Reply to French and Genone
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1. Acknowledgements

2. Reply to French

French begins his commentary by asking how I understand the problem of illusion for naïve realism. I maintain that the existence of (at least certain specific) perceptual illusions is inconsistent with naïve realism. Consider the example of the circular object viewed through the distorting lens. A highly plausible characterization of the error involved in this case is that while you experience the object as being elliptical it is not elliptical. In other words, it is highly plausible that what makes this case an illusion is the fact that ellipticalness is included in your perceptual experience's phenomenology. But if we assume (as I argue we should) that the disjunctivist strategy cannot be applied to such illusory experiences, then the naïve realist claims that the phenomenology of an experience of this sort is wholly constituted by acquaintance with ordinary objects and their properties. So, if naïve realism is true, ellipticalness cannot be part of your experience's phenomenology in the case at hand because the object you see is not elliptical.

Consequently, if the correct characterization of the error involved in this case is that ellipticalness is included in your experience's phenomenology, then naïve realism is false. And unless a plausible alternative account of this error is produced, we should assume that ellipticalness is included in your experience's phenomenology. Accordingly, we should assume naïve realism is false unless the naïve realist can provide a plausible account of the error that occurs in this case while denying that ellipticalness is included in the experience's phenomenology. Defenders of naïve realism have provided a variety of alternative characterizations of standard cases of perceptual illusion that attempt to do just that. What I

attempt to establish in my paper is that none of the most promising naïve realist characterizations of such cases is ultimately acceptable.

In §3 of his commentary, French raises questions about a specific form of disjunctivism. I argue that a naïve realist must grant that the veridical aspects of the phenomenology of illusory experiences are constituted by acquaintance with ordinary objects and their properties. That is, the naïve realist cannot adopt the view that Byrne and Logue (2008, 69) call *V v I/H* disjunctivism. But an alternative form of disjunctivism claims that illusory experiences are not the same kind of mental state as either veridical experiences or hallucinations, but are a kind of hybrid composed of elements of each. A naïve realist who defends this form of disjunctivism claims that the veridical elements of an illusory experience's phenomenology are constituted by acquaintance with an object's properties, while the illusory elements are not. We can call this view *V v I v H* disjunctivism.

My argument against *V v I v H* disjunctivism relies on a thesis defended by Fish (2009, 44) and Smith (2010, 389): that the distinct phenomenal features instantiated by a given perceptual experience are, to a significant extent, interdependent. French claims that this argument relies on a principle he labels (P): "when you see the shape of a coloured object, you see the object's shape in virtue of seeing its colour." However, the argument at issue doesn't rely on this specific principle; (P) is an instance of the more general interdependence thesis that the argument relies on. I don't discuss the argument in detail in my paper because I don't have anything to add to the points that Fish and Smith have already made. But it might help to apply the argument to a specific example. So, consider a positive *V v I v H* disjunctivist who claims that when you misperceive an object's colour but accurately perceive its shape your experience's shape phenomenology is constituted by your being acquainted with the object's shape, while your experience's colour phenomenology is constituted by your experience representing that the object is a certain colour. The interdependence thesis entails that this characterization of the illusory experience is false. If the experience's colour phenomenology is constituted by representation rather than acquaintance, and the experience gets its shape phenomenology partly due to its colour phenomenology, then the experience gets its shape phenomenology partly due to representation rather than acquaintance.

In §4 of his commentary, French raises some concerns regarding my discussion of the *Looks Approach* to illusion, focusing on the discussion of a specific variety of this approach, the *Situational Approach*. A naïve realist who adopts the Looks Approach claims that what makes an experience illusory is that you are acquainted with a *look* the object instantiates that is typical or characteristic of a kind of which the object you perceive is not an instance (where looks are

understood to be mind-independent properties of objects with which subjects can be perceptually acquainted). According to the Situational Approach, what it is for an object to instantiate a specific look is for it to instantiate specific *situational properties*: extrinsic properties that change with changes to viewing conditions. I provide two reasons for rejecting the Looks Approach in general. First, I claim that there is no account of the nature of looks consistent with naïve realism that will help explain the illusions at issue. And second, I claim that, even if the naïve realist could produce a plausible account of what looks are, being acquainted with such properties would not be sufficient for suffering an illusion. French raises concerns regarding each of these claims.

