

HOW TO ACCOUNT FOR ILLUSION

BILL BREWER

The question how to account for illusion has had a prominent role in shaping theories of perception throughout the history of philosophy. Prevailing philosophical wisdom today has it that phenomena of illusion force us to choose between the following two options. First, reject altogether the early modern empiricist idea that the core subjective character of perceptual experience is to be given simply by citing the object presented in that experience. Instead we must characterize perceptual experience entirely in terms of its representational content. Second, retain the early modern idea that the core subjective character of experience is simply constituted by the identity of its direct objects, but admit that these must be mind-dependent entities, distinct from the mind-independent physical objects we all know and love. I argue here that the early modern empiricists had an indispensable insight. The idea that the core subjective character of perceptual experience is to be given simply by citing the object presented in that experience is more fundamental than any appeal to perceptual content, and can account for illusion, and indeed hallucination, without resorting to the problematic postulation of any mind-dependent such objects.

This return from the current preoccupation with the representational content of perceptual experience to the more traditional idea of the direct objects presented in it also has promising consequences for the central disjunctivist contention, that perceptual experiences in which a person's subjective condition constitutes a simple openness to the mind-independent physical world are both explanatorily and

metaphysically basic, only by derivative reference to which various failures of direct perceptual contact are to be characterized and understood.

Let me begin by characterizing a visual illusion as an experience in which a physical object, o, looks F, although o is not actually F.¹ According to the early modern empiricists, especially Locke (1975) and Berkeley (1975a, 1975b), the way to account for the fact that something looks F in an experience is to construe that experience as the presentation to the subject of a direct object, which constitutes the core subjective character of the experience, and which must, supposedly, therefore itself be F. In cases of illusion, then, this direct object is distinct from the physical object o which is not F. On Locke's materialist view, the direct object of an illusion is a mind-dependent entity, which is F, which nevertheless sufficiently resembles a non-F, mind-independent object, o, for the latter to be the physical object which illusorily looks F.² According to the most straightforward version of Berkeley's mentalism, on the other hand, the direct object of an illusion is a mind-dependent entity, which is a part of an equally mind-dependent composite physical object o. o is not F, very roughly, because most of its parts are not F, and it does not behave, in general, in ways characteristic of F's: in particular we cannot use it as we can paradigm F's.

¹ I concentrate throughout on the case of vision. I believe that much of what I say applies equally to the other modalities, although I do not address this here. It will turn out later that the characterization given in the text is not sufficient for visual illusion. It is adequate to be getting on with, though, and its insufficiency highlights some interesting issues in the development of my argument.

² Things are of course more complicated in case of secondary qualities, according to Locke. For, in one sense, all secondary quality perception is illusory: nothing in the mind-independent physical world is red, in the basic sense in which mind-dependent ideas are red. Still, in having such an idea before the mind, a physical thing may look red*, that is, either disposed to produce red ideas in normal observers in normal conditions, or microscopically constituted in whichever way actually grounds that disposition. Some, but not all such perceptions may then be illusory in a derived sense. None of these details are relevant for present purposes.

Nevertheless, it looks F, on this occasion, because the part presented in the relevant illusory experience is F.³ Both approaches are widely regarded as unsatisfactory today, absolutely rightly in my view.⁴

According to current orthodoxy, the mistake goes right back to the idea that perceptual experience has its core subjective character given simply by citing its direct object, which must apparently therefore be F in a case of illusion, and hence must be distinct from the physical object, o, which illusorily looks F although it is not. The subjective character of perceptual experience is to be given instead by its representational content: how it represents things as being in the physical world around the subject. In an illusion, perception has the false representational content that o is F. In general, o looks F iff o is the referent of a perceptual content in which F is predicated. I call this the Content View, (CV), since it characterizes perceptual experience by its representational content, and identifies the objects of perception as those to which reference is made by such contents.⁵

³ See Stoneham (2002) for a compelling presentation of this account of Berkeley. Note, as with Locke's account of the secondary qualities, predicates apply to persisting physical objects, according to Berkeley, in a way which is derivative of their more basic application to our fleeting ideas, which are their temporal, and 'personal', parts.

