

Incompetent Perceivers, distinguishable Hallucinations, and perceptual Phenomenology. Some Problems for Activity Views of Perception

Alfonso Anaya*

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

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ABSTRACT: There is a recent surge in interest in agential accounts of perception, i.e. accounts where activity plays a central role in accounting for the nature of perceptions. Within this camp, Lisa Miracchi has argued that her Competence View (CoV) of perception has the resources to strike a double feat: to provide an alternative to current representationalist hegemony while avoiding endorsing relationalism about perception. If successful, CoV could be seen as inaugurating a third way, beyond relationalism and representationalism. Unfortunately, CoV faces serious problems which render it untenable in its present form. First, CoV cannot accommodate straightforward perceptual and hallucinatory phenomena – specifically, distinguishable hallucination, first perceptions, and hallucinations of implausible objects. Second, close inspection of the main locus of disagreement between relationalism and experience-first approaches shows that CoV has more in common with experience-first approaches than Miracchi acknowledges. Thus, contrary to Miracchi’s advertising, CoV is not a perception-first alternative to representationalism. Within the agential camp, in contrast to CoV, Susanna Schellenberg’s view (the Capacity View) can avoid many of the challenges faced by CoV. However, it is unable to make sense of distinguishable hallucination. This means that both agential accounts of perception face serious problems.

Keywords: perceptual activity; relationalism, reliable capacities, representationalism, experience.

* Email: alfonso.ws@gmail.com

1. Introduction

In recent work Lisa Miracchi (2017) articulates a novel account of perception which accords perceptual competences a central role in elucidating the *nature* of perceptual experience. On this account, perceptual experiences *are* activities carried out by perceivers. Miracchi's proposal arrives in fertile ground, for philosophical interest on the subject's agential contribution to the nature of perception has been mounting recently.¹ My primary goal in this paper is to raise serious doubts about the ultimate viability of Miracchi's Competence View of perception (henceforth "CoV"). Nevertheless, Miracchi's is not the only prominent activity view of perception in the market. A secondary goal is to compare CoV with Susanna Schellenberg's Capacity View of Perception (henceforth "CaV"). This view will serve as a useful contrast, since it shares many similarities with CoV (§1.1). One consequence of this analysis, however, is that the differences between them are quite significant, for these allow CaV to avoid *most* of the criticisms that I level against Miracchi's CoV. A second consequence, nevertheless, is that Schellenberg's view is unable to avoid the criticism developed in §2.1, and a deeper discussion is required to determine if this view can effectively avoid the criticism developed in §3. This comparative analysis shows that CaV is able to dodge some of the criticisms I level against CoV. However, this does not mean that CaV is off the hook – it still faces serious problems (see §2.1) that threaten its tenability. As a general result, the camp of activity views of perception finds itself in serious trouble.

Miracchi's aim is ambitious, in one sense, but modest in another. Ambitious because she articulates a novel account, which could provide an alternative to the two leading positions in philosophy of perception: representationalism and relationalism (Miracchi 2017, 677). But modest because she does not attempt to advance comprehensive arguments for the truth of her account. Instead, she focuses on establishing her "Competence View" as a plausible position. If successful, this development deserves attention, for a new contender would likely bring about changes in the dialectic that shapes the debate. Here we can already see an important contrast with Schellenberg's position: CaV is less disruptive of the extant dialectic. Her view is

firmly planted within the representationalist camp, and she does not attempt to develop a “perception-first” alternative to relationalism (as Miracchi does).

I argue that much more should be done in order establish both of Miracchi’s aims. First, I argue that CoV struggles to accommodate some basic aspects of perception (§2). I will explore whether the view can be modified to accommodate the problematic phenomena, but I conclude that these problems for CoV run deep. One of these worries is general enough extend to Schellenberg’s CaV (§2.1). Second, I argue that it is unclear whether CoV represents a genuine *perception-first* alternative to representationalist accounts of perception – I will argue that CoV has more in common with *experience-first* approaches to perception than Miracchi acknowledges (§3).² Importantly, I suggest that relationalism, a genuine perception-first approach, avoids the problems faced by Miracchi. Thus, if there is interest in perception-first approaches we should take seriously and pay closer attention to recent developments in the relationalist camp.

2. The competence view of perception

2.1 *The competence view explained, and its contrast with the capacity view*

Miracchi’s account of perception maintains that successful perceptual experience *is* an activity, performed by an agent, with an aim, and a target. An activity is characterized as an event which essentially has an agent, who performs the event, and such that the agent performs the event with an aim (Miracchi 2017, 635). For instance, the activity of shooting an arrow is an event performed by an agent (the archer), who performs it with an aim (hitting the bull’s eye). Perception is understood similarly, as an event performed by an agent (the perceiver), who performs the event with an aim (e.g., perceiving the goldfinch before her).

This provides the beginning of an account of the *nature* of perception³ – it tells us that perception is a kind of activity. But this ontological categorization does little to

elucidate the specific nature of perception, for it fails to distinguish perception from other activities. To zero in on an adequate characterization of perception's nature, Miracchi characterizes perception as an *achievement*, and as the exercise of a perceptual *competence* of the agent. Being and achievement means that the relevant activity is essentially successful in attaining its aim. That is, it is an essential feature of perception that it is an *existence entailing* activity.⁴ I.e., being in a perceptual state implies the existence of the objects (or the obtaining of the state of affairs) one seems to be presented within experience. For instance, if I see, or otherwise perceive, a black pig in front of me, then there *is* a black pig in front of me. Moreover, Miracchi claims that the activity of perception is importantly different from most paradigmatic activities. Perceiving occurs, for the most part, "automatically and effortlessly" (Miracchi 2017, 637). On her view perceiving does *not* require intention nor effort from the perceiver. Firstly, she argues that not all activities need to be "intentional". This means that the agent does not need to consciously make a prior decision to act, nor does she need to be able to articulate her reasons for acting. On this account, mindlessly scratching my head is an activity performed by me, despite not being *intentional*.⁵ Secondly, not all activities require effort from the agent. Training and habituation might lead to performing activities without much effort. For instance, riding a bike took enormous amounts of effort initially only to become effortless and natural.

