliefs whose content contains it: anyone capable of such hallucinations is capable of such beliefs. Once again, though, the objection to (III) fails.

Although this is a massive topic for another occasion, I claim that what substantively explains the capacity for beliefs whose content contains the empirical concept F, in the relevant cases, is the role of actually seeing F's in tracking that determinate condition of mind-independent things – being F – across variations in other conditions, along with a great deal more besides. Just as a hallucination cannot possibly provide anyone with a determinate demonstrative conception of any particular dagger, so a hallucination introspectively indistinguishable from being presented with an F from a given point of view P in such and such circumstances C, that is also therefore introspectively indistinguishable from seeing an F' from P' in C' or an F'' from P'' in C'' and so on, cannot on its own explain anyone's capacity for beliefs whose contents determinately contain the concept of mind-independent F's.

Recall now my brief presentation of the argument from hallucination in ch. 1 above. Like the argument from illusion, this is supposed to establish that the early modern approach to perceptual experience as our conscious acquaintance with certain direct objects is forced to admit that such direct objects are always mind-dependent. Hence claim (III) of the inconsistent triad that frames my discussion throughout. In cases of hallucination, there is no plausible candidate mind-independent direct object of perception, so this must

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be a mind-dependent thing. Then, since every perceptual experience is subjectively indistinguishable from one in a possible case of hallucination, the same goes across the board. The direct objects of any perception are bound to be mind-dependent. Again there are two phases to the argument. The first is intended to establish that hallucinatory experience must be construed as a relation to a mind-dependent direct object. The second is supposed to generalize this result to all perceptual experience, including that in veridical perception.

Once again (OV) rejects entirely the first phase of the argument. In the case of pure hallucination, unlike that of illusion, though, it is indeed true that there is no mind-dependent physical direct object of perception. But this is absolutely not to be addressed by the provision of a mind-dependent direct object instead. The apparatus of direct objects of experience is simply not applicable in this case according to (OV).

Hallucinations have no positive characterization in those terms. They are rather to be characterized in the derivative manner outlined above, as indistinguishable by introspection alone from 'corresponding' cases of genuine conscious acquaintance with mind-independent physical direct objects of various kinds.

Notice that (OV) is therefore committed to the invalidity of the inference from the fact that an experience is indistinguishable by introspection alone from one with such and such direct objects to the conclusion that the former experience also has direct objects of those same kinds. For hallucinations are indeed indistinguishable by introspection alone from perceptions with various mind-independent direct objects; but the former have no

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direct objects at all. So hallucination constitutes a counterexample to the inference in question. This in turn blocks the second phase of the arguments from illusion and hallucination as they would normally be formulated in this current context of the early modern approach to perception. For those phases both attempt to establish that the direct objects of all perceptual experience are mind-dependent from the premise that any veridical perception has a corresponding possible illusion or hallucination from which it is indistinguishable by introspection alone, along with the purported conclusion of the arguments' first phases that the direct objects of such illusions and hallucinations are bound to be mind-dependent.

Now, hallucinations may be caused in many and varied ways, such as by taking certain drugs or getting a firm knock to the head. Other ways of bringing about hallucination may also involve distal external objects, sometimes relatively systematically. Indeed, this may even occur in cases in which the relevant mind-independent objects are also presented as direct objects of vision, supplemented, as it were, by their hallucinatory products. An example here might be seeing a blue afterimage on a white screen after staring at a bright red stimulus. The white screen may be presented as a mind-independent direct object of perception, supplemented by a hallucination introspectively indistinguishable from seeing a blue stimulus corresponding to the original red one. This possibility of mixed perceptual-cum-hallucinatory experiences provides (OV) with the resources to account for some cases that may pretheoretically be classified as illusions. Hermann's Grid, in which pale grey patches appear at the intersections of the white channels formed by a grid of closely spaced black squares, is plausibly a case in point.

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We see the grid of black squares as a mind-independent direct object of perception supplemented by a systematic hallucination introspectively indistinguishable from seeing light grey patches at the intersections of the white channels between these black squares.

Two further related phenomena remain to be considered. Both concern ‘illusions’ due to some degree of abnormality or malfunction of the visual system, or of the perceptual system in another sensory modality; and I must confess that I am struggling clearly to formulate principles to determine which of the two (OV) strategies offered here should be adopted in which cases. Still, these certainly offer additional materials for the characterization of various perceptual phenomena within the context of (OV).

First, very much along the lines suggested above in connection with Hermann’s Grid, there are cases in which physiological abnormality or some kind of overload to the system may also lead to a systematic superimposition upon perception of the physical world of an additional layer of hallucinatory experience as elucidated above. I would be inclined to treat the supposed general yellowing of the jaundiced person’s perception in this way. Their experience, at least according to the standard philosophical description of the case, consists in visual acquaintance with the objects before them partially obscured by a general hallucinatory superimposition introspectively indistinguishable from the presence of a wash of yellow light.

Second, there are cases in which perceptual system malfunction results in an impediment of some kind to normal conscious visual acquaintance with the relevant mind-

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independent physical objects. According to (OV), the ways that such objects normally look is the result of our acquaintance with them together with their visually relevant similarities from the point of view and in the perceptual circumstances in question with paradigms of various kinds. Obviously, there are significant and highly complex physiological enabling conditions on our being so acquainted with them in vision, and indeed also in the other sensory modalities; and these may on occasion fail partly or fully in all sorts of ways. In certain cases, experiences are therefore to be construed most fundamentally as merely degraded acquaintance with the physical objects in question. Thus, (OV) may account for a red/green colour-blind subject's visual experience of an apple, say, as a case of degraded conscious visual acquaintance with that very object from a given point of view in specific circumstances of perception, or, equivalently, as conscious acquaintance with that very thing, from a given point of view, in a degraded visual modality and in such and such specific circumstances of perception.

