

**Master's Thesis**  
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# Perception or Hallucination?

Disjunctivism as a defence  
of naïve realism

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# Introduction

Our ordinary intuitions and practices form a natural starting point for philosophy. In what way these intuitions and practices can be upheld in the light of philosophical scrutiny is a different matter, but if the philosophical theory one ends up with is in no way compatible with the starting point, then the burden of proof lies with the revolutionaries. Let me begin by making the starting point of this thesis explicit: normal things in the world, like tables, trees, and tigers, exist independently of us, and we are able to perceive these objects, and the properties they have, directly. It is the second part of this claim, about perception, that is the subject of this thesis,<sup>1</sup> and I intend to defend it.

The account of perception presented above, what we shall call *naïve realism*, is threatened by cases of illusion and hallucination. In these cases a subject is in a situation that could appear to him exactly like a case of genuine veridical perception, although objects are not perceived as they really are (in the case of illusion), or where no object is actually present in the world to perceive (in the case of hallucination). Suppose, to take an example, that one of the branches of a tree breaks off and falls into a small creek which flows nearby. The branch, half submerged in water, might appear bent to me, while it is in fact straight. How could such a false appearance come about if I perceive the branch itself directly? Or suppose that I seem to perceive a tree in the distance, while, on perceiving it from close by, it turns out to be a strange work of art. How could I have been misled if I perceived the work of art directly? These two examples could, perhaps, both be seen as instances of perceptual illusions: in both cases something appears to me differently than it really is. But what if there is not even an object present in the world that could appear to me as a tree, and still I seem to perceive a tree? This would be a case of hallucination. And here the question is: if I cannot distinguish such a hallucinatory experience from a veridical perception of a tree, then could this veridical perception really involve a direct relation to the tree itself? The problem which arises from these examples can be formulated as follows: given cases of illusion and hallucination, how could perception still involve, as naïve realism holds, a direct relation between the perceiving subject and the perceived mind-independent objects and their properties? This problem is what has been called the problem of perception.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a defence of the first part of the claim, about the existence of normal things in the world, as against e.g. Lewis's four-dimensionalism, see Jesse Mulder, *Summing Things Up: What can mereology teach us about reality?*, unpublished Master's Thesis at Utrecht University, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> See Tim Crane, "The Problem of Perception," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2008 Edition, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/perception-problem/>; A. D. Smith, *The Problem of Perception* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 2002).

One solution, commonly attributed to Locke,<sup>3</sup> is to deny direct realism and adhere to indirect realism instead. This sort of realism holds that we in fact do not perceive any objects in the world directly, but instead perceive them by means of ideas (*i.e.* representations). Such a solution has the unfortunate consequence of introducing what has been called a ‘veil of ideas’ between us and the world, thus screening off the world from our immediate investigation. This inevitably leads to sceptical worries, for if we do not perceive the world directly, how do we know that the world is as we perceive it to be? And how can I know that another person perceives the world in the same way as I do, and assigns the same meaning to his words as I do? Or even worse: how do we know that we are not being misled by an evil demon to think we are perceiving the world, when we are in fact only hallucinating? A different version of this last question is very much relevant in the present-day context. Under the influence of science, psychologists and physiologists often claim that what we perceive is just a construction by the brain made out of information acquired through the senses.<sup>4</sup> This claim also is susceptible to the sceptical challenge that the incoming sense data have been produced by deviant causal chains and that the world we perceive could be, for all we know, a hallucination.

Currently, one position that tries to solve the problem of perception without falling prey to these sceptical worries, known as *disjunctivism*, is getting more adherents. Deriving from the works of John Hinton, it has been advocated most notably by Paul Snowdon, John McDowell and Mike Martin. According to disjunctivism, a case of veridical perception is fundamentally different from a case of hallucination: perception and hallucination are two different kinds of mental events. When a subject *S* seems to perceive that *p*, *S* either veridically perceives that *p*, or it just appears to *S* that *p*. Note that this way of formulating the disjunctivist’s thesis makes use of the notion “perceiving that”. Although there appears to be a difference between, say, the claim “*S* perceives that there is a tree” and the claim “*S* perceives a tree” – it seems the latter is true while the former is false if *S* does not recognise the seen object as a tree – this difference is unimportant for the previous formulation of the disjunctivist’s thesis. For if *S* seems to perceive, say, a tree, then this implies that *S* has already taken what he perceives to be a tree. That is, if *S* seems to perceive a tree, then “*S* perceives a tree” and “*S* perceives that there is a tree” must be either both true, or both false. Or at least this is so according to the disjunctivist.

Back to the core claim of disjunctivism: perception and hallucination are fundamentally different. This is not meant as the trivial observation that the entire situation in the case of hallucination is different from the entire situation in a case of

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<sup>3</sup> For a different reading of Locke, see John W. Yolton, *Perceptual Acquaintance from Descartes to Reid* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Randolph Blake, *Perception*, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 6; George Mather, *Foundations of Perception* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2006), 3.

veridical perception. Neither does it amount to the claim that the mental content in these cases has to be different because mental content is individuated with reference to the perceiving subject's physical environment (a claim characteristic for externalism in the philosophy of mind). Rather, the disjunctivist claims that the experiences themselves are different, even though they appear exactly alike to the subject undergoing them: there is no common element between a case of veridical perception and a case of hallucination. It should not be underestimated how far-reaching this proposal actually is: although it has long been accepted that we are fallible in our judgements concerning our own mental life, disjunctivism entails that this fallibility is even worse than suspected.

By adhering to disjunctivism, it becomes possible to defend naïve realism from the threats which arose from cases of hallucination. Since disjunctivism holds that veridical perception is fundamentally different from hallucination, it claims that we should not base our analysis of perception on arguments that take hallucination as their starting point. Disjunctivism thus is able to accept the thought that no objects are perceived in hallucination, while still maintaining that we do perceive objects in the world in a case of veridical perception. Yet disjunctivism has been challenged on several grounds. Many of these objections derive their force from the thought that if two mental states appear identical to the subject who is in them, they must have at least some element in common. The disjunctivist, on the other hand, will point out that two things can appear alike without actually being alike. Other objections stem from causal considerations: if we replicate the causal processes in the brain that are active during veridical perception, then they should have the same effect even in the absence of the perceived objects. The hidden assumption here is a version of the same-cause-same-effect principle which the disjunctivist might have good reason to reject. Thus, the debate between disjunctivism and its opponents carries on.

The goal of this thesis is to defend disjunctivism about perception and hallucination, and in doing so, to defend naïve realism as a theory of perception. Two important remarks about this goal must be made beforehand. First, the thesis is meant only as a defence of disjunctivism about perception and hallucination, and only defends naïve realism from the argument from hallucination. Although, as I previously mentioned, cases of illusion also form a problem for naïve realism, this problem is not addressed here. This does not mean that I find this problem less important, or easier to handle; it just means that it will not be dealt with in this thesis. Secondly, the hallucinatory cases addressed here, and important to the discussion, are hallucinations in a special, philosophical sense: they are experiences that cannot be told apart from veridical perceptions by the subject who has them. That is, the hallucinations that are the subject of this thesis are those experiences that are subjectively indistinguishable from veridical perceptions. Whether such hallucinations actually exist, and whether this is problematic for the philosophical discussion, is a question that will be addressed in the second chapter.

The outline of this thesis is as follows. In the first chapter, I explicate the commitments of naïve realism and present motivations in favour of this theory of perception. The major threat against naïve realism that arises out of the possibility of subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations, what is called the argument from hallucination, is set out in detail in the second chapter. Further, two alternatives to naïve realism, sense-datum theory and intentionalism, are discussed. I argue that both theories lead to ontological and epistemological problems because of the introduction of an intermediary between the perceiving subject and the world. In the third chapter I present disjunctivism as a way of rejecting the argument from hallucination. Here I concentrate on the historical development of disjunctivism, and discuss two arguments against it: the argument from subjective indistinguishability and the causal argument. From these considerations it becomes clear that the disjunctivist is pressed into a position I call ‘negative disjunctivism’, which holds that the only way to characterise some hallucinations lies in their being indiscriminable from a veridical perception. Two specific types of negative disjunctivism, proposed by Martin and Fish, are then discussed in the fourth chapter, and I argue that Martin’s type of negative disjunctivism is the most convincing there is.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I feel one more methodological remark is needed. In some articles on disjunctivism semi-logical notation is used to characterise the commitments of disjunctivism. I find that this way of presenting disjunctivism often does not help to achieve more clarity about disjunctivism, and in fact makes the articles that use it less readable. If an argument or statement can be put quite easily in normal English writing, I do not see any reason not to do so. That is why in what follows I make no use of the semi-logical notation that seems to have become somewhat of a style in the literature on disjunctivism.

# Chapter 1

## Naïve realism and its motivations

In the introduction naïve realism was presented as a theory of perception which claimed that in perception we are directly related to mind-independent objects and their properties. Several notions have to be cleared up to understand what this means exactly: something more needs to be said about the directness of the relation between perceiver and object, and the nature of the relation itself needs to be explained. After explicating naïve realism by considering these aspects of it, I present four motivations in favour of this theory. First, naïve realism fits best with the phenomenological point that perceptual experience is transparent. Secondly, naïve realism offers us a way to remove sceptical doubts about the external world. Thirdly, naïve realism is able to solve some difficult issues regarding the content of perception. Fourthly, naïve realism gives us a good way of understanding the possibility of demonstrative reference.

### 1.1. The directness of perception

An important aspect of the naïve realist's claim is that perception is direct. According to the naïve realist, when I look at the laptop in front of me I perceive that laptop directly. In the same sense it is possible for me to perceive a car directly by hearing it pass by on the street. The important question here is to ask what 'directly' means in these contexts according to the naïve realist.

The best way to look at the directness claim made by the naïve realist is to view it as a denial of the claim that perception is indirect. According to the naïve realist, we do not see the world by means of representations of that world. Nor do we have to infer what is going on in the world on the basis of certain mind-dependent sense-data.<sup>6</sup> In perception we are in direct contact with the world. As Hilary Putnam makes the point (albeit in terms of 'natural realism'):

The natural realist, in William James's sense, holds [...] that successful perception is a sensing of aspects of the reality "out there" and not a mere affectation of a person's subjectivity by those aspects.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Theories like these will come up in more detail later in chapter two.

<sup>7</sup> Hilary Putnam, *The Threefold Cord: Mind, Body, and World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 10.



John McDowell expresses a similar thought thus:

In a particular experience in which one is not misled, what one takes in is *that things are thus and so*. *That things are thus and so* is the content of the experience [...]. [...] But *that things are thus and so* is also, if one is not misled, an aspect of the layout of the world: it is how things are.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps an analogy will help in making the directness claim more clear. Compare two cases of seeing that a coffee cup is on the table in the living room. In the first case, you see the coffee cup is on the table by looking at the screen of your camcorder, which is recording the scene in front of you. The digital screen displays the scene that is present in the living room: it shows you that there is a coffee cup on the table. Contrast this with a second case, where you see that a coffee cup is on the table by looking through the window of the living room. Now it is natural to suppose that the second case is a more direct way of perceiving the coffee cup than the first case. In the second case, you immediately see where everything is located in the living room with regard to your own position, while in the first case it will be more difficult to establish this, and you might have to infer where everything is located from your position. Further, in the first case, it makes sense to ask how the scene in the living room is correlated with the image displayed on the screen, while in the second case a question of that kind seems a bit strange.<sup>9</sup> Now according to naïve realism, perception is far more like looking through a window than it is like looking at the screen of a camcorder.

However, even in the case of looking through a window, in some sense there is something ‘by means of which’ (viz. the window) we are able to perceive a certain scene in the world. And something similar again has to be said for perception. The naïve realist should not deny that what someone perceives can be influenced by the perceptual capacities and the concepts one has. That we perceive objects and their properties directly does not mean that we perceive all objects and all of their properties. A person who is red/green colour blind does not have the ability to perceive whether a certain object is red or green, but this does not imply that this person does not perceive that object directly. It just means that he does not have the required perceptual capacities to perceive the colours red and green. Neither should the directness claim of the naïve realist be understood as stating that the concepts we learn could not influence our perceptual experiences. Contrast for example a wine connoisseur with someone who has never tasted wine before. The connoisseur has all

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<sup>8</sup> John McDowell, *Mind and World*, First Paperback Edition. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 26.

<sup>9</sup> These reflections are not meant as an argument against other theories of perception, nor are they meant as a correct analogy between other theories of perception and naïve realism. It is just meant to help explain what naïve realism means with its directness claim.

sorts of concepts that allow him to perceive different aspects of the wine that the novice cannot easily distinguish. Or imagine Putnam walking through the forest with a botanist. Given that Putnam cannot even tell an elm from a beech, he will probably not be able to perceive all the details the botanist is able to perceive. What Putnam and the wine novice lack are certain conceptual-recognitional capacities, as William Fish calls them<sup>10</sup>, that the connoisseur and the botanist do have. But what the naïve realist will stress, is that these capacities do not constitute a new way of representing the world; rather, they enable the perceiver to distinguish more clearly those facts that were already present in the experience to be distinguished.