It is precisely at this level of generality where the most fundamental similarities between Miracchi's CoV and Schellenberg's CaV can be appreciated. In general terms, Schellenberg's CaV can be characterized as an activity account of perception, where the *capacities* to discriminate and single out perceivable particulars are exercised to yield representational states with singular (genuine perception) or 'gappy' (hallucination and certain cases of illusion) content. On this view, the exercise of the perceptual capacities to discriminate and single out constitutes itself perceptual awareness.⁶ A very general similarity between the views is that CaV endorses the general claim (central to CoV) that *activities* constitute (at least partially) perceptual experiences. As we shall see below, the views differ (among other things) in the specific kind of activity that constitutes

perceptual experiences (exercises of *competences* for Miracchi, and exercises of *capacities* for Schellenberg). However, a further similarity between both views is that the competences or capacities that constitute perception are *fallible*, i.e., which means that not all of their exercises will be successful (Miracchi 2017, 643; Schellenberg 2013, 712). On both views, the competences and capacities that are constitutive of perceptual experiences *can be* exercised and yield an *unsuccessful experience*. In Miracchi's view, for instance, the competence to see goldfinches can be unsuccessfully exercised when there is no goldfinch to be seen. Similarly, in Schellenberg's view, the capacity to visually discriminate or single-out goldfinches can be unsuccessfully exercised when there is no goldfinch to be discriminated or singled out.

This construal of perceptual competences/capacities as fallible is crucial in both views. For it is precisely this feature which allows them to advance similar accounts of (subjectively indistinguishable) hallucinatory experiences and their phenomenology. On both views, hallucinatory experiences are (at least partly) constituted by unsuccessful exercises of the corresponding capacities/competences. This means that, on both views, there is (at least) something in common between genuine perceptions and subjectively indistinguishable hallucinatory experiences: both involve exercises of the same capacities/competences. But this also implies that there is (at least) a difference between these experiences: genuine perceptions involve successful exercises – whereas hallucinations involve unsuccessful exercises – of the corresponding competences/capacities.⁷

In turn, this commonality between perception and hallucination is exploited in a similar fashion by both views – using it to accommodate the subjective indistinguishability between these types of experience. For both CoV and CaV, the phenomenology of perceptual and hallucinatory experiences is the result of the exercise of the relevant perceptual capacities/competences (regardless of whether the corresponding exercises are successful or not (Miracchi 2017, 658, 664; Schellenberg 2013, 710-712; 2019, 115-6, 128)).⁸ Thus, a successful exercise of a competence to see

goldfinches (in a genuine perception) will yield an experience with a phenomenological character which is identical to the phenomenal character of an experience produced by an unsuccessful exercise of the same competence (in a hallucination). This sameness in phenomenology is what naturally explains the subjective indistinguishability of the corresponding experiences.

A final and fundamental similarity between the views is that both CoV and CaV hold that there is some sort of explanatory and metaphysical primacy of “good cases” (i.e., experiences where the competences/capacities are successfully exercised) over “bad cases” (i.e., experiences where the competences/capacities are unsuccessfully exercised). Importantly, this does not mean that CoV and CaV would endorse the claim that hallucinations are constituted by episodes of perception. Rather, the metaphysical dependence present in these views is much more sophisticated. On both views, the idea is that the “proper” functioning of the competences/capacities is determined by the way they operate in good cases. This fixes their functioning and their contribution to phenomenology (Miracchi 2017, 650, 656; Schellenberg 2013, 714-5, 740; 2014, 93-4). Thus, hallucination depends on perception because the competences/capacities exercised (defectively) in hallucinations are the same competences/capacities exercised (successfully) in perception. Thus, bad cases depend both metaphysically and explanatorily on good cases: the very nature of the bad cases depends on the good cases, and any account of the bad cases has to appeal to the good cases. However, there are subtle differences in the way each view construes the metaphysical primacy of good cases. Part of the differences are explained by the fact that one view is developed in terms of competences, and the other in terms of capacities. But, more importantly, an important difference stems from Miracchi’s ambition to recruit this aspect of her view in defense of her claim that CoV is a “perception-first” account of perception. Below (§1.2) I explain in detail what does Miracchi mean by this category, and further below (§3) I assess critically her attempt to establish her view as a “perception-first” account of perception.

Despite their many commonalities, CoV and CaV are *different* accounts of perception. The most important difference is that each view appeals to a different kind of activity to account for perception, and the metaphysical difference between *competences* and *capacities* gives rise to importantly different views. For Miracchi, the distinction between capacities and competences boils down to their success ratio. Competences are dispositions to reliably attain their associated aim, whereas a capacity is a disposition which could attain it – not necessarily with a high success ratio: “a competence to achieve is reliable just in case there is a high probability that if the competence is exercised... the agent will achieve... what the competence is a competence to do” (Miracchi,2017, 654).⁹ Compare a skilled archer’s shooting of an arrow with mine. Although both shootings are activities, only the former is the exercise of a competence, given the archer’s high success ratio. But my shooting, even if successful, is only the exercise of a capacity, for I am unreliable in hitting the bull’s eye. This conception of competences entails one of the most important differences between CaV and CoV: Miracchi characterization of competences incorporates a reliability requirement within them. That is, for a subject to have a competence to φ she must be reliable in φ -ing. Moreover, this reliability requirement for competences implies that a subject can have a competence, say, to see goldfinches only after repeated exposure to goldfinches. For possessing a competence is partly a matter of having a reliable track record of success. In the perceptual case, this requires repeated exposure to the objects of perception (Miracchi 2017, 650). In contrast, Schellenberg’s view appeals to *capacities*, not competences. Accordingly, CaV does not have a built-in reliability requirement for capacities. This follows an ordinary conception of capacities: it seems natural to think that one can have a capacity to φ without being reliable in φ -ing (e.g., I might have a capacity to make free throws even if I am not reliable in making them). As a result, Schellenberg’s perceptual capacities do not require previous continued exposure to the objects of perception. As a matter of fact, she explicitly holds that the capacities required for perceiving P_s could be innate or acquired without previous exposure to P_s (Schellenberg 2013, 716).

There is one final difference between the views that I would like to discuss. This difference helps us understand the unique dialectical feat that Miracchi aims to perform. Schellenberg explicitly develops CaV as a representationalist theory of perception. The exercise of the capacities to perceptually discriminate and single-out objects give rise to representational content, which allows the position to explain the accuracy conditions arguably associated to perceptual experiences (Schellenberg 2019, 117, 124-6). In contrast, Miracchi explicitly rejects representationalism. As a matter of fact, she aims to articulate CoV as a serious contender against representationalism. Not only that, Miracchi is also interested in rejecting the experience-first approach distinctive of some paradigmatic forms of strong representationalism; adopting instead a perception-first approach *without* endorsing any form of relationalism. Thus, Miracchi's ambition is to articulate a view that is simultaneously an alternative to strong representationalism and to relationalism. I will devote the final section of this paper (§3) to examine the place CoV is meant to occupy within this dialectical landscape, and the delicate balance Miracchi has to achieve to position CoV in the place she wants to. This will allow us to determine whether Miracchi is successful in inaugurating a “third way” within this dispute in the philosophy of perception. But first, more importantly, we have to explore Miracchi's conception of a “perception-first” account of perception.

