

Title: True, authentic, faithful: Accuracy in memory for dreams

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Abstract: What is it to remember a dream accurately? This paper argues that neither of the two available concepts of mnemonic accuracy, namely, truth and authenticity, enables us to answer this question and that a new understanding of accuracy is therefore needed: a dream memory is accurate not when it is true or authentic but rather when it is “faithful” to the remembered dream. In addition to memory for dreams, the paper applies the notion of faithfulness to memory for perceptual experiences, memory for imaginations, and memory for hallucinations and briefly considers the broader implications of adopting an understanding of mnemonic accuracy as faithfulness.

Keywords: memory; dreaming; hallucination; observer memory; intentional objects

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1 Introduction: Accuracy in memory for dreams

The question of the nature of accuracy in memory for dreams appears to have been asked previously neither in the philosophical literature on dreaming nor in that on memory. This paper develops and defends an answer to the question, an answer that will turn out to have consequences for our understanding of the accuracy of memory in general.

Before the question can be stated precisely, some background assumptions and some terminology are required. To begin with, two assumptions. First, we sometimes dream about particular events. Second, we sometimes—including when we dream about particular events—remember what we dream. Both of these assumptions are intuitively plausible, but both might be challenged.

As far as the first assumption is concerned, Debus (2014) argues that, because they lack the kind of causal connection that is privileged by the causal theory of memory (Martin & Deutscher 1966), episodic future thoughts, unlike episodic memories, are never about particular events but only about event types (see Sant’Anna 2022), and one might argue that, for the same reason, dreams are never about particular events but only about event types. In reply to Debus, Michaelian (2016a) argues that advocates both of the causal theory and of the rival (post-causal) simulation theory (Michaelian 2016b) should grant that both episodic memories and episodic future thoughts are sometimes about event types but sometimes about particular events. This is not the place to review Michaelian’s reasoning; let us simply suppose that his argument succeeds. If it does, a similar line of reasoning is likely applicable to dreaming, in which case dreams are sometimes about events types but sometimes about particular events. The focus here will be on dreams about particular events.

As far as the second assumption is concerned, Dennett (1976) suggests that, strictly speaking, we do not remember what we dream; instead, an unconscious composition process during sleep prepares “cassettes” that are unconsciously inserted into memory upon waking.

Whether the intuitively plausible view that we sometimes remember what we dream or, instead, a view along the lines of the alternative suggested by Dennett is right is ultimately an empirical question, one about which there is room for disagreement (Windt 2019). Rosen (2013), for instance, voices scepticism with respect to our ability to remember our dreams, while Windt (2013) is more optimistic. No attempt will be made here to adjudicate this debate; Windt’s optimistic view will simply be taken for granted. If that view is right, we sometimes remember what we dream, including, presumably, when we dream about particular events.

Next, some terminology. Let “episodic memories” be memories of events,¹ “episodic dreams” be dreams of events, and “episodic dream memories” be episodic memories of episodic dreams—that is, episodic memories that correspond to episodic dreams in the way in which other episodic memories correspond to perceptual experiences. (While this terminology will be helpful in setting things up, it will, for the sake of ease of expression, often be useful to refer simply to “dreams”, “memories”, and “dream memories”.) The focus of the paper is on episodic dream memories. Thus we will not be concerned with semantic memories of episodic dreams, memories that one would characteristically report by saying “I remember that I dreamt of e ”, where e is an event. Nor will we be concerned with episodic memories of non-episodic dreams, memories that one would characteristically report by saying, for example, “I remember dreaming that P ”, where P is a proposition. We will be concerned exclusively with episodic memories of episodic dreams—episodic dream memories.

One might report these memories in either of two ways. First, one might say “I remember dreaming of e ”. Second, one might simply say “I remember e ”, where e is an event

¹ On most accounts, episodic memory involves more—such as the phenomenology usually referred to as “autonoesis”—than mere event memory (see Perrin & Rousset 2014). The definition of episodic memory as event memory may thus be an oversimplification, but this should make no difference to what follows.

about which one takes oneself to have dreamt.² The first kind of report is more common, but it is the second kind of report that more clearly points to the sort of remembering on which the paper will focus: the sort of remembering of interest here is not remembering a dream *as a dream* but rather remembering *what one dreamt*—the event about which one dreamt. When all goes well, metacognitive monitoring of the retrieval process ensures that one is aware, as one remembers an event about which one dreamt, that one is remembering a dream (see Horton, Conway, & Cohen 2008). But something analogous is true when one remembers an event that one perceived, and this does not imply that one remembers one’s perceiving of the event rather than the event that one perceived. By the same token, one can remember an event that one dreamt, rather than one’s dreaming of the event: in an episodic dream memory, one does not remember oneself dreaming, any more than, in a perception memory (an episodic memory of a perceptual experience), one remembers oneself perceiving—one remembers what one dreamt, just as one remembers what one perceived.³

Finally, some additional background assumptions. First, episodic dreams and episodic memories, including episodic dream memories, are (or at least involve) representations. Some have denied that memories are representations.⁴ And some would presumably be prepared to deny that dreams are (or involve) representations. It will be left to defenders of such views of memory and dreaming to determine whether and how the question of the accuracy of dream memories can be stated within their favoured frameworks and whether the answer to that question that is defended here is compatible with those frameworks. Second—this may, depending on how the notion of representation is understood, follow from the first

² On the (potential) contrast between reports of these two forms for perceiving rather than dreaming, see Vendler (1979) and D’Ambrosio and Stoljar (2021).

³ There is a background assumption here to the effect that the retrieved memory itself is neutral with respect to whether the remembered event actually occurred. For a defence of this assumption, see Michaelian (2012). Interestingly, Dranseika’s (2020) results suggest that laypeople are willing to say that a subject remembers a dreamt event even when the subject misidentifies that event as one that actually occurred.

⁴ Reid is sometimes read this way, though see Copenhaver (2017).

assumption—episodic dream and episodic (dream) memory representations can be accurate or inaccurate.⁵ Finally, episodic dream representations and episodic (dream) memory representations are representations of the same kind: sensory representations of events (see, e.g., McGinn 2004; Ichikawa 2009).