## 1.2. The relational aspect of perception

Thus far, we have been considering in what sense perception is direct according to the naïve realist. We should now focus on the kind of relation that is involved in perception. The direct relation the naïve realist supposes to be present in perception is not just a causal relation between an object and a perceiver. This would be fully consistent with a representational intermediary in perception, which, as we have seen in the previous section, is what a naïve realist denies. Instead of a mere causal relation, the relation in perception is, according to the naïve realist, a constitutive relation:

According to naïve realism, the actual objects of perception, the external things such as trees, tables and rainbows, which one can perceive, and the properties which they can manifest to one when perceived, partly constitute one's conscious experience, and hence determine the phenomenal character of one's experience. This talk of constitution and determination should be taken literally; and a consequence of it is that one could not be having the very experience one has, were the objects perceived not to exist, or were they to lack the features they are perceived to have.<sup>11</sup>

In his characterization of naïve realism, Martin here speaks of actual objects of perception determining 'the phenomenal character of one's experience'. To explain what this phenomenal character of experience is, often an appeal is made to "what it is like"<sup>12</sup> to have the experience. But we have to tread carefully here, since there are two problems with this explanation. First of all, if we understand 'what it is like to

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<sup>10</sup> William Fish, *Perception, Hallucination, And Illusion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 68.

<sup>11</sup> M.G.F. Martin, "The Reality of Appearances," reprinted in *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alex Byrne and Heather Logue (Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press, 2009), 93.

<sup>12</sup> A term introduced by Thomas Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?," *Philosophical Review* 83 (1974): 435-50. Reprinted in *Philosophy of Mind: a guide and anthology*, ed. John Heil (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 528-38.

have an experience' as how the experience seems to the subject, we might miss a distinction that is important to make. For we might then conclude that two experiences must have the same phenomenal character if they seem the same for the subject. And this need not be so; consider the following example: "two colour samples may seem the same as each other, when compared as a pair, but only one may match a third sample."<sup>13</sup> We can explain this phenomenon if we suppose that the phenomenal character of the experience of the first colour sample is in fact different from the phenomenal character of the experience of the second sample, even though the subject cannot himself spot the difference.

Is it strange to suppose that a subject does not know everything there is to know about his own experience? Well, think back to our earlier example of the wine novice and the wine connoisseur. When the novice learns to distinguish different aspects in his experience that he was not able to distinguish before, does this mean that these aspects have only now become a part of his experience? Then how could he have learned to distinguish them? The naïve realist is committed to saying that these features were present in the experience all along to be distinguished even though the subject had not noticed and thus had not distinguished them. Of course, this is a natural answer for the naïve realist, since he thinks the features of the experience are features present in the world itself.

A second problem with using the phrase 'what it is like' as a definition of the phenomenal character of an experience, is that it is unclear what we should count as being part of what it is like to have a certain experience. Take for example a subject who visually perceives a tiger. Suppose further that this subject is somewhat afraid of tigers (which is not such a strange supposition to make). On perceiving the tiger, the subject might thus very well feel frightened. We are now confronted with the following question: should we count this feeling of fear as being part of the phenomenal character of the *perceptual experience*? Fish has the following to say about this matter:

[...] we should note that, at any one time, a subject will be likely to be in a range of different mental states, many or all of which may contribute to the overall matter of what it is like for that subject at that time. So we should be careful not to confuse the question of what it is like to be in a particular mental state—the narrow contribution a particular mental state makes to the overall character of what it is like for the subject—with the more general question of what it is like for the subject of that mental state.<sup>14</sup>

Applying this suggestion to our problem, we would have to distinguish what it is like to perceive the tiger (mental state 1) from what it is like to be afraid of a tiger (mental

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<sup>13</sup> Martin, "The Reality of Appearances," 92.

<sup>14</sup> Fish, *Perception, Hallucination, And Illusion*, 8-9.

state 2), which would together constitute the overall matter of what it is consciously like for the subject at that time (mental state 1 + 2). Perhaps such a division of mental states is more easily carried out in different situations, but in the case at hand it is not obvious that it is possible. Emotions might influence what it is like to have perceptual experiences; a strange shadow will perhaps appear more threatening when the subject who perceives it is afraid. So Fish has not yet made the phrase ‘what it is like’ clear enough to specify exactly what the phenomenal character of an experience is. Unfortunately, it is not easy to supply a definition of ‘phenomenal character’ that is more adequate. We will, therefore, have to put up with the somewhat unclear notion of ‘what-it-is-likeness’ to explain what the phenomenal character of an experience is, keeping in mind the two issues that were raised above.

Now, according to the naïve realist, the phenomenal character of a perceptual experience is determined by mind-independent objects and their properties. When I look at, say, a red rose, it is *that* red rose that determines the phenomenal character of my perceptual experience. Why is it that the experience of a red rose is exactly like this? Because the rose itself is like that. The naïve realist holds that the redness of the rose is not a property of the experience; rather, it is a property of the experience that it relates its subject to the redness of the rose. There are no such things as ‘qualia’ that form the phenomenal character of the experience<sup>15</sup>, *i.e.* there are no such things as redness or sourness as properties of experience: roses are red, lemons are sour, and not the perceptual experiences themselves. Experience can relate us to red objects and sour objects, but is not itself red or sour.

### **1.3. Motivations for naïve realism**

In the previous two sections the important claims of naïve realism have been explained: perception is not representational but direct, and perceptual experiences are constituted by mind-independent objects and their properties (e.g. tables, roses, tigers). In this section four motivations are introduced in favour of this theory of perception. They are not meant as full-blown arguments against other theories of perception, but as a sketch of the welcome consequences naïve realism has to offer. First, naïve realism fits with how perception strikes us. Our perceptual experiences are transparent in the sense that they appear to relate us to mind-independent objects and properties. Since naïve realism maintains that perception does relate us to mind-independent objects, it offers a good explanation for this appearance. Secondly, naïve realism offers a defence against scepticism about the external world: since we are directly related to objects in the world by means of perception, sceptical doubts about

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<sup>15</sup> For a classic text on qualia, see for example Frank Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 32 (1982): 127-36. Reprinted in *Philosophy of Mind: a guide and anthology*, ed. John Heil (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 762-771.

the existence of that world are diminished. Thirdly, adhering to naïve realism allows us to specify the content of perception in a way that can do justice to the importance of the world itself. We perceive *that* object as being *such*. Fourthly, naïve realism shows how demonstrative reference is possible: via perception we are directly related to objects themselves, making it possible to refer demonstratively to these objects. All four motivations in favour of naïve realism are presented in more detail below.

### 1.3.1. The transparency of perceptual experience

Phenomenology offers us the first mentioned motivation in favour of naïve realism. What we seem to be aware of when we genuinely perceive the world are mind-independent objects and their properties. Even when we scrutinize perceptual experience itself, we still focus on those same objects and properties. Take the following example of Martin:

When I stare at the straggling lavender bush at the end of my street, I attend to the variegated colours and shapes of leaves and branches [...]. But I can also reflect on what it is like for me now to be staring at the bush, and in doing so I can reflect on particular aspects of the visual situation: for example that at this distance of fifty metres the bush appears more flattened than the rose bush which forms the boundary of my house with the street. When my attention is directed out at the world, the lavender bush and its features occupy centre stage. It is also notable that when my attention is turned inwards instead to my experience, the bush is not replaced by some other entity belonging to the inner realm of the mind in contrast to dilapidated street in which I live. I attend to what it is like for me to inspect the lavender bush through perceptually attending to the bush itself while at the same time reflecting on what I am doing.<sup>16</sup>

This property of perceptual experience, that it appears to present us with mind-independent objects like lavender bushes, is called the transparency of experience. We cannot turn our attention to the experience itself, making this experience an object of perception; in focusing on our own experience we are still attending to the objects in our environment, albeit in a more reflective manner. Perceptual experience is transparent in the sense that it is not, usually, itself an object that can be attended to. Now this property of experience fits nicely with the naïve realist's account of perception, since he believes that in perception we *are* directly related to the objects around us. No wonder perceptual experience is transparent: it is partly constituted by mind-independent objects and their properties.

The transparency of perceptual experience also explains why naïve realism could perhaps be seen as the theory of perception endorsed by the naïve 'common

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<sup>16</sup> M.G.F. Martin, "The Transparency of Experience," *Mind and Language* 17 (2002): 380-1.

man' (although I doubt that in these days, the common man really endorses naïve realism). Since perception presents itself as being about the world around us, it should come as no surprise that many will at first glance hold that perception directly relates us to that world. However, the argument from the transparency of experience is not reducible to an argument about the amount of people that intuitively accept naïve realism. The fact that a large amount of people intuitively accept naïve realism is not yet a very good argument for naïve realism<sup>17</sup>, rather, it is *why* these people would accept naïve realism that constitutes the argument: phenomenologically speaking, naïve realism fits. Perception appears to present us with mind-independent objects and their properties because it *does* present them to us.

### 1.3.2. Anti-sceptical considerations

A second motivation for endorsing naïve realism, one that figures prominently in the writings of McDowell<sup>18</sup>, is that it gives us a way of preventing scepticism about the external world. McDowell diagnoses this scepticism as follows:

What shapes this scepticism [scepticism about the external world] is the thought that even in the best possible case, the most that perceptual experience can yield falls short of a subject's having an environmental state of affairs directly available to her. Consider situations in which a subject seems to see that, say, there is a red cube in front of her. The idea is that even if we focus on the best possible case, her experience could be just as it is, in all respects, even if there were no red cube in front of her. This seems to reveal that perceptual experience provides at best inconclusive warrants for claims about the environment. And that seems incompatible with supposing we ever, strictly speaking, *know* anything about our objective surroundings.<sup>19</sup>

If we agree with naïve realism, the main idea of the scepticism McDowell presents is wrong: the subject could not have the same experience in all respects if there was no red cube in front of her, because the red cube itself partly constitutes the experience. If we focus on the best possible case, *i.e.* a case of genuine, veridical perception, we will find that in such a case a subject stands in direct contact with the world, making it possible for the subject to know what the world is like.

Naïve realism thus offers us a metaphysical picture that prevents scepticism about the external world, instead of refuting this scepticism. We still cannot prove to the sceptic that we are not, for example, under the influence of Descartes' deceiving

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<sup>17</sup> Although an 'experimental philosopher' might disagree.

<sup>18</sup> Most recently in John McDowell, "The Disjunctive Conception of Experience as Material for a Transcendental Argument," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona MacPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 376-89.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

demon without begging the question. But we can stress that on the view of the naïve realist, not every perceptual experience is like a scenario in which one is deceived. Indeed, according to the naïve realist, in genuine perception we stand in direct contact with the world: the external objects and properties themselves constitute our experience. And once we see that it is possible to have direct knowledge of the external world, we can shift the burden of proof on the shoulders of the sceptic. Why must we suppose that the experience I am now having is a *misleading* experience instead of one that puts me in direct contact with the world? The sceptic argument thrives on the implicit idea that all our experiences are such that they do not directly relate us to our environment, but naïve realism can be seen as removing this “prop on which sceptical doubt depends.”<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3.3. Specifying the content of perception

We now arrive at the third motivation in favour of naïve realism: it enables us to specify the content of perception, that which the perceptual experience conveys to its subject, in a manner that can do justice to the importance of the perceived objects themselves. Let us begin by taking a look at something John Searle claims about the content of a certain visual experience:

Consider, for example, the difference between looking at the front of a house where one takes it to be the front of a whole house and looking at the front of a house where one takes it to be a mere façade, e.g., as part of a movie set. If one believes one is seeing a whole house, the front of the house actually looks different from the way it looks if one believes one is seeing a false façade of a house, even though the optical stimuli may be identical in the two cases. And this difference in the actual character of the visual experiences is reflected in the differences between the two sets of conditions of satisfaction. It is part of the content of my visual experience when I look at a whole house that I *expect* the rest of the house to be there [...].<sup>21</sup>

According to Searle the house looks different when you take it to be a façade from the way it looks when you take it to be a real house, and this difference is reflected in a difference in perceptual content. This is just not very convincing. Does the house really *look* different when I expect it to be a façade, or do I just *judge* it to be different? It is not enough for Searle’s claim that someone’s entire conscious experience in the two cases is different, for it is unclear that this shows that the content of the experience is different.<sup>22</sup> When I return home from taking a long

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 385.

<sup>21</sup> John R. Searle, *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 54-5.

<sup>22</sup> Compare the remarks about phenomenal character and what-it-is-likeness in section 1.2.

holiday, I might well feel a gush of relief. This also effects the entire conscious experience of seeing my house again: I experience my house differently when I return from the long holiday than when I return from work. But it seems this has nothing to do with a difference in the content of perception. My house does not *look* any different (assuming nothing strange has happened), but I do experience it differently. Similarly, when I take a house to be a façade, the house does not look different from the way it looks when I take it to be a real house, but it might well be that I experience it differently.

How does the naïve realist propose to deal with the difference between perceiving façades and real houses? Well, according to the naïve realist, mind-independent objects and their properties partly constitute my experiences, and so the content of an experience is best described as “*that is thus*”.<sup>23</sup> When I am looking at a façade, the façade is part of the content, and when I am looking at a house, the house is part of the content. So the content of my experience is different, even if the façade and the house are indistinguishable when seen from the front.

#### 1.3.4. Demonstrative reference

The previous considerations about perceptual content take us to the fourth motivation for endorsing naïve realism: it explains how demonstrative reference should be understood.<sup>24</sup> Take for example the claim ‘that book is red’. It is hard to analyse this claim as having a general content of the sort ‘there is an  $x$  such that  $x$  is a book and  $x$  is red’. When I state that that book is red, I am not claiming of just any book that it is red, I am claiming of *that* book that it is red. It is not even the case that I am claiming that the book in front of me is red, since there could be several red books in front of me, none of which I am claiming of that it is red. Or I could be unknowingly looking at a mirror, without this preventing me from referring to a specific book. Again: I am claiming of *that* book that it is red. The content of my claim should be analyzed as a particular, object-dependent content. But how could my claim, or my judgement for that matter, attain this object-dependent content? Well, if naïve realism is right, the answer to this question is: via perception. Since perception directly relates us to the objects themselves, it is also via perception that a demonstrative thought or a demonstrative claim acquires its object-dependent content.