There may well be other experiences indistinguishable by introspection alone from those of the jaundiced and colour-blind perceiver respectively, as just characterized: that of being visually acquainted with a physical scene bathed in a wash of yellow light, for example; and perhaps that of a normal subject visually acquainted from an equivalent point of view with a greyish apple. But these are fundamentally quite different perceptual experiences according to (OV), regardless of their introspective indistinguishability.

As I say, it is not absolutely clear to me how most neatly to decide between these two strategies – hallucinatory superimposition or degraded acquaintance – in connection with

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various similar and related cases. I simply offer the conviction on behalf of (OV) that one of the strategies provides an adequate and correct account of every case of this general kind that may arise. Further cases to consider in an exhaustive treatment here would include at least the following.¹⁹ In each, I provide a sketch indication of what strikes me at present as the most fruitful (OV) approach.

First, an object in the periphery of the visual field may look red but no specific shade of red. This seems to me to be a relatively straightforward case of degraded visual acquaintance. The object would look red₁₃, let us say, and of course red simpliciter too, in a focal presentation, but peripheral presentation leads merely to degraded acquaintance. Second, how might (OV) handle cases in which objects look blurred? Perhaps there are different cases here. If the blurred vision is due to a malfunction in the visual system, then this would again be a case of systemically degraded acquaintance. If the blurring is due instead to the reflection of excessive bright, say, then perhaps it is a case in which visual acquaintance is conjoined with systematic hallucinatory superimposition as in Hermann's Grid. Third, consider the motion aftereffect known as the Waterfall Illusion (e.g. Mather, Verstraten and Anstis, 1998). Here a stationary stimulus looks to move when viewed immediately after staring at a moving object. For example, a rock looks to move upwards after staring at the waterfall in the river beside it. The illusion is complicated by the fact that the rock also looks to be stationary too. This latter fact is easy to explain on (OV), since the rock is stationary and has visually relevant similarities with paradigm stationary objects. I would propose explaining the illusory motion

¹⁹ Thanks to Adam Pautz for these suggestions. See also Pautz (forthcoming).

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aftereffect again as a systematic conjoined hallucination. No doubt there is a great deal more to be said about each of these cases and many more besides. But I hope at least to have indicated how these two phenomena of degraded acquaintance and hallucinatory superimposition extend the explanatory resources of (OV) significantly in connection with a wide range of further perceptual peculiarities.

Thus I conclude quite generally that the evident existence of illusions and hallucinations is absolutely no obstacle to (OV).

5.3 Looks

The goal of the present section is to elaborate further and defend the (OV) account of the ways mind-independent physical objects look in perception. Perceptual experience consists at its most fundamental level in a person's conscious acquaintance with particular mind-independent physical objects from a given point of view, in a particular sensory modality and in specific circumstances of perception. Those objects look various ways to her in virtue of their visually relevant similarities with paradigms of various kinds of such things, relative to the point of view and other circumstances of perception in question. Although the following proposal will be subject to significant development and qualification here, the basic idea is that a mind-independent physical object, o , looks F to a subject, S , in virtue of the fact that S is consciously visually acquainted with o from a point of view and in circumstances of perception relative to which o has visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of F , where visually relevant similarities

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are similarities of the various kinds to which the physical processes enabling visual perception respond similarly, as a result of both their evolutionary design and their development over the course of our lives. I work towards greater elucidation and defence of the proposal through a consideration of a series of objections and concerns.

It may be helpful right away, though, to put the whole discussion here in dialectical context vis a vis a potentially powerful general line of objection.²⁰ (OV) construes our most fundamental visual perceptual relation with the physical world in terms of our conscious acquaintance, from a given point of view and in certain specific circumstances with particular mind-independent objects. It goes on to offer an account of the ways that such physical objects look in terms of their visually relevant similarities, from the point of view and in the circumstances in question, with certain paradigm exemplars of various kinds. The objection takes the form of a dilemma. Either the key notions of visually relevant similarities and paradigms are given complete explicit definition or they are not. If they are, then there will inevitably be counterexamples. If they are not, then no specific position has adequately been identified under the title of '(OV)'. Either way, (OV) fails. My response is to insist that these two options are absolutely not exhaustive. The key notions are indeed theoretical to an extent, in that they go beyond our commonsense understanding of the terms expressing them. It is certainly also true that I have nowhere given a complete explicit specification of every respect in which they do so from which the whole of the (OV) account of looks may be derived in every possible situation. Still, I have given a rich and detailed combination of theoretical-definitional pointers and well

²⁰ This is due to Adam Pautz.

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worked examples and illustrations of how I intend these terms to be used in elaborating (OV) that provide specific guidance in many cases and indicate how to go on in developing the (OV) account in many more. What follows is significantly more in the same vein. I contend that this is precisely what is possible and desirable by way of proper elucidation of any illuminating philosophical position in the area.

To begin with, then, it might be objected that, in rejecting (CV) and insisting that our fundamental perceptual relation with the physical world is to be characterized in terms of the mind-independent physical direct objects of our conscious acquaintance, from a given spatiotemporal point of view, in a particular sense modality and in specific circumstances of perception, rather than directly in terms of any representational content of perceptual experience, (OV) misses entirely the crucial point: the more or less determinate ways that things look to us in perception, for example, are an experiential matter, a matter of how things are for the subject there and then in that very experience; and similarly, illusions like (ML) are experiential illusions. The ways that things look are therefore not a matter of abstract similarities between those and other things – various paradigms or anything else – but rather a matter of the phenomenology of perceptual experience itself; similarly, the (ML) lines look, phenomenologically, unequal in length!²¹ I agree with the data, but I disagree that only (CV), and not (OV), may accommodate them.

This objection raises a number of very interesting issues directly concerning the nature of perceptual experience and it also connects with a range of further major philosophical

²¹ Thanks to Ian Phillips (draft) for pressing this objection very forcefully in his paper at the 2005 Warwick University Mindgrad conference.