2.2 The competence view in perspective

Before assessing CoV, it is important to place the view within the current philosophical debate on perception. This will help us determine (below, in §3) whether the view inaugurates a new avenue for research in philosophy of perception, as advertised by Miracchi.

CoV is characterized as a “perception-first” approach to perceptual experience. According to Miracchi, these approaches oppose the dominant mainstream position: the “experience-first” approach, developed prominently by representationalism. The main

tenet of experience-first approaches is the *fundamentality of experience*, namely that all “perceptual states—perception, hallucination, illusion—are metaphysically *and* explanatorily dependent on experiencing” (Miracchi 2017, 629, emphasis added). For instance, an experience-first account might hold that there is a mental kind (call it “experience”) which partly *constitutes* the mental states of perception, hallucination, and illusion. By endorsing this claim about these mental states’ constitution, this position would be committed to the *metaphysical* priority of experiencing over perceiving. This might lead to the claim that an adequate *account* of the mental states of perception, hallucination, and illusion explains these derivatively by appeal to the mental state of experiencing. By endorsing this claim about the proper account of perception, this position would be committed to the *explanatory* priority of experiencing over perceiving.

Perception-first accounts are defined in opposition to the fundamentality of experience thesis. Minimally, this opposition entails a commitment to the claim that perception, hallucinations, and illusions *are not* metaphysically and explanatorily dependent on experiencing. But Miracchi’s characterization of perception-first approaches is more robust than this. For her, perception-first approaches maintain that perceiving is “metaphysically and explanatorily prior to all other perceptual states” (Miracchi 2017, 629). Call this the “fundamentality of perception thesis”. It should be clear that rejecting the fundamentality of experience thesis does not entail accepting the competing fundamentality of perception thesis. Yet this is precisely the picture Miracchi advances. Now, this characterization would be an innocuous articulation of conceptual space if it merely served the purpose of delineating Miracchi’s proposal. But she also uses this characterization to chart extant positions in the philosophical landscape – and the hasty adoption of Miracchi’s preferred articulation leads to a distortion of the dialectical ground on which the debate takes place. Let me elaborate.

For Miracchi, prominent defenders of the perception-first approach mostly include philosophers leaning towards relationalist accounts, such as naïve realism.¹⁰ But, arguably, prominent naïve realists would be inclined to reject the fundamentality of

experience thesis *without* endorsing the fundamentality of perception thesis. Take Mike Martin's position as a case in point. Clearly, Martin is interested in rejecting *one form* of the metaphysical dependence of perception on experiencing. In particular, he rejects the claim that there is a fundamental mental state (i.e. experiencing), common to perceptual experiences and subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations, the obtaining of which would suffice to give rise to the phenomenal character of both mental states.¹¹ For Martin, there is no common fundamental mental state M, which is a constituent of both perception and hallucination. Notice that rejecting this form of metaphysical dependence is not by any stretch equivalent to accepting that, therefore, there must be some kind of *metaphysical* dependence of hallucination on perception. Yet, Martin endorses one version of the *explanatory* dependence of hallucination on perception. An adequate account of hallucination and its phenomenal character does involve explaining it derivatively by appeal to perception, he argues. The mark of this type of hallucination is that it is introspectively indistinguishable from a corresponding perception. In other words, perception is *explanatorily* prior to hallucination – in order to characterize hallucination's phenomenal character we have to appeal to perception.

Martin is a prominent “perception-firster” who rejects the fundamentality of experience thesis, whilst also falling short of endorsing the fundamentality of perception thesis. For although he accepts that perception is explanatorily prior to hallucination, he falls short of endorsing that perception is metaphysically prior to hallucination.¹²

The point is that Martin is a perception-firster who would reject the fundamentality of perception thesis on the basis that he rejects its metaphysical leg. It is important then to bear in mind that endorsement of the fundamentality of perception thesis, embraced by Miracchi, is not mandated by adoption of a perception-first approach. In §3, I will exploit this aspect of Miracchi's account to argue that her view does not represent the kind of alternative to representationalism she advertises. However, now I put this task on hold. First I shall argue that CoV faces several basic problems, which threaten its tenability in the first place. As we shall see, Schellenberg's CaV is able

to avoid many of these problems, but it is unable to avoid one of them (see §2.1). This set of problems raises serious questions about the plausibility of CoV and CaV. However, they are independent of the problem developed in §3, which questions the status of CoV as a genuine perception-first approach.

3. Some challenges for the competence view

This section develops three problems which afflict CoV: a problem that arises from the commitment that the same competence is exercised both in perceptual and hallucinatory experiences (§2.1), and a couple of problems that arise from the reliability requirement for perceptual competences (§§2.2-2.3). In conjunction, these problems put pressure on Miracchi's first aim – to develop a plausible account of perception. As we shall see, the former problem arises for Schellenberg's CaV too.

3.1 Issues on hallucination's dependence on perception

As mentioned above, one commonality between CoV and CaV is that both hold that the same competence/capacity is exercised in a perceptual experience of *O*, *and* in a hallucination of *O*. On both views, exercising the same perceptual competence/capacity in a perceptual experience and a hallucinatory experience gives rise to *the same* phenomenal character (Schellenberg 2013, 710-712; 2019, 128; Miracchi 2017, 658, 664). This is a central element in both positions, for this is precisely what allows them to account for the subjective indistinguishability of some hallucinations *without* endorsing a disjunctive conception of perceptual experience.

Their commitment to the claim that phenomenal character is grounded on the exercise of perceptual competences/capacities makes their views vulnerable to a challenge based on the possibility of subjectively *distinguishable* hallucinations. Drawing on a suggestion by Jonathan Dancy (1995, 434-5)¹³ it is possible to conceive hallucinatory

experiences which are subjectively *distinguishable* from their genuine counterpart. It is not obvious that every hallucination of *O* would deceive us into thinking we are actually perceiving *O*. It is not clear that perceptual competences/capacities always fail in the same inveterate way – giving always rise to experiences indistinguishable from genuine perceptions. Actually, hallucinatory experiences which could be subjectively recognized as such are perfectly conceivable. Imagine hallucinating a ceramic white cup which slightly changes its shape, size or location; or take a hallucination of the cup which switches from looking translucent to looking opaque; or take a case where you pour coffee in the cup only to witness the liquid spilling on the table.