Regarding the first claim, French suggests that I have not demonstrated convincingly that the Situational Approach does not provide a plausible account of the nature of looks that will help explain the relevant illusions. However, some of French's concerns are based on misunderstandings that I should attempt to clarify. In particular, regarding the Müller-Lyer illusion, Brewer (2006, 168-69) claims that the lines in the diagram subtend the same visual angle, and that this situational property is characteristic of paradigm examples of two unequal lines at slightly different distances from the perceiver. In my paper, I deny that this situational property is relevant because paradigm examples of equal lines at the same distance from the perceiver also subtend the same visual angle. I then consider the potential objection that the arrows or hashes at the end of the lines operate as misleading depth cues, which makes the similarity between the lines in the Müller-Lyer diagram and paradigm examples of two unequal lines at slightly different distances from the perceiver "salient," thereby "bringing paradigms of unequal lines to mind" (Brewer 2006, 169). My response to this objection is that it is not plausible to regard the hashes as operating as misleading depth cues, since the hashes can be replaced with circles and the illusion remains. In other words, the fact that the hashes can be replaced with circles without eliminating the illusion suggests that the best explanation of how the illusion is produced will not claim that the hashes operate as misleading depth cues.

When discussing the circular object viewed through the distorting lens, I claim that the presence of the lens does not alter any pertinent shape-related situational properties. In defence of that claim, I consider and reject what I take to be the most natural proposal the naïve realist might make. Brewer does not discuss this specific example, so I look to his discussion of the similar case of the straight stick half submerged in water. Regarding that case, Brewer claims that the visually relevant similarity between the straight stick and a paradigm bent stick is that in the region of space "above the refracting surface of the liquid . . . light from corresponding parts of the two sticks travels, or would travel, along the same paths" (2011, 106). The first of the two

problems I raise for this proposal is that it is unsuccessful even for the case of the straight stick, since the path that light travels between some particular point in space and your eye is not something you can visually perceive. French suggests that even if you can't see the path that light travels from a particular point in space to your eye, there is no difficulty for the Situational Approach, because this path only partly constitutes the look that the straight stick shares with paradigmatic bent sticks. By analogy, you can see the piece of fruit even though you can't see the subatomic particles that partly constitute the piece of fruit. However, I understand Brewer to be claiming that the path that the light travels is a feature that you perceive and that the illusion consists in your perception of this situational property, given that it is characteristic of paradigm examples of bent sticks. If a defender of the Situational Approach claims instead that this property only partly composes the look in question, then we're still owed an account of what that look consists in. (A proposal suggested by French's analogy would be that the individual path partly composes an array of paths of light; but you don't see arrays of paths of light any more than you see individual paths of light).

My second claim that French takes issue with is that even if the naïve realist could produce a plausible account of what looks are, being acquainted with such properties would not be sufficient for suffering an illusion. French denies that the Looks Approach is committed to the claim that being acquainted with a certain specific look is sufficient for suffering an illusion. I agree with French on this point (unfortunately, the point is not explained particularly clearly in the relevant section of my paper). I only intended to claim that if all a defender of the Looks Approach does is establish that an object can instantiate a look characteristic of a kind of which it is not an instance, she has not yet provided an account of illusions. Consider the case of viewing the circular object through the lens. If all a defender of the Looks Approach says about this case is that under these particular viewing conditions the circular object instantiates a look characteristic of elliptical objects, and that this look figures in your experience when you view the object, that claim simply doesn't account for the fact that you are suffering an illusion (after all, when you view the tilted coin, the coin instantiates a look characteristic of elliptical objects and this look figures in your experience, but you don't suffer an illusion). Consequently, a defender of the Looks Approach will have to fill out the account by claiming that in cases of illusion you "register" or notice the unusual look, or perhaps by claiming that the unusual look precipitates a false judgment; in §4.2 of my paper, I argue that neither of these strategies results in acceptable accounts of the cases at issue.

Finally, in §5 of his commentary French appeals to Martin's (2011) account of looks in order to suggest an alternative naïve realist account of illusions. According to the resulting

Parsimonious Approach, looks are understood to be constituted by an object's basic visible properties, such as shape and size. I did not consider an approach of this sort in my paper because visual illusions typically concern precisely such basic visible properties. Consider, for instance, French's characterization of the Parsimonious Approach's account of the case of the straight stick half submerged in water: "The naive realist can say that the stick looks bent to one partly because one is acquainted with the stick and its bent look, i.e., its actual shape." If the stick's "bent look" just is its actual straight shape, then in virtue of being perceptually acquainted with this look you are accurately perceiving its shape. There is no account of illusion here because there is nothing in this characterization of the experience that distinguishes it from an ordinary veridical experience of a straight stick.