Moreover, the possibility for demonstrative reference goes further than just referring to specific objects in the environment. One can also demonstratively refer to the properties of those objects. One can refer to that colour, or that smell, and thereby refer to those properties of an object that are open for anyone to perceive.

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<sup>23</sup> See Bill Brewer, *Perception and Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> For a detailed exposition on this matter, see John Campbell, *Reference and Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).



Nevertheless, some have denied that experience can have object-dependent content.<sup>25</sup> The idea is that since two objects can be genuinely indistinguishable for a subject, the content of the experience must be general: the content in the perceptual experience of the one is exactly the same as the content in the perceptual experience of the other. Martin has responded to arguments of this sort in the following way:

[T]his is simply a *non sequitur*. First, if we consider the link between powers of discrimination and content, all will agree that for the qualities that either object has, the perceiver is unable to discriminate them, and the experience will have the same content. With respect to the particular objects themselves, the subject will be able to discriminate each if she is able to single each out from among the objects in her environment. *Ex hypothesi* she can do that as well, so powers of discrimination would again ground the assignment of a content relative to the particular object perceived.<sup>26</sup>

So, as we have already seen in the previous section, the subjective indistinguishability of two perceptual experiences does not entail similarity of content of these experiences.<sup>27</sup> Our experiences can have object-dependent content. As the naïve realist has stressed: in perception we are directly related to the objects and properties in our environment. This offers us the possibility to refer demonstratively to these objects and properties.

The four above mentioned motivations show why naïve realism is a theory of perception that should not be put aside too easily. In the next chapter, however, we look at an important threat for naïve realism: the argument from hallucination.

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<sup>25</sup> See for example Colin McGinn, *The Character of Mind*, Second Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> Martin, "The Reality of Appearances," 102.

<sup>27</sup> In fact, it does not even entail similarity of phenomenal character; see the remark in section 1.2 about different colour samples.

## Chapter 2

# The Argument from Hallucination

In the previous chapter we looked at the motivations for naïve realism, the view that we directly perceive objects and their properties. These motivations could be found in its perfect fit with the transparency of experience; its diminishing of sceptical doubts about the external world; its specification of perceptual content; and its explanation of the possibility of demonstrative reference. In this chapter we look at an important argument against naïve realism: the argument from hallucination. To begin with I set out the argument in detail, by considering its two important premises: first, that hallucinatory experiences are possible which are indistinguishable from veridical perceptual experiences by their subject; secondly, that these hallucinatory experiences are fundamentally the same kind of mental event as genuine perceptual experiences. After discussing these premises, I consider two theories of perception which both accept the argument from hallucination, viz. sense-datum theory and intentionalism. Although sense-datum theory has been almost completely renounced by philosophers, it is still instructive to see which considerations could lead one to it. Intentionalism, on the other hand, tries to show that there is a false assumption present in both sense-datum theory and naïve realism, and offers an alternative. Nevertheless, I argue that intentionalism faces similar difficulties as sense-datum theory: both theories share epistemological problems by introducing an intermediary between the perceiving subject and the world, and also have ontological problems concerning the metaphysical nature of the intermediary.

### 2.1. The first premise of the argument

The first thing that needs to be clear is what is meant by the term ‘hallucination’ in this discussion. The term ‘hallucination’ is meant to designate an experience which seems to the subject undergoing the hallucination exactly like a veridical perception of an object, but where that hallucinated object is in fact not present.<sup>28</sup> It is important to stress that the subject cannot figure out *on the basis of his hallucinatory experience* that he is not having a veridical perception. Although the subject might know that he is hallucinating on different grounds (e.g. he might know that he has taken a drug that induces certain hallucinations, or he has already frequently had a certain sort of

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<sup>28</sup> I say ‘that hallucinated object’ to incorporate those cases in which I have an ‘accurate hallucination’ because *an* object that is like the hallucinated object is present. In these cases the object out there in the world is not *that* object I hallucinate.

hallucination), when he is having a hallucination in our sense he cannot know it on the basis of the experience itself. The hallucinatory experience is from the subject's point of view exactly like a veridical perception; it is subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical perception.

Keeping this in mind we can now take a look at the argument from hallucination, construed as an argument against naïve realism. The first premise of the argument claims that subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations are possible. It need not claim that every hallucination was of this very type, only that such hallucinations are possible. Perhaps no one has ever had this kind of hallucination, but this is not what the first premise claims. The first premise just makes the weak claim that it is at least possible that subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations exist. Nevertheless, if it should turn out that there often is a way in which a hallucinating subject can distinguish his hallucination from a veridical perception, even this weak claim becomes questionable. Contrast this with the following comments by Tim Crane:

[T]he idea of an experience which seems the same as a genuine perception is only supposed to be a *metaphysical possibility*, one which is allowed by our ideas of perception and experience. The argument does not require that such hallucinations actually do happen, only that they are possible.<sup>29</sup>

And nor need they [hallucinations in our limited sense] be like the real hallucinations suffered by drug-users or alcoholics. They are rather supposed to be *merely possible events* [my italics] [...].<sup>30</sup>

Crane seems to believe that if our ideas of perception and experience do not contradict that subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations are possible, then they are possible. Supposing there to be empirical evidence that showed no one had ever had such an experience, Crane's argument is too weak as it stands. I agree with David Wiggins when he claims the following about possibility:

Where fs make up a natural kind, the only possible worlds we need consider, for these are the only possible worlds having within them any entity that is an f, are worlds sufficiently similar in nomological respects to the actual world to exhibit specimens relevantly similar to actual specimens. This means that, for the special case of natural

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<sup>29</sup> Tim Crane, *Elements of Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 133.

<sup>30</sup> Crane, "The Problem of Perception," section 1.3.

kinds, we find that ordinary necessity virtually coincides with physical necessity, and ordinary possibility with physical possibility.<sup>31</sup>

The experiences we are interested in are experiences that we, human beings, can have. Now although we might imagine there to be hallucinations that are indistinguishable from veridical perception, the question is whether these hallucinations are possible for us human beings. And what is possible for human beings must be empirically investigated by what human beings can *actually* do (or in our case: what experiences human beings can *actually* have). Crane can be seen to justify the claim that human beings can actually have subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations, by appealing to the following causal considerations:

Now, with any interaction between cause C and event E, it makes sense to suppose that an E-type effect could have been brought about by something other than a C-type cause. This could be done by intercepting the causal chain, bringing about an E-type event by bringing about something downstream of the normal kind of cause, C. So in our case, the experience—the effect of causal processes in the brain and outside—could be brought about by bringing about causes which are downstream of its normal cause outside the brain. For instance, the experience could be brought about by stimulating the retina in exactly the same way that it would be if the subject were really seeing a blue flower, and keeping all the other causal influences in the brain the same.<sup>32</sup>

Crane thinks that accepting the possibility of this way of inducing an experience, and thereby accepting the possibility of subjectively indistinguishable hallucination, is a natural thing to do. But since this picture of retina and brain stimulation is fairly speculative (although brain stimulation and retina stimulation have taken place, nothing like what is envisaged by Crane has been performed), the argument really is not that compelling. It would be wise to reconsider the possibility of Crane's thought experiment, and with it, the first premise of the argument from hallucination, that subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations are possible, if it turns out that these hallucinations have never occurred.

At the moment though, there seems to be no evidence for the claim that hallucinatory experiences could always be distinguished by their subjects from veridical perceptual experiences. In the absence of such evidence, we must accept the possibility of subjectively indistinguishable hallucination, thereby accepting the first premise.

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<sup>31</sup> David Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance Renewed*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 85. Page references are to the 2004 edition.

<sup>32</sup> Crane, *Elements of Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, 134.

## 2.2. The second premise of the argument

The second premise of the argument consists of the claim that subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations are fundamentally the same kind of mental events as veridical perceptions. If we accept this premise, it would entail together with the first premise that naïve realism is false. For it entails that the exact same perceptual experience could occur without the objects presented in it actually being present in the world. Perception could then not relate us directly to an object since the objects and properties themselves could not constitute the phenomenal character of the experience as the naïve realist holds. Since it has these drastic results, we should consider the second premise of the argument carefully.

At first glance the second premise might appear somewhat implausible. Why would we suppose that a hallucination in which you lose contact with your surroundings is fundamentally of the same kind as a veridical perception in which that contact is present? It seems that there is such an important distinction between perception and hallucination that they could never be of the same kind. Even if I have a perfect hallucination of a street scene which is indistinguishable from a veridical perception of a street scene, this just does not mean that these experiences must be ontologically similar. Howard Robinson mentions an often used example to illustrate this point: “a forged and a genuine banknote are qualitatively exactly similar, but one is a *real* banknote and the other is not.”<sup>33</sup> But Robinson immediately continues: “This argument is not very powerful because a forged note and a real one are both straightforwardly physical objects—the differences are a matter of origin and convention, and not of natural ontological category.” Still, the fact remains that we are basing an ontological conclusion, that hallucination and perception are experiences of the same kind, on epistemological considerations, viz. that we could not tell the difference between them, which seems to be an invalid move.

What if we try to move from a first-person perspective to a third-person perspective? The hallucinations we are talking about are hallucinations that are indistinguishable from a veridical perception from a first-person perspective, but this leaves open the possibility that these experiences are distinguishable from a third-person perspective. And there appears to be empirical evidence to support the claim that at least some ‘normal’ hallucinations (e.g. hallucinogen-induced hallucination) can be distinguished from veridical perception from the third-person perspective: “[i]n vivo brain imaging in humans using [<sup>18</sup>F]fluorodeoxyglucose has shown that hallucinogens increase prefrontal cortical metabolism, and correlations have been developed between activity in specific brain areas and psychological elements of the ASC [altered states of consciousness] produced by hallucinogens.”<sup>34</sup> Now this is all

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<sup>33</sup> Howard Robinson, *Perception* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 88.

<sup>34</sup> David, E. Nichols, “Hallucinogens,” *Pharmacology & Therapeutics* 101 (2004): 1.

very well and good, but these findings do not show conclusively that hallucination and perception must be two fundamentally different kinds of experience. First of all, we were talking about a specific type of hallucination, and it has not yet been shown that the hallucinations from the experiment were of this specific type. Secondly, even if the brain states are shown to be different, this does not mean that the experiences themselves are of a different kind. This would be a consequence of these findings if we accept a type-type identity theory of mental states, which holds that a type of mental state is identical to a type of brain state. Such a type-type identity theory faces difficult problems though, for we believe animals to be capable of having certain mental states even though they do not have the same type of brain states we have.<sup>35</sup>

The fact that a third-person, neuropsychological view on hallucination and perception appears to be unhelpful in deciding over a fundamental difference between the two, is perhaps one of the reasons that makes the case for the second premise stronger. If all we have to go on is our first-person perspective, and if we cannot distinguish hallucinatory experiences from perceptual experiences from that perspective, then it appears natural to conclude that they are experiences of the same kind. We will now look at theories that try to incorporate this common kind claim, and that can thus accept the argument from hallucination as presented here.

### **2.3. Sense-datum theory & the argument from hallucination revised**

The argument from hallucination could be used in favour of the sense-datum theory of perception. In fact, early proponents of the sense-datum theory (e.g. H.H. Price<sup>36</sup>, A.J. Ayer<sup>37</sup>) did not distinguish between the argument from hallucination and the argument from illusion, and it would therefore be somewhat incorrect to say that they used the argument from hallucination in favour of their sense-datum theory. Historical details aside, to use the argument from hallucination as an argument for the sense-datum theory, the following premise would have to be added: in hallucination, we are aware of a special kind of object, namely a *sense-datum*. This sense-datum is a mind-dependent object, that has all of the perceived properties: if I hallucinate, say, a round, red patch on the wall, then there really is a sense-datum that instantiates the property of being round and the property of being red. From the fact that we are aware of sense-data in hallucination, a proponent of the sense-datum theory could then generalize to the conclusion that we are always aware of sense-data, and never of the objects in the world themselves. Of course, the argument would lean on the premise that hallucination and perception are experiences of the same kind, a premise

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<sup>35</sup> For the introduction of this ‘multiple realizability’ argument, see Hilary Putnam, “Psychological Predicates,” in *Art, Mind, and Religion* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), 37-48. Reprinted in...

<sup>36</sup> H. H. Price, *Perception*, Reprint. (London: Methuen, 1954).

<sup>37</sup> A.J. Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, Reprint. (London: Macmillan, 1958).

for which we have already raised some doubts. And it appears that the introduction of sense-data even makes things worse: for it seems strange to suggest that in veridical perception, all we are aware of are the same sense-data we supposedly are aware of in a case of hallucination. Why not allow that we are aware of sense-data in hallucination, and that we are aware of normal objects in veridical perception?

Because the argument from hallucination in the previous form was not plausible enough to support sense-data, Robinson has given the following revised version:

- 1 It is theoretically possible by activating some brain process which is involved in a particular type of perception to cause an hallucination which exactly resembles that perception in its subjective character.
- 2 It is necessary to give the same account of both hallucinating and perceptual experience when they have the same neural cause. Thus, it is not, for example, plausible to say that the hallucinatory experience involves a mental image or sense-datum, but that the perception does not, if the two have the same proximate—that is, neural—cause.

These two propositions together entail that perceptual processes in the brain produce some object of awareness which cannot be identified with any feature of the external world—that is, they produce a sense-datum.<sup>38</sup>

First of all, notice that Robinson's first premise is similar to the considerations put forward by Crane in support of the possibility of subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations. But the dialectics of the situation are a bit different here. As the sole argument in favour of the possibility of subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations, in the face of some empirical evidence that would show that none such hallucinations had occurred, the causal considerations looked a bit too speculative to carry their weight. Here, however, we have already accepted the possibility of subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations, which perhaps makes the claim that they can be artificially induced more credible.