With this background in place, our question can be stated more precisely: *what is it for an episodic dream memory to be accurate?* Before turning to the motivation for this question, it will be helpful to distinguish it from another to which it is related. Let us get some examples on the table. Suppose that I dream of winning the Nobel Prize for philosophy; later, I might remember what I dreamt. Suppose that I dream of buying a car that is both red and green all over; later, I might remember what I dreamt. We might ask, in each of these cases, in virtue of what it is that I remember what I dreamt. This is, essentially, a question about *reference* in dream memory. Werning and Liefke (this volume) tackle this question, taking the reference of the dream for granted and attempting to explain how the reference of the dream is inherited by the memory. This paper will take both the reference of the dream and the inheritance of the reference of the dream by the memory for granted. In other words, the focus here is neither on how the dream gets to be about what it is about nor on how the memory gets to be about what the dream was about. The focus is, instead, on what it is for a dream memory to be accurate, given that the dream was about something and that the memory is about what the dream was about.⁶

⁵ It is not entirely obvious that dreams, in particular, can be *inaccurate* with respect to their objects; this issue is discussed below.

⁶ Werning and Liefke suggest that, because simulationism, unlike causalism, does not require a causal link between the retrieved memory and the corresponding dream experience, it is unclear how the simulationist might explain the inheritance of the reference of the dream by the memory. If reference poses a problem for simulationism, however, the problem that it poses is not specific to memory for dreams but will arise regardless of the nature of the corresponding earlier experience. This problem is beyond the scope of the present paper (but see Openshaw and Michaelian under review). Note, however, that the metaphor of inheritance may be ill-suited to simulationism, which does not require that a remembered event have been previously experienced (i.e., that there be a corresponding earlier experience). Since, in the case of memory for dreams, there is no possibility of remembering a non-experienced event, the metaphor is unobjectionable in the present context.

The motivation for asking what it is for an *episodic dream memory* to be *accurate* derives from a more general question at the heart of current debate in the philosophy of memory: what is it for an *episodic memory* to be *successful*? Recent discussions of the conditions that must be met by a memory, in order for it to count as successful (see Michaelian 2022 for an overview), have taken the accuracy of the experience to which the memory corresponds for granted; they have, that is, focussed entirely on memory for veridical experiences. But not all of our experiences are veridical, and an adequate account of successful remembering will apply to memories for nonveridical as well as veridical experiences (Baysan 2018). Most dreams (though arguably not all—see below) are nonveridical, and the thought that motivates this paper is that looking at the conditions that must be met by dream memories, in order for them to count as successful, will provide insight into the conditions that must be met by memories for nonveridical experiences in general.

Now, the debate over the nature of successful remembering presupposes that a memory must, in order for it to count as successful, satisfy both an accuracy condition and an additional condition designed to rule out merely coincidental accuracy. While this general approach goes back to Martin and Deutscher (1966), participants in the current debate focus, in contrast to Martin and Deutscher, not on hypothetical cases but rather on clinical memory errors, such as confabulation. In order to rule out veridical confabulation and other sorts of coincidentally accurate apparent memory, participants in the debate have invoked both a variety of causal conditions inspired by the causal theory of memory and a reliability condition drawn from the simulation theory of memory. In principle, an account of successful memory for dreams might be produced simply by applying the accuracy condition and the additional condition posited by one's preferred causalist or simulationist framework to the case of dream memory. In practice, the debate has concentrated almost entirely on the causal and reliability conditions, with little being said about the accuracy condition, presumably

because there is no apparent reason for causalists and simulationists to disagree about the nature of accuracy. It is, however, unclear how the accuracy of dream memories is to be understood, and thus, while we have a fairly good idea of what the causal or reliability component of an account of successful dream memory might look like, we know less about the options with respect to the accuracy component. The focus here will thus be on accuracy.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews a standard distinction between two forms of accuracy in remembering, namely, truth and authenticity. Section 3 argues that accuracy in dream memory does not amount to truth. Section 4 argues that accuracy in dream memory does not amount to authenticity. Section 5 introduces a new notion of mnemonic accuracy, faithfulness, and applies it to memory for perceiving, memory for imagining, and memory for hallucinating, in addition to memory for dreaming. Section 6 brings the paper to a close with a discussion of the implications of adopting an understanding of mnemonic accuracy as faithfulness for causalism and simulationism.

2 Two kinds of accuracy: Truth and authenticity

Let us refer to the event that a dream represents as “the dreamt event” and to the event of dreaming as “the dreaming event”. The two obvious ways of understanding accuracy in memory for dreams is as accuracy with respect to the dreamt event and accuracy with respect to the dreaming event. As noted above, one does not, in an episodic dream memory, remember oneself dreaming—one does not, that is, entertain a representation of oneself dreaming (for example, asleep in bed).⁷ Accuracy with respect to the dreaming event must, then, be a matter of accuracy with respect to the *experience* of dreaming—it must, that is, be a matter of entertaining the same representation again or of entertaining a similar

⁷ Causalists will maintain that a memory that represents the rememberer dreaming is necessarily unsuccessful, simply because one cannot experience oneself dreaming. Unlike the causal theory, the simulation theory does not include a condition requiring that the subject previously experienced a remembered event. Simulationists will thus grant that it is possible, in principle, for an apparent memory that represents the rememberer dreaming to be successful. Even simulationists will, however, take such cases to be highly unusual, and they will not be considered here.

representation. These two kinds of accuracy thus boil down to *truth* and *authenticity* (Bernecker 2010). As the terms are standardly defined, a memory is true just in case it is accurate with respect to the originally experienced event (that is, it accurately represents that event)⁸ and is authentic just in case it is accurate with respect to the subject's original experience of the event (that is, it includes no content that was not included in the subject's original representation of the event). To say that a dream memory is accurate with respect to the dreamt event amounts to saying that it is true, whereas to say that a dream memory is accurate with respect to the dreaming event amounts to saying that it is authentic.⁹

Bernecker, who first explicitly introduced the distinction between truth and authenticity, himself holds that both forms of accuracy are required for successful memory. Let us refer to this view as “authenticism”. It might be suggested that that label ought to be reserved for the view that memory requires authenticity but not truth, but that view does not seem to have been defended in the literature; what we are calling “authenticism”, in contrast, is fairly widely endorsed (see, e.g., McCarroll 2018). In opposition to authenticism, Michaelian (2016b, 2022) has argued that memory requires truth but not authenticity. Let us refer to this view as “alethism”. We will see, in the next section of the paper, that accuracy in dream memory cannot be a matter of truth. This suffices to rule out both alethism and authenticism. Authenticism—along with the view that successful memory requires authenticity but not truth—is also ruled out by the following section, which shows that accuracy in dream memory cannot be a matter of authenticity.