⁴ Having said that, I believe that there are significant, and illuminating, structural similarities between the latter Berkeleyian view, and Lewis' (1998) account of the metaphysics of persisting (that is, perduring, rather than enduring) macroscopic physical objects, especially in the presence of his Ramseyian humility (2002). My forthcoming book, Perception and its Objects, contains a detailed development of this suggestion.

⁵ I elucidate both the early modern empiricist insight which I am to preserve and the (CV) alternative to it in terms of the most basic theoretical characterization of perceptual experience: does this proceed by the identification of an object presented in the experience, or a state of affairs represented by the experience as obtaining? This is certainly intended to indicate the metaphysical commitments of the two views – in the most abstract terms, that experiences are relations to object and relations to contents respectively – but a great deal is clearly left metaphysically open by my characterizations: which objects, what are contents, which relations, are there other

The debate between disjunctivism and its opponents is often characterized at this point as follows. It is agreed on both sides that cases in which it appears visually to S that p are, either cases in which S (veridically) sees that p, or cases in which it merely (that is, non-veridically) appears visually to S that p.

Disjunctivism insists upon the explanatory priority and metaphysical distinction of the veridical case. ‘S sees that p’ picks out a basic, unanalysable metaphysical condition of S’s visually apprehending the fact that p. The fact that p is, in this case, “within the reach of ... [S’s] subjectivity” (McDowell, 1986, p. 150), and is therefore essential to that very experiential condition itself. It merely appears visually to S that p whenever he is in an experiential condition which, although not a case of seeing that p, he cannot distinguish introspectively from this basic one. The mere appearance that p is therefore explanatorily parasitic upon veridically seeing that p. For it is defined by essential reference to such seeing, as anything else appropriately indistinguishable from it. Its merely appearing visually that p is also a metaphysically distinct condition from seeing that p. For the former does not, whereas the latter does, essentially involve the fact that p. Unlike the corresponding mere appearance, seeing that p is not a possible subjective experiential condition in the absence of the fact that p. The notion of a visual appearance to S that p simpliciter, is, therefore, both explanatorily and metaphysically, disjunctive: such things are either cases in which S sees that p, or, something derivative and quite distinct, cases in which it merely appears visually to

relata, and so on? Note that my own development of the early modern empiricist insight differs significantly from those of its initiators in answering affirmatively to the last of these questions.

him that p. 'It appears visually to S that p' is a locution which applies when one or other of two fundamentally quite distinct conditions obtains.

Opponents of disjunctivism, on the other hand, regard the general condition of its appearing visually to S that p, entirely uncommittal as it is on whether or not p, as explanatorily and metaphysically basic. This is a unified single condition of S, which is the common experiential core to veridical and non-veridical appearances that p. When it is appropriately caused by the fact that p, or its relevant worldly constituents or correlates, we say that S sees that p. The visual appearance that p constitutes her seeing that p. In this way, the common experiential element is involved in an explanatory and metaphysical analysis of seeing that p. Otherwise, we say that it merely appears visually to S that p. The visual appearance that p constitutes some kind of illusion or hallucination. Again, the common experiential element is explanatorily and metaphysically basic.

According to the disjunctivist proponent of (CV), then, a visual illusion is illusory because its subjective character is given by a false representational content. It is therefore an experience of an explanatorily derivative kind. It has to be understood as something akin to a failed attempt at seeing, that is, by reference to a more basic, and quite distinct, experiential condition: seeing that q (or something like it) is E. This condition would only have been possible, though, had the world been quite different from the way it actually is: had q, or something else suitably placed and appropriately like it, been E, rather than not.

Now, every visual experience is plausibly illusory in some respect: something visible looks in some way, perhaps only slightly, different from the way it actually is. So this disjunctivist – the disjunctivist who is also a proponent of (CV) – appears committed to the idea that all actual perception is explanatorily and metaphysically parasitic upon some non-actual ideal. Full direct contact between mind and world is never actually established in human perceptual experience. This is a strange result; but I will not consider it further here. I think that the problem lies, not in the disjunctivist idea itself, that perceptual experiences in which a person’s subjective condition constitutes a simple openness to the mind-independent physical world are both explanatorily and metaphysically fundamental, only by derivative reference to which various failures of direct perceptual contact are to be explained, but, rather, in the background commitment to (CV). What I aim to do here, is to articulate and defend an alternative Object View, (OV), which retains the early modern conviction that the core subjective character of perceptual experience is to be given simply by citing its direct object, but which is able to resist any inference from the existence of illusion to the identification of such direct objects with mind-independent entities distinct from the persisting (and, indeed, enduring)⁶ mind-independent physical things we know and love, and which also provides a more conducive setting for the basic disjunctivist idea.

