

It's still there!

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1 The big picture

The view concerning perception developed in 'There it is' (Hellie 2011) involves, most centrally, the following theses:

- I.
 - A. One brings *a* within the scope of attention only if *a* is an aspect of one's perceptual (or sense-perceptual) condition;
 - B. If one sees veridically, one ordinarily brings within the scope of attention such an *a* partly constituted by the condition of the bodies surrounding one;
 - C. The perceptual condition of a dreaming subject is never partly constituted by the bodies surrounding them;
- II. One brings *a* within the scope of attention just if it is *situatedly analytic* for one that *a* is genuine (where this is partly constitutive of the character of one's rational position);
- III. If two subjects are in distinct rational positions, what it is like for them differs.

Section 1 defends thesis (III). Section 2 lays the groundwork for the defense in section 3 of thesis (II). Thesis (I) is obvious so I don't bother defending it.

2 A hallucination puzzle

The view runs headlong into a sort of 'hallucination puzzle', discussed in section 4 and extended to other troubling phenomena of perceptual epistemology in

section 5. Consider Sam, an ordinary ‘veridically perceiving’ subject. The following principle, in the spirit of an internalism about the phenomenological, is alluring:

PI There is a possible subject ‘Dreaming Sam’ who is dreaming but for whom what it is like does not differ from what it is like for Sam.

Those giving in to the allure of (PI) will then argue as follows:

1. By (I-B), Sam brings within the scope of attention an aspect *a* of her perceptual condition partly constituted by the condition of the bodies surrounding her;
2. So, by (II), it is situatedly analytic for Sam that *a* is genuine;
3. By (III) and (PI), Sam and Dreaming Sam are in the same rational position;
4. So, by (2) and (3), it is situatedly analytic for Dreaming Sam that *a* is genuine;
5. So, by (4) and (II), Dreaming Sam brings *a* within the scope of attention;
6. But, by (I-C) and (I-A), Dreaming Sam does not bring *a* within the scope of attention—

In contradiction with (5). So if we go with the alluring phenomenological doctrine (PI), we have to get rid of one of the theoretical hypotheses (I-B), (II), or (III).

I have discussed this sort of hallucination puzzle before (Hellie 2006, 2007, 2010). At its core is a three-way incompatibility among something like the *externality* of the object or content of (veridical) perception—in the current presentation, (I-B)—the *relationality* or *factivity* of the perceptual stance or attitude toward this object or content (II), and an alleged *inner supervenience* of perception (PI). This structure was brought to my attention by Michael Martin (see in particular his 2002); Martin has also argued convincingly (Martin 2000) that this structure is at the heart of the twentieth-century analytic dispute over perception. Like Martin,

I think the best resolution of the puzzle jettisons the ‘inner supervenience’ claim in (PI): accordingly, I am on the side of the view variously known (unhappily) as ‘disjunctivism’ or ‘naive realism’ or (more happily) as ‘direct realism’.¹

3 Phenomenology meets epistemology

In ‘There it is’, I defend (III) on the grounds that it accounts for the significance of ‘simulation’ (Heal 2003): that it explains the inextricable role of the ‘second-person perspective’ in real-life rationalization of the reactions of the other. What is this principle doing in a discussion of the hallucination puzzle? Answer: linking the best case for externality—found in the phenomenologically-oriented literature on perception—with the best case for relationality/factivity—found in the epistemologically-oriented literature.

In these two largely independent strands of literature, phenomenal internalists occupy closely corresponding positions:

- Among the more phenomenologically-oriented, we find
 - i. *Sense-data theorists* (Robinson 1994), who require existing objects or factive contents of perception, and correspondingly locate these objects or facts within an internal realm;
 - ii. *Intentionalists or representationalists* (Crane forthcoming; Chalmers 2004), who allow the objects or contents of perception to be as in or as concerning external bodies, and correspondingly sometimes require the objects to be nonexistent or the contents false.

¹Or at least I think the puzzles for the theorist are maximally difficult if direct realism is assumed at the outset. My experience has been that when faced with an aporia, the maximal amount of grain is revealed in the phenomena when we stay on the vehicle heading off the cliff for as long as possible before hitting the eject button. In the present case, we might say that there would be no real problem about perception if it were in fact as the intentionalists say: false belief puzzles, if they exist at all, are far less compelling than hallucination puzzles, so presumably the answer is different. More generally, philosophers should be hesitant to think solutions consist in the rephrasing of everyday worries in high-tech locutions. Here I think Martin would agree: Martin 2000.