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questions in other areas. So my reply will inevitably be incomplete or somewhat dogmatic in certain respects. I begin with a general analogy that reappears in more detail in ch. 6 below; and I pursue the point more fully in reply to the current objection also by way of particular examples. Suppose that o is F. According to one kind of resemblance nominalism, o satisfies the predicate 'x is F' in virtue of the fact that o sufficiently and appropriately resembles the paradigms whose association with that predicate plays a significant role in determining its meaning.²² Thus, o's being F is a matter of its resemblance with other things. Still, it is o itself that is F. Similarly, I claim, if o has certain visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of F relative to a given spatiotemporal point of view and specific circumstances of perception, then o itself looks F in a perceptual experience of conscious visual acquaintance with that very object from that point of view in those circumstances; and I see no good reason to worry that this is anything other than a fully phenomenological fact about the experience itself in which o is visually presented.

Indeed, it seems to me that (CV) is, if anything, less well placed than (OV) in connection with this concern. For (CV) construes facts about the ways things look as facts about the representational contents of perceptual experience; and almost all theories of content involve a significant degree of externalism, according to which the contents of mental states are extrinsically or relationally determined, perhaps on the basis of the normal cause or biological-evolutionary function of states of that (more intrinsic) kind. So it is a feature of both views that a complete account of looks involves a certain amount of

²² Nominalism is obviously a major topic. See Rodriguez-Pereyra (2002) for an overview and defence of a related version of the position.

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relationality somewhere. Furthermore, as the analogy with resemblance nominalism brings out, the visually relevant similarities that are central to the (OV) account of looks are at least similarities of the very kind that ground facts about *o* itself, from the point of view and in the circumstances in question; and the core claim of the position is that the most fundamental account of our perceptual relation with the mind-independent physical world is to be given precisely in terms of conscious acquaintance, from that point of view and in those circumstances, with that very object.

To illustrate, elucidate and expand upon these basic ideas concerning the (OV) account of the phenomenology of looks, consider a series of examples.

First, suppose that I see a duck. According to (OV) my experience consists in my conscious visual acquaintance with that very animal out there from a particular point of view and in specific circumstances of perception. Provided conditions are relatively normal, then the direct object of my experience has visually relevant similarities, relative to that point of view and those circumstances, with paradigm ducks. In this sense it looks ducklike. Being an experience in which that very animal looks ducklike in this way, this is an appropriate context for the teaching and learning of the concept of being a duck – although of course much more must also be done. Such an experience is also an intelligible ground for the application of that concept by those who already have it.²³ Still, given the actual direct object involved, and its visually relevant similarities with paradigm ducks from the point of view and in the circumstances in question, we may also

²³ See ch. 6 below for further development of this idea in a more explicitly epistemological context.

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say that it looks ducklike even to a child without that concept. All that is involved in her having the experience, though, is that that very animal is presented from a point of view and in circumstances relative to which it has visually relevant similarities with various paradigms of ours. Reference to that object, given her viewpoint and the relevant circumstances, along with a shared currency of paradigms central to our grasp of the concept, entirely captures and serves to convey her phenomenology. We may further register the relevant similarities with such paradigms when presented with a duck in perception in this way. Most importantly, we may note the intelligible applicability of the concept of a duck and thereby come to see it as a duck. This is a further genuinely phenomenological affair associated with our conceptual classificatory engagement with what is directly presented to us in experience: that very duck, as we would now say.²⁴

Thus (OV) has an appropriately rich and nuanced account of the various ways that mind-independent physical objects look to us in perception. At its foundation is the simple idea that o looks F iff o is the direct object of a visual experience from a point of view and in circumstances relative to which o has visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of F. I will say in such cases that o thinly looks F. O thickly looks F iff o thinly

²⁴ There may also be other less demanding modes of registration of visually relevant similarities in perception that do not explicitly draw upon fully conceptual categorization. Something along these lines is plausibly involved in simple systematic sorting behaviour or other robust differential responses for example. Registration may also consist in noticing various organizational, orientational or other Gestalt phenomena. For clarity of exposition I leave these possibilities largely to one side in what follows. See ch. 6 for further discussion of conceptual registration.

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looks F and the subject recognizes it as an F, or registers its visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of F in an active application of that very concept.²⁵

Conceptual phenomenology of this latter kind is not simply a matter of being caused to make a judgement employing the concept in question. It is a matter of actively and intelligibly subsuming the particular presented as the direct object of experience under that concept, in virtue of its evident similarities with the paradigms central to our understanding of that concept. We may simply find ourselves with that concept in mind, but, in cases of seeing o as F, in which it thickly looks F, the concept is evidently appropriate – to us – to that particular in virtue of the de facto existence and attentional salience of such visually relevant similarities. Note also, and importantly, that the concept F may be evidently appropriate in this way, in virtue of our conceptual registration of the relevant visually relevant similarities, even if we know that we are subject to some kind of illusion and that o is not in fact F, and so, for that reason or any other, do not actually make any judgement to the effect that o is F – although we may in such a case judge that o looks F.²⁶

The mind-independent physical objects that are presented to us in perception de facto have visually relevant similarities with very many paradigms relative to our points of view and circumstances of perception. So, for example, my study carpet thinly looks blue, navy and maximally determinate navy shade N, say, and many other ways too. In registering some and not others of these similarities I explicitly recognize and categorize

²⁵ As I say, there may also be intermediate levels of such registration and categorization.

²⁶ See my discussion of belief-independence below for further clarification of this point.

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it, for example, as navy, although, as I say, I may for some reason withhold an all out judgement to the effect that it actually is navy. This makes a significant difference to the nature of my perceptual relation with the carpet; but it is absolutely not a matter of perceiving that a similarity relation obtains between the carpet and something else – not least because I do not perceive the relevant something else itself, that is, the paradigm of navy that plays a central role in my grasp of that colour concept. Still, I claim in reply to the present objection, thick looks as well as thin looks are a genuinely phenomenological matter.