⁸ On an alternative definition of truth, a memory is true just in case it is accurate not with respect to the originally experienced event but rather with respect to the event that unfolded before the subject's eyes at the time of the original experience. The two definitions can come apart; see section 3.

⁹ One might object to the distinction between truth and accuracy on the ground that, in order for it to make sense to think of authenticity, as defined by Bernecker, as a kind of accuracy, one must take the memory to represent—to be about—the experience, in which case it would not make sense to treat a given memory as being authentic but untrue. The objection would certainly be worth pursuing, but this is not the place to do so—the distinction between truth and accuracy is standard and will simply be taken for granted here.

3 The problem with truth

It will be helpful, in considering the view that accuracy in dream memory is a matter of truth, to have a comparison case in hand. Just as one can remember what one dreamt, one can remember what one imagined or what one hallucinated, and dreaming itself is often compared to imagining and hallucinating. Dreams, imaginations, and hallucinations are alike in two salient respects. First, they typically do not represent occurrent events (events that have occurred, are now occurring, or will occur).¹⁰ Second, although they typically do not represent occurrent events, they may sometimes represent such events. To see this, note that we sometimes dream about events that did occur. Suppose that I dream about working on a paper on memory for dreams. Suppose that I did in fact work on a paper on memory for dreams. If the right conditions are met—again, no attempt will be made here to explain the reference of dreams—the dream will be about the event in question and, indeed, may represent it accurately. Something similar is arguably true of imagination (Munro 2021) and even of hallucination (James 2014). Although dreaming, imagining, and hallucinating may sometimes amount to representations of occurrent events and even to veridical representations of occurrent events, cases in which they do so are unusual, and veridical dreaming, imagining, and hallucinating can be set aside for now.

In order to narrow things down further, nonveridical imagining will also be set aside. This leaves us with dreaming about nonoccurrent events and, as a comparison case, nonveridical hallucinating.¹¹ The first of the examples given above (in which I dream of winning the Nobel Prize for philosophy) serves to illustrate the kind of dreaming in question, as does the second (in which I dream of buying a car that is both red and green all over), the

¹⁰ The assumption that hallucinations and other perceptual experiences can be of events seems safe, but a fuller discussion would need to take perception of other kinds of entities, such as objects, as well as the corresponding memories (Openshaw 2022), into account.

¹¹ Dreaming about occurrent events and veridical hallucinating, along with veridical and nonveridical imagining, are discussed in section 5.

difference between them being that, while the first example involves a counterfactual but possible event (there is no Nobel Prize for philosophy in the actual world, but there is such a prize in certain other possible worlds, and in some of those worlds—however distant they may be—I win it), the second example involves a counterpossible event (there is no possible world in which I own a car that is both red and green all over). Analogous cases of hallucinating are easy to generate.

The comparison between dreaming and hallucinating will enable us to see that the view that accuracy in memory for dreams is a matter of truth is problematic for two reasons. First, because, in the case of dream memory, there is no “originally experienced event” with respect to which the accuracy of the dream memory might be assessed.¹² Dream memory is like hallucination memory in this respect. Second, because there is no “other” relevant event with respect to which the accuracy of the dream memory might be assessed. Dream memory is unlike hallucination memory in this respect. In short, in contrast to hallucination memories, which are *truth-apt*, even if they are invariably false, dream memories are not truth-apt.

It will take some work to establish these points. Suppose, to begin with, that one hallucinates. Suppose that one remembers one’s hallucination. We want, intuitively, to say that there are two possibilities with respect to the accuracy of one’s hallucination memory. On the one hand, the memory might be authentic. If it is authentic, then it will be untrue, simply because the hallucination did not correspond to the event that unfolded before one’s eyes at the time of the experience, so that, if the memory is accurate with respect to the hallucination, then it is inaccurate with respect to the event. On the other hand, the memory might be true. If it is true, then it will be inauthentic, again simply because the hallucination did not correspond

¹² One might object here that there is in fact an originally experienced event, namely, the event that the dream was about. Just as hallucinations can both be experiences and be about events without amounting to experiences of the events that they are about (see below), however, the fact that one experiences when dreaming about an event does not imply that one experiences that event. (I might dream at night about the events of the next day, but, when I wake up in the morning, I have not yet experienced them.)

to the event that unfolded before one's eyes at the time of the experience, so that, if the memory is accurate with respect to the event, then it is inaccurate with respect to the hallucination.

Given the way truth has been defined, however, we cannot say this. The definition given above says that a memory is true just in case it is accurate with respect to the originally experienced event. This is equivalent to saying that a memory is untrue just in case it is inaccurate with respect to the originally experienced event. The problem is that, in the case of hallucination, *there is* no originally experienced event. In hallucinating, the subject *experiences*, but he does not experience *an event*. Thus, if we employ the definition of truth given above, we will have to say that hallucination memories are never true or untrue. The categories "true" and "untrue" are simply inapplicable—hallucination memories are not truth-apt. The same thing holds with respect to dream memories. In dreaming, the subject *experiences*, but he does not experience an event. Thus, if we employ the definition of truth given above, we will have to say that dream memories are never true or untrue—they are not truth-apt. It is not immediately clear whether we should treat dream memories as being capable of being (un)true, but we do want to treat hallucination memories as being capable of being (un)true. The problem thus suggests that the definition of truth in memory needs to be modified.

Intuitively speaking, what makes a hallucination memory true is that it corresponds to the event that the subject "should have" experienced but did not—the event that unfolded before the subject's eyes at the time of the hallucinatory experience. This suggests a modified definition of truth: a memory is true just in case it is accurate with respect to the event that unfolded before the subject's eyes at the time of the original experience. Equivalently: a memory is untrue just in case it is inaccurate with respect to the event that unfolded before the subject's eyes at the time of the original experience. The difference between the modified

definition and the original definition is that the modified definition mentions the original experience only incidentally; it is not the experience but the time at which it occurred that fixes the event with respect to which accuracy is to be assessed. A similar line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that the original definition of authenticity—which says that a memory is authentic just in case it is accurate with respect to the subject’s original experience of the event—ought to be replaced with a modified definition of authenticity on which a memory is authentic just in case it is accurate with respect to the subject’s original experience *tout court*. The difference between the modified definition of authenticity and the original definition is simply that the modified definition does not presuppose that the original experience was an experience of an event. If these modified definitions are adopted, then we are able to say what we want to say about hallucination memories: hallucination memories are truth-apt; in particular, they are untrue if authentic and inauthentic if true.