Nonetheless, the first premise stated in this way ('by activating some brain process') really is not credible enough in the light of the empirical evidence we do have. Compare Fish's remarks on the experiments by Wilder Penfield, in which various parts of the cortex were electrically stimulated:

Far and away the most damning evidence from the point of view of the claim that Penfield's experiments produced experiences with the same phenomenal character as a veridical perception, however, is his own admission that "none of the patients has ever confused the hallucination with reality except for a moment. All have retained awareness

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<sup>38</sup> Robinson, *Perception*, 151.

of the operating room and the events occurring in it, even during the time of an experiential response” (Penfield and Perot 1963: 679). This “dual awareness” comes through in a few of the patient interviews. For example, patient G.Le. states, “I see the people in this world and in that world too, at the same time” (635), and patient S.Be. was “asked if the person [he saw] was there [and answered], ‘Yes, sir, about where the nurse with the eyeglasses is sitting over there’ ” (640).<sup>39</sup>

What would have to be done to induce a hallucination which exactly resembled a perception in its subjective character thus seems far more complex than ‘activating some brain process’ involved in that perception. To prevent the dual awareness described, one would also need to shut out all perceptual processes that could interfere. Furthermore, the phrase ‘some brain process’ also seems to suggest that just one process is at work to cause ‘the perception’, but, of course, perception is far more complex than that. To induce a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination would be nowhere near as simple as Robinson presents it; perhaps even entirely impossible. Robinson’s oversimplification contributes to the intuition that the first premise is indeed plausible, but we should be far more sceptical about it.

The second premise of Robinson’s revised argument employs the same-cause-same-effect principle. We will investigate this principle in more detail in the next chapter. For now, let us just accept this second premise, and go to Robinson’s conclusion. According to Robinson, “these two propositions together entail that perceptual processes in the brain produce some object of awareness which cannot be identified with any feature of the external world—that is, they produce a sense-datum.” If ‘sense-datum’ is defined as an object of awareness which cannot be identified with any feature of the external world, and ‘object’ is read in the neutral sense that it does not imply that the object exists, then this would be correct. But that a sense-datum, as an existing mind-dependent entity which really has the properties that are perceived, is produced, has not been shown by this argument. For the argument tells us nothing about the exact nature of the hallucination and the hallucinated object, and here opinions can differ, as we will see when we look at another theory of perception.<sup>40</sup>

Before considering this theory, let me mention two important objections to sense-data, considered as mind-dependent entities that instantiate all perceived properties. First, there is an ontological worry: what are these sense-data exactly?<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Fish, *Perception, Hallucination, And Illusion*, 132. Fish refers to W. Penfield and P. Perot, “The Brain’s Record of Auditory and Visual Experience: A Final Summary and Discussion,” *Brain* 86 (1963): 595–696.

<sup>40</sup> Robinson is aware of this, and deals with some compatible theories in the subsequent chapter.

<sup>41</sup> The following remarks are inspired by John Langshaw Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). For a discussion of Austin’s success in refuting sense-datum theory, see A.J. Ayer, “Has Austin refuted the sense-datum theory,” *Synthese* 17 (1967): 117-40.



They are nothing like the other objects we suppose to be out there in the world; for instance, a sense-datum does not have a backside that we can investigate by walking around it. Speaking of backside, does it even make sense to suppose that sense-data are three-dimensional objects? Probably not. Another question concerns the number of sense-data we perceive. For instance, when I am looking at a tree for several minutes, do I perceive one sense-datum of the tree, or are there multiple sense-data? And is the sense-datum (or are the sense-data) I am looking at after two minutes the same sense-datum (same sense-data) I was looking at from the start? Or do sense-data change per minute/second/millisecond? Further, we normally never seem to perceive these sense-data themselves. As we saw in the first chapter, perceptual experience is transparent: we perceive properties to be part of three-dimensional objects that we also perceive. So sense-data are altogether different entities than the natural objects we suppose to be in the world, and their full nature is somewhat unclear. We must therefore consider carefully whether we allow these strange entities in our ontology, and should not do so if there are better alternatives to sense-datum theory.

Secondly, there is an epistemological worry. If the sense-datum theory is correct, we never perceive the world itself. The only entities we are aware of are sense-data, and we only have indirect access to the objects in our environment. We thereby create a veil of sense-data that closes us off from the world. Thus, we become vulnerable to sceptical worries: how do we know that a world really exists beyond our sense-data? And if we can ascertain that the world exists, how do we know whether, and if so, in what way, the world resembles our sense-data? Further problems arise when we go from our general point of view to an individual point of view and compare this to the point of view of another individual. How do we know whether this person perceives similar sense-data as I do? If he does not, then he probably does not attach the same meaning to words as I do. And even if he perceives a similar type of sense-data, then he could still never really understand a demonstrative reference of mine, for this would refer to my sense-datum, and not to the object in the world itself. These epistemological problems, created by the intermediary that is introduced by sense-datum theory between subject and the world, show that we should not accept it if there is a reasonable alternative. And fortunately, there are such alternatives. One such alternative is intentionalism, a theory of perception we now turn to.

## **2.4. Intentionalism<sup>42</sup>**

Thus far the theories of perception we have reviewed, naïve realism and sense-datum theory, have in common that they analyse perception as involving a relation between

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<sup>42</sup> Although there are different versions of intentionalism, I only discuss intentionalism in so far as it accepts the argument from hallucination. Those intentionalists that hold that the content of a perceptual experience can be object-dependent are not affected by this argument, but then again, these do not take hallucination and perception to be of the same kind.

an object and a perceiver. Although what the objects of perception are is (crucially) different in both theories – peculiar mind-dependent objects in the case of sense-datum theory, and mind-independent objects in the case of naïve realism – still they agree that perception must involve a relation to an object. Intentionalism denies this relational view on perception.<sup>43</sup>

According to intentionalism, perception is similar to thought in the following way: its intentional objects, the objects which are the subject of the thought or perceptual experience, need not exist. Just as I can think of a unicorn without there actually existing any unicorns, I might hallucinate a unicorn without there actually existing any unicorns (as a mind-independent object or as a sense-datum). Perception does not involve a relation to any kind of object, instead, perception involves representation of objects. Furthermore, the intentionalist will stress that the representation itself is not perceived, but serves only as the vehicle by means of which one perceives. Again an analogy with thought could be used to make this clear:

[...][W]e do believe that thought about a unicorn is of a unicorn without there being any unicorn; and this does not mean that there must be a replica of a unicorn in the mind which is what we are thinking of in its place: there is, no doubt, a representation of a unicorn in the mind when one thinks of a unicorn, and that representation may, sometimes, be a kind of replica, but that is not what we are thinking of, rather it is what we think with or by.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, according to the intentionalist, in perception objects are represented without these representations becoming the intentional objects of perception.

The major advantage this theory has over sense-datum theory is that it does not postulate strange entities that instantiate perceived properties, but only posits representations that represent objects as having certain properties. A case of hallucination can then be explained as a very bad case of misrepresentation, while a case of veridical perception is seen to be a case of correct representation. Thus, intentionalism accepts that hallucination and perception are of the same kind: they are intentional experiences involving representation instead of a relation (as naïve realists and sense-datum theorists hold).

However, intentionalism is not without problems of its own. Although defenders of intentionalism often make use of an analogy with thought, it must be recognized that perception is not like thought in some important aspects. First, perception is normally constrained by what objects there are around you, while thought is not. I can now think of many objects that are not present in my

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<sup>43</sup> For a defence of intentionalism see Crane, *Elements of Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*.

<sup>44</sup> Robinson, *Perception*, 164.

environment, but I cannot perceive them. Secondly, there is such a thing as the phenomenal character of perceptual experience, which is not clearly present in the case of thought. Seeing a red apple is not at all like thinking of a red apple. Of course, these points come hand in hand for a naïve realist, for the phenomenal character of perception is, according to the naïve realist, best explained by pointing to the objects in the environment. Crane tries to deal with this objection by claiming that the phenomenal character of an intentional state not only depends on the intentional content of that state but also on the intentional mode (e.g. sight, touch, smell).<sup>45</sup> Further, according to Crane, the content of perception is non-conceptual, and thereby differs from the conceptual content of thought. Nevertheless, this manoeuvre is more like labelling the difference between perception and thought than explaining this difference. What needs to be explicated is *why* a certain intentional mode has a certain phenomenal character.

Connected with this problem about the phenomenology of perception, is an important insight about the ontology of the posited representations. This is nicely illustrated by Robinson:

Appeal to intentionality does not [...] solve – or, perhaps, even help to solve – any problems there may be about the ontology of the images themselves. One could say that Henry VIII is inexistent with respect to (in a non-literal sense, exists in) Holbein's portrait of him, but the pigment of the painting exists in a wholly unproblematic way.<sup>46</sup>

If we think it through, we see that intentionalism just puts up a smoke screen for what ultimately comes down to a theory of perception that is very much alike to sense-datum theory. For although it is true that the intentional object of a perceptual experience might not exist in the case of a hallucination, the representation does exist, and it is this representation that must be invoked to explain the phenomenal character of the hallucination. Just as the colour of the painting explains why the intentional object of the painting looks like it has a certain colour, so properties of a representation must be invoked to explain why a hallucinated object looks like it does. If this is true in the case of hallucination, then this must be true in the case of veridical perception, since we have accepted that hallucination and perception are experiences of the same kind. This leads to the conclusion that how objects look, which properties these objects are perceived to have, can only be explained by referring to our perceptual representations and their properties. Such a view is not an instance of direct realism,<sup>47</sup> but of indirect realism: what worldly objects are really

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<sup>45</sup> Crane, *Elements of Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*, 144.

<sup>46</sup> Robinson, *Perception*, 165.

<sup>47</sup> Pace Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, 270.

like can (perhaps) only be inferred on the basis of the representations we have of these objects.<sup>48</sup>

As was the case with sense-datum theory, an intermediary is introduced between the subject and the world, and again, the same epistemological worries apply: how do we know that the properties of our representations are also properties that can be found in the world; how do we know whether we all have similar representations; how can we demonstratively refer to an object out there in the world, etc. A theory of perception needs to be able to explain how we come to stand in genuine contact with the world itself. Intentionalism, just as sense-datum theory, is not able to do so, but posits an intermediary that cuts off our link to the world. For this reason, we should keep looking for a reasonable alternative.

Such an alternative will, however, not be easy to find if we accept the argument from hallucination. As long as we accept that hallucination and genuine perception are two experiences which are fundamentally of the same kind, we are stuck with a form of indirect realism and all the ontological and epistemological worries this brings with it. The position that attacks this assumption, disjunctivism, is our subject for the next chapter.

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<sup>48</sup> One can even wonder whether intentionalism will not entirely collapse into sense-datum theory. For, according to intentionalism, there is no direct way for us to come into contact with objects and their properties. Does it then really make sense for us to take the properties we perceive to be properties of the supposed mind-independent objects? If not, then we will be back at the original sense-datum theory.

## Chapter 3.

# Disjunctivism about perception and hallucination

In the previous chapter we have looked at the argument from hallucination, which claims that since 1) subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations are possible, and 2) subjectively indistinguishable hallucination is fundamentally the same kind of mental event as veridical perception, that 3) perception cannot involve a direct relation between a subject and a normal object in the world as naïve realism holds. However, we have seen reasons to be sceptical about theories of perception that accept this argument: sense-datum theory as well as intentionalism bring with them important epistemological and ontological problems. At this point we should, therefore, look at a position that rejects the argument from hallucination by rejecting its second premise. Hallucination and veridical perception are not of the same kind, but fundamentally different. When a subject *S* seems to perceive that *p*, it can *either* be the case that *S* genuinely perceives *p*, *or* it only appears to *S* that *p*.

This position, aptly called disjunctivism, is relatively new in the philosophy of perception. We begin discussing it by looking at its historical development from its first statement in the writings of John Hinton. We then go to John McDowell's writings on the subject, where two versions of disjunctivism are distinguished: metaphysical and epistemological disjunctivism. Our focus on historical development gradually changes to reviewing specific problems of disjunctivism when the historical line brings us to articles on the subject by Mike Martin. The first problem to be discussed is one that arises from the subjective indistinguishability of perception and hallucination. Martin's response to this problem is discussed, as well as a specific non-disjunctive alternative proposed by Mark Johnston. I argue that we remain at an impasse regarding the subjective indistinguishability of hallucination and perception – it cannot be used as an argument against or in favour of disjunctivism – and that Johnston's alternative attempts to occupy an unstable middle position which either collapses into indirect realism, or appears to be incomprehensible. The second problem for disjunctivism to be discussed arises from causal considerations, and I argue with Martin that the disjunctivist must adhere to negative disjunctivism to circumvent this objection.

### 3.1. Hinton's introduction of disjunctivism

In his article "Hinton and the Origins of Disjunctivism" Paul Snowdon poses the question why Hinton is viewed as the main inventor of disjunctivism as we know it today. According to Snowdon, there are at least three achievements that should be attributed to Hinton:

The first is that he isolates a thesis about perceptual experience, which [...] I have called CEH [Common Element Hypothesis], and about which he is right to suggest that it is simply assumed by many philosophers but without proper justification. [...] Second, he isolates and analyses a type of disjunctive sentence, P-I Ds [Perception-Illusion Disjunctions], which is of colossal interest in the philosophy of perception. [...] Third, Hinton identified and explored many of the considerations which are relevant to arguments in favour of CEH, even though he left much to say.<sup>49</sup>

We will consider these three points in turn, starting with the perception-illusion disjunctions Hinton introduces. Hinton's favourite example of such a disjunction is the following: 'Either I see a flash of light, or I have an illusion of a flash of light'. The first disjunct states that a particular person  $x$  perceives a certain thing, while the second disjunct states that the person  $x$  is having an illusion of that certain thing. Further, the second disjunct is meant to incorporate both illusions and hallucinations (despite the wording), since Hinton explicitly mentions "what you get for instance when an electric current is passed through your head"<sup>50</sup> as an example of having an illusion of a flash of light.