- While among the more epistemologically-oriented, we find:
 - i. *Evidentialists* (Carnap 1932; Lewis 1973), who think our basic justification must be infallible, and correspondingly locate its subject-matter as concerning an internal realm;
 - ii. *Fallibilists* (Pollock 1974, Pryor 2000), who think our basic justification typically concerns an external realm, and correspondingly allow ‘basic justification for false claims.

These evidentialist and fallibilist views assume something like (III). This principle is rejected in the epistemological literature by *classical externalists* (Goldman 1976, Williamson 2000), according to whom basic justification *concerns the external and must be infallible*. Obviously no analogue to this position could exist in the phenomenologically oriented literature: discuss the nonphenomenological and the subject is changed. Notably, the *modern externalist* analogue to direct realism advocated in ‘There it is’ is largely absent in the epistemological literature.

In the phenomenologically-oriented literature, externality is better off than factivity: the sense-data theorist is in a weak position relative to the direct realist and the representationalist. Obviously, ordinary perception is ‘transparent’ in at least the sense that we find no sense-data there to which to turn attention (Harman 1990): this is part of why ‘There it is’ is friendly toward (I-B).

By contrast, when we pit the representationalist against the direct realist, the outcome is more mixed. Why can’t we say that in a dream, I’m (to use a slightly perplexing locution occasionally arising in conversation) ‘turning attention to a mere intentional object’? Well: phenomenologically, ‘there it is’, whatever it may be. My inclination is that when I focus my attention on Pirate, his in-my-face, no-doubt-about-it presence is something like a baseline of certainty around which other bits of uncertainty and error are ‘wrapped’. My feeling here is that this demands factivity or relationality, but other (perhaps more sensitive) compatriots of mine remain unconvinced and surely not in bad faith; so if the issue is not yet settled, exactly what it would take to do so emerges as entirely nebulous.

It is the opposite over in the more epistemologically-oriented literature, where

factivity is better off than externality: here it is the fallibilist who is in a weak position relative to the evidentialist (and the classical and modern externalists). This is largely for programmatic reasons, but the program is extremely deeply rooted and far-reaching. The core idea of the analytic tradition, perhaps, is that inquiry should be modeled on proof. It is easy to see why we should accept theorems proven from analytically true axioms—but why would we accept anything ‘proven’ from something that might be true, might be false? To insist that this is the best we can do is to consign us to ‘frictionless spinning in the void’ (McDowell 1994). ‘There it is’ generates friction through a model of focusing attention on *a* as the ‘tokening’ of a ‘sentence’ in a ‘Lagadonian’ (Lewis 1986) language (in essence, the story says about attention to the external what Chalmers (2003) says about attention to the internal). In a Lagadonian language, grasp of one of its sentences requires recognizing that the semantics is part of the orthography. My proposal is that focus of attention on *a* is tokening of a sentence with *a* as a part and meaning that *a* exists: since the sentence cannot be tokened unless it is true, it is ‘analytic’—but *situatedly* analytic in the sense that this sentence is difficult to utter: that’s (II). On this proposal, perception provides ‘axioms’—sentences that are implicitly known to be, and the contents of which are phenomenologically presented as, infallible: an suitable basis for the rest of a picture of the world, surely.² This Lagadonian story is available to the evidentialist and the classical and modern externalists, unavailable to the fallibilist: too bad for the fallibilist, in my view, and good for the modern externalist.

But, pitted against the modern externalist, the evidentialist can mount a strong

²The technical implementation of this idea in ‘There it is’ is not fully adequate. A better approach builds on a quasi-Stalnakean approach to self-location (Stalnaker 2008). One’s overall picture of the world is represented by a set of doxastically possible worlds *plus* an object of attention *a*; *a* is rigidly designated across the doxastic possibilities; the act of attention to *a* is the tokening of a Lagadonian judgement that *a* exists with *a* as a part. In a doubly complex-demonstrative judgement (‘this tomato is that color’), the semantic values of the subject and predicate are extracted from *a* as the constituents of *a* satisfying the restrictor predicates. If there are any: which is a presupposition of the doubly complex-demonstrative judgement.