While the modified definition of authenticity appears to be unproblematic, the modified definition of truth leads to unacceptable consequences when applied to dream memories, for we do not want to say that a dream memory is true if it is accurate with respect to the event that unfolded before the subject’s eyes at the time of the dream experience. Suppose that I dreamt of having lunch in my favourite restaurant. Suppose that I remember (dreaming of) sitting in a boring meeting. Suppose that, as I dreamt of having lunch in my favourite restaurant, I was in fact sitting (asleep) in a boring meeting.¹³ We clearly do not want to say that my memory is true in this case. It is, of course, accurate with respect to the event that unfolded before my eyes at the time of the relevant experience, but that event is, intuitively speaking, irrelevant. The comparison of dream memories to hallucination

¹³ It might be objected here that, in the case of dreaming, unlike in the case of hallucinating, the relevant event is not necessarily the one that unfolded before the subject’s eyes at the time of the experience but rather the event about which one dreamt, which may occur at another point in time. This is right but overlooks the fact that we are, at this stage in the argument, concerned only with memory for dreams of nonoccurrent events. Memory of dreams for occurrent events (regardless of the time at which they occur) is discussed in section 5.

memories enables us to see why. Suppose that I hallucinated having lunch in my favourite restaurant. Suppose that I remember sitting in a boring meeting. Suppose that, as I hallucinated having lunch in my favourite restaurant, I was in fact sitting in a boring meeting. We do want to say that my memory is true (though only coincidentally so) in this case, for it is accurate with respect to the event that unfolded before my eyes at the time of the relevant experience, and that event is the one that I would have experienced, had I not been hallucinating. Since hallucination amounts, in cases of the kind at issue here, to a malfunction or breakdown in cognition, that event is the one that I *should have* experienced. Dreaming, in contrast, does not amount to a malfunction in cognition, so the event that I would have experienced, had I not been dreaming, is *not* the event that I should have experienced; *there is* no event that I should have experienced.

The consequence is that the definition needs to be modified further, so that it says that a memory is true just in case, first, if the subject experienced an event, the memory is accurate with respect to the event that he experienced, and, second, if the subject did not but should have experienced an event, the memory is accurate with respect to the event that he should have experienced—the event to which we might refer to as the “normative” event.¹⁴ Equivalently: a memory is untrue just in case, first, if the subject experienced an event, the memory is inaccurate with respect to the event that he experienced, and, second, if the subject did not but should have experienced an event, the memory is inaccurate with respect to the normative event. This definition still has the consequence that hallucination memories are truth-apt, but, like the previous definitions, it has the consequence that dream memories are not truth-apt. That consequence now appears clearly to be desirable. In both hallucination memory and dream memory, there is no originally experienced event with respect to which the accuracy of the memory might be assessed. In hallucination memory, however, there is

¹⁴ The notion of a normative event requires further development. In particular, factors such as what the subject was attending to will need to be taken into account.

“another” event with respect to which the accuracy of the memory can be assessed: the event that the subject should have experienced. In dream memory, in contrast, there is no such “other” event.¹⁵ We can thus conclude that accuracy in dream memory does not require truth.

4 The problem with authenticity

Though dream memories are not truth-apt, they are *authenticity-apt*. A memory is, again, authentic just in case it is accurate with respect to the subject’s original experience—that is, just in case it includes no content that was not included in that experience. A dream memory, in particular, will be authentic just in case it is accurate with respect to the experience of dreaming—that is, just in case it includes no content that was not included in the dream.

There is nothing to prevent dream memories from (sometimes) being authentic.¹⁶ And a view on which accuracy in memory for dreams amounts to authenticity has some intuitive appeal: given that a dreamt event is not an occurrent event with respect to which a dream memory might be assessed for truth, it would seem that what matters, as far as the accuracy of dream memory is concerned, must be the dream itself—the dreaming event, rather than the dreamt event.

Despite its intuitive appeal, this view, like the view that accuracy in dream memory amounts to truth, faces a serious problem. Stated in general terms, the problem is that one can remember a dream accurately even when, in remembering, one represents the dreamt event in a way other than that in which one represented it in dreaming, in which case one’s dream

¹⁵ The consequences of the definition for imagination memory are less clear. In most cases, imagination does not amount to malfunction; thus, in most cases, there is no event that the subject should have experienced, and the definition implies that imagination memory is not truth-apt. In some cases, imagination may amount to malfunction; in those cases, the definition implies that imagination memory is truth-apt. There is a further complication: imagining, unlike dreaming and hallucinating (at least of the idealized sorts that are at issue here), is compatible with perceptual experiencing: one can simultaneously imagine an event and experience the event that is unfolding before one’s eyes. This complication would need to be taken into account in a fuller discussion, but it will be bracketed here.

¹⁶ No stand will be taken here on how frequently authentic dream memory might occur, but, given the conclusion to which this section comes (that accuracy in dream memory is not a matter of authenticity), it is worth noting that, given the reconstructive character of remembering, it is unlikely that it occurs very often; indeed, the reconstructive character of remembering suggests that it is unlikely that authentic memory occurs very often, even if only perception memory is at issue.

memory will include content that was not included in one's dream. There may be other examples, but the clearest example of this phenomenon is provided by cases of divergence between the *perspective* adopted in the dream and that adopted in the memory, and it is on this example that the remainder of this section will focus.

In order to make sense of the example, some background on perspective in memory will be required. It is standard to contrast *field perspective* memory and *observer perspective* memory. McCarroll's definitions of these terms echo others given in the empirical and philosophical literature: "When remembering events from one's life one often sees the remembered scene as one originally experienced it, from one's original point of view—a field perspective. Sometimes, however, one sees oneself in the memory, as if one were an observer of the remembered scene—an observer perspective" (2018: 3). It might seem, at first glance, that observer perspective memories are bound to be inaccurate, since what one sees when remembering does not correspond to what one saw when experiencing. It is important to note, however, that truth and authenticity may come apart in observer perspective remembering. On the one hand, the fact that one sees oneself when remembering does appear to imply that one's memory is inauthentic, simply because what one thus sees cannot be accurate with respect to one's experience of the event. On the other hand, the fact that one sees oneself when remembering does not imply that one's memory is untrue, for what one thus sees may still be accurate with respect to the event that one experienced.