It might be objected to this last claim that recognizing the carpet as falling under the concept ‘navy’ cannot possibly make a phenomenological difference of any kind. For if it did, then it would not be possible to have two phenomenologically identical experiences of seeing the same carpet from the same viewpoint in the same circumstances, in one and not the other of which it is conceptually registered as navy in colour. But this surely is possible. Indeed it would apparently follow from denying its possibility that when it is recognized as navy it somehow looks different in colour; and surely that cannot be right.²⁷

The reply is straightforward. Both before and after any categorization using the colour concept ‘navy’ the carpet thinly looks navy; and this is a matter of constant visual phenomenology. After conceptual registration of its visually relevant similarities with paradigms of navy blue it also thickly looks navy; and this is a phenomenological change. Any problem arises only on the assumption that there is a single uncontroversial notion of visual phenomenology on which it makes perfectly good sense to ask, and it is always

²⁷ This line of objection came up in correspondence with Susanna Siegel.

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possible determinately to answer, whether two experiential conditions are phenomenologically identical tout court. The whole point of the thin vs. thick looks distinction is precisely to deny that assumption. All that is involved is acknowledgement of a familiar phenomenon. Recognition – of a cloud as shaped like a bull, or of a doodle as a distorted name, say – is both classificatory and phenomenological. In one sense it changes the way the thing in question looks; in another sense the shape it looks is unchanged. It is surely a virtue rather than a vice of (OV) that it has easily to hand the materials to make this simple acknowledgement

Consider as a closely related second example Jastrow's (1900) Duck Rabbit (see, also, Wittgenstein, 1958, II.ii). Suppose that I am simply presented with the diagram head on in normal lighting conditions. According to (OV), my fundamental perceptual condition is one of conscious visual acquaintance with that diagram. Relative to my point of view and circumstances of perception, it has visually relevant similarities with paradigms of both a duck and a rabbit. It therefore thinly looks both duck-like and rabbit-like regardless of whether I notice either resemblance: perhaps I am preoccupied with other things.²⁸ Suppose that I register it as duck-like: I notice its visually relevant similarities with the paradigms central to my grasp of that concept. It thickly looks duck-like and I see it as duck-like. This is a phenomenological fact, according to (OV), although one of conceptual classificatory engagement with the very diagram presented to me in perception, which continues thinly to look both duck-like and rabbit-like. Similarly, when

²⁸ It has these visually relevant similarities with paradigms of both a duck and rabbit even if I do not have either concept myself. Still it thinly looks like both: either characterization by others with the relevant concepts of how things look in my experience would be (thinly) correct.

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I shift aspects and see it as rabbit-like, there is an alteration in this phenomenology of the categorization of what is presented.²⁹

Consider third the case of (ML). Suppose that I have the diagram presented to me, head-on and in good lighting conditions, with my eyes open and a normally functioning visual system. According to (OV), my experience is most fundamentally one of conscious visual acquaintance with that very diagram as its mind-independent physical direct object, from that point of view in those circumstances. Relative to the viewpoint and circumstances in question the (ML) diagram presented has visually relevant similarities with a paradigm pair of unequal lines at different depths. Thus its two main lines thinly look unequal in length; and again we can perfectly correctly mark the de facto existence of these visually relevant similarities in this way in connection with children without the relevant concepts. This is genuine phenomenology consequent upon the identity and nature of the direct object of experience, given the viewpoint and relevant circumstances involved. It is fully captured by (OV) without any need for (CV). Possessing the concept of inequality in length as I do, I may notice the visually relevant similarities in question with my paradigms, either because the question of the relative length of its main lines becomes relevant in some way and I attend accordingly, or simply because they jump out at me or capture my attention. As a result of this conceptual registration, the lines thickly look unequal in length, regardless of whether I actually judge them to be so, as most likely in this case I do not because I am well aware of the illusion. In any case, this is a perfectly

²⁹ As I mentioned above, there may be more primitive phenomenological differences possible in such cases too, where the subject registers a figure as oriented that way (left) and then shifts or registers its orientation as that way (right). Here registration perhaps involves a kind of active demonstrative categorization of orientation.

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genuinely phenomenological matter; but one which is again captured entirely by (OV), along with my deployment of attention and active conceptual endowment.

Return as a fourth example to the case of a white piece of chalk illuminated with red light. I explained the way in which (OV) accounts for the fact that this illusorily looks red. (OV) appears equally committed to the claim that it looks white-in-red-light. For everything presumably has visually relevant similarities with itself however exactly these are to be defined; and this may well be a paradigm case some something that is white-in-red-light. This plausibly entails that the chalk looks white simpliciter, which is suspect at best in the envisaged circumstances. Furthermore, parity of reasoning suggests that (OV) is committed to the idea that a red piece of chalk in normal lighting conditions similarly looks white-in-red-light, and therefore looks white simpliciter too. This is surely completely unacceptable.³⁰

Again, the key to making sense of all of this in the context of (OV) lies in the distinction between thin and thick looks. A suitable squiggle, for example, thinly looks quarter-note-rest-shaped to all of us; it thickly looks quarter-note-rest-shaped only to some of us – those who recognize it as (at least an attempt at) such. The duck-rabbit diagram thinly looks both duck-like and rabbit-like; it thickly looks at most one of these to a given subject at any one time. The looks locution is I think standardly interpreted thickly, although the thin reading can certainly be and often is made appropriate. When we see a white piece of chalk in red light, it thinly looks white-in-red-light, as well as red; it is

³⁰ Many thanks to Anil Gupta, who raised this line of objection in his excellent comments at the Pacific APA, 2006, in Portland.