On this model, the act of attention is infallible and—if the presupposition is true—entails the doubly complex-demonstrative judgement: that is how perception justifies belief. (I develop this story in more detail in *Semantics, Self, and World*: in preparation).

defense. Why not say that we have an ‘implicit’ understanding or posit of statistical connections between internal evidence and the external world which leverage internal evidence into external belief? Without some further articulation of what this ‘implicit’ posit consists in—not at all an easy task if the subject-matter of epistemology is understood on an all-too-common hydraulic metaphor, as a sort of flow of normative juice—it is hard to say what the problem is supposed to be.

So the external-content theorist is strong on the phenomenology but weak on the epistemology, while the factive-attitude theorist is strong on the epistemology but weak on the phenomenology. If only there were some connection between the phenomenological and the epistemological! Fortunately there is: namely (III). This means we can assemble the transparency argument for externalism and the programmatic case for factivity: in combination, these yield direct realism on the phenomenological side aka modern externalism on the epistemological side (henceforth I will use these labels interchangeably).³

4 Lucid dreaming

It would be nice if modern externalism could be made to work: the big challenge is addressing the allure of the phenomenological internalist doctrine (PI)—an allegedly phenomenologically manifest datum.

The alleged datum can be contested. Obviously epistemology goes a lot better if (PI) is false. Perhaps (as I argue in the first sections of Hellie 2007) (PI) just cannot be made consistent with the genuine phenomenological presentation of perception (‘there it is’). Perhaps (PI) cannot be explained in a way that makes sense: in the second half of Hellie 2007 I sketch out a multiplicity of candidate

³To be explicit, modern externalism gives the following verdicts on its competitors: evidentialism is right to ally the rational and the phenomenological, right to require basic justification to be infallible, wrong to require the content of basic justification to be internal; fallibilism is right to ally the rational and the phenomenological, right to allow the content of basic justification to be external, wrong to allow basic justification to be fallible; classical externalism is right to require basic justification to be infallible, right to allow the content of basic justification to be external, wrong to dissociate the rational and the phenomenological—and all three positions (like sense-data theory, like intentionalism) are wrong to insist on phenomenological internalism.

meanings, while in the first half of Hellie 2010 I attempt to undermine the sense that there is a clear meaning to any phenomenological internalist claim fit to conflict with modern externalism.

Still, alleged data is most convincingly tackled head-on. So ‘There it is’ argues that it is *false* that what it is like for Sam and Dreaming Sam is the same. The wedge is *lucid dreaming*: what it is like to lucidly dream of seeing a tomato differs from what it is like to knowingly see a tomato and what it is like to be taken in by a dream of seeing a tomato. But to be lucidly dreaming could be like a case of seeing a tomato while somehow under the mistaken impression that one is lucidly dreaming.

I suggest that this class of phenomena, not to my knowledge really explored in either the phenomenological or epistemological literature, is best explained as follows. ‘What it is like for one’ is what the *world* is like for one. And there is more to what the world is like for one than which *a* (or even: which kind of *a*) is taken up within the scope of attention: other beliefs also matter, especially one’s presuppositions concerning *a*.

So in particular, we analyze our four cases as follows:

S/C This is the normal seeing case Sam inhabits (seeing/correct presuppositions). When one is seeing a tomato, the phenomenological contribution of attention to the red color of the tomato—what it is like to be attending to that color—consists of the fact being ‘for one’ that that particular state of redness exists as a target of attention. When, against this background, one presupposes correctly that one is seeing, there is no conflict between this fact and one’s broader sense of how one interacts perceptually with the world.

Accordingly, a complete story about what it is like for one can simply mention the fact that one is focusing attention on a particular state of redness.

D/C This is the lucid dreaming case (dreaming/correct presuppositions). When one is dreaming of seeing a tomato, the target of one’s attention is something other than a token state of color of any tomato: it is rather a

qualitative *red-like* state of, perhaps, some dreamy tomato-simulacrum, part of the brain, imagined or recollected previous tomato-encounter, neural image, or something else. Then, the phenomenological contribution of that act of attention consists of the fact being ‘for one’ that that particular state of red-likeness exists as a target of attention. When, against this background, one presupposes correctly that one is dreaming, there is no conflict between this fact and one’s broader sense of how one interacts perceptually with the world.

Accordingly, a complete story about what it is like for one can simply mention the fact that one is focusing attention on a particular state of red-likeness.