French goes on to suggest that "it might be that when the straight stick is seen, so is its straightness, but the straightness is seen in such *a way* or such a *manner* that it is not evident to the subject that they are confronting straightness, and in such a way or manner that the stick looks *bent* to the subject." But such a proposal would not be a version of the Looks Approach because looks would not be doing any work in the account of this illusion; instead, all of the explanatory work would be done by the notion of a "way" or "manner" of seeing a shape. And until this notion of a "way" or "manner" of seeing a basic visible property is explained, we don't yet have an alternative naïve realist account of illusion that can be evaluated. Moreover, it seems likely that, however this notion is explained, if the naïve realist allows that you can be acquainted with an object's straightness in such a manner that it appears bent to you, he will lose any grip on the distinction between perceptual acquaintance and perceptual representation. That is, it is unlikely that there would be any theoretically interesting distinction between the notion of being *perceptually acquainted in a certain manner* with some property and the notion of *perceptually representing* some property; in which case, the debate between naïve realism and the content view (or intentionalist view) would be purely terminological.

3. Reply to Genone

Genone begins his commentary by denying that we possess a theory-neutral definition of illusions. Assuming from the outset that illusions are non-veridical perceptual experiences begs the question, Genone claims, because "the distinctive explanatory strategy of naïve realism is to claim that veridical/non-veridical distinction has no application to perceptual experiences, illusory or otherwise." However, first, the naïve realist can accept that there are non-veridical perceptual experiences by adopting disjunctivism. And, in any case, we don't need a theory-neutral definition of illusions because we can focus on specific examples of standard perceptual

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illusions (as I do in my paper). For instance, the visual experience you have when you view the Müller-Lyer diagram is typically understood to involve a perceptual error of some kind. The naïve realist is free to claim that your visual experience itself does not contain any error. She might claim instead that the experience simply gives rise to a false judgment. The important question is whether this characterization of the case is ultimately acceptable.

Consequently, I don't accept Genone's statement of the challenge that illusions pose for naïve realism: "how can a theory that analyzes perceptual experience as constituted by perceived objects and properties explain why perceptual experience sometimes leads us to form false beliefs?" The issue is not the beliefs that we form on the basis of our perceptual experiences. After all, if you know that there is a distorting lens between you and the circular object in front of you, your visual experience won't lead you to form the false belief that the object is elliptical, and yet the illusion persists. Rather, the challenge facing naïve realism is that a highly plausible characterization of your perceptual experience when you view the circular object is that you experience it as being elliptical. And so, assuming that the disjunctivist strategy is off the table, the naïve realist needs to provide an account of the error that occurs in this case while denying that ellipticalness is included in the experience's phenomenology.

The final potential difficulty Genone raises concerns the expression "the property an illusory experience concerns." That specific expression does not occur in my paper. But I do discuss the assumption that "the property any given illusion concerns" is a property that the perceived object does not instantiate. The reason I discuss this assumption is that a defender of the Looks Approach might deny that we must characterize the error in standard cases of illusion in terms of the subject attributing a property to the perceived object that that object lacks. For instance, a defender of the Looks Approach might claim that when you view the circular object through the distorting lens, the error does not consist in the fact that you attribute ellipticalness to the object; rather, the error consists in the fact that you are visually acquainted with a look characteristic of elliptical objects that this circular object happens to instantiate given the unusual viewing conditions.

A different strategy that a defender of the Looks Approach might adopt, as Genone notes, relies on mistaken judgments. "Whether an experience is misleading," Genone says, "is a matter of whether or not perceiving the object's appearance prompts a judgment corresponding to the perceived object's actual properties." I offer two reasons to reject this strategy in my paper. First, there is no plausible account of the nature of looks (or appearances) consistent with naïve realism that will help explain the relevant cases of illusion. Second, if you are acquainted with both some basic visible property, F, and some look, L, instantiated by the object that you

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perceive, O, there is no reason for you to judge that O instantiates some distinct basic visible property incompatible with F. Genone is not entirely correct when he says "Millar claims that naïve realism cannot account for illusions because neither the perceived property, nor its appearance, explains why the subject is misled." The difficulty with the present strategy, rather, is that if your experience consists in acquaintance with both F and L, it will prompt an accurate judgment that the object is F (as I say at the end of §4.2 of my paper).

Consider, again, your experience of the circular object viewed through the distorting lens. A defender of the Looks Approach who adopts Genone's strategy maintains that you are acquainted with the object's circularity as well as an uncharacteristic look (a look characteristically instantiated by elliptical objects), and that your acquaintance with this look prompts you to judge that the object is elliptical. But this account of the error involved in the case at hand is unacceptable because the explanation of how the faulty judgment is produced is unacceptable. On this account, even though you can see that the object is circular, because you can also see that it has a look characteristic of elliptical objects, you judge that it is elliptical. But, in cases where you see that an object is circular and also see that it has a look characteristic of elliptical objects, such as when you view a tilted coin, you accurately judge that it is circular. In other words, on this account, when you view the circular object through the lens, the result ought to be an ordinary case of shape constancy. Accordingly, this variety of the Looks Approach does not enable the naïve realist to provide a plausible account of the error that occurs in this case while denying that ellipticalness is included in the experience's phenomenology.

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