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World in Mind: Extending Phenomenal Character and Resisting Skepticism

Heather Logue

Abstract: I will begin by sketching a view according to which perceptual phenomenal character is "extended", in the sense of literally incorporating mind-independent entities in the subject's environment (a view also known as Naive Realism or the Relational View). I will then argue that this metaphysical thesis about perceptual phenomenal character affords a novel version of epistemological disjunctivism (a view elaborated and defended by John McDowell and Duncan Pritchard). I will conclude by comparing the resulting view with other versions of epistemological disjunctivism, and arguing that the version I've offered provides the most satisfying response to external world scepticism.

Keywords: perception, perceptual experience, external world skepticism, disjunctivism, phenomenal character, Naïve Realism, extended mind hypothesis

A well-known argument for skepticism about the external world begins with the claim that the subject of a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana is in the *same epistemic position* as the subject of an indistinguishable illusion or hallucination.¹ A common way of supporting this claim is to say that the experiences have the *same phenomenal character*—that "what it's like" for the subject of the veridical experience is the same as "what it's like" for a subject of one of the non-veridical experiences. If (as has traditionally been supposed) experiences with the same phenomenal character put their subjects in the same epistemic position, then the veridical and non-veridical experiences put one in the same epistemic position. But if the veridical and non-veridical experiences put one in the *same* epistemic position, the epistemic position of the *veridically perceiving* subject doesn't support the proposition that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped thing before her over the proposition that there *isn't* a such a thing before her (because she's hallucinating, or subject to an illusion). So, given that a veridically perceiving subject knows that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped thing before her only if her epistemic position supports it over such alternatives, the skeptic concludes that she doesn't know this

¹ By 'veridical experience', I mean an experience in which something appears F to a subject because she *perceives* the thing's F-ness (e.g., an experience in which a banana appears yellow to a subject because the subject perceives the banana's yellowness). This contrasts with a weaker sense of 'veridical', on which an experience is veridical just in case things are as they appear to the subject to be. In this weaker sense of the term, a total hallucination (an experience in which the subject doesn't perceive anything in her environment) could count as veridical by coincidence.

(and *mutatis mutandis* for every other proposition we take ourselves to be able to know by perception).²

A view known as *epistemological disjunctivism* denies the initial premise of this argument. It holds that the subject of a veridical experience is in a *better* epistemic position with respect to claims about her environment than the subject of an indistinguishable illusion or hallucination—indeed, an epistemic position that is a position to *know* such claims (at least, in the absence of defeaters).³ But what makes for the epistemic difference between a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped thing and a subjectively indiscriminable illusion or hallucination? We need to specify what exactly the difference in epistemic position is supposed to consist in, and how there could even be such a difference in light of the fact that non-veridical experiences can be subjectively indiscriminable from veridical ones. This latter task is necessary because epistemological disjunctivism is intended to be a version of *access internalism*. A view is access internalist just in case it holds that we must have a first-person mode of access to the grounds of our knowledge.⁴ Without the commitment to access internalism, epistemological disjunctivism would encompass well-known access externalist views. For example, a reliabilist holds that a veridical experience and a subjectively indiscriminable non-veridical one put a subject in different epistemic positions in virtue of the former figuring in a reliable belief forming process; but this is a difference that's not necessarily accessible to the subject. However, proponents of epistemological disjunctivism clearly intend it to be a competitor to and an improvement over access externalist views (see, e.g., Pritchard 2012, 2–3).

I will argue that the route to the most satisfying version of epistemological disjunctivism goes via a particular metaphysics of perceptual phenomenal character. Importantly, the plausibility of this metaphysics requires an unorthodox (yet, in my view, defensible) theory of how we acquire knowledge of our experiences. To foreshadow in broad strokes: the metaphysics of perceptual phenomenal character provides the difference in epistemic position postulated by the epistemological disjunctivist, and the theory of experiential knowledge enables

² Cf. the argument from underdetermination outlined in Byrne 2004, 304–6.

³ *Metaphysical* disjunctivism is the view that the metaphysical structure of veridical experience is different from that of at least some kinds of non-veridical experience (see, e.g., the papers collected in Haddock and Macpherson 2008 and Byrne and Logue 2009). Although it neither entails, nor is entailed by, epistemological disjunctivism (Logue 2011, 272; Pritchard 2012, 24), I will argue that a particular version of metaphysical disjunctivism yields a particular version of epistemological disjunctivism (given certain further premises).

⁴ If we want to allow that facts that are external to the subject's perspective can be defeaters (e.g., that one has unknowingly stumbled into fake barn country), we will have to weaken the access internalist thesis accordingly (e.g., to the claim that we must have a first-person mode of access to the "primary" facts in virtue of which one has knowledge, where 'primary' is elaborated in a way that excludes intuitively auxiliary matters like the absence of external defeaters). I will set aside this complication in what follows.

us to explain how this difference can be accessible to a subject. In section 1, I will outline the aforementioned metaphysics of perceptual phenomenal character, and the theory of experiential knowledge that it requires. In section 2, I will put these views to epistemological work, and explain how they afford a novel form of epistemological disjunctivism. I will conclude in section 3 by comparing this view with the version of epistemological disjunctivism articulated by John McDowell (1982; 2008) and elaborated by Duncan Pritchard (2008; 2012).

1. Extended phenomenal character

Before we get into the details of the metaphysics of perceptual phenomenal character, let us specify the metaphysical explanandum in more detail.⁵ As a first pass, we can say that the phenomenal character of a perceptual experience is “what it is like” to have it (Nagel 1974). For example, the phenomenal character of a veridical experience of yellowness is “what it’s like” to see a yellow thing. I will use ‘phenomenal yellowness’ as shorthand for ‘the phenomenal character of a veridical experience of yellowness’.⁶

However, the “what it is like” characterization is somewhat opaque, so it will be helpful to say more. When I’m talking about the phenomenal character of an experience, I am not necessarily just talking about how things *perceptually appear* to the subject in virtue of having it (cf. Millar’s characterization of phenomenal character in this volume). For there may be more to phenomenal yellowness than something’s looking yellow to one. Phenomenal character is something that a “philosophical zombie” (see, e.g., Chalmers 1996) is supposed to lack. But one might say that something can look yellow to a zombie, in the following sense: as the result of the operation of his visual system, he can be in personal-level states that carry the (mis)information that there’s something yellow before him. Yet there’s *nothing it’s like* for the zombie to be in such a state. By contrast, in creatures like us, perceptual appearances are imbued with something distinctive. When we get (mis)information about the world through our senses, it is infused with something that makes it particularly vivid, confrontational, and (as a result) potentially pleasant or unpleasant. Something’s looking yellow to me has a characteristic *feel* to it. This is

⁵ In what follows, I’ll leave out ‘perceptual’ for brevity’s sake—unless stated otherwise, by ‘phenomenal character’ I mean the phenomenal character of *perceptual experience*.