D/M This is the case Dreaming Sam inhabits, in which she is taken in by a dream (dreaming/mistaken presuppositions). When Dreaming Sam is dreaming of seeing a tomato, the phenomenological contribution of attention to the red-likeness of whatever is given—what it is like to be attending to that feature—consists of the fact being ‘for Dreaming Sam’ that that particular state of red-likeness exists as a target of attention. But her presupposition that she is seeing is incompatible with any such dream quality being a target of attention. So when Dreaming Sam affirms this presupposition, the fact that is ‘for Dreaming Sam’ in attention conflicts with Dreaming Sam’s broader sense of how Dreaming Sam interacts perceptually with the world.

So what then *is* it like for Dreaming Sam? The question admits of no coherent answer, because the condition the world would have to meet in order for it to be faithful to how the world is ‘for Dreaming Sam’ is unsatisfiable. As a result, the best we can say is that Dreaming Sam’s overall position is ‘fragmented’ (Lewis 1982): the view Dreaming Sam adopts in attention and the view Dreaming Sam adopts presuppositionally cannot be put together into a unified view. In one fragment, that particular state of red-likeness exists as a target of attention. But in another, some particular state of color exists as a target of attention; by Dreaming Sam’s reckoning, a state of redness. The incoherence is not obvious because the Lagadonian language of attention and what-

ever ‘language’ Dreaming Sam’s presuppositions are carried in ‘code’ the incompatible content in a way that obscures the incompatibility. At bottom, then, the hallucination puzzle is a Frege puzzle.

That is the story that would be given by a sympathetic ‘second-person’ observer armed with the apparatus of ‘There it is’. The subject in that position would put things differently: the fragment according to which Dreaming Sam sees a state of redness is in charge of *articulation* of things. So Dreaming Sam would articulate what it is like for her by saying that she turns attention on a state of redness.

In that sense, what it is like for Dreaming Sam is ‘indiscriminable’ from what it is like for Sam (compare Martin 2004). But this indiscriminability should not be taken as a mark of identity. For although what it is like for Dreaming Sam is indiscriminable from what it is like for Sam *for Dreaming Sam*, for others it is *discriminable*. In particular, these are discriminable for the sympathetic external observer armed with my apparatus. Why? If I attempt to make sense of what it is like for Dreaming Sam, I want to answer in two stages: focusing *just* on the perceptual side of things, I find a ‘dreamy’ property; but bundling this together with Sam’s overall view of things, I find redness. The discrimination from Sam’s position consists in the absence of any available ‘dreamy’ property in Sam’s case.

Why trust the external observer above Dreaming Sam? Ordinarily when someone makes a mistake about a situation and when someone else does not, we trust whatever conclusions the latter subject comes to above the conclusions of the former subject when both are in otherwise equally good positions to understand what is going on. Why are Dreaming Sam and I in otherwise equally good positions? Because simulation is roughly as good as the real thing (when the simulation is based on genuine experience rather than mere speculation, and I have been in Dreaming Sam’s position before).

S/M This is the odd case in which one is seeing but thinks one is lucidly dreaming (seeing/mistaken presuppositions). Here the story is analogous to the previous case, (D/M): out of respect for trees, I will leave

the ‘plugging-and-chugging’ as an exercise to the reader.

5 Bedrock

We might wonder what *makes* Dreaming Sam’s position indiscriminable from Sam’s? In particular, *why*, given her presuppositions, does she interpret the state of red-likeness she sees as a state of *redness*, rather than a state of *greenness*? I have attempted to provide a ‘happy-face’ answer to this question before,⁴ but ‘There it is’ argues for the ‘unhappy-face’ response on which there is no hope for an articulation of the internal cognitive mechanics generating the data.⁵

The grounds for despair are these. Dreaming Sam’s picture of the world is incoherent. So if what is wanted is an answer pitched at the level of rational psychology, *we can’t give one*. Rational psychology runs out of steam as soon as someone loses coherence: all that can be done at that point is to break the subject into multiple ‘fragments’, each comprehensible through rational psychology. But rational psychology concerns the doings of individual coherent subjects; interaction among fragments is out of bounds, to be explained at the physiological or ecological level if at all. That is why, in the McDowellian slogan of ‘There it is’, if what is wanted for Dreaming Sam is ‘justification’, too bad: all that can be given is ‘exculpation’. Obviously we can use ourselves as instruments to see what we would think in Dreaming Sam’s position. But that would be, again, to offer only exculpation: it would ‘make sense’ of her reaction to her situation as rec-

⁴In the second half of Hellie 2010 I provide a precise account of what the indiscriminability could consist in. Some problems: the account presupposes an ‘epistemic two-dimensionalism’ (Chalmers 2003) which ‘There it is’ rejects (140); the account does not explain how lucid dreaming could seem different from seeing; the account is not at all easy to distinguish from a ‘qualia’ account.