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very unlikely thickly to look white-in-red-light without considerable stage setting; but then it may well be right to say that it does: for example, when trying to pick out the white piece from a collection of differently coloured chalks in a setting in which we all know that the light is abnormally red. The correct target looks white (in-red-light). A red piece of chalk in normal lighting also thinly looks white-in-red-light, as well as red. It would not normally thickly look white-in-red-light; but again, given sufficient stage-setting, it may be brought to do so. Notice, though, that the sense in which the white chalk in red light, and the red chalk in normal light, thickly look white, if and when they do so with sufficient stage setting, is essentially indirect, involving an explicit conjunction elimination by the subject from the evident similarities that the direct object in question has in the circumstances with a complex paradigm of something white-in-red-light.³¹ Still, it seems to me that all this serves to confirm, rather than in any way undermine, the (OV) contention that the rich and various looks that particular mind-independent physical objects have in perception are the product of a fundamental relation of conscious visual acquaintance with particular such things from a given point of view and in specific circumstances of perception and the visually relevant similarities that those objects have with various paradigms relative to the point of view and circumstances involved, along with sometimes quite sophisticated attentional and classificatory phenomena.

³¹ Such conjunction elimination is not appropriate in the case simply of thin looks. It seems to me wrong to say that the white chalk in red light or the red chalk in normal light thinly look white simpliciter. For they do not have visually relevant similarities in the envisaged circumstances with paradigm white objects.

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It may be objected here that (OV) now appears committed to the possibility of perceptual experiences in which things have impossible combinations of looks in just the way that I argued was unacceptable in the case of (CV). For I claim that there are senses in which the white chalk in red light looks red and in which it looks white, for example; but nothing is or could be red (all over) all over and white (all over). Similarly, and more simply, a round coin seen from an angle both looks elliptical and looks round; yet nothing could be round and (eccentrically) elliptical. The situation is quite different though, and is not so far as I can see in any tension with the genuine role of perception and conceivability in the epistemology of modality. First, the direct objects of these experiences are particular mind-independent physical objects. These actually exist and so they are clearly possible. Their looks are a product of direct acquaintance with that very thing, and so there is no need whatsoever to characterize perception by reference to anything impossible at all. The problem for (CV) was that it is committed to impossibility at the most fundamental level of the characterization of perceptual experience. Furthermore, according to (OV), the thin looks of the mind-independent physical direct objects of perception are a product of the various visually relevant similarities that they have from the point of view and in the circumstances in question with certain paradigms. All of this is a matter of what is also actual and hence perfectly possible. Their thick looks conceptually register some but not others of these similarities, in each particular case corresponding to a way that the object in question might be whether or not it actually is so. Thus, suppose that the white chalk in red light thickly looks red; it might have been red; but it actually is not. Insofar as it can be brought thickly to look white, this is also of course a way that it might have been because it actually is. Just as with the duck-rabbit,

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though, it does not thickly look both ways for a given subject at the same time. Similarly, the coin may thickly look elliptical, which it might have been but is not; or it may thickly look round, which it might have been because it is. It is a notable datum that we cannot focus on impossible combinations of such aspects together. The closest we get, for example, as subject of the experience itself, is to register on the basis of perception that the coin is round even though there's a sense in which it looks elliptical; and again there is nothing impossible in that.³²

There are of course many more cases to consider in clarifying the (OV) account of looks completely. I confine myself to three that illustrate what are hopefully helpful points of principle about the position.³³

First, how does (OV) handle variation in colour vision: for example, a case in which Janet and John are both looking at a colour chip in good lighting conditions that looks pure blue to Janet and green-blue to John? This case raises issues about the nature of the colours of mind-independent physical objects themselves that are beyond the scope of the present discussion. I confine myself to a relatively dogmatic statement of my own (OV) account. The pertinent issue is: whose paradigms of specific colour shades are in question in the characterization of the way the chip looks to Janet and John? Given fixed paradigm exemplars of pure blue, either the chip has visually relevant similarities with them or it

³² See my discussion below of the purported belief-independence of perception for a little more that is relevant to this kind of situation.

³³ Once again these are due to Adam Pautz. See Pautz (forthcoming) for further discussion.

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does not.³⁴ If so, and provided that Janet and John are both in optimal viewing conditions, then in that sense it looks pure blue to both of them. (Envisage this report in the voice of someone for whom the fixed paradigms in question are precisely those that play a central role in his understanding of the colour term ‘pure blue’.) If not, then in the same sense it looks pure blue to neither of them. The sense in which the chip looks pure blue to Janet is that it has visually relevant similarities with her paradigm exemplars of pure blue: those that play a central role in her understanding of ‘pure blue’. Similarly, it looks green-blue to John because it has visually relevant similarities with his paradigm exemplars of green-blue: those that play a central role in his understanding of ‘green-blue’. They just have slightly different such paradigms, and so understand the specific colour terms slightly differently. This is all perfectly consistent so far as I can see and no threat to (OV). It clearly raises further issues about the nature of shared language understanding in the domain of colours and indeed more widely. There is a delicate balance to be drawn between the fundamental genuinely public nature of a shared language and the datum that we can sometimes talk past each other. Although it would be ludicrous to deny it could ever happen, there are also I believe strong forces massively limiting the range and significance of any such idiolectal deviation. Again though, I must leave these issues aside for present purposes.

Second, suppose that all the actual exemplars of red are round. That is, everything that is actually red happens also to be round. Presumably this entails that the all paradigm

³⁴ See n. 8 above for the condition that visually relevant similarity in the sense invoked in the (OV) account of looks requires sufficiently many similarities of visually relevant sort with paradigm exemplars of the kind in question.

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exemplars of red are round. So if a person is visually acquainted with a blue round object, then this has visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of red. Thus, according to the (OV) account of looks, it looks red, at least thinly. This is surely false: except in abnormal illusory circumstances, a blue round object would not look red in this situation.