⁶ I should note that it is a matter of dispute whether there is any such thing as *the* phenomenal character of a veridical experience of yellowness—for some hold that what it’s like to have such an experience can *vary* across subjects and times (see, e.g., Block 1996). Let us set this complication aside for simplicity’s sake, as everything I want to say could be rephrased accordingly (albeit in a rather cumbersome manner).

what the theory of phenomenal character I'm about to outline aims to account for—let us now turn to that account.⁷

a. Veridical experience

The metaphysics of phenomenal character I have in mind gives a different account for veridical experiences, hallucinations, and illusions.⁸ Let us begin with veridical experience, as the theory is the most straightforward in that case. On this view, the phenomenal character of veridical experience consists in *perceiving* mind-independent entities in one's environment. That is, phenomenal F-ness (e.g., phenomenal yellowness) consists in perceiving an instance of F-ness (e.g., an instance of yellowness). Let's call this an *extended* account of phenomenal character, as it holds that phenomenal character is partly constituted by mind-independent entities that exist *beyond* our bodily boundaries (for views in this vicinity, see, e.g., Campbell 2002; Martin 2004; Fish 2009; Brewer 2011; Logue 2012 a).⁹ I won't argue for this theory here; I will just elaborate it a bit, and then proceed to sketch what I

⁷ A couple of clarificatory remarks are in order. First, in invoking the notion of a philosophical zombie in order to specify what I mean by 'phenomenal character', I'm not committing to the possibility of such creatures. Rather, I'm just using their *prima facie* conceivability to suggest that phenomenal character and perceptual appearances are distinct *concepts*. Second, this characterization of phenomenal character is meant to be compatible with the possibility that it ultimately boils down to nothing over and above perceptual appearances in the end. It's just that this possibility is a *substantive* claim, not a conceptual truth (which strikes me as the right result).

⁸ Hence, it is a version of metaphysical disjunctivism (see fn. 3 above).

⁹ Of course, this characterization is inaccurate in the special case of perceiving one's own body (thanks to an anonymous referee for pointing this out). This type of view is also called 'the Relational View' (Campbell 2002), 'Naïve Realism' (Martin 2004; Fish 2009; Logue 2012a), and 'the Object View' (Brewer 2011). I prefer the label 'the Extended View', as it highlights what is arguably the most distinctive aspect of the theory—namely, that it is an instance of the extended mind thesis (see Clark and Chalmers 1998).

One might take the claim that phenomenal character is extended to imply that it itself has properties like shape and location (thanks again to an anonymous referee for raising this issue). It's not obvious that this is an inevitable consequence of the view. Strictly speaking, the claim is that phenomenal character consists in the instantiation of a particular relation (i.e., the perceptual relation), and it's not clear whether it makes any sense to talk of instances of relations as having shapes or locations (although one might think that instances of relations are located where the *relata* are). But even if this *is* a consequence of the view, it's not clear that it is indefensible—perhaps the intuition that phenomenal character cannot have shape or location is merely the result of indoctrination (i.e., the fact that we're taught from early on to think about phenomenal character in a broadly internalist, Cartesian way). Defending this speculation would take us too far afield.

think a proponent of this account ought to say about the phenomenal character of non-veridical experience. Some readers will no doubt find this exposition unsatisfyingly brief. However, the aim of this paper is to explore the epistemological implications of extended phenomenal character, rather than to refine or defend the view. These tasks require much more space than I can give them here.

Notice that, on this view, phenomenal character consists in a *relation*—for example, phenomenal yellowness consists in *a subject perceiving an instance of yellowness*.¹⁰ Given that phenomenal character consists in a relation, we may ask: what are the relative contributions of each of the relata? That is, how much of the nature of a given type of phenomenal character is contributed by the *thing perceived*, and how much of it is contributed by the thing *doing the perceiving*?

Typical articulations of the Extended View attribute the bulk of the contribution to the objects of experience. In this regard, such a view is analogous to the *sense-datum theory*, on which the nature of phenomenal character is entirely down to the nature of the sense-data with which one is acquainted. So, for example, the nature of phenomenal yellowness just is the nature of the property of sense-data one is acquainted with in having experiences of yellowness. All the subject-end of the relation brings to the table is *awareness* of this nature. Although proponents of the Extended View typically allow that features of the subject play *some* role in determining the precise nature of a given instance of phenomenal character—e.g., the subject’s perspective, how she distributes her attention over a scene (Fish 2009, 75), whether she has jaundice (Campbell 2002, 119)—the bulk of the work is being done by the nature of the thing perceived. So, for example, the nature of the phenomenal character of my experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped thing is largely determined by the nature of crescent-shapedness and the nature of yellowness. Again, what the subject brings to the table is (mostly) just awareness of these natures.

However, this way of fleshing out the Extended View isn’t compulsory. Arguably, we should allow that (e.g.) the fact that the subject is looking at the world through a simple eye rather than a compound one, or that processing of information about light has an opponent structure, plays a substantial or even dominant role in determining the phenomenal character of a subject’s experience. In general, we might want to claim that features of the subject can play a more substantial role in determining the nature of phenomenal character. If phenomenal character is a relation between the subject and the objects of experience, there is a spectrum of possibilities concerning the relative contributions of the relata to phenomenal character. For example, it is possible that the subject relatum makes an extremely minimal contribution to the phenomenal character it grounds—that all it really does

¹⁰ One might worry that this just isn’t the notion of phenomenal character typically employed by philosophers of perception. I’m claiming that it’s a relation, but isn’t it supposed to be a *property* of experiences? (Thanks to Rowland Stout for raising this issue.) However, the claim that phenomenal character consists in a relation is nothing new. Sense-datum theorists have long held that phenomenal character consists in a relation to *sense-data*. So one of the issues that’s up for debate is which ontological category phenomenal character falls into (property or relation).