Now why is Hinton so interested in these perception-illusion disjunctions? Well, according to Hinton, it would be a better question to ask why they have *not* received a large amount of attention:

It is perhaps surprising that perception-illusion disjunctions are not more often deliberately placed in the centre of the picture, in the philosophy of perception. Philosophers do quite often introduce the notion of an experience-report as that of a statement, or even *the* statement, which is true both when you perceive a given thing and when you have the illusion of doing so. This makes it sound as if they had in mind a perception-illusion disjunction. In a high proportion of cases, however, one has only to ask them whether they do, to find that they do not.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Paul Snowdon, "Hinton and the Origins of Disjunctivism," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona MacPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 55.

<sup>50</sup> J.M. Hinton, *Experiences: An Inquiry into Some Ambiguities* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 22. Page references are to selections from this book reprinted in *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alex Byrne and Heather Logue (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-1.

This brings us to the second important aspect of Hinton's work: his analysis of the Common Element Hypothesis. Upholders of this hypothesis maintain that there is an inner experience that is present both in the case of a veridical perception of, say, a flash, and in the case of an illusion (in Hinton's sense) of a flash. In other words, there is a common element between a case of perception and a case of hallucination or illusion. Although someone might doubt whether he is actually perceiving a flash or only under that illusion, this person cannot doubt that he had a flash-experience.

Now Hinton allows that the sentence 'I perceive a flash of light' could be true both in the case of an actual perception and in the case of a illusion of a flash, but only if what is meant by the sentence is a perception-illusion disjunction. What Hinton rejects is that 'I perceive a flash of light' could be a necessarily true report of the sort of inner experience that is posited by the proponents of the Common Element Hypothesis. However, Hinton's strategy does not consist in giving a knock-down argument against it, rather, it consists in shifting the burden of proof on the shoulders of the opponent: Hinton states that he cannot see that there are any true reports, or could be any true reports of the purported inner experiences.<sup>52</sup>

This is not the only move Hinton makes in his debate of the Common Element Hypothesis. He also discusses several considerations that might lead one to accept it, the most important ones having to do with subjective indistinguishability and causality. This is what Snowdon takes to be the third important aspect of Hinton's work that earns him the right to be called the inventor of disjunctivism. Unfortunately, Hinton's discussion of the causal argument in favour of the Common Element Hypothesis, and especially his response to it, is somewhat unclear, and I will not go into that here.<sup>53</sup> His response to the problems arising from subjective indistinguishability, on the contrary, is a lot clearer. A proponent of the Common Element Hypothesis might argue that there must be a common inner experience present in the case of perception and in the case of the corresponding illusion, for they could appear exactly the same for the subject. I fully agree with Hinton when he responds as follows:

It can indeed be the same experience, but this only means that it can "be the same" experientially or subjectively or "qualitatively," i.e. that you can be quite unable to tell the difference. It is no more allowable to twist subjectively indistinguishable events into indistinguishable subjective events than to twist subjectively indistinguishable girls into indistinguishable subjective girls.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Hinton, *Experiences: An Inquiry into Some Ambiguities*, 26-7, 28; Hinton, "Visual Experiences," reprinted in *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alex Byrne and Heather Logue (Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press, 2009), 4.

<sup>53</sup> Although I do discuss the causal argument and Martin's response to it in section 3.5.

<sup>54</sup> Hinton, "Visual Experiences," 10.

The fact remains that Hinton's adversary draws an ontological conclusion on the basis of epistemological considerations, and it is not at all clear why this should be allowed. Further, Hinton remarks that he is puzzled why the Common Element Hypothesis is often accepted, even though sense-datum theory is "so out of fashion".<sup>55</sup> This is a puzzlement I fully share, which shows itself in my arguments from the previous chapter against intentionalism.

Before we go into a full discussion of the problem arising out of the subjective indistinguishability of hallucination and perception, we first follow the historical development of disjunctivism further. Eventually, this will bring us back to our discussion of subjective indistinguishability.

### 3.2. McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism

From Hinton on, the disjunctive theory was further advocated by Paul Snowdon<sup>56</sup> and John McDowell.<sup>57</sup> As we saw, Hinton was mostly concerned with arguing against a supposed inner experience present both in the case of perception and in the case of hallucination. Snowdon shares this concern with Hinton, and argues especially against the causal theory of perception which presupposes such an inner experience (an 'L-state'<sup>58</sup>). More precisely, Snowdon argues that the causal theory of perception does not follow from a conceptual analysis of 'perception'. Still, Snowdon remains broadly in line with Hinton in that he is concerned with what has been called 'metaphysical disjunctivism'. McDowell, on the other hand, is often portrayed as maintaining a different form of disjunctivism, namely epistemological disjunctivism. In contrast with metaphysical disjunctivism, epistemological disjunctivism argues not against the existence of a common element present both in a genuine perceptual experience and a subjectively indistinguishable hallucinatory experience, but against a supposed *common epistemological predicament* between a case of actual perception and an indistinguishable hallucination. Because of the importance of this new turn in disjunctivism, we make a short digression to review McDowell's article, before returning to our main discussion of disjunctivism.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Snowdon, "Perception, Vision, and Causation," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 81 (January 1980): 175-192; Paul Snowdon, "The Objects of Perceptual Experience," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 64 (1990): 121-50. Page references are to reprints of these articles in *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alex Byrne and Heather Logue (Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press, 2009), respectively 33-48, and 49-74.

<sup>57</sup> John McDowell, "Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 68 (1982): 455-79. Page references are to the reprint in John McDowell, *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality* (Cambridge MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 369-94.

<sup>58</sup> Snowdon, "Perception, Vision, and Causation," 34.



In “Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge”, McDowell attacks an interpretation of Wittgenstein which suggests that we have knowledge of other people’s inner mental states by means of defeasible criteria. According to this view, we are able to tell whether, for example, someone has a pain in his foot, by seeing that he is limping and has an agonized expression on his face. We do not *infer* from the fact that the person is limping and has an agonized expression on his face the conclusion that this person is in pain; rather, the circumstances are the criterial evidence that make it correct to say that this person is in pain, and that we know that this person is in pain. Of course there is always the possibility of pretence: someone might act as if he was in pain, while not actually being in pain. On the interpretation of Wittgenstein McDowell wants to reject, the possibility of pretence shows that the criteria constituting our evidence are defeasible. Other circumstances can show that in this particular case, even though our criteria are satisfied, we still cannot be said to know that someone is in pain. McDowell is skeptical about such an approach, because “the ‘criterial’ view does envisage ascribing knowledge on the strength of something compatible with the falsity of what is supposedly known.”<sup>59</sup> That is, on this picture, our knowledge of someone’s being in pain is based on criteria that can be satisfied by someone who only pretends to be in pain. To argue that we can still speak of knowledge in an actual case of pain because of a convention, because that is how our language works, does not alleviate this worry, according to McDowell.

From these considerations about our knowledge of other minds, we can now turn back to perception, illusion, and hallucination:

In the traditional approach to the epistemology of other minds, the concept of pretence plays a role analogous to the role of the concept of illusion in the traditional approach to the epistemology of the “external” world. So it is not surprising to find that, just as the possibility of pretence is often thought to show the defeasibility of criteria for “inner” states of affairs, so the possibility of illusion is often thought to show the defeasibility of criteria for “external” states of affairs.<sup>60</sup>

The story about other minds can be repeated for perception in general: we have certain criteria that make it correct to conclude that, for example, it is raining, and since these criteria are also satisfied in the case of an illusion or hallucination of rain, this shows that the criteria are defeasible. For similar reasons as before, McDowell finds such a view unconvincing, and posits his alternative view: “when our ‘sense-impressions’ deceive us, the fact is not that criteria for rain are satisfied but that they appear to be satisfied.”<sup>61</sup> McDowell later elaborates on this claim as follows:

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<sup>59</sup> McDowell, “Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge,” 372.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

[...] an appearance that such-and-such is the case can be *either* a mere appearance *or* the fact that such-and-such is the case making itself perceptually manifest to someone. As before, the object of experience in the deceptive cases is a mere appearance. But we are not to accept that in the non-deceptive cases too the object of experience is a mere appearance, and hence something that falls short of the fact itself. On the contrary, the appearance that is presented to one in those cases is a matter of the fact itself being disclosed to the experiencer. So appearances are no longer conceived as in general intervening between the experiencing subject and the world.<sup>62</sup>

The relation to disjunctivism should be clear: according to McDowell, when someone seems to perceive that, say, it is raining, this can either be a mere appearance, or the fact making itself manifest. In the latter case the criteria for rain are satisfied, while in the former these criteria only appear to be satisfied.

The question that remains is why McDowell's disjunctivism is seen as a different form of disjunctivism.<sup>63</sup> The reason for this is that in "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge" McDowell is primarily interested in the epistemology of perception, and not in its metaphysical nature. McDowell's claim is that the possibility of being deceived that it is raining (or that someone is in pain) does not entail that we can *never* know that it is raining (or that someone is in pain). This claim, however, is compatible with the denial of Hinton's or Snowdon's metaphysical disjunctivism. One could hold that there is a common element between a veridical perception and a corresponding hallucination, and argue that the right causal link in the case of veridical perception is responsible for its being a case of genuine knowledge instead of a case of mere appearance. This would be an example of a conjunctive view on perception and hallucination, combined with an externalist account of knowledge.

Nevertheless, even though this is a theoretical possibility, such an externalist account of knowledge seems to go against what McDowell himself claims:

[...] such experiences can present us with the appearance that it is raining only because when we have them as the upshot (in a suitable way) of the fact that it is raining, *the fact itself is their object* [my italics]; so that its obtaining is not, after all, blankly external.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 386-7.

<sup>63</sup> See Alex Byrne and Heather Logue, "Either/Or," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona MacPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 57-94; Adrian Haddock and Fiona MacPherson, "Introduction: Varieties of Disjunctivism," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona MacPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-24.

<sup>64</sup> McDowell, "Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge," 388-9.

When someone has a fact made manifest to him, the obtaining of the fact contributes to his epistemic standing on the question. But the obtaining of the fact is precisely not blankly external to his subjectivity, as it would be if the truth about that were exhausted by the highest common factor.<sup>65</sup>

McDowell wants to make room for a conception of perception which exactly prevents the obtaining of a fact becoming external to a person's subjectivity: that a certain fact is the case must be open to a person's reflective capacities.<sup>66</sup> The best way to do so, is to accept metaphysical disjunctivism, which holds that a genuine case of perception differs mentally from a hallucination. Thus, the evidence open to a subject in a case of perception is different from the evidence a subject has in a case of hallucination. In the one case, the fact itself<sup>67</sup> constitutes the experience, while in the other this only appears to be so. This shows why metaphysical and epistemological disjunctivism naturally come hand in hand: metaphysical disjunctivism supplies a convincing ground for epistemological disjunctivism.

After this digression into of McDowell's "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge" we can now return to the main thread: the historical development of disjunctivism and the arguments against disjunctivism. We shall from now on be mostly concerned with the metaphysical variety of disjunctivism, and definitely not with epistemological disjunctivism construed narrowly, that is, construed as denying metaphysical disjunctivism.

### **3.3. Martin's defence of disjunctivism against subjective indistinguishability**

Although Snowdon and McDowell both advocated disjunctivism in one form or another, it only became a real topic of debate in the philosophical literature on perception after several articles by M.G.F. Martin.<sup>68</sup> In "The Reality of Appearances" Martin forcefully argues against the thesis that, "if two perceptual experiences are indistinguishable for the subject of them, then the two experiences are of the same conscious character."<sup>69</sup> In other words, Martin argues against one of the objections to

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 390-1.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Duncan Pritchard, "McDowellian Neo-Mooreanism," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 284-310.

<sup>67</sup> McDowell's view is different in the sense that he takes *facts* to constitute veridical experiences, where we have taken *objects* and *properties* to constitute them.

<sup>68</sup> M.G.F. Martin, "The Reality of Appearances," in *Thought and Ontology*, ed. M. Sainsbury (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1997), 81-106.; M.G.F. Martin, "The Limits of Self-Awareness," *Philosophical Studies* 120 (2004): 37-89. Page references are to the reprints of these articles in *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alex Byrne and Heather Logue (Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press, 2009), respectively 91-115 and 271-317.

<sup>69</sup> Martin, "The Reality of Appearances," 91. I take conscious character to be phenomenal character.

disjunctivism which we ended up with in discussing Hinton's work. In "The Limits of Self-Awareness" Martin goes further by arguing that Hinton was right to put the burden of proof on the disjunctivist's opponent, and that disjunctivism should be seen as the default view on perception. Moreover, in the same article, Martin responds to the causal argument against disjunctivism. The considerations about subjective indistinguishability are the topic for this section and the next, while discussion of the causal argument is relegated to section 3.5.

Let us begin by setting out an overview of the situation so far.

- (1) The argument from hallucination purported to show that since subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations are possible, in which *ex hypothesi* perceived objects do not in fact exist, perception could not be direct as naïve realism maintains.
- (2) Disjunctivism then defended naïve realism against the argument from hallucination by arguing that hallucination and perception are two different kinds of mental events which do not have an experiential common element, thus showing that what goes on in hallucination says nothing about what goes on in veridical perception.
- (3) However, the disjunctivist's opponent will now be quick to point out that a hallucinatory experience and a perceptual experience can appear exactly alike to their subject. The disjunctivist, according to this opponent, has to explain this subjective indistinguishability of perception and hallucination.