Supporters of (OV) should in my view deny the move from the hypothesis that all the actual exemplars of red are round to the claim that all paradigm exemplars of red are therefore also round. Paradigms are not simply a subset of actual exemplars. They are actual exemplars, or images derived from perception or description of them, as representatives of all possible exemplars, or as indicative of the set of all possible exemplars. As Hume points out in connection with the ideas associated with general terms of predication, “The word raises up an individual idea, along with a certain custom; and that custom produces any other individual one, for which we may have occasion” (1978, I.1.vii). Hence, although a blue round direct object of perception has visually relevant similarities with every actual exemplar of red, it does not have visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of red, for these also include, at least potentially as it were, possible but non-actual non-round red things. (OV) is therefore not committed absurdly to the idea that the blue round object looks red in any sense in the objector’s envisaged scenario.

An extension of the broadly Humean idea also accounts for the fact that a white wall illuminated with red light in a world in which there are no genuinely red objects

nevertheless looks red. For, although there are no actual exemplars of red, the redly illuminated wall nevertheless has visually relevant similarities with possible but non-actual exemplars of red: the paradigm exemplars, our imagination of which plays a central role in our understanding of the predicate ‘is red’.³⁵³⁶

Third, suppose that there were sentient creatures but no concept users. Red objects may still look red to such creatures, even though there are presumably no paradigm exemplars of red, in this case because there are no subjects for whom any such exemplars play any role in their possession of the concept red: nobody has that concept or any other. Here once again it is crucial to note the distinction between thin and thick looks, and indeed to recall a point I made briefly earlier in elucidating this distinction. An object, o, thinly

³⁵ See my discussion in § 5.2 above of hallucination and the explanatory role of perception in connection with our capacity for beliefs whose contents contain various empirical concepts for more on the complex stage setting that is required for our acquisition of uninstantiated such concepts. This is clearly a historically familiar problem for empiricist-minded philosophers that I cannot solve in complete generality here.

³⁶ See Rodriguez-Pereyra (2002, ch. 5) for extended discussion of a parallel appeal to non-actual instances in defence of a resemblance nominalist account of the difference between distinct but contingently coextensive properties. Rodriguez-Pereyra’s view about necessarily coextensive properties is that any apparent example of distinct such properties is “in fact just a case of semantically different predicates applying in virtue of one and the same property or relation” (2002, p. 100). I remain neutral on the correct individuation of properties. But I do think that a parallel proposal applies in some cases at least in connection with the (OV) account of looks. Suppose that F and G are necessarily coextensive. Then, given the comments on paradigms offered in the main text above, F and G may have identical paradigm exemplars, although see n. 8 above for an important qualification concerning the orientation-sensitivity of certain paradigms. In such cases, according to (OV), an object thinly looks F iff it thinly looks G. This seems to me absolutely right in certain cases at least (again modulo n. 8 above). Just as an appropriate squiggle thinly looks quarter-note rest shaped even to the musically uninitiated, a triangle thinly looks both three-sided and three-vertexed, as well as triangular, as it were, to all of us, reading these in the senses in which they are indeed necessarily coextensive. Things become far more complicated with respect to thick looks, of course, because a great deal more is involved in conceptually registering visually relevant similarities with various paradigm exemplars than simply being presented with an object that has them.

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looks F if o is the direct object of a visual experience from a point of view and in circumstances relative to which it has visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of F. These are the exemplars that play a central role in our possession of the concept F in terms of which the look in question is to be characterized. Provided that the appropriate visually relevant similarities obtain for the subject, from the point of view and in the circumstances in question, the thin look ascription holds even if s/he does not have the concept F itself in terms of which this is to be expressed. The creature whose experience is to be characterized here may be in precisely the same situation. We may truly say that objects look red in its experience even through nobody in the world in question is capable of making or understanding that very ascription. The case is clearly controversial and raises many disputed issues. I simply contend that (OV) has the resources to account for the idea that red objects may still look red to such creatures in such circumstances. Of course nothing thickly looks red to anyone in the world in question. For this additionally involves recognition of the objects as red, or conceptual registration of the pertinent visually relevant similarities.

I conclude from my consideration of all of these examples and everything that has gone before that (OV) is amply able to capture the rich, varied and nuanced phenomenology of the ways mind-independent physical objects look in perception.

I turn now to address the question of the extent to which my own final position really is an Object View on the model of the early modern empiricists, or whether it might not better be characterized simply as a variant of the currently orthodox Content View.

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Unsurprisingly I contend that the distinction remains firm and (OV) has all the virtues of (CV) without its vices.

To begin with, given the rich (OV) account of looks and the illusions that they give rise to, one might wonder what the force is supposed to be of the claim that a relation of conscious visual acquaintance with the particular mind-independent physical direct objects themselves that are presented in perception constitutes the most fundamental characterization of perceptual experience.³⁷ I clearly reject the early modern empiricist biconditional that something looks F in perceptual experience iff the direct object of that experience is F. The direct objects of perception are certainly not basic to our understanding of perceptual experience in this very simple sense. Nevertheless, I have explained the way in which the nature of the mind-independent physical direct objects of perception is still the source of the most perspicuous account of the way that those very things look in perception, given the point of view from which and specific circumstances of perception in which we are visually acquainted with them on any particular occasion. Those very objects are therefore what explanatorily ground and unify the various ways that they do and might look in perception from any point of view and in any circumstances. Thus every such perception most fundamentally consists in our conscious acquaintance with particular such things. The relation between the direct objects of perception and their looks is more complex according to (OV) than according to the early modern empiricists; but the underlying insight is just the same: only by thinking of our perceptual relation with the physical world most fundamentally in terms of our conscious

³⁷ Thanks again to Anil Gupta for pushing this question in discussion at the 2006 Pacific APA.