is serve as a relatum of the perceptual relation (i.e., all it's bringing to the table is awareness of the objects of experience). At the opposite end of the spectrum, we can imagine a case in which the *mind-independent entity* makes an extremely minimal contribution: e.g., one in which phenomenal yellowness derives almost entirely from certain features of the *subject* (e.g., the structure of visual processing). In this case, all the instance of a color contributes to the phenomenal character is being a relatum of the perceptual relation. And we can imagine cases in between: e.g., a case in which phenomenal yellowness derives some of its nature from the structure of the instance of the color (perhaps isomorphism with respect to its brightness and saturation), and some of it from the structure of visual processing (perhaps isomorphism with respect to the aspects of visual processing that give rise to experience of hue).¹¹

In summary, the Extended View can accommodate the possibility that features of the subject make a substantial contribution to the nature of phenomenal character. As we'll see shortly, this comes in handy in accounting for the phenomenal character of illusions. But first, let us address the elephant in the room—namely, total hallucinations.

b. Hallucinations

By definition, the subject of a total hallucination doesn't perceive anything in her environment. Since total hallucinations do not involve perception of mind-independent property instances, the Extended View cannot account for their phenomenal character—it cannot consist in perceiving things in one's environment if one *doesn't* perceive any such thing.¹² So what can the proponent of the Extended View say about the phenomenal character of total hallucinations?

One (admittedly radical) answer is that total hallucinations lack perceptual phenomenal character altogether (see Fish 2009, chap. 4; Logue 2012b). This doesn't necessarily mean that there's *nothing it's like* to hallucinate; perhaps hallucinations have the sort of phenomenal character associated with sensory imagination (although see Logue 2012b, 182 for a worry about this proposal). However, I think that even the claim that there is nothing it's like to hallucinate is defensible (Fish 2009, chap. 5, Logue 2012b, 187–94). I won't attempt to address all

¹¹ See Logue 2012a, secs. 1-3 for further elaboration of this line of thought, and cf. Russell's characterization of sensibilia and (physical) sense-data in his 1917, 150. (Thanks to an anonymous referee for suggesting the similarity with Russell's view.)

¹² A similar issue arises with *partial* hallucinations, i.e., experiences that are partly hallucinatory, but also partly a matter of perceiving things in one's environment. (Plausibly, the most common hallucinations are of this sort.) The hallucinatory aspects of such an experience count as hallucinatory precisely because they are not the causal upshot of things in one's environment impinging upon one's sense organs in the normal way; rather, they are the result of direct brain stimulation (e.g., by drugs). Hence, the phenomenal character associated with those aspects of the experience cannot consist in perceiving things in one's environment. For simplicity's sake, I'll set partial hallucinations aside.

the objections one might raise to this proposal here, but tackling the most obvious one will bring to light a theory that we can use against the skeptical argument.

The obvious objection is this: how could there be *nothing* it's like to have a hallucination that is *subjectively indiscriminable* from a state that there *is* something it's like to be in? As a first pass at spelling out this objection, we might appeal to the idea that subjective indiscriminability entails phenomenal sameness. Given this claim, if a total hallucination is subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical experience, then if there's something it's like to have the latter, there must be something it's like to have the former.

However, the claim that subjective indiscriminability entails phenomenal sameness stands in need of support, especially in light of the fact that indiscriminability doesn't entail sameness in general. The fact that I can't tell two things apart doesn't mean they are the same in all respects, or even that they are similar—I might just be *irremediably bad* at discerning differences between the things.¹³ We must remember that sameness is a *metaphysical* notion (involving sharing of properties), whereas indistinguishability is an *epistemological* one (involving an *inability to tell* that things differ in their properties). Unless our epistemic access to phenomenal character is infallible, then it is at least possible for subjectively indiscriminable experiences to differ in phenomenal character. Absent infallibility, the two notions do not march in lock step.

That being said, there is a more troubling way of fleshing out the obvious objection. My opponent might well concede that our epistemic access to our mental states is fallible, but she might be unwilling to concede that it is susceptible to *egregious* errors. And the account of hallucination just sketched (insofar as it concedes that total hallucinations are subjectively indistinguishable from veridical experiences) entails that hallucinators would be making such an error—i.e., the error of believing that a state has perceptual phenomenal character when it in fact has none whatsoever. In short, even if subjective indiscriminability doesn't entail phenomenal sameness, and even if we can be subtly in error about phenomenal character (e.g., in failing to discriminate similar yet different phenomenal properties) we haven't yet explained how a hallucinator could make the massive mistake at issue (cf. Logue 2010, 35–36).

In order to explain the possibility of such a mistake, we need to invoke a particular type of theory of how we come to know about our mental states (including our experiences and their phenomenal character). On what is arguably the standard, Cartesian model of such self-knowledge, we get it by directing our attention “within”, in some sense. If I want to know what I believe, or what I desire, or what I'm experiencing, I attend to what's (presumably) going on inside my head

¹³ I take J.L. Austin (1962, 51–52) to be making basically the same point, although he frames it somewhat differently (focusing on cases in which the experiences are in principle distinguishable but in fact not distinguished). However, he acknowledges that in some cases “it may be true that we can't distinguish, and not merely that we don't”, and goes on to insist that “even this doesn't mean that the two cases are exactly alike” (p. 52). Thanks to an anonymous referee for highlighting this similarity.

(see, e.g., Armstrong 1968, chap. 15; Gertler 2001). By contrast, on what we might call the “outward looking” model, we acquire knowledge of our mental states by directing our attention *without*. As Gareth Evans famously proposed, I answer the question “do I believe that there will be a Third World War?” by my attention *out to the world*, and assessing the evidence for and against the proposition at issue (1982, 225). Evans thinks a similar model holds for *experience*: I acquire knowledge about my experience by attending to the (mind-independent) *objects* of my experience (Evans 1982, 227–28; see also Byrne 2012).¹⁴ This is, of course, a controversial theory in need of considerable elaboration and defense; but this is not the place for those tasks. For our purposes, let us assume the outward looking model of experiential knowledge for the sake of argument, and consider how it can be used to rescue the account of hallucination under discussion.

According to this model, we get knowledge about our experiences by attending to their mind-independent objects. However, notice that total hallucinations *don't have* mind-independent objects. Thus, our means of getting knowledge about our experiences *can't be employed* in such cases—a hallucinator cannot attend to the mind-independent objects of her experience, simply because there aren't any. This means that hallucination would be a *defective* context for the employment of one's mode of epistemic access to one's experiences, as a hallucinator would be unable to carry out the normal epistemic procedure. Now, if you try to use a mode of epistemic access in conditions unfavourable for its employment, it wouldn't be surprising if you end up with wildly inaccurate results. Here is a crude analogy to help illustrate the idea: if you try to use vision to tell the colors of things in the dark, you'll get the result that everything is pitch black. Similarly, in the case at issue here: if you try to acquire knowledge of your experience by attending to the objects of your experience *when there are no such objects*, it wouldn't be particularly surprising if the result is a wildly inaccurate belief (such as the belief that your experience has perceptual phenomenal character when it in fact does not).