So, what is the Object View, and how does it account for illusion? The basic idea is that the core subjective character of perceptual experience given simply by citing the

⁶ Any serious engagement with the debate between endurance and perdurance accounts of the persistence of physical objects is of course well beyond the scope of the present paper. I simply record my conviction that (OV) and the endurance view are mutually supporting. See Lewis (1998) for the launch of the perdurantist’s case. Sider (2001) constitutes an excellent recent discussion with the same sympathies. My forthcoming book begins to make the connection which I see between (OV) and the defence of endurantism.

physical object which is its mind-independent direct object. This is what I earlier called the early modern empiricist insight, that perceptual experience should be conceived as a relation between a perceiving subject and the object presented. From various points of view, and in various circumstances of perception, physical objects have visually relevant similarities with paradigms of various kinds, or types, of such things. These may intelligibly lead us to take them as instances of such kinds when seen from the relevant points of view in the circumstances in question. Thus, they look various ways to us. So (OV) supplements the early modern insight with the insistence that perceptual experience should be conceived as a three-place relation, in which the third relatum is an index of the conditions of perception, which involve the subject's spatiotemporal point of view, and other relevant circumstances, such as lighting, and so on. Illusions are simply cases in which the direct object of experience has such similarities with paradigms of a kind of which it is not in fact an instance.

Consider, for example, the Müller-Lyer illusion, (ML), in which two lines which are actually identical in length are made to look different in length by the addition of misleading hashes. The (ML) diagram is visually-relevantly similar to a pair of lines, one longer and more distant than its plane, one shorter and less distant – a paradigm of inequality in length. It is therefore perfectly intelligible how someone seeing it might take that very diagram as consisting of unequal lines, regardless of whether she does or not. In this sense: they look unequal in length.

Which similarities are visually relevant, though; for anything has unrestricted similarities with everything? Clearly, the visually relevant similarities cannot be defined as identities in the ways the relata are visually represented as being, or else

(OV) depends upon (CV). That is to say, we cannot simply say that two objects have visually relevant similarities just when there are sufficiently many common properties amongst those which each is visually represented as having. Rather, they are, according to (OV), to be what ground and explain the ways in which the relata may intelligibly be taken to be when seen. That is to say, two objects have visually relevant similarities when they share sufficiently many common properties amongst those which have a significant involvement in the physical 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.⁷

Furthermore, what are the paradigms of physical kinds supposed to be? Again very roughly, these are instances of the kinds in question, whose association with the terms for those kinds partially constitutes our understanding of them, given our training in the acquisition of the relevant concepts: paradigm exemplars of the kinds in question relative to our grasp of the concepts for those kinds.⁸

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

⁷ I entirely acknowledge that this is a very rough placeholder for what must in the end be a far more developed account of visually relevant similarities.

⁸ This idea is clearly in need of far more extended discussion. It also involves a controversial account of concepts and their possession. To make progress here I will have to leave further elucidation and defence for another occasion; but see Fodor (1998) for strong opposition.

relevant paradigm pair of lines of unequal lengths at different depths look equal in length, for the very same reason.⁹

I would make two points in reply to this objection. First, a looks E, to a first approximation, according to (OV), iff a may intelligibly be taken to be E, when seen from the point of view in question in the relevant circumstances of perception, in virtue of its visually relevant similarities with certain paradigm E's. The (ML) diagram does not constitute a paradigm case of lines which are equal in length. So, although plain similarity is symmetrical, the relevant condition of similarity to a paradigm is not. Second, misleading cues could, no doubt, be added to unequal lines at different depths, to bring about an inverse to the (ML) illusion. Notice, though, that which such cues should be added, would be ascertained precisely on the basis of knowledge of the physical processes involved in vision: those which would intelligibly ground a mistaken judgement as to the relative lengths of the lines if the composite were seen from the point of view in question, in the relevant circumstances, in virtue of its visually relevant similarities with an appropriate paradigm of lines of equal length.