Martin responds to the challenge voiced in (3), not by explaining how it is possible that two different kinds of mental events can be subjectively indistinguishable, but by attacking the hypothesis that two experiences that are subjectively indistinguishable must have the same conscious character.<sup>70</sup> Notice though, that Martin phrases his main goal in terms of similarity of conscious character, and not in terms of similarity of mental event. By showing that two subjectively indistinguishable experiences need not have the same conscious character, the supposition of the disjunctivist's opponent in (3) has been sufficiently weakened: two experiences that *appear* alike need not *be* alike. Let us look in more detail at Martin's argument against the indistinguishability thesis.

First of all, notice that if a subject could not distinguish two different objects from each other, we would not immediately draw the ontological conclusion that the two objects must be of the same type. I cannot distinguish gold from pyrite, but that does not make them the same stuff. Secondly, even if no subject could distinguish

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<sup>70</sup> Martin, "The Reality of Appearances."

two different objects from each other they do not have to be the same kind of object.<sup>71</sup> Why are we then tempted to do so when our reasoning is about conscious experiences? Recall Hinton's remark: "It is no more allowable to twist subjectively indistinguishable events into indistinguishable subjective events than to twist subjectively indistinguishable girls into indistinguishable subjective girls."<sup>72</sup> Still, just stating that this is not allowable is not to *argue* that it is not allowable. Martin, in contrast, tries out several possible lines of argument in favour of the thesis that indistinguishability of conscious experiences entails sameness of conscious character, and argues that they all fail.

As a first line of argument, Martin considers an appeal to a link between our discriminatory powers and the content of our conscious experiences.<sup>73</sup> For example, it seems reasonable to suppose that a colour blind person who cannot discriminate samples of red from samples of green cannot have a visual experience with the content that a certain sample is red, because he lacks the relevant discriminatory capacity. It seems one could argue on a similar basis that if two apples are qualitatively identical, neither one of these could figure as a particular in the content of an experience, since the apples cannot be distinguished from one another. The conclusion would be that all content must be general in character, since for each particular an indistinguishable double would work just as well. In this way one might try to show that indistinguishability does entail similarity of the conscious experience.

Martin correctly responds that this attempt will not work. Although the apples in the example might be qualitatively indistinguishable, a subject will still be able to pick each of them out from the other objects in the environment. The subject does in fact have the discriminatory powers needed to see *that* apple. So, taking in consideration these powers of discrimination, it appears the apple can figure in the content of the experience as a particular, even if the subject is not able to tell which of the apples he is looking at. This line of argumentation is thus unable to show that subjective indistinguishability entails sameness of conscious character.

The second line of argument Martin considers for the subjective indistinguishability claim is more difficult:

...our actual discriminations of the observable properties in our environment are the judgements we make; our powers of discrimination are reflected in the contents of the sensory states we are in which prompt those actual discriminations. Our actual discriminations of our own mental states would be the self-ascriptive judgements that we

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<sup>71</sup> Since what makes *a* the same as *b* also has to do with properties which do not show themselves in the present (for example, *a* and *b*'s coming to be). See Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance Renewed*, 61-3.

<sup>72</sup> Hinton, "Visual Experiences," 10.

<sup>73</sup> Martin, "The Reality of Appearances," 99-102.

make; our powers of discrimination would be reflected in the conscious character of our phenomenal states.<sup>74</sup>

According to this argument, if we are not able to discriminate a veridical perceptual experience from a hallucinatory experience they must have the same conscious character, just as if we are not able to discriminate a sample of red from a sample of green the visual content of our perception of them must be the same. On this view, introspection is like perception: if two perceived things appear the same, they must share a look, so if two mental states appear the same, they must also share some element. Since the argument from hallucination claims that there are hallucinations which cannot be told apart from veridical perception, this would then mean that these hallucinations have the same conscious character as perception, and disjunctivism would be refuted.

In fact, I do not see why Martin takes this argument to get us past the standoff we were at in the beginning: the disjunctivist claims indistinguishability does not entail similarity, while his opponent does claim that indistinguishability entails similarity. In my view, the indistinguishability claim has just as much support with or without the proposed analogy between perception and introspection. Fortunately, Martin goes on to investigate why it intuitively seems right to suppose that if we cannot distinguish between two experiences, they must be the same. According to Martin, this thesis is intuitively right because we feel that we must be able to determine what kind of experience we are having, just as we are able to determine what kind of thought we are having.<sup>75</sup> The intuition is rooted in the Cartesian idea of infallibility about our own mental life, according to which we must know, even if we do not know whether we are genuinely perceiving or being deceived by an evil demon, what kind of experience we are having. At the very least I should be able to say: well, perhaps I do not know whether there actually is a tree in front of me, but at least I know that I am having a tree-experience! We feel that the conscious experiences we have must be transparent to ourselves. Martin notes that this reason for accepting the indistinguishability thesis is problematic:

Here I suggest that the naïve realist can point out that the desire for reflective knowledge of one's experiences really cannot be satisfied whether we accept the argument from subjective indistinguishability or not. For, if the naïve realist is right to claim that her account of perceptual appearances is the only adequate description of how our experiences strike us, then the alternatives to this approach, some form of intentional theory or subjectivist view, will be giving an account of experience which does not accord with how it initially strikes us—the correct account will be, in J. L. Mackie's

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<sup>74</sup> Martin, "The Reality of Appearances," 105.

<sup>75</sup> Martin, "The Reality of Appearances," 107-8.

term, an “error theory” of perception, which distinguishes between how it seems to us we are perceptually related to the world, and how we are in fact related to the world.<sup>76</sup>

Since experience strikes us as relating us to the objects and properties in the world themselves,<sup>77</sup> and accepting the common element view leads us to reject this picture, our experiences would still not be transparent to ourselves in this way. So our need for transparency can never be fulfilled, and should not, therefore, lead us to accept the thesis that subjective indistinguishability entails sameness of conscious character.

Although one might question whether Martin is right in identifying what gives the indistinguishability thesis its intuitive support, we can rephrase his argument in a different way. On the one hand, we feel that our intuitions support the thesis that subjective indistinguishability entails sameness of mental state. On the other, we have the intuition that experience relates us to objects and properties in the world. Since neither disjunctivists nor their opponents can accept both intuitions, we cannot prefer or reject a theory of perception on the grounds of not being able to satisfy one of these intuitions. In fact, it is questionable whether intuitions should count as any evidence at all.

Martin does not leave it at that though. In “The Limits of Self-Awareness” he gives an elaborate argument that tries to show why it is the disjunctivist’s opponent who has the burden of proof.<sup>78</sup> Roughly, the argument goes as follows: since the opponent of the disjunctivist holds that there must be a common element between a hallucination and a perception because of their similarity in appearance, he is committed to the existence of certain properties of these experiences on the basis of which a subject can judge them to be the same. The disjunctivist, in contrast, allows that two experiences can appear the same although they have no properties in common, except for the property that the subject cannot discriminate the experience from a veridical perception. This last property must also be accepted by the disjunctivist’s opponent, since he too is committed to saying that a hallucination cannot be told apart from a veridical perception by their subject. So the disjunctivist leaves an option open that is not left open by his opponent, and the opponent has the burden of proof to explain why he does not.

This argument has been criticized by Byrne and Logue<sup>79</sup>, and I agree that it cannot shift the burden of proof. For the opponent will claim that the disjunctivist is unable to explain why hallucination and perception appear the same, while he, the opponent, is able to explain it by means of the common element. To which the

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 108-9.

<sup>77</sup> This is discussed in section 1.4.

<sup>78</sup> M.G.F. Martin, “The Limits of Self-Awareness,” in *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alex Byrne and Heather Logue (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 279-84.

<sup>79</sup> See Byrne and Logue, “Either/Or,” especially 73-8.

disjunctivist, of course, will respond that there is only a need to explain the common appearance of hallucination and veridical perception if we accept the idea that two experiences can only be indistinguishable if they are of the same kind, which he, the disjunctivist, does not. Further, the disjunctivist is in some cases, namely causally matching hallucinations (which we get back to in section 3.5), committed to holding that they cannot have any properties in common except the mentioned epistemic property. And this also appears to be a strong commitment. So I believe that appeals to subjective indistinguishability cannot refute disjunctivism, but neither can disjunctivism use an appeal to experience to show that the opponent has the burden of proof. On this matter, we remain at an impasse.

### **3.4. Interlude: Johnston's direct realism**

So far we have been supposing there to be two positions in the debate: either you are a disjunctivist, and deny that hallucination and illusion have a common element, or you accept the argument from hallucination, and thereby accept that hallucination and illusion share a common element. However, there seems to be an option open that rejects the argument from hallucination, that is, denies that hallucination and perception are of the same kind, while still allowing a common element between them. Let us now turn to an account which tries to move within this middle space, and thus has the possibility of giving a robust explanation of the similarity between hallucination and genuine perception, without succumbing to a form of indirect realism. One proponent of such a position is Mark Johnston:

We must find a way to combine the common object of awareness that is arguably present in hallucination and seeing with the no less "direct" awareness of external objects that is definitive of seeing. We cannot treat the common object of awareness and the objects of the act of seeing as wholly distinct. Nor should we treat the distinctive objects that are seen as "indirect" objects of awareness in the fashion of the Conjunctive Analysis. We need to put the common object of awareness together with the distinctive objects which we see without merely tacking on to the common object of awareness the external objects which we see.<sup>80</sup>

If Johnston's attempt succeeds, we would have a very powerful alternative to disjunctivism: we would have a theory that could, on the one hand, explain the similarity in appearance between hallucination and veridical perception by pointing to their common component, and could, on the other hand, still have all the virtues of a

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<sup>80</sup> Mark Johnston, "The Obscure Object of Hallucination," in *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alex Byrne and Heather Logue (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 213.



direct realism about perception. So it is interesting to see how Johnston supposes to perform this spectacular feat.

According to Johnston, what a case of genuine perception and an indistinguishable hallucination have in common is a certain sensible profile:

Consider the sensed field or scene before your eyes. Now attend to the relational and qualitative structure that is visibly instantiated there in the scene. It consists of just the properties and relations of which you are visually aware, when you are seeing the scene. It is a scene type or sensible profile, a complex, partly qualitative and partly relational property, which exhausts the way the particular scene before your eyes is if your present experience is veridical.<sup>81</sup>

The question remains how this sensible profile can be present both in hallucination and genuine perception, without it preventing objects in the world to be directly perceived. Johnston explains this as follows:

Your seeing the scene before your eyes is your being visually aware of a host of spatio-temporal particulars instantiating parts of such a profile or complex of sensible qualities and relations. The suggestion is that in the corresponding case of a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination you are simply aware of the partly qualitative, partly relational profile. [...] When the visual system misfires, as in hallucination, it presents uninstantiated complexes of sensible qualities and relations, at least complexes not instantiated there in the scene before the eyes.<sup>82</sup>

This immediately raises the question how we could be aware of uninstantiated complexes of sensible qualities and relations. If we are to be aware of a certain property, then how could this property *not* be instantiated? I can perceive, say, a red apple, but it seems unintelligible how I could perceive redness without it being instantiated by some object. That is, unless we resort to a form of intentionalism, according to which the apple is just represented as being red. But as has been argued in the previous chapter, such a move would posit an intermediary between object and subject, thus resulting in a form of indirect realism.

The burden of proof lies squarely on Johnston's shoulders: what has to be shown is that it is indeed possible to be aware of uninstantiated complexes of sensible qualities and relations. Now Johnston realises that some opponents might be sceptical about this possibility:

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 227.

‘Ah,’ the opponent will say, ‘but this [the manner of presentation of the scene before you] is by hypothesis a complex of qualities and relations instantiated in the scene before the eyes—you want a complex that is not instantiated there!’ But the opponent is here trying to hold to an unstable stopping point. For it is contingent that the scene before you is just the way it looks to you to be. You could be aware of the complex of sensible qualities and relations without that whole complex being instantiated. [...] In the extreme case, in which you are enjoying a full-blown, phantasmagoric hallucination, none of the qualities or relations will be instantiated.<sup>83</sup>

It is clear that this reply just will not do: Johnston is evidently begging the question by assuming his account of hallucination to be correct. For if we do not accept his account, it does not follow that we are aware of an uninstantiated sensible profile in a hallucination, and his account is precisely what is at issue. So the worry has not yet been alleviated. Fortunately, Johnston has more to say on the matter:

[...] sensible profiles that happen not to be instantiated in the scene before the eyes raise no more ontological difficulties than items with which many philosophers are already quite comfortable, namely those manners of presentation that happen to have no referent. [...] Sensible profiles are manners of presentation that are themselves presented in sensing. Indeed this is a distinctive aspect of sensory experience, one that marks it off from belief or thought. Sensory manners of presentation are themselves sensed.<sup>84</sup>

However, this response too will not work. First of all, manners of presentation have to do with concepts and words, with thought and language, and perceptual experience is different from them. So even if we can focus on types of properties instead of on tokens of properties in thought and language, this does not prove that the same must be possible in sensory awareness. Second, if we mark off sensory experience from thought by claiming that in the former case we sense manners of presentation themselves, this just raises the question why this would not constitute a manner-of-presentation-token, while we were after a manner-of-presentation-type.

We are led to the conclusion that Johnston’s proposal remains unintelligible. It seems that there is no intermediary option possible between disjunctive direct realism, and, call it ‘conjunctive’, indirect realism. As soon as we posit a common element in the case of hallucination, it is unclear how it could be prevented from screening off direct perceptual experience in the case of veridical perception. These considerations will become relevant again in our discussion of the causal argument, which is the topic of our next section.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 230-1.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 231.