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relation of acquaintance with certain direct objects of experience can we properly understand the various ways that physical objects look to us in perception at all.

It may help to clarify this (OV) approach to the ways that mind-independent physical objects look in perception to probe further the particular relation between the look of inequality in length and our conscious visual acquaintance with the (ML) diagram as the direct object of our perception.³⁸ Since the main lines making up that diagram are not themselves unequal in length it may appear difficult for (OV) adequately to capture the robustness of the illusory appearance. On the other hand, if the look of inequality in length is held to be essential to the fundamental characterization of our experience of (ML), then the (OV) insistence that our fundamental perceptual relation is one to objects and not contents may sound rather hollow. The objection has the form of a dilemma. Is the fact that the main lines look unequal in length essential to the characterization of our fundamental perceptual relation with (ML) or not? If not, then (OV) fails to capture the robustness of the illusion: someone may stand in just that perceptual relation and yet the lines not look unequal in length. That seems wrong. If the fact that the lines look unequal in length is essential to the characterization of our fundamental perceptual relation with (ML), on the other hand, then, since the main lines of the diagram are not themselves unequal in length, representational properties must be essential to the characterization of our fundamental perceptual relation in order to secure that look of inequality in length. (OV) therefore appears to have given way to a version of (CV).

³⁸ My discussion here is motivated by questions from Matt Soteriou.

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This is a very helpful challenge. For it enables us to appreciate the interesting and subtle division of labour between ourselves and the world in accounting for the (ML) illusion; and, indeed, in making sense of the way that mind-independent physical objects look to us in perception generally. According to (OV), the main lines of the (ML) diagram thinly look unequal in length in virtue of the fact that we are visually acquainted with that very diagram from a point of view from which and in circumstances of perception in which it has visually relevant similarities with certain paradigm cases of lines of unequal length. Already this depends upon certain contingencies about ourselves, our evolutionary development and our experience in life. Of course we have to have a visual system; but this also has to have evolved a sensitivity to certain stimuli and a propensity to group them and to identify and distinguish them in various ways. Only so is there a relatively settled notion of visually relevant similarity in order to determine the thin looks of the objects that we see. This dependency upon contingency deepens with respect to thick looks. The main lines of (ML) thickly look unequal in length in virtue of our further registration of these visual similarities with the paradigms that play a central role in our own grasp of the concept of inequality in length as it applies to such things. Here there is a further role for the particular nature of our own particular experience in acquiring and deploying that concept. Were these factors sufficiently different, then the (ML) lines would not look unequal in length in the relevant thin or thick sense and our experience of them would not in this way be misleading. This is right in my view: the illusion is not unrestrictedly robust.³⁹ Still, given these deep contingencies about our evolution and

³⁹ See McCauley and Henrich (2006) for empirical confirmation from results that suggest that susceptibility to the ML illusion is dependent upon being in a carpentered world,

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development, the fact that the main lines look unequal in length follows from the fact that we are visually acquainted with that very diagram from a particular point of view and in specific circumstances without any need for appeal to independent representational properties.

These points apply to the (OV) account of looks quite generally. The ways things look depend upon the identity and nature of the objects themselves that are consciously presented in perception and the range of visually relevant similarities that they have from the points of view and in the circumstances in question with paradigms of various kinds. Which such similarities are visually relevant and what constitute the various paradigms each depend in complex ways upon numerous more or less deep contingencies about us and our nature, evolution, education, perceptual experience to date and so forth. Taken together these factors determine the robustness of the looks in question, and so of any illusions to which these may give rise. This certainly raises many interesting questions: to what extent, and how, might it have been possible to see the objects in question, from those points of view and in those circumstances, and yet for them not look those ways? Perhaps their having some, but not others, of the looks that they actually have are more central to the sensitivity that we have to them being seeing rather than something else. Perhaps we might have picked up on them in radically different ways that were less, or more, susceptible to various forms of illusion. However things might have been, and whichever alternative scenarios are held to be genuinely possible, and, indeed, however one thinks that it is to be determined which such scenarios are genuinely possible, I claim

whose orthogonal joints invest the diagram's hashes with their misleading association with depth.

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that (OV) is absolutely right in discerning a complex cooperation in determining the ways things look between the contributions of the worldly objects themselves that we see and the external and internal, historical and contemporary, physical, psychological, educational and other processes that are involved in our seeing them as we do.

Still, it may be objected further, this just brings out the fact that my own characterization of illusions involves categorization: they are experiences in which o looks F although o is not F; and I certainly accept in general that when S sees o there are numerous truths of the form o looks F to S. Yet this surely entails an immediate assimilation of (OV) to (CV)?⁴⁰ It is certainly true that looks phenomena as explained and elaborated above are precisely the aspect of my development of (OV) that is intended to accommodate the features of perceptual experiences that are central to (CV); but this absolutely does not collapse (OV) into a version of (CV). For (CV) attempts to capture our most fundamental perceptual relation with the physical world directly and wholly in contentful terms, whereas (OV) explains the truth of looks claims, involving the categorization that they clearly do, as the product of a more basic subjective presentation of a particular object, along with its salient visually relevant similarities with various paradigms in the circumstances.

Consider analogously Grice's discussion of conversational implicature (1989a, 1989b). It is a datum that we communicate a highly complex message in speaking a language that our audience understand. Grice's opponents regard every aspect of this message as part of

⁴⁰ Thanks to Nicolas Bulloz for pressing the issue in this way in his helpful comments on my presentation of (OV) to the 2006 Pacific APA in Portland.