I claim that the same account covers many of the most standard cases of visual illusion. Here are two further examples for illustration.

First, a partially submerged straight stick looks bent. Here, the direct object which constitutes the core of the subjective character of the experience is that very (straight) stick itself. Nevertheless, it looks bent, in virtue of its visually relevant similarities

⁹ Thanks to Tim Williamson for this objection.

with a bent stick, with a coincident unsubmerged portion, and its bottom half in the position of the relevant virtual image, from the subject's point of view and given the refractive index of the liquid in question. These similarities exist in virtue of the refraction of the light from the submerged portion of the actual stick at the surface of the liquid. The illusion consists in the fact that those very similarities may intelligibly be taken for qualitative identities. The actual stick, presented as it is in experience, from the point of view in question and in the relevant circumstances – especially given the presence of a refracting liquid – in this sense looks bent.

Second, a white piece of chalk illuminated with red light looks red. Again, the (OV) proposal is that the core of the subjective character of such illusory experience is constituted by that very piece of chalk itself: a particular persisting (by enduring) mind-independent physical object. From the viewpoint in question, and given the relevant perceptual circumstances – especially, of course, the abnormally red illumination – it looks red. This consists in the fact that it has visually relevant similarities with paradigm red objects: the light reflected from it is like that reflected from such paradigms in normal viewing conditions.

Of course there are very many quite different kinds of visual illusion. I cannot possibly consider representatives of all kinds. Further materials for the overall (OV) account will emerge in what follows; but I leave the direct enumeration of examples for now, and move on to introduce further key distinctions of principle in the (OV) approach to illusion. To set the scene, we should ask how (OV) accounts for hallucination.

The intuitive category I have in mind consists of purely inner phenomena, in the following sense. Nothing in the mind-independent world is subjectively presented in hallucinatory experiences. They have no mind-independent direct object. (OV) also rejects any characterization of hallucination in terms of purportedly mind-dependent direct objects. Rather, hallucinatory experiences have to be characterized by giving a qualitative description of a mind-independent scene, and saying that the subject is having an experience which she cannot distinguish 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.¹⁰ Thus, for example, I once had an experience which I could not distinguish by introspection alone from one in which a large pink elephant in a desert was the direct object of my perception.

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. (OV) has the resources to account for some cases which may pretheoretically be classified as illusions in this way. 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.¹¹

¹⁰ I rely heavily here upon Martin (2004).

¹¹ Illusions due to sudden faults in the visual system, which are not intelligible in the light of any evident visual similarities between the object in question and paradigms of the kind illusorily involved, belong in this class.

(OV) also has a relatively straightforward account of the distinction between illusion and robust delusion. A person may be so-conditioned that sight of a cat always makes him think that there is a pouncing tiger before him. Indeed, it may cause him to think that that very thing is a pouncing tiger. But this is clearly not a case of visual illusion. The obvious explanation is that there are insufficient visually relevant similarities between any given such cat and any paradigm tiger for this to be an intelligible way in which to take the cat which is presented to him.

This account does raise an interesting issue, though, of how (OV) should best classify a case in which a person takes a life-like papier-mache model before her to be a pouncing tiger. Surely this may well be precisely in virtue of its visually relevant similarities with paradigms of tigerhood. Yet this is intuitively no illusion.¹² My inclination is absolutely to acknowledge that its classification as an illusion is intuitively forced; but to explain this by pointing out significant dissimilarities with paradigm cases of illusion, even in light of the similarity in explanation given for the error: the model is indeed visually-relevantly similar to paradigm tigers, which explains why it may intelligibly be taken to be a tiger.

The obvious point of disanalogy lies in the relation between paradigms and instances of the kinds in question: unequal in length, on the one hand, and tiger, on the other.