But if distinguishable hallucinations are on the table, CoV and CaV find themselves in trouble. For these views would arguably predict that distinguishable hallucinations would have the same phenomenal character than genuine perceptions, since they *all* would involve exercises of the same perceptual competences/capacities. If exercises of the same competences/capacities give rise to different phenomenologies, then these views would lack the resources to explain the *distinguishability* of certain hallucinations. But that the hallucinations described above would be subjectively distinguishable suggests that their phenomenal character would differ from that of a genuine perception. Thus, CoV and CaV's account of the phenomenal character of these experiences is problematic. If a given perceptual competence/capacity, (defectively) exercised in distinguishable hallucinations, gives rise to a phenomenal character markedly different from the character of a genuine perception, then why would another defective exercise of the same capacity (in indistinguishable hallucination) give rise to the same character than that of a genuine perception?

Defenders of CoV and CaV have two natural responses available, neither of which clearly solves the problem. First, they might deny the possibility of distinguishable hallucinations, claiming that every defective exercise of our perceptual capacities/competences gives rise to a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. They might explain away the problematic cases above as exercises of *different* perceptual

competences/capacities. But this line implies that perceptual competences/capacities can only fail in a very specific way – in a way that they give rise to subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations. Not only does this move seem *ad hoc*, it also rings false to the ordinary way we conceive competences and capacities. In general, they can be exercised defectively in a multitude of ways. For instance, there are indefinitely many ways in which I could defectively exercise my capacity to return a tennis ball: I might miss the ball entirely, I might hit the net or put the ball out of the court, I might lose my grip on the racket and drop it, and so on without an assignable limit. Similarly, nothing about the nature of capacities and competences seems to prevent the possibility of a failure to discriminate, single out, or perceive *O* in such a way that it is evident to the subject that she is not in fact seeing *O*. In the face of the evident multitude of ways in which competences and capacities might fail, defenders of CoV and CaV have the burden of proof. They are the ones who must show that perceptual competences/capacities can only fail in one very determinate manner.

Second, defenders of CoV and CaV might concede that distinguishable hallucinations are possible, but appeal to the idea that exercises of perceptual competences/capacities are merely a *partial* constituent of phenomenal character. At least Schellenberg has the space to endorse this line, for she explicitly claims that exercises of perceptual capacities “at least partially constitute” (Schellenberg 2019, 129, fn. 4) the phenomenal character of experiences.¹⁴ Defenders of CoV and CaV could find some additional feature(s) $F_1(-F_n)$ in distinguishable hallucinations which could make a contribution to their phenomenal character. This feature could be used to explain why these experiences exhibit a different phenomenology than genuine perceptions, despite involving exercises of the same perceptual competences/capacities. But following this line would place the burden of proof, again, firmly in CoV and CaV’s defenders’ territory. First, they would have to make a non-ad-hoc case for thinking that such feature *F* obtains in distinguishable hallucinations, which also makes a subjectively accessible contribution to their phenomenal character. Second, they would have to show that this very feature *F* is absent in genuine perceptions *and* indistinguishable hallucinations.

But not only does this leave defenders of CoV and CaV with a substantial theoretical task in their hands; additionally, addressing the worries raised by distinguishable hallucinations in this way would strip those positions of their anti-disjunctivist power. Endorsing this line of response amounts to conceding that the mere exercise of perceptual competences/capacities is insufficient to fully account for the phenomenal character of experiences. In other words, this admission leaves wide open the possibility that a given perceptual competence/capacity might be exercised in experiences with different phenomenologies. Furthermore, this phenomenological difference could arise in cases where the purported object of perception does not exist, i.e., hallucinatory cases. These observations would be very welcome by a disjunctivist, who might encourage defenders of CoV and CaV to connect the dots and notice that the phenomenological difference in question could straightforwardly be accommodated if they endorsed the idea that the perceived objects play a constitutive role in phenomenal character. In other words, this line of response by the defender of CoV and CaV could be read as providing a relationalist with independent reason to favour their disjunctive approach to perceptual experience. But this would be an unwelcome consequence for the views, since they are advanced partly as alternatives to disjunctivist conceptions of perceptual experience.

This is a serious challenge that targets both Miracchi's CoV and Schellenberg's CaV. It has been shown that CoV and CaV are unable to make sense of distinguishable hallucinations. By itself, this is a good reason to think that both views are ultimately untenable. As a result, unless defenders of CoV or CaV are able to articulate a convincing case to accommodate distinguishable hallucinations, their positions will remain untenable. Some possible ways for CoV and CaV to make sense of this phenomenon have been explored, but they did not turn out to be very promising prospects for these views.

3.2 Issues on perception and reliability

However, when it comes to the Competence View, we find additional serious problems. These problems stem from the position's built-in reliability requirement outlined in §1.1. Since Schellenberg's CaV does not incorporate such a reliability requirement, these problems do not arise for CaV. According to the Competence View, perceiving is the (successful) exercise of a competence. One condition on having a (reliable) perceptual competence is that regular encounters with the relevant type of object obtain: "In order to have a competence to perceive *F*s, there must be appropriate regularities involving the agent and the *F*s" (Miracchi 2017, 650). The following consideration raises problems for this position: in some cases, it seems intuitive that we can perceive an *F* despite our general *unreliability* in perceiving *F*s. An example helps flesh out this contention.

Consider the first time you encounter a goldfinch. Since you have not encountered one before, you cannot (yet) possess a *competence* to see goldfinches. For possessing that competence requires, minimally, regular encounters with these birds. And, for Miracchi, perceiving an object is the exercise of a competence; in this case, the competence to see goldfinches. But what should Miracchi say about someone's first goldfinch-sighting? It should be clear that when a goldfinch lands before our eyes at a good distance and under good lighting for the first time in our lives *we see the animal*. This ordinary observation about perception sits in *prima facie* tension with Miracchi's theoretical commitments: for it seems clear that we can see the goldfinch despite lacking a corresponding perceptual competence to see goldfinches.

One potential way of addressing this problem, that we can develop on behalf of CoV, holds that the subject exercises a closely related competence, which allows her to see the goldfinch: e.g., the competence to see birds, to see animals, or to see physical objects. Accordingly, the subject's experience would be characterized as a successful perceptual activity, but it would be the exercise of a competence other than that of seeing goldfinches.