The view that observer perspective memories can be true but cannot be authentic is defended by Bernecker (2015). McCarroll (2018), in contrast, argues for the surprising view that observer perspective memories can be both true and authentic and hence fully successful. His argument turns on two key claims. The first is that, in addition to field perspective experiences, we sometimes have observer perspective experiences, where an observer perspective experience is one that includes a nonvisual representation of the self. The second

is that remembering sometimes involves a process of “translation” in which this nonvisual representation is transformed—without the addition of new content—into a visual representation of the self. If these two claims are granted, McCarroll’s view—that observer perspective memories can be both true and authentic—appears to follow. In response to McCarroll, Michaelian and Sant’Anna (2022) have argued that, while the observer perspective experience claim is unproblematic, the translation claim is false: there is simply no way of getting from the nonvisual representations of the self that might be involved in observer perspective experiences to the visual representations of the self that are involved in observer perspective memories without the addition of content. If this is right, then observer perspective memories are indeed bound to be inauthentic. Now, Michaelian and Sant’Anna agree with McCarroll about the possibility of fully successful observer perspective remembering. Because they disagree with him about the possibility of authentic observer perspective remembering, they come to the conclusion that successful remembering (whether observer perspective or field perspective) does not require authenticity but only truth: memory, as they put it, *aims at* truth but not authenticity.

Let us suppose that Michaelian and Sant’Anna’s argument for the conclusion that observer perspective remembering cannot be authentic succeeds. If the argument of section 3 above likewise succeeds, then we have reason to resist their further conclusion that memory aims at truth: given that argument, successful dream remembering, in particular, does not require truth, which undermines the view that successful remembering, in general, requires truth. We thus come to the overall conclusion that successful remembering requires neither authenticity (because successful observer perspective memories are not authentic) nor truth (because successful dream memories are not true).¹⁷

¹⁷ If successful remembering requires neither truth nor authenticity, the obvious question is what kind of accuracy, if any, it *does* require. This is the question that will occupy us in section 5.

It might be suggested that, even if successful remembering, in general, does not require authenticity, successful dream remembering, in particular, does require authenticity. It is at this point in the dialectic that we encounter the basic problem for the view that accuracy in dream memory amounts to authenticity: the possibility of divergence between the perspective adopted in a memory and that adopted in the corresponding dream implies that this suggestion is not right. It seems safe to assume that dreams often have a perspectival character: in dreaming, one experiences the dreamt event from a particular perspective.¹⁸ In most cases, that perspective is presumably a field perspective, the perspective of one's dream self. In other cases, it may be an observer perspective, the perspective of a hypothetical observer of the dreamt event.¹⁹ It seems safe to assume, moreover, that, just as one can have a field perspective perceptual experience and later have an observer perspective memory of the perceived event, one can have a field perspective dream and later have an observer perspective memory of the dreamt event—or vice versa. If Michaelian and Sant'Anna's argument against McCarroll succeeds, observer perspective memories of field perspective perceptual experiences cannot be authentic; presumably, the same thing goes for observer perspective memories of field perspective dreams and for field perspective memories of observer perspective dreams.²⁰ Nevertheless, we want to be able to count cases in which the perspective adopted in the memory diverges from that adopted in the dream as instances of

¹⁸ There may be other possibilities. It would not be surprising if perspective in dreaming were often indeterminate, multiple, or even absent (see Rosen & Sutton 2013). For the sake of simplicity, such cases will not be considered here. Note, however, that, to the extent that we consider that memories have a single determinate perspective, these possibilities reinforce the point that successful dream remembering does not require authenticity.

¹⁹ Observer perspective dreaming should be distinguished from what Rosen and Sutton (2013) refer to as “vicarious dreaming”, dreaming in which one experiences from the perspective of *another participant* in the dreamt event as opposed to a hypothetical observer of the event. For the sake of simplicity, vicarious dreaming will be set aside here, but it would appear to provide another illustration of the basic problem for the view that accuracy in dream memory is a matter of authenticity.

²⁰ Additional discussion would be required to establish that the case in which we go from observer perspective to field perspective poses the same problems as the case in which we go from field perspective to observer perspective, for, while it is clear that content (specifically: content pertaining to the self's visual appearance) must be added in the latter case, it is less clear that content must be added in the former case. The case in which we go from field perspective to observer perspective, however, is sufficient for the argument.

successful remembering. Suppose that I dream of giving the acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for philosophy, that the dream unfolds from a field perspective, that I later remember the dream, and that the memory unfolds from an observer perspective. There is a clear sense in which the memory might be accurate and hence potentially successful. The conclusion to which we come is thus that accuracy in dream memory is not a matter of authenticity. If we grant that such dream memories can be accurate, then we stand in need of a notion of *a third kind of accuracy*, for they cannot, as we saw above, be true.

5 Beyond truth and authenticity: Accuracy as faithfulness

If accuracy in dream memory is a matter neither of truth nor of authenticity, then of what *is* it a matter? In order to avoid having to answer this question, we might, in principle, abandon the assumption that dream memories can be accurate or inaccurate. The costs of making such a move are, however, too high for it to be appealing, as it would leave us unable to distinguish between cases in which memory gets things right with respect to a dream and cases in which it gets things wrong. Moreover, since there is no reason to suppose that, when it comes to potential (in)accuracy, dream memory is a special case, making this move would lead naturally to abandoning the assumption that memories of other sorts can be (in)accurate. And making *that* move would amount to abandoning the assumption that a memory must, in order to count as successful, satisfy an accuracy condition (such as causation or reliability) in addition to a condition designed to rule out merely coincidental accuracy. The costs of making such a move are clearly too high for it to be acceptable, as it would leave us without any standard for success in remembering. Continuing, therefore, to assume that dream memory representations, like memory representations in general, can be (in)accurate, this section will argue that we need to distinguish a third kind of accuracy in remembering.