In short, egregious error about phenomenal character is possible as long as it's possible for our mode of epistemic access to our experiences to fail catastrophically. And *this* is possible in the case of hallucination given that knowledge of perceptual phenomenal character requires “looking outward” to the mind-independent objects of experience. There is obviously much more to be said here (and I say some, but by no means all of it in Logue 2012b).¹⁵ But since the aim

¹⁴ A common label for one's mode of epistemic access to one's own mental states is ‘introspection’. But of course, if the outward looking model is correct, ‘introspection’ is a misnomer.

¹⁵ Just to flag a couple of pressing issues I don't have the space to address properly here: why is the hallucinator's belief inaccurate in the specific way that it is (i.e., why does the subject believe *that she is in a state with phenomenal character*)? And why is the means to knowledge of experience *successfully* attending to the objects of experience, rather than *merely trying* to attend to the objects of one's experience? (Thanks to Scott Shalkowski for pressing this question.)

of this paper is to explore the anti-skeptical potential of the outward looking model in conjunction with the Extended View, let us move on.

c. Illusion

Let us now turn to what the Extended View should say about illusions. An illusion is an experience in which the subject perceives things in her environment, and something appears F to her, but not because she perceives its F-ness. For example, a subject might perceive a green thing that looks yellow to her, thanks to the unusual ambient lighting conditions. Since the subject of an illusion perceives things in her environment, a proponent of the Extended View has the resources to accommodate the claim that illusions have perceptual phenomenal character—at least in principle. But the matter is not entirely straightforward, for it isn't immediately obvious what the phenomenal character associated with *non-veridical* aspects of an illusion consists in. For example, consider the phenomenal character associated with an illusion in which a green thing looks yellow. What does the phenomenal character associated with the illusory appearance of yellowness consist in? Of course, it cannot consist in perceiving an instance of *yellowness*—for the thing *isn't* yellow. So the phenomenal character of a non-veridical illusion as of a yellow thing must consist in perceiving an instance of a property *other than* yellowness.

In response to this challenge, a proponent of the Extended View can say that the phenomenal character associated with an illusion of a green thing as being yellow consists in the subject perceiving the instance of *greenness*. It's just that the *subject's visual system in the viewing circumstances* determines the phenomenal character in such a way that it is *subjectively indiscriminable from veridically perceiving an instance of yellowness*. In general, the proposal is that the phenomenal character of a non-veridical illusion as of something being F consists in the subject perceiving an instance of G-ness (where G-ness is distinct from F-ness, but a determinate of the same determinable).¹⁶

¹⁶ This account of the phenomenal character of illusions is inspired by the account offered in Brewer 2008, and is also similar to those offered in Fish 2009, chap. 6; Antony 2011; and Kalderon 2011.

Note that I don't mean for this account to apply in a case in which the thing's G-ness isn't playing any role in causing the subject's experience (given that this is a necessary condition of perceiving something). If the reason why the thing appears F *isn't* the upshot of the thing's G-ness and how the subject's perceptual system normally responds to instances of G-ness in the prevailing perceptual conditions, arguably such a case should be classified as a *partial hallucination*, not an illusion. (Thanks to Rowland Stout and Susanna Siegel for pressing me to clarify this point.)

We also need to give an account of *veridical* illusion; i.e., an experience in which something appears F and *is* F, but the perceptual conditions are such that it could have very easily *failed* to appear F (e.g., the Ames room illusion described in Johnston 2006, 272–74). If we extend the account of non-veridical illusion just given to the case of veridical illusion, the phenomenal character of a veridical illusion in which something appears F would consist in perceiving an instance of F-ness. Some

I anticipate that some will resist the idea that the subject of an illusion in which a green thing looks yellow perceives the instance of greenness. For on the face of it, the following principle is plausible: a subject S perceives an instance of G-ness only if the thing perceived *appears G* to S. Given this principle, it follows that the subject *doesn't* perceive the instance of greenness—as the thing doesn't *look green*. However, once we recognize that the subject's visual system can make a significant contribution to phenomenal character (as mentioned above in section 1a), this principle loses its pull. The idea is that, in unfavorable viewing conditions with respect to a given property (say, greenness), the visual system normally responds to these viewing conditions in such a way that the resulting phenomenal character is subjectively indiscriminable from the phenomenal character of a *veridical* experience of a *different* property (say, yellowness). And since the phenomenal character of the experience is subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of yellowness, the thing *looks yellow* to the subject. In short, if we accept that facts about the subject's visual system can make a significant contribution to phenomenal character, it's perfectly possible to make sense of a case in which a subject *perceives* a thing's F-ness even though it doesn't *appear F* to her.

Notice that, on this view, a veridical experience of yellowness and a subjectively indiscriminable illusory counterpart have *different* phenomenal characters: the former consists in perceiving an instance of yellowness, and the latter consists in perceiving an instance of a distinct property (such as greenness). Note also that the phenomenal character of an illusion is of a sort that cannot be had by veridical experience. Even though they both may consist in perceiving, say, an instance of greenness, the former involves the subject's visual system reacting to the viewing conditions so as to render the phenomenal character indiscriminable from that of a veridical experience of yellowness; of course, this isn't happening in the case of a *veridical* experience of greenness. As in the case of hallucination, there is a difference in phenomenal character that subject cannot access. However, this difference seems to be much less objectionable than the drastic difference postulated in the case of hallucination—after all, in this case, both experiences have phenomenal character, and we have scientific explanations of why the phenomenal character of an illusion is indiscriminable from that of a veridical experience (having to do with how perceptual systems react in the prevailing perceptual conditions).¹⁷

Now that we have elaborated the Extended View's accounts of veridical experience, hallucination, and illusion, let us turn to the question of how we can get a version of epistemological disjunctivism out of it.

will balk at the claim that the subject of a veridical illusion perceives the property at issue; but I think the important thing is to explain why such an experience is defective, and we can do this without claiming that there is a failure to perceive F-ness here. In particular, we can say that such an experience cannot afford knowledge that the thing is F—on the grounds that the subject is bound to fail to meet some necessary condition on knowledge or other (the belief isn't safe because of the fluky perceptual conditions, a suitably individuated belief forming process isn't sufficiently reliable, etc.)