Nevertheless, it is unclear that this response would address the underlying problem. This response might deal effectively with the scenario envisaged above, but it merely pushes the question further back: we can raise a similar problem for the first time you saw a bird, an animal, or a physical object. This suggests a fundamental question – what about the first thing that we saw? This first perception cannot depend on any previously acquired perceptual competence – for we have not had opportunity to develop the required competences. Miracchi could retort that there are innate perceptual competences. But this response leads to very specific commitments on the development of perceptual capacities. And although, in general, empirical testability of philosophical positions is desirable, this suggestion advanced on behalf of CoV would not be rooted on sound empirical research on human development, but merely on armchair philosophical speculation.

A second retort on behalf of Miracchi appeals to relatively uncontroversial accounts of how humans gain the capacity to play a musical instrument. Plausibly, we lack an innate capacity to play an instrument – yet we have the resources to gain that capacity through training. One is not competent whilst one learns, and yet at one point in the process one becomes competent. Miracchi could argue that it is possible to explain the problematic perceptual cases in a similar fashion, without invoking controversial innate perceptual capacities. We are not born with the competence to see goldfinches, yet after repeated exposure to them we become competent. But this response does not address the fundamental worry, namely that it seems intuitive that we can see our surroundings (e.g., a goldfinch) *before* acquiring the competence. For it seems clear that continued exposure to goldfinches is unnecessary to be able to see a goldfinch the first time one lands before our eyes. The analogy with the competence to play an instrument breaks because in the process of acquiring the competence to play we are not competent in playing it – yet in the process of acquiring the relevant perceptual competences (e.g. to see goldfinches) we seem to be able to see our surroundings (e.g. goldfinches).

It might be thought that the worries I raise here for CoV are not novel, or that they fail to voice a problem specific to CoV. It could be argued that this worry applies equally to any theory of perception which explains perceptions of *xs* by appealing to regular encounters with *xs*. Although there are some similarities, I maintain that the worry I raise for CoV is sharper than the worry faced by other positions.

Consider, for instance, Michael Tye's causal account of perceptual content. For Tye, perceptions represent worldly features partly underpinned by the causal correlation between experience and the presence of those features (Tye 2000, 64-7, 117-140). Thus, a condition for one's experience featuring the representational content of, say, *being a goldfinch* is a history of previous goldfinch sightings. Certainly, Tye will be unable to accommodate the first time you see a goldfinch as a state of seeing the animal as being a goldfinch. The problem for Tye is that it is difficult to construe this perception as featuring *the (visual) content* of a goldfinch. Notice that this problem merely targets the *contents* which can figure in perception – the worry never raises doubts as to whether the subject sees a goldfinch, i.e., the subject sees the goldfinch, but it is not represented as such in perception.

In contrast, for Miracchi the problem runs deeper. The problem raised by the first goldfinch sighting for CoV is unrelated to the perceptions' content. Rather, the problem is whether the subject finds herself in a perceptual state of seeing a goldfinch at all. The acuteness of this problem is intimately connected to the strength of the fundamental claims of CoV. The view accords competences (hence, regular encounters with certain objects) a central role in determining the *very nature* of perception. As a result, the goldfinch example envisaged above raises questions as to whether subjects are even capable of seeing the objects they encounter for the first time. In other words, the problem of the first goldfinch sighting for CoV does not stop at the level of its content, it goes all the way to the level of its nature. For these reasons, it seems clear that CoV faces a distinctive and more acute problem than a position such as Tye's.¹⁵

3.3 Issues on hallucination and reliability

The problems for CoV and its built-in reliability requirement do not stop here. Shifting our focus towards CoV's account of hallucination reveals a serious problem for the view. For Miracchi, having a competence entails being reliable in attaining success, but this is consistent with being fallible – a point acknowledged by Miracchi herself. This leads to an account where hallucinations are exercises of perceptual competences which fail to attain success: “in a case where a subject's perceptual competences are merely degenerately exercised, the subject fails to perceive any object, and so hallucinates” (Miracchi 2017, 656, emphasis removed). On this view, hallucinations are, as much as perceptions, exercises of perceptual competences. I argue that this dependence of hallucination on perceptual competences makes CoV vulnerable to a pattern of counter-example. This kind of dependence is common to Miracchi and Schellenberg's approaches. But Miracchi's commitment to a reliability requirement for perceptual competences gives rise to an acute problem when it comes to hallucinations – a problem avoided by Schellenberg.

CoV is committed to the claim that hallucinations too depend on the regularities which give rise to perceptual competences. But it is quite contentious that in order to hallucinate an *F* subjects should first possess a competence to perceive *F*s. It seems odd to say that for me to hallucinate a goldfinch I should possess the competence to see goldfinches. More starkly, what if I hallucinate a flying pink elephant? Is CoV bound to appeal to the degenerate exercise of a perceptual competence in this case? Which competence could that be? For obvious reasons, the competence at work cannot be the competence to see flying pink elephants.

A possible response on behalf of CoV would be to say that the competence at work is the competence to see physical objects, which is degenerately exercised. Although this might prevent CoV from positing a competence to see pink elephants, such a response leaves the view with an inadequate explanation of why the exercise of *this competence* gives rise to a hallucination with *that* phenomenal character. If the competence

degenerately exercised is that of seeing physical objects, then why does it seem to me as if I was seeing a flying pink elephant? Something seems to be missing if all we can say is that the subject undergoes the hallucination of an object.

In contrast to CoV, Schellenberg's CaV does not introduce a reliability condition for perceptual capacities. Furthermore, she is explicit in the claim that the relevant competences to discriminate and single-out could be acquired without a repeated exposure to the relevant objects: "the perceptual capacities employed in hallucination... might be innate, they might have been acquired through testimony, or they might have been arrived at through imagination" (Schellenberg 2013, 716). This means that for one to have a perceptual capacity to see *O*s one need not have a history of *O*s sightings. Thus, on her position, one might be in a position to hallucinate a pink elephant without having perceived pink elephants before. Notice that this line of reasoning could be extended to advance a response on behalf of Schellenberg to the problem articulated in §2.2. This contrast with Schellenberg's position shows that if the reliability requirement is dropped from the theory, the problems in 2.2-2.3 lose their teeth.

3. Is the competence view a genuine perception-first approach?

In the previous section I articulated some challenges CoV should address if it is to be considered a tenable account of perception. Now I want to put pressure on a different aspect of Miracchi's project, namely her aim to advance a perception-first alternative which can mount a challenge to representationalist hegemony.