Accuracy is always accuracy *with respect to* something—in the first instance, with respect to the entity that the accurate representation is *about* or to which it refers. This goes

for representations in general and hence for both memories and dreams. If we want to know what it is for a dream memory to be accurate, then, we would do well to start with the question of accuracy in dreaming and hence with the question of what dreams are about—that is, with the question of the *objects* of dreaming. Given that we are focussing on dreams about nonoccurrent events, this is a special case of the question of the objects of nonveridical experience. A traditional approach to that question is to introduce the notion of an *intentional object*, which can be defined, roughly, as an object of thought.²¹ Consider, again, the case of nonveridical hallucinating. A nonveridical hallucination is not about the normative event (the event unfolding before the subject’s eyes), but this does not prevent it from being about something. The event that it is about—despite the fact that that event does not actually occur—is its intentional object. Similarly, a dream about a nonoccurrent event is about something, and the event that it is about—despite the fact that it does not occur—it is its intentional object.

The ontology of intentional objects is a notoriously tricky matter. If they are necessarily existent—in the case of events: occurrent²²—then they will not enable us to answer the question of what dreams are about. If they are potentially nonexistent or nonoccurrent, then they may enable us to answer that question, but their ontological status becomes murky. We might adopt the position that intentional objects, qua intentional objects, are “real”, where reality does not imply existence/occurrence, but doing so would require us to admit into our ontology entities that are in some sense real—that “partake of being”, to borrow a phrase from Plato—despite the fact that they do not exist/occur. Some theorists have

²¹ There is a large and sophisticated literature on intentional objects; it will be impossible to take much of this literature into account here. Interestingly, the notion of an intentional object has rarely been employed in the philosophy of memory literature. There have been some discussions of the “intentional objects” of memory, but these are not about intentional objects in the relevant sense, as the only alternatives considered (see, e.g., Fernandez 2017) are worldly (occurrent) events and mental events.

²² Existence and occurrence here are meant atemporally; in particular, an event is “occurrent” regardless of whether it occurs in the past, present, or future.

nevertheless adopted this position, accepting the strange and arguably bloated ontology that it entails, but a more appealing position—and the one that will be adopted here—is provided by Crane’s (2001) deflationary view. For Crane, an intentional object is simply an object of thought—what a thought is about. Intentional objects are not a kind of entity, and hence the question of their ontological status, qua intentional objects, does not arise. Some thoughts (for example, veridical perceptual experiences) have objects that exist/occur (the event unfolding before the subject’s eyes); their intentional objects exist/occur in the ordinary way. Others (for example, nonveridical hallucination) do not; their intentional objects do not exist/occur at all. Indeed, in some cases, their intentional objects could not exist/occur: contrast my dream of giving the acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for philosophy (a possible but nonoccurrent event) with my dream of buying a car that is both red and green all over (an impossible and therefore nonoccurrent event).

The proposal, then, is that a dream, like a thought of any other sort, is about its intentional object and that the event that is its intentional object may be nonoccurrent. A dream memory inherits its intentional object from the corresponding dream in the way in which memories in general inherit their intentional objects from the corresponding experiences. The dream memory may be accurate or inaccurate with respect to that object. The kind of accuracy in question—let us refer to it as “faithfulness”—can be given a definition analogous to the definition of truth with which we started: a memory is faithful just in case it is accurate with respect to the intentional object of the subject’s original experience.²³ The proposal, in short, is that *accuracy in dream memory is a matter of faithfulness*: memory for dreams aims neither at truth nor at authenticity but rather at

²³ It is likely that not all experiences have intentional objects. (Consider phosphenes.) This does not, however, mean that faithfulness runs into the sort of difficulties into which we saw truth run in section 3. In the case of an objectless experience, there is simply nothing, beyond the experience, with respect to which the accuracy of a later corresponding memory might be assessed. The memory cannot be true, it cannot be faithful, but it can be authentic; authenticity thus provides the only available standard of accuracy.

faithfulness. Since there is no reason to suppose that, when it comes to potential (in)accuracy, dream memory is a special case, this implies that *memory, in general, aims neither at truth nor at authenticity but rather at faithfulness.*²⁴

Before going any further, let us pause to make the relationships among these three kinds of accuracy explicit. As far as the relationship between truth and authenticity is concerned, we have already seen that neither of these kinds of accuracy entails the other. Consider, then, the relationship between faithfulness and authenticity. We have already seen, in our discussion of observer perspective memories for field perspective dreams, that a memory can be faithful without being authentic. The converse would seem to be true as well: as long as an experience can be inaccurate with respect to its intentional object—and this is something that we need to grant in order to make sense of cases of misperceiving (for example, perceptual illusion) as well as analogous cases of misremembering (for example, the DRM effect)²⁵—a memory can be authentic without being faithful. Consider, next, the relationship between faithfulness and truth. On the one hand, faithfulness does not entail truth. Suppose that the subject nonveridically hallucinates. Then the intentional object of his experience is qualitatively distinct from the event unfolding before his eyes. A memory that is accurate with respect to the intentional object and is therefore faithful will thus be inaccurate with respect to the event that unfolded before his eyes and will therefore be untrue. On the other hand, truth does not entail faithfulness. Suppose, again, that the subject nonveridically hallucinates. A memory that is accurate with respect to the event that unfolded before his eyes and is therefore true will thus be inaccurate with respect to the intentional object and will therefore be unfaithful. In short, whereas there were, given the distinction between truth and authenticity, four possibilities to be taken into account when assessing the accuracy of a given

²⁴ This proposal may strike those who work on truth as trivial. The fact remains that it has not so far been discussed by those who work on memory.

²⁵ On the DRM effect (in which subjects study a list of thematically-related words and later falsely recall having seen a thematically-consistent but nonstudied lure word) as a form of misremembering, see Robins 2016.

memory—the memory might be true and authentic, true but not authentic, untrue but authentic, or untrue and inauthentic—there are now, in principle, eight possibilities to be taken into account.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Bearing this in mind, let us consider, again, the case of dream memory. We have been focussing on memories of dreams about nonoccurrent events, and we saw above that such memories are not truth-apt. This leaves us with the four possibilities illustrated in figure 1: the memory might be authentic or inauthentic, and, regardless of whether it is authentic or inauthentic, it might be faithful or unfaithful. In a case of divergence between the perspective adopted in the dream and that adopted in the memory of the kind discussed in section 4, the memory will be inauthentic, but it may nevertheless be faithful, which is, if the argument given above is right, all that is required for its being successful. Taking the accuracy of the dream itself into account complicates things somewhat. It is not the case that, if the dream was inaccurate, then a subsequent memory will necessarily be unfaithful if it is authentic, for authenticity is compatible with the subtraction of content, and it might be that the content in virtue of which the dream was inaccurate is not present in the memory. But, if the dream was accurate, then a subsequent memory will necessarily be faithful if it is authentic.