¹⁷ Thanks to Rasmus Thybo Jensen for pressing me to clarify these points.

2. A novel version of epistemological disjunctivism

Recall that the skeptic's argument presupposes that experiences with the same phenomenal character make the same rational contribution to one's epistemic position. From there, the skeptic argues that since a veridical experience and its subjectively indistinguishable non-veridical counterparts have the same phenomenal character, they must put one in the same epistemic position. Epistemological disjunctivism responds to the skeptic by claiming that the subject of a veridical experience is in a *better* epistemic position than a subject of an indiscriminable illusion or hallucination—such that the former is in a position to know things about the world around her (absent defeaters). Again, this is just a broad outline of the response. We still need to specify two crucial details:

- a) What exactly does this difference in epistemic position consist in?
- b) How can this difference be *accessible*, given the subjective indiscriminability of the experiences?

In this section, I will suggest that the epistemic difference between subjects of veridical and non-veridical experiences consists in the *phenomenal* differences entailed by the Extended View of phenomenal character. We can *concede* to the skeptic that the rational contribution made by an experience is constituted by its phenomenal character, and yet maintain that a veridical experience puts one in a *different* and *better* epistemic position than its subjectively indiscriminable non-veridical counterparts.¹⁸ This is because the Extended View holds that a subjectively indiscriminable hallucination lacks phenomenal character altogether, and that a subjectively indiscriminable illusion has a different (albeit subjectively indiscriminable) phenomenal character. Hence, the claim that there is an epistemic difference between a veridical experience and its subjectively indiscriminable counterparts is compatible with the claim that phenomenally identical experiences make the same rational contribution—according to the Extended View, a veridical experience and its subjectively indiscriminable non-veridical counterparts are *not* phenomenally identical.

Of course, the crucial question at this juncture is this: how exactly does the *phenomenal* difference between the experiences make for the required *epistemic* difference between them? And again, how can these phenomenal/epistemic

¹⁸ Plausibly, veridical experiences of qualitatively identical but numerically distinct objects have the *same* phenomenal character (in virtue of involving perception of instances of the same properties), but make *different* rational contributions (with respect to *object-dependent* beliefs). If that's right, we should reject the claim that experiences with the same phenomenal character make *exactly* the same rational contribution, and concede the weaker claim that an experience's rational contribution is *largely* constituted (but not entirely exhausted) by its phenomenal character.

differences be accessible to the subject, given the subjective indiscriminability of the experiences at issue? I will address these questions by considering veridical experiences, hallucinations, and illusions in turn.

a. Veridical experience

On the Extended View of phenomenal character, the phenomenal character of a veridical experience of yellowness has an instance of yellowness of a *constituent*. Given that the rational contribution of an experience is at least partly constituted by its phenomenal character, the rational contribution of an experience that instantiates phenomenal yellowness *literally includes* an instance of yellowness. This means that the subject's epistemic position with respect to the proposition that there is a yellow thing before her is *infallible*. The subject could not be in this epistemic position in the absence of an instance of yellowness. So if the subject forms the belief that there is a yellow thing before her as a result of being in this epistemic position, she cannot go wrong.¹⁹

Furthermore, if one's epistemic position is infallible with respect to the proposition that p, then one is in a position to know that p, at least in the absence of defeaters.²⁰ This qualification is important—it means that veridically perceiving a

¹⁹ This account of the rational contribution of the phenomenal character of veridical experience is broadly similar to the one put forward in Hellie 2011. A crucial difference is that my account will leave room for hallucinatory experiences to make rational contributions, too (see below).

One might worry about such an infallibility claim with respect to experience of finely-grained properties (e.g., a determinate shade of yellow). Couldn't one veridically perceive an instance of yellow₅₁, but incorrectly judge that the thing is yellow₅₂ as a result of having a phenomenally yellow₅₁ experience? (Thanks to Jon Robson for this question.) This point deserves more discussion than I can devote to it here, but I agree that the phenomenal character of veridical experience doesn't put one in an infallible epistemic position with respect to such properties. However, there is an innocuous explanation for this fallibility (our tenuous grasp of the finely-grained color concepts that figure in the judgments at issue), and it's plausible that such judgments rarely amount to knowledge in any case.

²⁰ Some clarifications are required here. First, note that by 'defeater', I mean what are often called *undercutting* and *rebutting* defeaters for the belief that p—i.e., a *positive reason* for believing that not-p (rebutting), or believing that one's evidence for the claim that p is misleading (undercutting). Skeptical hypotheses (e.g., that I might be a brain-in-a-vat) are not defeaters of either sort, as we have no positive reason to believe them; and indeed, if epistemological disjunctivism is correct, we actually have conclusive Moorean evidence *against* them. (Thanks to Darren Bradley for pointing out the need to clarify this.)

Second, note that *infallibility* is not sufficient for being in a position to know in the absence of defeaters. For arguably, there is a difference between being infallible and being in an infallible *epistemic position*: Bonjour's "Norman the Clairvoyant" (1980) may well be infallible with respect to the proposition that the

yellow thing is not sufficient for being in a position to know that there is a yellow thing before you. Arguably, if there are defeaters for your belief that there is a yellow thing before you (a good reason for mistrusting your senses, such as a reasonable but false belief that you've just taken a hallucinogenic drug), this would undermine your epistemic position so that it's no longer a position to know. But if there are no such defeaters, an infallible epistemic position with respect to the proposition that *p* is plausibly sufficient for being in a position to know it.²¹ (Of course, one might fail to parlay this infallible epistemic position into knowledge simply by failing to form the relevant beliefs—for example, I might not care whether or not there's a yellow thing before me, or fail to notice the yellow thing I'm seeing, etc.)

In summary: the phenomenal character of a veridical experience, as characterised by the Extended View, puts the subject in a position to know claims about her environment (absent defeaters) in virtue of putting the subject in an infallible epistemic position with respect to those claims.