### 3.5. The causal argument

Let us recall the situation so far: disjunctivism denies a common element between perception and hallucination, even though these experiences can be indistinguishable from each other for their subject. We have seen that the argument from subjective indistinguishability is not able to refute the disjunctive theory. Another threat for disjunctivism arises from causal considerations we already encountered in discussing Robinson's argument for sense-datum theory, and where I also expressed some doubts about this argument.<sup>85</sup> Martin still gives, temporarily bracketing these concerns, a direct response on behalf of the disjunctivists. Here we look at the causal argument in detail as an argument against disjunctivism, and at Martin's response.

We can distinguish between two versions of the causal argument: the good-to-bad causal argument, which starts from a case of veridical perception and then considers whether the same effects are present in a causally matching hallucination, and the bad-to-good causal argument, which starts from the causally matching hallucination and then considers whether the same effects are present in the veridical perception.<sup>86</sup> Both arguments are discussed in turn.

#### 3.5.1. The good-to-bad causal argument

Let us begin our discussion of the good-to-bad causal argument against disjunctivism. This argument starts by considering a case of veridical perception (a good case), in which a certain object, say, a tree, is perceived. It then proceeds by pointing out that in this case of veridical perception, there is a causal chain starting from the light reflected of the tree, which then stimulates our retina resulting in neuron firings in the brain, and finally culminates in our perceptual experience of the tree. Now it is tempting to suppose that when we recreate part of this causal chain by artificially stimulating the retina in exactly the same way as in the veridical perception, we should be able to recreate the exact same experience for the subject. If this is correct, then disjunctivism must be false, since disjunctivism holds that hallucinatory experiences are not of the same kind as perceptual experiences.

There are several assumptions lying behind this causal argument. First of all, there is the assumption that it is empirically possible to artificially generate an indistinguishable hallucinatory experience by some sort of brain-stimulation. I have already expressed doubts about this assumption of the causal argument. Second, there appears to be the assumption that a perceptual experience is the endpoint of a causal chain of events. Johnston argues forcefully against such a conception of experience:

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<sup>85</sup> See section 2.3.

<sup>86</sup> I use terminology from Alex Byrne and Heather Logue, "Introduction," in *Disjunctivism: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alex Byrne and Heather Logue (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2009), vii-xxix.

As against this picture, the relation between seeing an object and the long physical process involving first the light coming from the object and then the operation of the visual system is not the relation between a first mental effect and a prior physical process that causes it. Seeing the object is not the next event after the visual system operates. Seeing the object is an event materially constituted by the long physical process connecting the object seen to the final state of the visual system. Seeing the object is an event that is (as it actually turns out) constituted by a physical process that goes all the way out to the object seen. There is accordingly no “looking back” required by the last brain state or pattern of neuronal firing in order to determine whether to cause veridical awareness of external objects as opposed to the type of awareness involved in hallucination. There is no such “last” brain state that then causes seeing.<sup>87</sup>

Although I believe that Johnston is partly right in this response, I do not believe it will ultimately be able to refute the causal argument. It works as an argument against anyone who supposes that a perceptual experience is the last effect in a chain of neuron firings. The picture put forward by such a person is that the physical links in a causal chain, constituted by neuron firing after neuron firing, ultimately lead to a mental endpoint where the spotlight of consciousness is activated. Probably no sophisticated naturalist would, however, accept such a view on perception. For the physicalist’s purpose it is enough to suppose that all the causal links that take place within the skin and skull of the perceiver are sufficient to generate the experience in some way or other. Thus, he need not hold that the experience must be the mental endpoint of a physical chain of events, only that the physical chain of events within the subject is in some way sufficient for the mental experience. If Johnston replies that the objects themselves are also important in the physical chain of events that generates the mental experience, then he must answer how this object could act at a distance to influence the effect.

However, there also seems to be a gist of a different response in Johnston’s objection, which rejects the assumption of the same-cause-same-effect principle that is present in the good-to-bad causal argument. Recall that according to the naïve realist, objects and properties themselves are partly responsible for constituting the perceptual experience:

The given event could not have occurred without these entities existing and being constituents of it; in turn, one could not have had such a kind of event without there being relevant candidate objects of perception to be apprehended. So, even if those

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<sup>87</sup> Johnston, “The Obscure Object of Hallucination,” 229.

objects are implicated in the causes of the experience, they also figure non-causally as essential constituents of it.<sup>88</sup>

What Martin is advocating here, is that objects can figure non-causally as constituents of experiences, and that the same-cause-same-effect principle therefore does not apply in this context. Even if the proximate cause in the brain is similar in the artificially induced hallucination, this will not lead to the same effect as in the case of veridical perception since the perceptual experience has external objects as non-causal constituents. We do not even need to accept Martin's type of naïve realism for this conclusion, accepting externalism about mental content leads to the same result: when Oscar has a certain brain state, he is thinking about H<sub>2</sub>O, while the similar brain state of his twin can correspond with this twin's thinking about XYZ.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the good-to-bad causal argument cannot be used as a convincing argument against disjunctivism.

### 3.5.1. The bad-to-good causal argument

Perhaps the second version of the causal argument, the bad-to-good causal argument, can be more successful in its task of refuting disjunctivism. In this version of the argument, one, again, starts from a thought experiment in which a hallucination is artificially induced by reproducing the proximate cause in the brain which is normally present when veridically perceiving. It seems natural to suppose that the subject will then undergo a hallucinatory experience that is *at least* indistinguishable from a veridical perception – notice that the assumption that this experience must be of the same kind is dropped. We are then asked to consider the effect that is caused in the bad case of hallucination. This effect, the hallucinatory experience, does not have any non-causal constituents in contrast with what the disjunctivist claimed in the case of veridical perception. So it seems we are now allowed to apply the same-cause-same-effect principle to conclude that in the case of veridical perception, the same effect must be produced as in the case of the hallucination.

At first glance, this might appear unproblematic for the disjunctivist. For nothing in this argument rules out that in the veridical perception something extra is going on besides the effect which is present in the corresponding hallucination. Nevertheless, it does constitute a problem. When we introspect our perceptual experiences we are normally not aware of them consisting of two parts, one of which could also be present in hallucination. And if we argue that the perceptual experience somehow trumps the hallucinatory experience, we need to explain how this might be

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<sup>88</sup> Martin, "The Limits of Self-Awareness," 288.

<sup>89</sup> See Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning'," in *Mind, Language and Reality: Philosophical Papers Vol. 2* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 215-271.

possible, since the hallucinatory experience can also be introspected. To posit some kind of dual experience in veridical perception thus appears problematic. Fortunately, Martin gives a different response on behalf of the disjunctivists:

What is distinctive of the rejection of the Common Kind Assumption is the thought that the most fundamental kind that the perceptual event is of, the kind in virtue of which the event has the nature that it does, is one which couldn't be instanced in the case of hallucination. So we can accommodate (6) [that in a veridical perceptual experience the same effect is generated as in a causally matching hallucination] while rejecting the Common Kind Assumption by claiming that while the perceptual event is of a fundamental kind which could not occur when hallucinating, nonetheless this very same event is also of some other psychological kind or kinds which a causally matching hallucinatory event (i.e. one brought about by the same proximate causal conditions) belongs to.<sup>90</sup>

What the disjunctivist needs to do, according to Martin, is to show that a hallucinatory experience is of fundamental kind *H*, and that a perceptual experience is also of kind *H* but at the same time of *fundamental* kind *P*. With this explanation, however, the disjunctivist would not yet be in the clear, because he must also show that it is in virtue of being of fundamental kind *P* that a perceptual experience has its causal and rational powers. If the disjunctivist is not able to do so, the perceptual experience would still become explanatory redundant, since being of kind *H* would then be able to accommodate all causal and rational consequences of a genuine perception. This would make the perceptual experience an epiphenomenon about which one would have reason to be sceptical. Martin offers the following solution for these issues:

There is a sense, then, in which the disjunctivist insists that there is only a negative characterisation of causally matching hallucinatory experience: it is nothing but a situation which could not be told apart from veridical perception. This fact links with the formal concern mentioned at the start of our discussion of (6): how could it be that the veridical perception is fundamentally of one kind and yet also of some other kind which it shares with the hallucination, where the hallucination must fundamentally be of that kind. Clearly for a veridical perception, being a veridical perception of a tree is a better candidate for being its fundamental or essential kind than being indiscriminable from being such a veridical perception.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Martin, "The Limits of Self-Awareness," 291.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 301.

The proposal is that causally matching hallucinations only share a certain negative epistemic property with veridical perceptual experiences: the property that it cannot be told apart from a veridical perception by its subject. Further more, the explanatory powers of a hallucinatory experience can now be shown to be parasitic on the more fundamental property of being a veridical perception. How can we explain someone's running away when he is hallucinating a tiger? Well, a subject undergoing a hallucination of a tiger acts the way he does because he would act in a similar way if he were actually having a veridical perception of a tiger. The property of being indiscriminable from a veridical perception only has the consequences it does because it is parasitic on the veridical perception.

Perhaps an analogy will make Martin's solution more clear. Take the example of a banknote and a perfect forgery of this banknote. If the forgery really is indiscriminable from the banknote, it will have the same effects as a genuine banknote: if no one is able to detect any differences, then I can use the forged banknote as I would use the genuine banknote, e.g. to buy things or to pay off a debt to a friend. It is the forgery's being indiscriminable from a genuine banknote that is responsible for these causal powers, a property which it shares trivially with a genuine banknote. However, in the case of the genuine banknote, it would be strange to claim that it had its causal powers because of the property of being indiscriminable from a genuine banknote. A genuine banknote has the causal powers it has because of its being a genuine banknote! This last property is one that it does not share with a forgery: this is exactly what makes the genuine banknote a member of a different fundamental kind than the forgery. In a similar way, Martin proposes that a causally matching hallucination shares with a veridical perception the property of being indiscriminable from a veridical perception. This explains why the hallucination has similar effects as the genuine perception, while it also leaves untouched that a veridical perception has the effects it has because of its being a veridical perception.

The consequence of this theory is that the most inclusive way to characterise hallucinations is that they are indistinguishable from veridical perceptions. Because of this negative characterization, this version of disjunctivism can be called 'negative disjunctivism'. In the next chapter, we look at specific ways of cashing out this negative criterion of hallucinations proposed by Martin and Fish, and arguments that have been raised against them.

## Chapter 4.

# Negative disjunctivism

In the previous chapter, we looked at the historical development of disjunctivism, and the way in which disjunctivism defends naïve realism against the argument from hallucination. According to disjunctivism, perception and hallucination are two fundamentally different mental events, so the fact that we are not directly related to mind-independent objects in a case of hallucination should not count against the possibility of being directly related to these objects in a case of genuine perception. Further, we have seen that the subjective indistinguishability of hallucination and veridical perception provides no refutation of disjunctivism, and that the causal argument also cannot prove disjunctivism to be wrong. Nevertheless, the causal argument does force disjunctivism into giving a purely negative epistemic characterization of causally matching hallucinations: they are experiences that are indiscriminable from a veridical perception. In this chapter, we look at two different ways of explaining this criterion of indiscriminability proposed by M.G.F. Martin and William Fish, and at several arguments that have been raised against them. I argue that Fish fails to see what grounds the arguments against Martin, and that these underlying issues are fatal to Fish's own view on hallucination and perception. Moreover, I argue that if we interpret Martin correctly, the arguments raised against him can be seen to miss the mark, and that his version of disjunctivism is the most convincing there is.

### 4.1. Indiscriminability according to Martin

Martin believes that the indiscriminability of two experiences should be explained in terms of 'not possibly knowing them to be different':

[...] the relevant conception of what it is for one thing to be indiscriminable from another is that of not possibly knowing it to be distinct from the other. To be somewhat more precise, since here we are concerned with knowing of individual experiences whether they are among the veridical perceptions or not, [...] [an experience  $x$  is indiscriminable from veridical perception if and only if]  $x$  is such that it is not possible to know through reflection that it is not one of the veridical perceptions [...].<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> M.G.F. Martin, "On Being Alienated," in *Perceptual Experience*, ed. Tamar Szabó Gendler and John Hawthorne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 363-4.



The example Martin works with is that of having a visual experience of a white picket fence. If it cannot possibly be known through reflection that my experience is not a veridical perception of a white picket fence, then my experience is indiscriminable from a veridical perception and thereby this experience counts as an experience of a white picket fence. We must remind ourselves, however, that on Martin's view experiences of a white picket fence do not constitute a homogeneous kind. One can either be hallucinating a white picket fence or genuinely perceiving a white picket fence, and these are fundamentally different kinds of mental events. Nevertheless, both count as an experience of a white picket fence because the subject is not able to tell the difference. This shows that Martin takes the subject's perspective seriously: if it seems to the subject that he is having a visual experience of a white picket fence, then he is having a visual experience of a white picket fence, even though he might not know what fundamental kind of experience this actually is.

Returning again to Martin's account of indiscriminability, it is important to highlight the phrase 'through reflection' in his definition that an experience is indiscriminable from a veridical perception, if it is impossible through reflection to know that it is not a veridical perception. A subject might know on different grounds than through reflection that he is not veridically perceiving a white picket fence, without thereby ceasing to have an experience of a white picket fence. For example, you might tell me that you are going to induce in me a hallucination of a white picket fence by means of some sort of brain stimulation. After undergoing the brain stimulation, I will, if everything goes right, undergo a hallucination of a white picket fence. However, because of your testimony, (and because I know that you are an honest person, etc.) I will know that it is only a hallucination and not a veridical perception. So here we have a case in which I know that I am not having a veridical perception of a white picket fence but where we should still maintain that I am having an experience of a white picket fence. Martin wants to exclude these sorts of situations by concentrating on what a subject can possibly know through reflection on his actual circumstances. In the previous example, I could not know *through reflection* on my circumstances that I was not veridically perceiving a white picket fence, and therefore I was having an experience of a white picket fence.