Admittedly, it is not immediately obvious that dreams about nonoccurrent events can be inaccurate with respect to their intentional objects; that is, it is not obvious that one can *misdream*, just as one can misperceive and misremember. Sense might be made of some cases of misdreaming by deploying the apparatus of possible worlds. When I dream of giving the acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for philosophy, for example, my dream can be said to be accurate just in case it matches the relevant event in the nearest world in which I win the

Nobel Prize for philosophy; if it does not match that event in that world, then I have misdreamt. Since the intentional objects of dreams include impossible events, however, this approach cannot be generalized to all cases of misdreaming. There is, for example, no possible world in which I own a car that is both red and green all over. If we therefore opt to say that dreams about nonoccurrent events cannot be inaccurate with respect to their intentional objects, we are left with only three possibilities: if the memory is authentic, then it is necessarily faithful; if it is inauthentic, then it might be either faithful or unfaithful.

[Figure 2 about here.]

While it may not be clear whether dreams about nonoccurrent events can be inaccurate with respect to their intentional objects, it seems clear that dreams about occurrent events can be inaccurate with respect to their intentional objects—if one can dream about an occurrent event, one can misdream it. Broadening our focus to include cases in which the memory corresponds to a dream about an occurrent event, it might thus initially appear that we have the same range of possibilities as we do in cases in which the memory corresponds to a (nonhallucinatory) perceptual experience; see figure 2. The key point to note about perception memory is that faithfulness and truth cannot come apart: since the intentional object (the object with respect to which faithfulness is assessed) just is the normative object (the object with respect to which truth is assessed), the memory will be true just in case it is faithful. Authenticity, however, can come apart from faithfulness and truth—cases of divergence between the perspective adopted in the perceptual experience and that adopted in the memory, again, serve to illustrate this possibility. We thus have four possibilities: the memory might be authentic or inauthentic, and, regardless of whether it is authentic or inauthentic, it might be faithful and true or unfaithful and untrue. Taking the accuracy of the experience itself into

account, again, complicates things somewhat. It is not the case that, if the experience was inaccurate, then a subsequent memory will necessarily be unfaithful and untrue if it is authentic, for authenticity is compatible with the subtraction of content, and it might be that the content in virtue of which the experience was inaccurate is not present in the memory. But, if the experience was accurate, then a subsequent memory will necessarily be faithful and true if it is authentic.

Despite the initial appeal of the thought that we have the same range of possibilities in cases in which the memory corresponds to a dream about an occurrent event as we do in cases in which the memory corresponds to a (nonhallucinatory) perceptual experience, however, that thought is wrong, for, regardless of whether the dream was about an occurrent event or about a nonoccurrent event, dream memories are not truth-apt. Given the definition of truth adopted above, a memory is true just in case either the subject did not experience an event but the memory is accurate with respect to the normative event (the event that he should have experienced) or the subject did experience an event and the memory is accurate with respect to the event that he experienced. We saw above that there is no normative event in the case of dreams about nonoccurrent events, and the same thing goes for dreams about occurrent events: even if one dreams about an occurrent event, it is not the case that that is the event that one *should* dream about. The first disjunct is thus not satisfied. As far as the second disjunct is concerned, it might be tempting, if one is comfortable with talk of remembering as reexperiencing, to think of dreaming about occurrent events as another form of reexperiencing. This assumes, however, that the occurrent events about which a given subject dreams are necessarily located in his past and have previously been experienced by him, and that assumption is clearly too strong. If I can dream about the talk I gave yesterday, I can surely dream about the talk I will give tomorrow, and, whatever merit talk of past-oriented dreaming as reexperiencing might have, talk of future-oriented dreaming as

“preexperiencing” is clearly not to be taken seriously, just as talk of (waking) episodic future thought as preexperiencing is not to be taken seriously. Dreams, including dreams about occurrent events, are not experiences of events. The second disjunct is thus not satisfied. We therefore have the same range of possibilities with respect to cases in which the memory corresponds to a dream about an occurrent event as we did with respect to cases in which the memory corresponds to a dream about a nonoccurrent event: the memory might be authentic and faithful, authentic and unfaithful, inauthentic and unfaithful, or inauthentic and faithful. The difference is that, given that dreams about occurrent events can be inaccurate with respect to their intentional objects, all four of these possibilities need to be taken into account, whereas the second arguably can be excluded in the case of dreams about nonoccurrent events.

Imagining was set aside above. We are now in a position to see that the situation with respect to imagining is analogous to the situation with respect to dreaming. In the case of imaginations about occurrent events (assuming that it is possible to imagine an occurrent event), the memory might be authentic and faithful, authentic and unfaithful, inauthentic and unfaithful, or inauthentic and faithful. In the case of imaginations about nonoccurrent events, the second of these possibilities can arguably be excluded.

[Figure 3 about here.]

Now that we have dealt with memory for dreams, perceptions, and imaginations, let us consider memory for hallucinations; see figure 3. Whereas truth and faithfulness cannot come apart in perception memory, they can come apart in hallucination memory. There are two cases to consider: memory for nonveridical hallucinations and memory for veridical hallucinations. In nonveridical hallucination memory, the normative object is qualitatively

distinct from the intentional object. The memory thus cannot be accurate with respect to both the normative object and the intentional object: it is untrue if it is faithful, and it is unfaithful if it is untrue. The memory might, however, be *inaccurate* with respect to both the normative object and the intentional object—it might be both untrue and unfaithful. If we assume that the hallucinatory experience itself was accurate with respect to its intentional object, then, if the memory is authentic, it follows that it is faithful and hence untrue. If the memory is inauthentic, then it might, in principle, be untrue but faithful, faithful but untrue, or both untrue and unfaithful.