Now let us turn to the question of how this epistemic position could be epistemically accessible to the subject. The first part of the answer is an appeal to the “outward-looking” model of experiential knowledge. In particular, the idea is that the subject of a veridical experience has access to the phenomenal character of her experience along the lines sketched by the outward-looking model. For example, the subject of a veridical experience of a yellow banana attends to the *banana's yellowness*, and thereby comes to know that she's having a phenomenally yellow experience. Of course, this isn't a complete answer, as there is an obvious challenge still remaining: namely, to explain why indiscriminable illusions and hallucinations don't block the acquisition of this phenomenal knowledge. It seems to the subject of a *non-veridical* experience of yellowness that she's having a phenomenally yellow experience, but according to the extended theory, she's not. (Recall that phenomenal yellowness consists in *perceiving* an instance of yellowness on the Extended View, and the subject of a non-veridical experience of yellowness isn't perceiving an instance of yellowness.) But even if it *merely* seems to such a subject that she's having a phenomenally yellow experience, why doesn't this fact prevent a veridically perceiving subject from knowing that she's having a phenomenally yellow experience? How can a veridically perceiving subject rule out the possibility that she's having an illusion or a hallucination? To fully answer the question at hand,

POTUS is in New York City, but arguably he's not really in an epistemic position with respect to it (he doesn't have any experiences or beliefs that bear on it).

²¹ A complication lurks here. If a “truth fairy” puts me in an infallible epistemic position by ensuring that my beliefs are always true, arguably these beliefs don't amount to knowledge. (Thanks to Kurt Sylvan for raising this issue.) One might insist that the contingent good will of the truth fairy is a defeater, so we don't have a counterexample to the claim at issue. However, in cases where the truth fairy's benevolence is unknown to the subject, this move interacts in a complicated way with the access internalism built into epistemological disjunctivism (see fn. 4 above). I will set aside this complication for simplicity's sake.

we have to consider how the outward-looking model plays out in the cases of hallucination and illusion.

b. Hallucination

Insofar as one's epistemic position is at least partly constituted by the phenomenal character of one's experience, the subject of a hallucination is clearly in an inferior epistemic position relative to the subject of a veridical experience by the lights of the Extended View. The subject of a veridical experience enjoys phenomenal character that puts her in an infallible position with respect to specific propositions about her environment, whereas the subject of a hallucination is in a state that lacks perceptual phenomenal character entirely. So the epistemic difference between veridical experience and hallucination is straightforward. A trickier issue is whether the subjective indiscriminability of hallucinations from veridical experiences renders the epistemic difference between them inaccessible. In this section, I will use the outward-looking model to argue for the conclusion that subjective indiscriminability can be *asymmetrical*: even though a hallucination can be subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience, it does not follow that the veridical experience is subjectively indiscriminable from the hallucination. Given this asymmetry, the subject of a veridical experience can access the epistemic difference between her experience and a hallucination, thereby discriminating the former from the latter.

It is agreed by all sides that a hallucination can be subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience—i.e., that the subject of a hallucination cannot know (just by reflection on her experience) that her experience is not veridical. One explanation of this subjective indiscriminability is phenomenal sameness: the hallucination is subjectively indiscriminable from the veridical experience because they have the same phenomenal character. Of course, a proponent of the Extended View cannot give this explanation, as she thinks that there is a radical phenomenal difference between the two experiences. Fortunately, she has an alternative explanation at her disposal which invokes the outward-looking model of experiential knowledge: the subject of a hallucination cannot know that her experience is not veridical simply because hallucination is a defective context for the employment of the outward-looking procedure for experiential knowledge. As I explained above, hallucination is a defective context for this procedure because it involves attending to the objects of one's experience, but in the case of hallucination, there are no objects of experience for the subject to attend to. The fact that hallucination is a defective context for the employment of the outward-looking procedure means that the subject cannot acquire knowledge about her experience in this context (e.g., knowledge that it's not veridical, and if the Extended View is true, that it lacks phenomenal character).

Now—and this is the crucial point—the fact that a procedure cannot afford knowledge in conditions unfavorable for its employment does not impugn its

capacity to afford knowledge in conditions that *are* favorable.²² A hallucination as of a yellow thing is subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a yellow thing *simply because of a failure of the normal procedure for acquiring knowledge of one's experiences*. But that does *not* mean that one cannot come to know that one is having a veridical, phenomenally yellow experience when one is, in virtue of the procedure working properly in non-defective circumstances.

In general, sometimes indiscriminability is due to sameness or similarity between the entities that can't be discriminated. But it could also be down to the fact that one's mode of access to just one of the entities is severely compromised. In cases with this latter type of structure, indiscriminability is *asymmetrical*. The subject might not be able to tell the entity to which she has *compromised* access apart from the other (perhaps radically different) entity. But this certainly doesn't mean that she can't tell the entity to which she has *uncompromised* access apart from the other entity (especially if the latter is radically different).

Before turning to the case of illusion, let us pause to consider a worry concerning the implications of the account just sketched for the epistemological power of hallucination. The worry is that, on this account, hallucinations cannot make any rational contribution at all. Plausibly, a total hallucination makes *some* rational contribution—other things being equal, it is rational for the subject of a total hallucination as of a yellow thing to believe that there is a yellow thing before her.²³ Of course, an epistemological disjunctivist must deny that this rational contribution is the *same* as that of a veridical experience. But surely we should acknowledge that the subject has *some* experiential justification for believing that there is a yellow thing before her (albeit of an inferior sort). However, if (as we're granting the skeptic) the rational contribution of an experience is constituted by its phenomenal character, and (by the extended account) total hallucinations lack perceptual phenomenal character, then it appears that total hallucinations can't make any contribution to the subject's epistemic position after all.

However, we can account for the epistemic power of hallucination by appealing to the fact that things still *perceptually appear* to be a certain way to the subject of a hallucination. (Recall that I'm using 'perceptually appear' in a *non-phenomenal* sense—I'm referring to a personal-level perceptual informational state

²² This point is nothing new, but is all too often overlooked. It goes at least as far back as Descartes' first meditation: he suggests that the mere fact that we are subject to visual illusions in *non-ideal* viewing conditions isn't sufficient to impugn the capacity of vision to provide us with knowledge in *ideal* viewing conditions (1641/1993, 14; see also McDowell 2009 and 2011).