Locke's (1975, II.xiii-xxiii) distinction between mode and substance is surely the key here, especially his idea that the real and nominal essence are identical in the former

¹² This is the point at which my earlier characterization of a visual illusion emerges as insufficient. For, although intuitively not a visual illusion, it is a case in which a physical object, o, looks E, although o is not actually E – the papier-mache tiger looks 'tiger'-instantiating, although it is not actually 'tiger'-instantiating, although the roundabout way in which this has to be put is in itself revealing.

case, whereas they are distinct in the latter. Very roughly, I want to say, when considered from every point of view and in all relevant circumstances of perception, being identical in visually relevant respects to a paradigm of unequal lines is sufficient for actually being unequal in length, whereas being identical in visually relevant respects to a paradigm tiger is not sufficient for being a tiger. This, I suggest is why we classify (ML) as a visual illusion, whereas, although the papier-mache model looks just like a tiger, we do not regard visual experience of it as illusory.¹³

You might object at this point that, in rejecting (CV), and insisting that the core subjective character of perceptual experience is to be given simply by citing its mind-independent direct object, given the relevant point of view and circumstances of perception, (OV) misses entirely the crucial point: illusions like (ML) are experiential. The (ML) lines look, phenomenologically, unequal in length!¹⁴ I agree with the datum, but I disagree that only (CV), and not (OV), may accommodate it.

This can be illustrated by reflection on the phenomenon of aspect-seeing. In the most basic case, the concept 'duck' is intelligibly applicable on being presented with a particular mind-independent animal as the direct object of perception, in virtue of its visually relevant similarities with paradigms of duckhood. In this sense, it looks like a duck. Given the actual direct object involved, with its visually relevant similarities to what we take to be paradigms of duckhood, we can even apply this characterization of the experience to a child without the concept of a duck, if we wish, although the characterization makes essential reference to the paradigms constitutive of our grasp

¹³ My discussion of the issues raised by this kind of case is clearly inadequate as it stands. See my forthcoming book for further details.

¹⁴ Thanks to Ian Philipps (draft) for pressing this objection very forcefully in his paper at the 2005 Warwick University Mindgrad conference.

of that concept. All that is involved in her having the experience, though, is that that very animal is presented, with the similarities it actually has with various paradigms of ours, not that her experience in any way represents it as being any such way.

Reference to that object, given her viewpoint and the relevant circumstances entirely captures this phenomenology. Noting the intelligible applicability of our concept of a 'duck', in virtue of the de facto similarities with our paradigm, we may see it as a duck. This is a further genuinely phenomenological affair; but the difference in how things are for us phenomenologically is no change in the core subjective character of the experience; it rather concerns our classificatory engagement with what is presented to us in it: that duck, as we would now say. This is the further phenomenology of actual and intelligible conceptual categorization, or recognition, not that of basic experiential presentation, which is common throughout. Still, it is aptly titled phenomenology, all the same.

Conceptual phenomenology of this 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 in the core subjective character of the 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 as, it is evidently appropriate to that particular in virtue of the de facto existence and attentional salience of such visually relevant similarities.

Similarly, in connection with Jastrow's (1900) Duck Rabbit (see, also, Wittgenstein, 1958, II.ii). Suppose that I am simply presented with the diagram. According to (OV)

the core subjective character of my experience is given simply by that diagram itself. It actually has visually relevant similarities with my paradigms of both a duck and a rabbit. In this sense both concepts are intelligibly applicable, and it looks like both a duck and a rabbit, regardless of whether I notice either resemblance: perhaps it is presented at a peculiar angle.¹⁵ Then I see it as a duck, say, this is again a phenomenological change, but one of actual conceptual classificatory engagement with the very diagram presented to me. Similarly, when I shift aspects, and see it as a rabbit, there is an alteration in this phenomenology of the categorization of what is presented.¹⁶

Consider now the case of (ML). Suppose that someone has the diagram visually presented to them, from head-on, and in good lighting conditions, with eyes open and a normally functioning visual system. According to (OV), the core subjective character of their visual experience is simply constituted by that diagram itself. From that viewpoint, and given the circumstances of perception, it has visually relevant similarities with a paradigm pair of unequal lines at different depths. In this sense, the concept of inequality in length is intelligibly applicable to its main lines, the lines

¹⁵ It has visually relevant similarities with paradigms of both a duck and rabbit even if I don't actually have either concept myself. In this weaker sense, even then, it may be said to look like both, although I cannot classify it as (like) either.