⁵If I understand his position correctly, Soteriou (2005) assumes that we must face dreams with the assumption that they are real if we are to characterize them at all, and argues that the inevitable incoherence blocks any understanding of the nature of dreams. The assumption seems to be based on an overly demanding understanding of the ‘transparency’ of perception which would rule out lucid dreaming. But the prospect remains that our only strategy for understanding the nature of perception involves making no false assumptions, in which case we in effect merely recapitulate something more determinate than what we already knew. Soteriou’s important insight is that while we respond intellectually to perception, this does not involve in any way our analyzing it.

ognizably *human*, but it would do so without providing any *rational* basis for the reaction. Ultimately the task here is not for philosophers: we are good at rational psychology, bad at empirical psychology. If we want answers we should pass the file on to someone else.

‘But can’t we just say that Dreaming Sam thinks she sees something red rather than green because the dreamy simulacrum *looks red*’? No. On a correct analysis, ‘that looks red’ expresses one’s sense, concerning the object one is looking at and arrived at by looking at it, that it is red (I develop this in *Semantics, Self, and World*). For Dreaming Sam, this sense *just is* her thinking that she sees something red, because she has no further basis for thinking she sees something red beyond going by looking. This is the *product of* her attending to a state of red-likeness while under the impression that she is awake, and not any distinctive further fact about the relation of red-likeness to red in Sam’s view. If there is explanatory power to ‘I think it is red because it looks red’, it derives entirely from the presuppositional content of ‘it looks red’: what it conveys is ‘I arrived at my belief that it is red by looking at it’. That is a *causal* claim, and not a *rationalizing* claim. Similarly, ‘I think it is not green because it looks red’ conveys ‘I arrived at a belief that it is red by looking at it and what is red is not green’. So the purported explanation merely restates what we already know: namely, that Dreaming Sam arrived at the belief concerning the simulacrum that it is red rather than green by looking at it, and that a normal person would have the same reaction in her position (namely, focusing attention on red-likeness while presupposing that one is seeing). It offers no added clarification of why it is a good idea to react as she does.

So, I conjecture, the best we can say in response to what makes Dreaming Sam’s position indiscriminable from Sam’s is that *this is just how she reacts*: given her habits of translating perceptually coded vehicles into articulately coded vehicles, she is disposed to translate Lagadonian red-likeness into ‘red’ rather than ‘green’. Not because that helps to best make sense of things; not because she has introduced a meaning postulate which makes the transition analytic. Rather, that is just how she is ‘wired up’—at a physiological or ecological level.

6 The importance of the second-person perspective

A philosophical theory of perception should explain why there is any need for a philosophical theory of perception—again, a point emphasized by Martin (2002). We wouldn't find the need for such a theory if we didn't focus on cases in which we are misled. After all, the theory (I)–(III) is completely self-consistent, and upon superficial reflection is just plain obvious. The monkey in the wrench is (PI): as stated explicitly, the principle concerns a case of being misled; as generalized to the 'phenomenal internalist spirit', it highlights one among the many 'pathologies'—odd cases beloved by modern thought in which things ordinarily going together get teased apart—serving as data for the philosophy of perception.

On the theory of 'There it is', these pathologies are episodes of incoherence. When Fred is incoherent, he is in the worst possible position to understand what is going on with him: noticed incoherence collapses to one or another variety of coherence, so incoherent Fred must be self-ignorant. So what it is like for Fred can only be understood from the second-person view. Unfortunately, a distinctive element of the modern philosophy of mind is the isolation of the subject, the paradigm of which is the Cartesian 'soul-pellet' ontology. Granting the isolation of the subject, it is natural to think that the route to understanding the phenomenological would be from the first-person if from anything. But get rid of the isolation of the subject and this assumption vanishes—which, for the philosophy of perception, unties the knot.

Perhaps the main overarching moral of 'There it is' is the importance of the second-person perspective. Reflection on the role of the second-person motivates the principle (III), which in turn is the keystone in the case for direct realism aka modern externalism: without a doubt, the natural phenomenologico-epistemological view. Accord the appropriate level of respect to the second-person perspective, and it ceases to be clear why we would resist this natural view.

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