²³ This idea is in the same spirit as the "New Evil Demon Problem" for externalist theories of justification (Lehrer and Cohen 1983). While epistemological disjunctivism is incompatible with a hallucinating subject being in the *same* epistemic position as a veridically perceiving counterpart, it can and should allow that the former has *some* justification for beliefs about her environment in virtue of which they count as rational (as I will explain shortly). Benj Hellie (2011) denies that standards of rationality apply to hallucinating subjects; see Logue 2013 for an explanation of why I think this is wrong.

that a philosophical zombie could be in.) The fact that it perceptually appears to the subject of a hallucination as of a yellow banana that there is a yellow thing before her provides *some* justification for believing that there is. Of course, this fact radically underdetermines what's going on in her environment—it could perceptually appear to her that there's a yellow thing before her if she's looking at a white thing in yellow light, or if she's a brain in a vat (and so on ad nauseam). However, this fact confers at least *some* justification for believing each one of these propositions.²⁴ This isn't to say that it's *rational to believe* each one of these propositions—which ones it would be rational for her to believe is partly a function of her background beliefs as well. So provided that she believes that the lighting conditions are normal, and that she's not a brain in a vat (etc.), it's rational for her to believe that there's a yellow thing before her. I should emphasize that her belief is not *fully* justified, in the sense that she has justification that would be sufficient for knowledge were she veridically perceiving. Epistemological disjunctivism couldn't countenance that.²⁵ But we can recover a sense in which her belief has some justification and thereby qualifies as rational, which I think is enough.

c. Illusion

The phenomenal difference between a veridical experience and an illusion doesn't quite so obviously translate into the required sort of epistemic difference. Both types of experience involve perceiving things in one's environment, and so (by the lights of the Extended View) both types of experience have phenomenal character. So given the claim that one's epistemic position with respect to one's environment is at least partly constituted by the phenomenal character of one's experience, both types of experience have something to contribute on this score. However, I will argue that the epistemic difference consists in the fact that the illusory aspect of the phenomenal character of one's experience is not accessible to the subject. As in the case of hallucination, I will rely upon the outward-looking model of experiential knowledge.²⁶

²⁴ I should note that I am assuming here that perceptual experiences can (at the very least) provide defeasible justification for beliefs. In this volume, Christopher Gauker criticizes an argument for this claim (what he calls the meta-argument from "looks" talk). I don't endorse that argument (as I reject its second premise); however, providing another argument for the assumption is beyond the scope of the present paper.

²⁵ Cf. McDowell: "We can consistently acknowledge that an experience that merely seems to be one of perceiving can give its subject a reason for belief, even while we maintain that such an experience makes no relevant contribution to the subject's opportunities for knowledge" (2009, 470).

²⁶ In a previous draft of this paper, I conceded that veridical experiences are subjectively indistinguishable from illusions. Thanks to Rasmus Thybo Jensen and a graduate student from Rutgers (whose name I unfortunately didn't catch) for independently suggesting that I shouldn't give up so easily.

Just as in the case of hallucination, it is agreed by all sides that an illusion can be subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience—i.e., that the subject of an illusion cannot know (just by reflection on her experience) that her experience is not veridical. And again, one potential explanation of this subjective indiscriminability is phenomenal sameness. But as before, a proponent of the Extended View cannot give this explanation, since she thinks that there is a significant phenomenal difference between the two experiences (albeit a less radical difference than the one between veridical experience and hallucination).

According to the Extended View, the color phenomenology of a veridical experience of a yellow banana consists in perceiving the banana's yellowness. By contrast, recall that the color phenomenology of an illusion in which a green banana looks yellow consists in perceiving the banana's *greenness*. Note that this illusion is neither phenomenally yellow nor phenomenally green as I've been using the labels. 'Phenomenal greenness' refers to the phenomenal character of a veridical experience of greenness, which this illusion does not have; 'phenomenal yellowness' refers to the phenomenal character of a veridical experience of yellowness, which (according to the Extended View) consists in perceiving an instance of yellowness. The phenomenal character of an illusion in which a green banana looks yellow has a phenomenal character *of its own*, which could not be had by a veridical experience. For lack of a better term, let's call it 'phenomenal grellowness'—a phenomenal character that consists in perceiving an instance of greenness, but is subjectively indiscriminable from perceiving an instance of yellowness (because of the way in which the visual system reacts to the unusual lighting conditions).

Given that the illusion is subjectively indiscriminable from the veridical experience, it follows that phenomenal grellowness is subjectively indiscriminable from phenomenal yellowness. But for reasons similar to the ones outlined in the previous subsection, it does not follow that phenomenal yellowness is subjectively indiscriminable from phenomenal grellowness. The subject of an illusion cannot know that her experience is not phenomenally yellow, because illusion is a *partially* defective context for the employment of the outward-looking procedure for experiential knowledge. It's not an entirely defective context for the procedure, as the subject of an illusion has objects of experience to attend to (unlike in the case of hallucination). But it is a *partially* defective context, in that the subject cannot attend to some of the *features* of the object of her experience. For example, in an illusion where a green banana looks yellow, the subject cannot attend to the thing's color. She sees the thing's greenness, but the way her visual system reacts in the circumstances blocks her from attending to that particular color.²⁷ The fact that

²⁷ I recognize that this premise of the argument might be regarded as controversial, but addressing all the issues it raises would take us too far afield. Let me just offer a brief consideration in its favor: attention is supposed to be epistemologically beneficial, in that attending to something generally puts you in a better epistemic position with respect to it. But (as long as the viewing conditions remain the same) no amount of attentive effort will put the subject of the illusion in a better epistemic position with respect to the thing's color. This suggests that the subject cannot attend to the thing's color, no matter how hard she tries.

illusion is a partially defective context for the procedure means that the subject cannot acquire knowledge of certain aspects of the phenomenal character of her experience. For example, the subject cannot acquire knowledge of the color phenomenology of her experience if she cannot attend to the color of the thing she is experiencing. Since she cannot attend to the color of the banana, she cannot acquire knowledge of color phenomenology in the way specified by outward-looking model. Nevertheless, she can still acquire knowledge of (say) the *shape* phenomenology of her experience, provided that she can attend to the shape of the banana.

So the subject of such an illusion cannot know that her experience is phenomenally green rather than phenomenally yellow. But, as in the case of hallucination, the fact that a procedure cannot afford knowledge in conditions that are partially unfavorable for its employment does not impugn its ability to afford knowledge in conditions that *are* favorable. I won't rehearse the reasoning from the previous subsection here; suffice it to say that there is no impediment to the subject of a veridical experience of a yellow banana coming to know that her experience is phenomenally yellow by means of the outward-looking procedure.

In summary: the accessible epistemic difference between a veridical experience and a subjectively indistinguishable illusion consists in the infallible phenomenal character of the former. The subject of a veridical experience of a yellow thing has access to phenomenal character that puts her in an infallible epistemic position with respect to the proposition that there is a yellow thing before her, whereas the subject of an illusion of a yellow thing does not.