¹⁶ Having granted that core subjective character is given by citing the object presented, and marking, as I do, a key distinction between presentation in experience and representation in thought, how can it then be said that conceptual classification induced a phenomenological alteration? This is a good question, deserving extended discussion. I can only make two points here. First, I reject any assumption behind the question, that there is a single, simple and exhaustive account of the phenomenology of a given experience: this notion has layers in my view, the object at the core, and various levels of actual or intelligible classification based upon that. Second, there is surely something quite familiar and harmless in the idea that recognition – of a cloud as shaped like a bull, or of a doodle and a distorted name, say – is both classificatory and phenomenological, although this may indeed be difficult fully to explain. Given my rejection of the myth of a single simple level of phenomenology, this difficulty is no more acute on (OV) than on any other account.

look unequal in length. Once again, we may even 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, which flows directly from the identification of the direct object of the experience, given the viewpoint and relevant circumstances. It is fully captured by (OV) without any need for (CV). Possessing the concept, as I do, I may notice the intelligible applicability of ‘unequal in length’ to the direct object of my (ML) experience. This may be, either because the question of the relative length of its main lines becomes relevant, and I attend accordingly, or simply because the intelligible applicability of this concept jumps out at me, or captures my attention. In this more robust sense, the lines now look unequal in length to me, regardless of whether I actually judge them to be so. This is a perfectly genuinely phenomenological matter; but one which is again captured entirely by (OV), along with my deployment of attention and active conceptual endowment, without any need for (CV).

A very closely related worry about (OV) can be sharpened, though, in the form of a dilemma.¹⁷ Is the concept of inequality in length essential to the subjective character of my (ML) experience, or not? If not, then (OV) fails to capture the robustness of the illusion: someone might have just that experience, and yet the lines not look unequal in length, which seems wrong. If so, if inequality is essential to the subjective character, that is, then, since the lines which are its direct objects are not themselves unequal in length, representational properties are surely also essential to its subjective characterization, and (CV) is back in business.

¹⁷ Many thanks to Matt Soteriou for presenting the objection to me in this form.

This is a very helpful challenge. For it enables us to appreciate the interesting and subtle division of labour between us and the world in the (ML) illusion. According to (OV), the concept of inequality in length is appropriate to the subjective character of (ML) experience due to the visually relevant similarities between its direct object – the (ML) diagram – and certain paradigm cases of unequal lines. These obtain, relative to the viewpoint and circumstances of perception in question, in virtue of the intrinsic nature of the direct object itself, given the normal operation of our perceptual systems, their historical evolution and our developmental training, and what we take to be paradigms of inequality in length. Thus, were these factors concerning us and our perceptual systems to have been sufficiently different, then the (ML) lines would not look unequal in length: an experience with them as direct object would not be misleading. This is right, in my view: the illusion is not unrestrictedly robust.¹⁸ Still, given these deep contingencies about our evolution and development, intelligible applicability of the concept of inequality in length follows simply from the intrinsic nature of the direct object of the (ML) illusion and the subject's point of view and other relevant perceptual circumstances, without any need for appeal to independent representational properties in the subjective characterization of the experience of it. Thus, (OV) is entirely in the clear.

Still, one might worry now that, since the apparent inequality of the lines is supposed to be a genuine feature of the phenomenology of our experience of the (ML) diagram, as I explained in discussing the phenomenon of aspect-seeing above, any significant distinction between (OV) and (CV) has been lost, or, at the very least, that the final

¹⁸ See McCauley and Henrich (2006) for empirical confirmation from results which suggest that susceptibility to the ML illusion is dependent upon being in a carpentered world, whose orthogonal joints invest the diagram's hashes with their misleading association with depth.

view which I am proposing is some combination of the two. This would be a mistake. I certainly argued earlier that (CV) alone is bound to leave something essential out of its account of the subjective character of perceptual experience. I also believe that the position at which we have arrived is firmly to be distinguished from any simple combination of (OV) and (CV).