First, I explore the fundamental ground of disagreement between CoV and other perception-first alternatives, such as relationalism. This will bring to the foreground a contentious point in Miracchi's case for CoV. I argue that, on closer inspection, although the Competence View is a non-representationalist account of perception, it is much more doubtful whether it really is a perception-first account. I suggest that a comparison with

relationalist approaches reveals how far CoV is from being a genuinely perception-first alternative.

Let me begin by addressing a more general question: what is the fundamental ground of disagreement between representationalist and relationalist accounts of perception? Following Miracchi, standard versions of representationalism endorse the thesis that perception, hallucination, and illusion are metaphysically and explanatorily dependent on experiencing. Some relationalist approaches reject this thesis by advancing the claim that perception and hallucination are radically distinct mental occurrences. This form of relationalism often takes its cue from the claim that the phenomenal characters of perceptions and subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations are entirely different.¹⁶ It would be a mistake to think that this position implies a commitment to the claim that there is nothing in common whatsoever between these experiences.¹⁷ The relationalist position is consistent, for instance, with the claim that the same physiological mechanisms are activated in both cases.

But surely, the relationalist needs an explanation of why a pair of perceptual and hallucinatory experiences differ in phenomenology despite being subjectively indistinguishable. Such explanation comes from one of the main tenets of the relationalist view, i.e., the claim that in genuine perception the mind-independent objects are themselves constituents of the phenomenal character of perception.¹⁸ For relationalism, the phenomenal character of a genuine perception cannot be exhaustively accounted for without appealing to the non-representational psychological relation of acquaintance that holds between the perceiver and the perceived mind-independent objects. Since these objects are absent in hallucinatory experiences, the phenomenal character of perception and hallucination is bound to be different.

Thus, the relationalist opposition to experience-first approaches is grounded on the claim that there is no common psychological or mental occurrence which suffices to account for the *phenomenal character* of a perception and a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. In contrast, for the experience-first view there is such common

psychological state: call it *experiencing*. That is, a psychological occurrence which obtains both in cases of hallucination and perception, and which ultimately accounts for their putative sameness in phenomenology. When we focus on the representationalism-relationalism dispute we encounter a very specific locus of disagreement. The relationalist rejects, whereas some prominent (experience-first) representationalists¹⁹ accept, the following articulation of the experience-first thesis:

Experience-first Thesis_{PC}: the phenomenal character of perceptual states (i.e. perception, hallucination, illusion) is wholly determined by the obtaining of experiencing – i.e., a psychological occurrence with representational content.

On this articulation, *experiencing* is construed as a representational psychological occurrence, a constituent of the relevant perceptual states, and its obtaining suffices to account for their phenomenology. I argue that as soon as we put the emphasis on this disagreement, the appearance that CoV incarnates a perception-first alternative to representationalism fades. Instead, I argue that the position is merely an *experience-first* alternative to representationalism. My contention is that CoV endorses a modification of the Experience-first Thesis_{PC}, according to which the psychological occurrences which wholly account for the phenomenal character of perceptual and hallucinatory experiences *lack* representational content. That is, Miracchi merely advances a non-representationalist version of the Experience-first Thesis_{PC}. Let me elaborate.

After advancing her account of hallucination, Miracchi sets out to address the subjective indistinguishability of perceptions and perfect hallucinations:²⁰ “how does this account of the nature of hallucinations as degenerate exercises of perceptual competences allow us to explain the possibility of their subjective indistinguishability from perception?” (Miracchi 2017, 657). This phenomenon can be addressed in radically different ways. For instance, relationalists claim that their phenomenal characters differ. Thus, they tend to emphasize the subject’s introspective limitations in their account of the indistinguishability of such experiences.²¹ It is possible, then, to accommodate the

relevant *explanandum* without commitment to sameness of phenomenal character between perception and (indistinguishable) hallucination. Miracchi, nevertheless, follows a different route: “the Competence View can explain how is it possible for hallucination to have *the same qualitative character* as perception... and how it might be indiscriminable from perception” (Miracchi 2017, 658, emphasis added). Ultimately, it is the exercise of the same perceptual competence which gives rise to the same phenomenal character in perception and hallucination:

We have uncovered a clear sense in which one is in the same perceptual state in all three cases [perception, hallucination and illusion]—one is exercising the same competence(s), and thereby is engaging in perceptual activities with the same qualitative character (Miracchi 2017, 664).

Here, we get an explicit commitment from Miracchi to the existence of a psychological (probably sub-personal)²² occurrence which *suffices* to account for the phenomenal character of the relevant mental events.

Miracchi refuses to characterize these occurrences as “experiencings” partly because she is interested at this stage of her argument to distance herself from experience-first representationalism. Thus, she insists that these occurrences (i.e., the operation of the “bases” of perceptual competences (see note 22)) do not constitute mental states with representational content. Her position does not posit a common *mental representational state* (i.e., “experiencing”) which obtains in perception, hallucination, and illusion; and which is responsible for their phenomenal characters. In other words, she rejects Experience-first Thesis_{PC}. Instead, the sub-personal goings-on (i.e., the operation of perceptual competences’ bases) which underpin these perceptions, illusions, and hallucinations, are responsible for fixing their phenomenal character (Miracchi 2017, 656-7).

With this move, Miracchi might succeed in taking distance from representationalism. CoV cannot be characterized as an experience-first

representationalism – for CoV does not posit a fundamental mental state of experiencing with representational content. Nevertheless, it is not so clear that her position emerges as a genuine perception-first alternative to representationalism. It seems that placing too strong an emphasis on opposing experience-first *representationalism* engenders a blindspot in Miracchi’s approach. For this makes her overlook that for CoV to be a genuine perception-first approach it does not suffice to dispense with representationalist “experiencings”. In addition, perception is to play a central role in an account of phenomenal character if CoV is to constitute a genuine perception-first alternative. But it is unclear that CoV can do this, given Miracchi’s account of hallucination’s phenomenal character.