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an undifferentiated notion of meaning. Grice insists, on the contrary, upon a partition into core semantic truth-conditional meaning, on the one hand, and any pragmatic implicature that may be conveyed by choosing to say something with just those truth-conditions in the circumstances, given the conventions governing good communication, on the other. Similarly, I claim that, although ‘unequal in length’, for example, really is part of how the (ML) lines look, it is right to regard this as the product of a more basic relation of conscious visual acquaintance with those very lines themselves, along with their visually relevant similarities with certain paradigms of inequality in length from our point of view and in the circumstances, and the ways that we may or may not register these similarities, given our evolution, training, conceptual endowment, attention and interests at the time. Looks in general flow from the core early modern empiricist insight at the heart of (OV), given independently motivated additional theoretical materials. They are not to be accommodated by any direct and undifferentiated appeal to a barrage of perceptual contents that are simply served up to us in experience. Acquaintance with the mind-independent physical direct objects of perception is the fundamental basis only in terms of which we can properly and in turn understand the rich and varied superstructure of the ways that such things look and otherwise appear to us in perceptual experience. Thus, I claim that the (OV)/(CV) contrast remains entirely robust and stable.⁴¹

⁴¹ Not wishing to labour the analogy beyond its useful limits, the partition illustrated above in connection with the conditional robustness of the (ML) illusion, between the contribution of the object and that of the perceiver in accounting for the way things look in perception, provides an analogue of the cancellability of Gricean implicature (see again his 1989a and especially 1989b). For looks are conditional not only upon visual acquaintance with the object in question, from the right point of view and in the right circumstances, but also upon the various contingencies that determine visual relevance, paradigm exemplars and conceptual registration. Specific such looks may therefore be ‘cancelled’ by envisaging a similar visual acquaintance with that object from the same

Before turning to explicitly epistemological issues in ch. 6 below, I would like to make a few comments about the various proposals that I mentioned above in ch. 4 as to how (CV) might draw the distinction between the representational contents of perception, on the one hand, and of thought, on the other.

According to (OV) \underline{Q} thinly looks \underline{F} iff it is the direct object of conscious visual acquaintance from a point of view from which and in circumstances in which it has visually relevant similarities with certain general paradigms of mind-independent \underline{F} -ness. This may be the case and so we may correctly describe another subject in this way even if she does not have the concept of an \underline{F} . Thus, in this sense, \underline{Q} may non-conceptually look \underline{F} . \underline{Q} thickly looks \underline{F} to \underline{S} iff it thinly looks \underline{F} and \underline{S} registers the visually relevant similarities in question. In the most important case this is a matter of recognizing it as an \underline{F} and thereby taking it to be one, although she may simply note that it looks like an \underline{F} instead if she has reason to believe that it is not actually one. In this sense \underline{Q} conceptually looks \underline{F} .⁴² This distinction between non-conceptual and conceptual looks is quite different from that normally invoked within the context of (CV), although it remains true that non-conceptual thin looks as elucidated here are a feature of perception and all thought content is conceptual.

point of view and in the same circumstances in the absence of the relevant additional factors actually involved.

⁴² I do not here rule out the possibility of non-conceptual modes of something like this registration of visually relevant similarities that may be involved in simple systematic sorting behaviour or other robust differential responses for example. I stand by my earlier arguments (1999) that only conceptual registration of the kind outlined in the text is suitable to ground the fully epistemic reason-giving role of perceptual experience.

Demonstrative registration exploits the presented particular itself as a paradigm for the subject's grasp of the conceptual category in question. Her experience is most fundamentally a matter of her conscious visual acquaintance with that very mind-independent physical object. So truths of the form 'that looks thus', for the appropriate range of demonstrative predications certainly capture a peculiarly basic feature of her perceptual condition. Proponents of (CV) appealing to this phenomenon are certainly onto something, although they deploy it in my view to mistaken ends in forcing their account of perception into the fundamentally contentful mold.

In connection with the proposed passivity of perception, (OV)'s commitments are as follows. Suppose that S is visually acquainted with o from a given point of view and in specific circumstances of perception. That this is the case is normally of course a matter of some freedom for the subject: she may choose where to look and whether to open her eyes and so on. In any case, the ways that o thinly looks are simply a matter of its visually relevant similarities relative to that point of view and those circumstances with paradigms of various kinds of mind-independent physical objects. Although, as noted earlier, the question of which similarities are visually relevant depends upon S's visual system, and the paradigms involved are also dependent upon the conceptual schemes of the subject and attributor, these ways that o thinly looks are not in any way within S's control. It just looks the ways it looks. Further freedom enters in connection with the question of which such visually relevant similarities she registers conceptually. Although these may on occasion capture her attention automatically, she may also direct her

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attention according to certain specific concerns, focussing on questions of colour as opposed to shape, for example, or on comparisons with one set of paradigms as opposed to another. Still, the visually relevant similarities that are there to be registered in this way are again simply a matter of the nature of the mind-independent physical direct object presented itself and not at all up to her. Thus, the balance of passivity and activity is a subtle one; and what I said here is clearly incomplete. The main point is that (OV) is in an excellent position fully and adequately to account for its complexity.

Finally, what of the proposed belief-independence of perceptual content? Again there is a great deal that could be said here. For present purposes two points suffice. First, thin looks are clearly belief-independent in the sense outlined in ch. 4. Q may thinly look F to S even though S does not believe that o is F, or perhaps even cannot do so because she does not have the concept 'F'. With respect to thick looks things are less straightforward. In the normal case in which S registers the visually relevant similarities between an object, o, that is presented to her in perception and the paradigms that play a central role in her grasp of the concept 'F', she does so by recognizing o as an F in an active application of that concept with the genuine force of a judgement. In cases in which she has reason to believe that o is not actually F she may still register its visually relevant similarities with paradigm exemplars of F conceptually, but in the judgement that it looks F instead. So there is a good deal that is correct in the various (CV) claims of belief-independence; but these miss the fact, according to (OV) as developed here, that the

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normal case of conceptual registration is one of judgement actively subsuming the presented particular under the general concept in question.⁴³

⁴³ I recall suggestions along these lines for which I am grateful here from unpublished work by Johannes Roessler.