An analogy with Grice on conversational implicature may be illuminating (Grice, 1989a, 1989b). We communicate a complex message to our audience when we speak a language they understand. On one view, every aspect of this message is to be regarded as part of an undifferentiated notion of the meaning of what is said. This effectively undermines the possibility of any fruitful and illuminating systematic theory of meaning (Baker and Hacker, 1984, ch. IV). On the Gricean alternative, we get a more satisfying and complete picture of the situation by regarding the whole message communicated as the product of at least the following two factors. First, the core semantic meaning: what is strictly and literally said to be the case. Second, any pragmatic implicature, which may be conveyed by choosing to say something with just those core truth-conditions in the circumstances, given the conventions governing good communication. Notice, in particular, that the pragmatic elements of the message are systematically to be explained by appeal to the core semantic element, plus a further, independently plausible, theory, concerning the etiquette of good conversation.

Thus, I may say ‘the vice-chancellor was sober at the party today’, and thereby communicate that he had not drunk very much and was behaving respectably and so forth, but also that this is not normally the case – that he normally gets inappropriately

inebriated. On the Gricean view, the strict and literal meaning of my words is simply that he was sober at the party: not drunk, period. Still, since that is only a remotely interesting or informative thing to say when it is not normally so, and there is a standing convention of good conversation only to say something when it is interesting, relevant and informative, I thereby also communicate that he is normally embarrassingly inebriated at such events.

Similarly, I claim that, although ‘unequal in length’ really is part of how the (ML) lines look, phenomenologically, it is best to regard this fact as the product of a more basic phenomenal presentation of those very lines themselves, from the viewpoint and in the circumstances of perception in question, along with a further, independently motivated, theory, of how they may therefore intelligibly strike us, given our evolutionary niche, developmental training, conceptual endowment and our attention, interests and concerns at the time of viewing. Inequality in length is not an independent part of the phenomenology of the situation, to be explained by an appeal to (CV), entirely orthogonal to the crucial application of (OV) in giving the core subjective character of perceptual experience simply by citing the relevant mind-independent physical object presented, from the point of view and in the perceptual circumstances in question. The relevant phenomenological ‘looks’ phenomena flow directly from the core early modern empiricist insight at the heart of (OV), in the context of appropriate background theoretical materials. So it is not even accurate to portray (CV) as a correct account of part of the illusory phenomenon. (CV) is not even acceptable as an autonomous account of part of the phenomenology of perception.

I remarked earlier that the modern (CV) disjunctivist faces the implausible prospect that all actual perception is parasitic, both in its metaphysical nature, and in the order of correct philosophical explanation, to a non-actual ideal of perfect subjective openness to the mind-independent facts. (OV) provides a far less hostile environment for the disjunctivist insight, that perceptual experiences in which a person's subjective condition constitutes a simple openness to the mind-independent physical world are both explanatorily and metaphysically basic, only by derivative reference to which various failures of direct perceptual contact are to be characterized and understood. Hallucination is to be characterized and understood only negatively, as it were, as a condition introspectively indistinguishable from a non-actual presentation of worldly objects of certain kinds; and this category may even expand to include certain cases pretheoretically classed as illusions. Still, illusion proper consists in a genuine subjective presentation of particular mind-independent objects themselves, although from a viewpoint and in circumstances of perception in which they provide the perfectly intelligible ground for some misclassification or miscategorization of those very things, in virtue of their visually relevant similarities with paradigms of kinds of which they are nevertheless not actually instances.¹⁹

In conclusion, I contend that the early modern empiricist insight, that the subjective character of perceptual experience is to be given simply by citing the objects presented in such experience, in a given sense modality, from the point of view and in the circumstances of perception in question, is perfectly capable of accounting for the

¹⁹ It is also worth pointing out in this connection that (OV) entails the disjunctivist insight that perceptual experiences in which a person's subjective condition constitutes a simple openness to the mind-independent physical world are both explanatorily and metaphysically basic, whereas there are certainly *prima facie* consistent forms of (CV) which reject this.

phenomena of illusion, and, indeed, of hallucination too, without any pressure towards regarding such direct objects as mind-dependent entities, distinct from the mind-independent physical objects we all know and love. Perhaps ironically, this early modern empiricist idea also provides a far more hospitable setting for disjunctivism than the more recent (CV), within the context of which disjunctivism is normally formulated and discussed. In any case, (OV) provides the best account of illusion consistent with the empirical realist conviction that the objects which are subjectively presented to us in perceptual experience are the genuinely mind-independent persisting (by enduring) physical things we all know and love.²⁰

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