CoV is committed to the existence of some psychological occurrence (the operation of the basis of perceptual competences), responsible for the phenomenal character of perceptions, illusions and hallucinations. This means that *a* psychological occurrence, *more fundamental than perception*, illusion and hallucination, and therefore *different* from perception, is responsible for the phenomenal character of these experiences. As a result, when it comes to the phenomenal character of perception, illusion and hallucination (a fundamental aspect to be explained by a philosophical theory of perception by Miracchi’s own lights) perception does not come *first*. As a matter of fact, Miracchi’s CoV shares with representationalism more than she is ready to acknowledge. For she posits a different psychological occurrence to play a similar role to that of “experiencings” in strong representationalism. The position Miracchi ends up defending endorses a *non-representationalist* version of the Experience-first Thesis_{PC}. It is unclear, then, that CoV does represent a perception-first alternative to representationalism. Instead, it seems to embody a non-representationalist version of the experience-first approach. This discussion brings to the surface a further difference between CoV and CaV. Unlike Miracchi, Schellenberg does not make an explicit commitment to the sort of psychological occurrence (common to perception and hallucination) that Miracchi advances to explain how perception and hallucination end up having the same phenomenal character. However, it is debatable whether, despite not being explicitly

committed to such psychological occurrence, CaV implies a commitment to an occurrence of the kind advanced by Miracchi. I discuss this issue in more detail in the closing part of this section.

At this point Miracchi could insist that, on her view, hallucinations and perceptions are two different types of mental events,²³ and she might argue that, therefore, her position is distinctively perception-first. She holds that the mere exercise of a perceptual competence is insufficient to fully characterize a mental event – one exercise of the competence might be a perception (if there is a relevant target), whereas another exercise might be a hallucination (if there is no target). Thus, her view makes space for the idea that perceptions and hallucinations belong to different mental kinds, despite their sameness in phenomenology, and despite being exercises of the same competence. Unfortunately, this would be insufficient to establish CoV as a perception-first approach. Defenders of the experience-first view too could concede that there are important respects in which hallucination and perception belong to different kinds, and that such classification might be fruitful in certain theoretical contexts. After all, experience-first approaches are consistent with the claim that the type of causal chain which gives rise to both experiences is different. On this basis, for instance, the representationalist might hold that perception and hallucination belong to different mental kinds. Thus, claiming that there is one reason for classifying perception and hallucination as different types of mental states does not go far enough to establish the view as perception-first.²⁴

How is it that Miracchi ends up endorsing a theory which shares some central tenets with the experience-first approach to perception? My proposed diagnosis is that as soon as Miracchi rejects the relationalist picture about phenomenal character she loses access to the most straightforward account of perception as a distinctive mental state, different in (fundamental) kind to hallucination. The relationalist can straightforwardly reject the Experience-first Thesis because of the strong disassociation between perception and hallucination. But Miracchi cannot avail herself to this position. In her

attempt to reject any form of relationalism she commits herself to the sameness of phenomenal character between hallucination and perception. This leads her to posit a common psychological state, the obtaining of which suffices to determine the phenomenal character of perceptions, hallucinations, and illusions – which amounts to swallowing one version of the fundamental tenet of experience-first approaches, namely a non-representationalist version of the Experience-first Thesis_{PC}.

At this point it will be useful to bring back Schellenberg's Capacity View for contrasting purposes. I have argued that Miracchi's CoV fails to establish itself as a genuine perception-first alternative to relationalism and strong-representationalism. As it stands, this objection could not be extended to Schellenberg's CaV. For one thing, she very explicitly positions her view within the representationalist camp (2019, 125-6). Moreover, it seems that the sort of reasoning sketched above, which showed Miracchi's CoV not to be a genuine perception-first view, is not straightforwardly applicable to CaV. Schellenberg explicitly claims that the sameness of phenomenological character between a perception and an indistinguishable hallucination is fundamentally explained by the fact that they involve exercising the same perceptual capacities (2019, 120). She is quite careful in not positing a common psychological occurrence between the two experiences, which is responsible for the phenomenal character of both.²⁵ Schellenberg's view would be compatible with the idea that the same perceptual capacities can be exercised within two different kinds of experience, without giving rise to a common psychological state (that accounts for their phenomenology). One might think that, being a representationalist, Schellenberg must be committed to a common representational state, responsible for the phenomenology of hallucinations and perceptions. However, she explicitly rejects such a view, endorsing instead a form of "weak representationalism" (2016, 50). According to which two states with identical phenomenal character could differ in their representational content by virtue of differences in the particulars that are represented by the state. According to Schellenberg: "on a weak representational view, there can be differences in [representational] content that are not reflected in sensory character" (2016, 50). The clearest example of this would be a hallucinatory experience which fails

to refer to any particular, and a genuine perception which successfully refers to a particular object. For Schellenberg, these experiences have the same phenomenal character because they involve exercising the same perceptual capacities, even though they differ in their representational content: perception's content is singular, whereas hallucination's is 'gappy' (2013, 729).

As a result, at first sight Schellenberg seems to be well-covered against the final objection that I levelled against Miracchi. However, there is an outstanding issue that must be left open in this paper. Schellenberg is very careful in not positing the kind of psychological occurrence that Miracchi posits. Nevertheless, we might reasonably wonder whether her view *implies* the existence of psychological occurrences of that kind. We might begin by asking exactly *how* do exercises of capacities produce the phenomenal character of the corresponding experiences. Is there any reason to think that this explanation needs to appeal to psychological occurrences that obtain whenever the relevant capacity is exercised? Schellenberg does not provide a direct answer for this type of question. If we are to establish with complete certainty that Schellenberg's view is immune to the problem I identified in Miracchi's position, we need clear answers to these questions. However, such a task goes beyond the limits of this paper and should be left as an open question for further research. For the time being, at least we have that, unlike Miracchi, Schellenberg is not explicitly committed to the problematic type of psychological occurrence.

In trying to establish CoV as a perception first- alternative *both* to relationalism and strong-representationalism, Miracchi has problems carving up a place for the view (and this section raises doubts as to whether the view can rightfully claim the place it needs). Thus, within the contemporary theoretical landscape, CaV is better positioned than CoV to constitute a plausible articulation of the general idea that perceptual experience is constituted by activity.

4. Conclusions

The alleged perception-first alternative to representationalism articulated by Miracchi turns out to have more in common to experience-first approaches than she acknowledges. Miracchi sets out to find a perception-first alternative to experience-first representationalism, although a view like this had been present in the philosophical landscape for a long time, and has gained popularity recently in the form of relationalism. Engaging seriously with the opposition that relationalism advances against experience-first representationalism sheds a valuable lesson for Miracchi – to focus on some of the most fundamental thesis of experience-first accounts and develop one way of rejecting that thesis straightforwardly. But even if it were possible to establish CoV as a perception-first approach, Miracchi would still need to address the challenges to her view raised in §2. The prospects for CoV are not auspicious.