Matters are somewhat less straightforward when it comes to veridical hallucination memory. Roughly speaking, a veridical hallucination is one in which the hallucinatory experience is accurate *with respect to* the event unfolding before the subject's eyes but is not *about* that event. In other words, a veridical hallucination is one in which the hallucinatory experience is accurate with respect to the normative event but in which the normative event is—because the experience is not appropriately linked to it—not the intentional object of the experience. If we assume that the experience is accurate with respect to its intentional object, then a veridical hallucination is one in which the normative event is not identical to the intentional object but in which the experience is accurate with respect to both the intentional object and the normative event. Given that the experience is accurate with respect to both the intentional object and the normative event, if a subsequent memory is authentic, then it will be both faithful and true. (If the memory is inauthentic, then it might be both faithful and true or both unfaithful and untrue.) There is, intuitively, a sense in which a veridical hallucination memory is defective even if it is authentic, faithful, and true. Such a memory need not violate a causal or reliability condition (see section 1 above) meant to rule out coincidental accuracy. This suggests that, to the extent that the memory is defective, its defectiveness is inherited from the corresponding hallucinatory experience. There are two options here. First, we might

simply appeal to the fact that the hallucinatory experience was not appropriately linked to the normative object. Second, we might appeal to the fact that, because it was not so linked, the intentional object of the experience was not identical to the normative event. The latter option seems preferable, as it enables us to say that there is something defective about the memory itself: since the memory inherits its intentional object from the corresponding experience, the intentional object of the memory is not identical to the relevant normative event. This gives us a clear sense in which the memory is defective despite being authentic, faithful, and true.²⁶

6 Conclusion: Authenticism, alethism, and pisticism

The question with which we began was: what is it for an episodic dream memory to be accurate? The answer that has been defended here is that such a memory is *accurate just in case it is faithful*. Along the way, we have seen that there is reason to suppose that this goes not just for episodic dream memory but for episodic memory in general: an episodic memory, then, *whether of a dream or of an experience of another sort*, is accurate just in case it is faithful.

The motivation for asking what it is for an episodic memory to be *accurate* derives from a more general question: what is it for such a memory to be *successful*? As noted above, the current debate over successful memory has focussed almost entirely on causal and reliability conditions associated with the causal and simulation theories of memory; little has been said about the accuracy condition on successful remembering. Two positions on the nature of mnemonic accuracy have, however, been defended in the broader philosophy of memory literature. On the one hand, authors including Bernecker (2010) and McCarroll (2018) have defended *authenticism*, according to which successful remembering requires both truth and authenticity. On the other hand, Michaelian and Sant'Anna (2022) have defended

²⁶ This way of putting the point seems to reify the intentional object, turning it into an entity in its own right. This would, of course, be inconsistent with the deflationary view of intentional objects adopted above. If Crane is right, it should be possible to restate the point in terms that do not suggest that the intentional object is an entity in its own right, but not attempt to do so will be made here.

alethism, according to which successful remembering requires truth but not authenticity. The conclusion to which we have come here suggests a third view, *pisticism* (from “pistis”, the Greek for faith):²⁷ successful remembering requires faithfulness but not authenticity or truth.

The adoption of *pisticism* may have consequences for the various causalist and simulationist arguments that have been offered in the successful memory debate. It may also have consequences for the causal and simulation theories themselves. Michaelian’s (2016b) argument for simulationism, for instance, as well as his recent argument for a virtue-theoretic variant of the simulation theory (Michaelian 2021), presuppose *alethism*. We might thus wonder whether those arguments can still be run if *alethism* is replaced with *pisticism*. Since, in the core case of perception memory, truth and faithfulness cannot come apart, it is likely that they can be. But a detailed discussion of this question (and of the analogous question about Bernecker’s 2010 arguments for causalism, which presuppose authenticity) will have to be left for a future occasion. The question what *pisticism* implies concerning memory for forms of experience other than perceptual experience, imagination, and hallucination—we might, for example, want to consider forms of experience including mindwandering and remembering itself—will likewise have to be left for a future occasion.

²⁷ It would perhaps be more elegant to opt for a Latin root, which would give us “fideism”, but that term is already taken.

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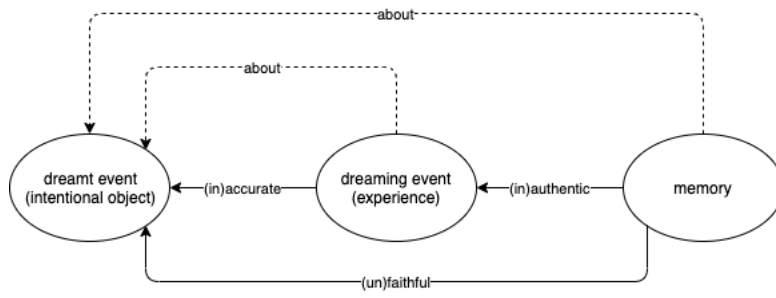


Figure 1: Memory for dreams.

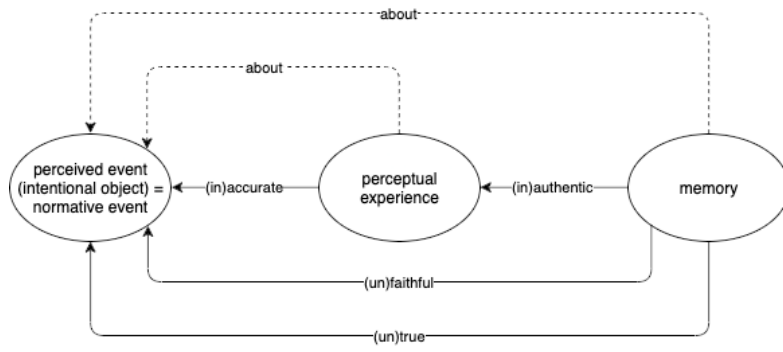


Figure 2: Memory for perceptions.

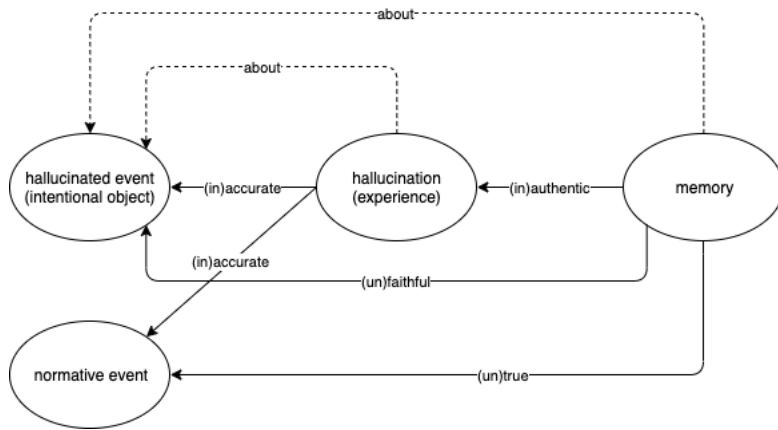


Figure 3: Memory for hallucinations.