One might object that the subject of the illusion is in an infallible epistemic position with respect to the proposition that there is a *green* thing before her, on the grounds that the phenomenal character of the illusion has an instance of *greenness* as a constituent. However, although the subject is enjoying a phenomenal character that has an instance of greenness as a constituent, this aspect of her phenomenal character arguably does not contribute to her epistemic position. For recall that the view being developed here is supposed to be a version of access internalism—hence, something contributes to a subject's epistemic position only if it is accessible to her. But as I've just argued above, given the outward-looking model, the illusory aspects of a subject's phenomenology aren't accessible to her.

d. The epistemological order of explanation

On a standard version of access internalism, beliefs about one's environment (e.g., that there is a yellow thing before one) are based upon a belief about one's mental state (e.g., that one is having a phenomenally yellow experience). However, note that this cannot be the epistemological order of explanation for the view just outlined. For the outward-looking model of experiential knowledge is an integral part of this view, and that model has the order of explanation the other way around. That is, *beliefs about one's phenomenal character are based upon beliefs about one's environment*—it is through attending to and registering facts about one's environment (e.g., that there is a yellow thing before one) that one comes to know that one is having a phenomenally yellow experience. The order of explanation I'm proposing has it that phenomenal character *itself* is epistemically basic, rather than

beliefs about it. The phenomenal character of one's experience grounds beliefs about one's environment, which in turn ground *beliefs about* the phenomenal character of one's experience. While this order of explanation is unorthodox, it is not circular (as phenomenal character and a belief about it are distinct mental states, and the former is not the sort of state that admits of justification or epistemic grounding in any case).²⁸ But this view is a version of access internalism, although not of the sort traditionally envisaged—one meets the requirement of having access to the grounds of one's knowledge all right, but this access is *posterior* to that knowledge.

3. Conclusion: a brief comparison

Let us conclude by comparing the version of epistemological disjunctivism just outlined with the standard version, originated by McDowell (1982; 2008) and elaborated by Pritchard (2008; 2012). On their view, the accessible epistemic difference between the subject of a veridical experience and a subject of an indistinguishable non-veridical experience is that the former *sees that p* (focusing on the case of vision for simplicity's sake). For example, the subject of a veridical experience of a yellow thing *sees that* there is a yellow thing before her, whereas the subject of an indistinguishable illusion or hallucination does not.

One might worry that the fact that a subject sees that *p* is not accessible to her, on the grounds that her experience is subjectively indistinguishable from a possible illusion or hallucination. However, in principle, this version of epistemological disjunctivism can also appeal to the outward-looking model of experiential knowledge in order to explain how one knows that one sees that *p*.²⁹

The real problem with this way of fleshing out epistemological disjunctivism is that seeing that *p* is too close for comfort to knowing that *p*, which is what we're trying to account for in the first place. According to Timothy Williamson, seeing that *p* is a determinate of knowing that *p*—in particular, knowing that *p* on the basis of vision (2000, sec. 1.4). Pritchard rejects this view, and argues that seeing that *p* falls just short of knowing that *p*—it is *being in a position* to know that *p* on the basis of vision, a position one might be unable to exploit (2012, Part One, section 5).

Either way, seeing that *p* is a deeply unsatisfying candidate for the epistemic difference between veridical and non-veridical experience. This is because, faced as we are with the skeptic's challenge, the whole point is to identify *what it is* about veridical experience that affords knowledge about things in one's environment. Saying that it puts its subject in a position to acquire such knowledge, or that it is sufficient for such knowledge, simply does not address the challenge of identifying

²⁸ Note that this grounding relation need not (and plausibly does not) take the form of a conscious inference—it could just be a transition that the subject automatically makes. Thanks to Rasmus Thybo Jensen for pressing me to clarify this point.

²⁹ Contrary to what I suggest in Logue 2015, 260–61. Perhaps the outward-looking model is along the lines of what McDowell has in mind when he talks of “self-consciously possessed perceptual capacities” (2008, 387).

what it is about such an experience that puts its subject in that epistemic position in the first place. If this is the best that the epistemological disjunctivist can do, her “response” to the skeptical argument is arguably just as unsatisfying as G.E. Moore’s (1962) infamous “proof” of an external world. By contrast, my version of epistemological disjunctivism can address this challenge. What is it about veridical experience that puts one in a position to know things about one’s environment? In a nutshell, the answer is that the subject’s epistemic position is at least partly constituted by the *infallible phenomenal character* of her experience. This is different from knowing that p, or being in a position to know that p, and so can explain how one can come to be in such a privileged epistemic position.

One might wonder: why not simply say that in the case of veridical experience, one sees the banana and its yellowness, but in the case of a subjectively indiscriminable non-veridical experience, one does not? That is, couldn’t we just locate the epistemic difference in *non-propositional seeing*, directed at particular objects, property instances, and so forth? Such a state is distinct from both knowing and being in a position to know that p on the basis of vision, and so is a legitimate candidate for being what puts one in such an epistemic position. Indeed, this story is entailed by my version of epistemological disjunctivism; since on the Extended View, phenomenal character (in the case of visual experience) just is a matter of seeing particulars in one’s environment. But what’s to be gained by marshaling the Extended View in order to locate the epistemic difference in phenomenal character?³⁰

The gain, I submit, is a promising diagnosis of the powerful grip that skepticism has on many of us. The path to skepticism often begins with the claim that one’s epistemic position with respect to propositions about one’s environment is grounded in the phenomenal character of one’s perceptual experiences. I suspect that many find this claim rather difficult to give up, but holding onto it has seemed to lead inexorably to skepticism. However, the point of this paper is that we can accept this plausible claim about the epistemic role of phenomenal character without capitulating to skepticism after all. Specifically, if we adopt the Extended View of phenomenal character (along with the outward-looking model of experiential knowledge it requires), we can actually *agree* with the skeptic that one’s epistemic position with respect to propositions about one’s environment is grounded in the phenomenal character of one’s experiences. But at the same time, we can avoid the skeptical conclusion by rejecting the claim that veridical experiences and their indistinguishable non-veridical counterparts have the same phenomenal character. This path out of the skeptical predicament has been long obscured by the predominance of a broadly Cartesian view of perceptual experiences as “inner” and perfectly accessible to subjects. But now that cracks are emerging in this Cartesian consensus, we can and should pursue this path further.³¹

³⁰ Thanks to Rowland Stout for pressing me to clarify this point.

³¹ Thanks to audiences at the University of Nottingham, the LEM Forum at the University of London Institute of Philosophy, the Centre for Metaphysics and Mind at the University of Leeds, Susanna Schellenberg’s spring 2015 graduate seminar on philosophy of perception at Rutgers, the Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature at

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