The majority of the problems raised here for CoV can be avoided by Schellenberg's CaV. So, within the arena of capacity views of perception, my discussion shows CaV to be less susceptible to certain criticisms. Here I have not focused on examining the plausibility of CaV by itself. So, this comparative diagnosis should not be read as providing a positive reason in favour of CaV. I have merely put CoV to the test and contrasted it with CaV, coming to the conclusion that, relative to this test, CaV is able to dodge some of the problems faced by CoV. But nothing said here prevents that CaV could be found to be, on different grounds than those explored here, an untenable theory of perception. As a matter of fact, the challenge to accommodate distinguishable hallucination raised here (see §2.1), does constitute one reason which puts very serious pressure on Schellenberg's position, rendering it untenable unless it finds a way to make sense of distinguishable hallucinations. And as we have seen, some of the available moves do not seem promising. Finally, there is still some reason to think that Schellenberg is not entirely off the hook with respect to the objection developed in §3. In order to discard such a possibility, we need to enquire if CaV implies a commitment to any sort of psychological occurrence which can be entirely responsible for the phenomenal character

of corresponding experiences. This question has been left open in this paper, but its importance warrants a detailed treatment in further research.

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Notes

- ¹ Two recent efforts in this direction include Mark Kalderon (2017) and Susanna Schellenberg (2019), whose position I shall discuss in parallel to Miracchi's. This interest in perceptual activity is fundamentally different to the efforts spearheaded by Alva Noë (2004), J. Kevin O'Regan (2001), and others, in reviving a version of Enactivism (See also Gibson (1979)). The latter view holds that bodily activity impacts on the *content* of perceptual experiences, whereas the proposals by Miracchi, Kalderon, and Schellenberg explore the extent to which activity contributes to the *nature* of perceptual experience.
- ² Below, following Miracchi, I characterize "experience-first" and "perception-first" approaches.
- ³ See Miracchi (2017, 630-1). For Miracchi, any philosophical account of perception ought do more than just providing an account of its nature, such as being compatible with the science of perception. Here I focus on Miracchi's account of the nature of perception, leaving a discussion of other desiderata for a different occasion.
- ⁴ Miracchi actually characterizes perception as a "factive activity" (Miracchi 2017, 641). But "factivity" is often used to describe attitudes that take a propositional complement. Since I am not assuming a representationalist account of perception (and neither is Miracchi), I take it to be more appropriate to use a term which is applicable to perceptual experiences as construed by non-representationalist approaches.
- ⁵ For a similar view see Levy (2013).
- ⁶ For an up-to-date exposition of Schellenberg's view see her recent book *The Unity of Perception* (2018) which brings together her account of the nature of perception as well as her epistemological account of perception. For useful discussion of the view and a general characterization of the view along the lines that I present here see Martin (2020).
- ⁷ The obtaining of this difference is heavily exploited by Schellenberg in her account of the epistemological significance of perception and hallucination. She holds that, partly due to this difference, genuine perception provides us with factive perceptual evidence, whereas hallucinations provide us with non-factive perceptual evidence (Schellenberg 2013). Miracchi has not developed (at least not yet) an account of the epistemological significance of perception and hallucination. For an alternative agentive account of perceptual knowledge see Anaya (forthcoming).
- ⁸ Very importantly, Miracchi posits an additional psychological occurrence common to successful and unsuccessful exercises of the competences. I examine this commitment, and the problems it engenders, in detail in §3.
- ⁹ This is only a first pass by Miracchi's – her final characterization of reliability for *perceptual* competences is more complex than this condition for competences in general. Given my purposes, this simplified characterization suffices to understand the gist of her proposal. For the full account see Miracchi (2017, 655.)
- ¹⁰ See the representative list of "perception-firsters" assembled by Miracchi (2017, 629, fn. 2).
- ¹¹ See Michael G.F. Martin (1997, 2002, 2004, 2006). See also Bill Brewer (2007), John Campbell (2002), and Matthew Soteriou (2013, 2016).

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- ¹² It is important to note again, this does not entail an endorsement from Miracchi to a controversial claim that hallucinations are constituted by episodes of perception. See above.
- ¹³ Masrour (2020) voices a similar suggestion.
- ¹⁴ In contrast, Miracchi is explicitly committed to the claim that exercises of perceptual competences completely fix phenomenal character; see Miracchi (2017, 657). Notice, then, that this hypothetical response already incurs in a substantial modification of CoV.
- ¹⁵ Although in addressing this final objection I discuss the goldfinch case, everything I say applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the cases in which the subject sees for the first time a bird, an animal, or even a physical object.
- ¹⁶ See Martin (2006, 2002) and Soteriou (2013).
- ¹⁷ Tyler Burge (2005) characterized disjunctive accounts of perception in these terms. This was seen as an unfair characterization by some advocates of disjunctivism, for instance see John McDowell (2010, 2013) and Soteriou (2016) especially Ch. 2. Martin (2006) articulates a naïve realist conception which explicitly avoids the commitment Burge accuses disjunctivists of making. As a matter of fact, the claim that disjunctivism is consistent with such a common element can be traced back to John Hinton (1967, 220).
- ¹⁸ For relationalist views along these lines see fn. 10.
- ¹⁹ This is true mainly of so-called “strong representationalists” (following Brogaard’s (2010) terminology), e.g., Dretske (2003), McGinn (1988), Tye (2000), Chalmers (2004), and Siegel (2010).
- ²⁰ This has been a key issue for modern philosophical accounts of perception. See A.J. Ayer, (1940), J. L. Austin (1962), David Hume (1975), Martin (2000). For methodological discussions on phenomenal similarities see Anaya & Clark (2019), and French & Gomes (2019)
- ²¹ See Austin (1962) and Martin (2004).
- ²² This process is characterized by Miracchi as the operation of the “basis” of the competence. This “basis” includes at least the “neural activity, information processing, computations, and other functional states and events” (Miracchi 2017, 655) associated to the operation of perceptual competences.
- ²³ She explicitly advances this claim. See Miracchi (2017, 658,9).
- ²⁴ See Soteriou (2010) and Martin (2004), for the claim that experience-first representationalism is consistent with the claim that there are *some* differences between perceptions and hallucinations.
- ²⁵ Of course, Schellenberg might concede that there are *some* psychological similarities between the experiences (just as even a naïve realist might concede it). But, importantly, Schellenberg falls short of making the further commitment (which Miracchi makes) that those psychological occurrences suffice to produce the relevant phenomenal character.

Note on Contributor

Alfonso Anaya is postdoctoral researcher within the “perceptual objects in the unimodal and multimodal settings” at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw. He currently works on epistemic agency within perceptual knowledge, objects of perception, and perceptual recognition.

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