Compare this with an example by Scott Sturgeon:

During the summer of 2005 my wife and I used a big fan in our flat. We then stopped monitoring our toddler's sleep for the first time. The result was a distinctive pattern of auditory hallucination. Every night I would 'hear' Sascha, our daughter, crying; but after several trips down the hall—over several nights—the hallucinatory nature of the set up became known.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Scott Sturgeon, "Disjunctivism about Visual Experience," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona MacPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 137.

This case creates a difficulty for Martin's definition, since it shows the problems that arise in applying the through-reflection-clause. What we would like to say, is that Sturgeon's knowledge of his previous hallucinations<sup>94</sup> does not fall under knowledge acquired through reflection. Sturgeon could then be said to have a hallucinatory experience of the crying of his daughter, since he could not possibly have known through reflection that it was not a veridical perception of the crying of his daughter. So perhaps we should not allow background beliefs to play a role for knowledge through reflection. But if we do so, this generates problems for what the disjunctivist would want to count as knowledge through reflection.<sup>95</sup> For instance, if I hallucinate a white picket fence, I know that I am not veridically perceiving a blue car, which explains why I cannot be said to have an experience of a blue car. This appears to suggest that background beliefs do play a part in the knowledge that can be attained through reflection; for instance, I must know that a blue car looks different from a white picket fence. The problem thus lies in specifying those background beliefs that are allowed to play a role in acquiring knowledge through reflection, and those that are not. To tackle this problem, it is interesting to notice that Martin often writes about knowing through *introspective* reflection, or about introspective reflection in general<sup>96</sup>, thus supplying us with at least an intuitive understanding of the through-reflection-clause. Since I do not now know by introspection that I have had a recurring hallucination – reflection on the nature of my experience alone could not tell me that this was a recurring hallucination – this does not count as the right kind of knowledge. I do know by introspection that I am not now perceiving a blue car, so this does count as the right kind of knowledge. Because of this, I do not think that the problem about the through-reflection clause is insurmountable for Martin's account of indiscriminability.

One last issue with Martin's criterion of indiscriminability has to do with the question *for whom* it is impossible to know that the experience is not a veridical perception:

Imagine the case of John who has normal sensory sensitivity but is very much in a world of his own and inattentive to things he sees or tastes. Let's suppose that John doesn't do well at telling scarlet from vermillion. Just as he is bad at telling apart samples of these shades of red, so we may suppose him inattentive at telling apart the visual experiences of these samples.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> We can skip the question whether this is really a case of hallucination or a case of illusion, since the example can of course be adjusted to make it clear that we are dealing with a case of hallucination.

<sup>95</sup> Sturgeon, "Disjunctivism about Visual Experience," 138.

<sup>96</sup> Martin, "On Being Alienated," e.g. 362, 367, 379, 381, 385.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

If this is really the case, then John cannot possibly know that his visual experience of scarlet is not a veridical perception of vermillion, and neither can he know that his visual experience of vermillion is not a veridical perception of scarlet. This would then lead to the conclusion that both these experiences should be the same. Yet the naïve realist is committed to saying that these experiences are different, since they are partly constituted by the objects and properties in the world. To solve this problem, Martin claims the relevant notion of indiscriminability in the criterion is an impersonal notion:

[...] when we are comparing experiences as relevantly alike or not, we are not concerned with whether John himself is particularly attentive to the subtle variations in colour appearance, or whether he has a good visual memory; rather, we are interested in whether with respect to the mode of introspective reflection the situations can be discriminated or not. So we are interested in the impersonal notion of inability or incapacity here. That is we are interested in the claim that John is in a situation for which it is impossible *simpliciter* and not just impossible for John to tell apart through introspective reflection from a veridical perception of a patch of scarlet.<sup>98</sup>

Now in the case of there actually being a sample of vermillion or a sample of scarlet in front of John, this solution makes sense. In such a case, we could imagine someone with a better eye for colour in John's place who would be able to make the distinction, and since the naïve realist believes that the sample of scarlet or the sample of vermillion itself partly constitutes the experience, we can conclude that the experiences are also different in John's case. The situation becomes more difficult, however, if we suppose John to be hallucinating. Does it make sense to suppose that John is hallucinating a sample of vermillion and not a sample of scarlet if he himself is not able to spot the difference between samples of scarlet and samples of vermillion? At least the impersonal notion of indiscriminability seems difficult to apply here, for it is not clear how we could imagine someone else being in the same situation as John is in this case.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, without having recourse to John's own capacities of discrimination, it seems the disjunctivist cannot even specify the situation John is in, since the only property of his hallucination is that of being indiscriminable from a certain veridical perception. To determine which veridical perception it is indiscriminable from, we must look at John's own capacities. This has the consequence that it makes no sense to claim that John is having a hallucination of a vermillion patch, or a hallucination of a scarlet patch. We can only claim of John that he is having a hallucination of a red patch.

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

<sup>99</sup> My argument here draws on an argument by Susanna Siegel, "The Epistemic Conception of Hallucination," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona MacPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 211-14.

If this result appears too implausible, there is another, and I believe better, way the disjunctivist could handle inattentive perceivers like John. This option would make more use of the modal aspect there is in Martin's account of indiscriminability. Supposing John's eyesight to be normal, it is possible for him to discriminate scarlet from vermillion. He is not like an individual who is red/green colour blind for whom it is impossible to discriminate red from green. If we take this line, we would not even have to make use of an impersonal notion of indiscriminability; we could just point to other people to show that it is possible for John to discriminate scarlet from vermillion. And if it is within John's power to do so in the case of veridical perception, then there is no reason why this should not be in his power in the case of hallucination.

## **4.2. Objections against Martin's account of indiscriminability**

Two important arguments have been raised against Martin's specific account of the indiscriminability condition for hallucinatory experiences: first, that this account does not give necessary conditions for being a hallucinatory experience; second, that this account does not give sufficient conditions for being a hallucinatory experience. Let us begin by examining the argument against the necessity of Martin's proposed characterisation of hallucinatory experiences.

According to Martin, a hallucination is an experience which is indiscriminable from a veridical perception. Martin takes this indiscriminability to mean that a hallucination is an experience of which it is impossible to know that it is not a veridical perception. Susanna Siegel, however, objects that this criterion will fail for cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators.<sup>100</sup> According to Siegel, it is possible for animals, or any creatures with senses for that matter, to hallucinate. The idea is simple: if a creature has the capacity to perceive its environment, then it should be possible for this creature to misperceive its environment or, even worse, to have a hallucinatory experience. Further, such a creature need not have the cognitive equipment that is required to form judgements that could count as knowledge. If the creature cannot have knowledge at all, then it follows that it cannot have knowledge that its current experience is not a veridical perception of some sort. Thus, according to Martin's criterion, all hallucinations of a cognitively unsophisticated hallucinator will be experientially alike, since the creature in question could not possibly know that its hallucination was not a veridical perception of a tree, or know that its hallucination was not a veridical perception of a white picket fence, etc. This conclusion is absurd: animals can have hallucinations, and they can have different hallucinations for that matter. So Martin's criterion does not give us necessary conditions for hallucinatory experiences.

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<sup>100</sup> Siegel, "The Epistemic Conception of Hallucination."

Martin's first response to this objection is an appeal to the impersonal notion of indiscriminability. That is, we are not interested in whether, for example, a dog could discriminate its hallucinatory experience from a veridical perception, but rather whether the experience itself could be discriminated from a veridical perception. However, we here encounter the same problem as we saw earlier in the case of John: we cannot specify the dog's situation without making use of the capacities of the dog itself. As long as we construe the indiscriminability of experiences by means of what is, or what is not, knowable through introspection, the dog just will not be able to have different hallucinatory experiences because it is incapable of knowledge. Martin does recognize this problem with the appeal to the impersonal notion of indiscriminability:

But it really is not clear how establishing the possibility of impersonal claims of indiscriminability will help with our initial problem in respect of the dog. While we do use such claims without singling out any specific defects of agents, the example of invisibility still suggests that they are focused on certain aspects of agents which will not carry over to the case of the dog. For example, where we do praise the mend as being invisible, even if we need not then be speaking of any specific failing in Jones's sight, still we do seem to be talking about sight, a psychological capacity, and what can or cannot be known through its use.<sup>101</sup>

Further, it is also not yet clear how an appeal to the modal aspect of the indiscriminability criterion could help as it did in the case of John. In what sense could it be possible for the dog to have knowledge of its hallucinatory experiences? We could of course imagine the dog having ideal reflective knowledge but then it is questionable whether it would still be a *dog* undergoing the hallucination.<sup>102</sup> It appears Martin's indiscriminability criterion faces serious difficulties in supplying necessary conditions for hallucinatory experiences.

A second problem arises in giving sufficient conditions for hallucinatory experiences. A.D. Smith has argued that Martin's criterion is incapable of distinguishing between hallucinatory experiences and other types of mental events, 'very bad cases' as Smith calls them, that should not be counted as sensory experiences at all.<sup>103</sup> Smith gives three examples of such very bad cases: dreams, hypnotic experiences, and what we might call 'tachistoscopic' experiences. Starting with the last, tachistoscopic experiences are induced in psychological experiments

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<sup>101</sup> Martin, "On Being Alienated," 383.

<sup>102</sup> See the remarks on possibility in section 2.1; also see Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance Renewed*, especially chapter four, "Individuative Essentialism," 107-38.

<sup>103</sup> A.D. Smith, "Disjunctivism and Discriminability," in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*, ed. Adrian Haddock and Fiona MacPherson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 181-204.

where subjects are asked to watch images briefly flashed on the screen by a tachistoscope. In these experiments, subjects often give false positives: they claim to have seen something while no image was in fact at that moment projected onto the screen. According to Smith, this tachistoscopic experience is problematic for Martin, since the subject cannot possibly know by introspective reflection that it is not a veridical perception of an image that flashed on the screen. Nevertheless, we would not want to call such an experience a hallucination, which shows that Martin has not supplied sufficient conditions for being a hallucinatory experience.

Smith has a similar story about dreams and hypnotic experiences. In both these bad cases, the subject might not possibly know on the basis of introspective reflection that he is not having a veridical perception of some sort. When a person is dreaming, he is often not in the right circumstances to know that he is not having a veridical perception but we would still want to distinguish this type of experience from the sensory kind of experience hallucination belongs to. The case of hypnosis appears to be even worse: a subject hypnotised to believe that he is looking at a white picket fence might not possibly know that he is not having a veridical perception of a white picket fence. Yet we would not want to say that he is having a hallucinatory experience of a white picket fence. All these cases show, according to Smith, that Martin's criterion of indiscriminability does not supply sufficient conditions for being a hallucinatory experience because it cannot distinguish certain non-sensory experiences from sensory experiences.

Let me express a doubt about the correctness of two out of Smith's three examples. Starting again with the tachistoscopic case, it is not clear at all whether Martin's criterion has been correctly applied here. According to Martin, something counts as an experience of an image flashing on the screen if it cannot be known not to be a veridical perception. In the tachistoscopic case, what appears to be going on is that the subject has not in fact had an experience at all, but only seems to remember that he has had an experience. If there was no experience, then there is no experience of which we can sensibly ask whether it could be known not to be a veridical perception. Indeed, if there was no experience, then there was no experience of which it could be said to have been a hallucinatory experience. On the other hand, if Smith wants to focus on the experience of seeming to remember having had an experience, then we can apply Martin's criterion and it will come out right: a subject *can* distinguish seeming to remember having had an experience of a flash from a veridical perception of a flash. So tachistoscopic experiences do not count as good examples against the sufficiency of Martin's criterion.

Moving on to a second example of Smith's, the very bad case of dreaming is problematic for two reasons. First of all, it is not clear whether dreaming should be distinguished from having a hallucination. If, in the dream, it really appears to me that I am veridically perceiving, then is this not a kind of hallucination? Second, it is questionable whether it is impossible for a subject to know that he is not having a

veridical perception in a dream, since there are so-called ‘lucid dreams’, dreams in which the subject is aware that he is dreaming. So using dreams as examples against Martin’s criterion is not a very strong move. Thus, the only example Smith is left with is that of hypnotic experiences.<sup>104</sup> These might appear problematic, for how could a subject under hypnosis possibly discriminate his hypnotic experience from a veridical perception? This example alone, then, seems sufficient to demonstrate the insufficiency of Martin’s criterion.

It seems that Martin’s way of spelling out the indiscriminability criterion gives us an unsatisfactory definition of what hallucinations are. It might therefore be a good idea to see whether a different account of this criterion will deliver more fulfilling results. The next section focuses on such a different account proposed by William Fish.

### 4.3. Indiscriminability according to Fish

According to Fish, Martin is right in looking at indiscriminability as the important property of a hallucination. Instead of Martin though, who focuses on introspective reflection to spell out what this property comes down to, Fish concentrates on the effects of a hallucination:

Given an understanding of indiscriminability as involving not-knowable distinctness, then what is of central importance to the question of whether two states are indiscriminable is a matter not of the mechanisms of introspection themselves, but rather of the knowledge that introspection can yield. Thus, we can interpret the requirements placed on hallucination as insisting (1) that a hallucination must not fail to produce any judgments or beliefs that would have been produced by a veridical perception of the relevant kind and (2) that a hallucination must not produce any beliefs or judgments that would not have been produced by a veridical perception of the relevant kind.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, what makes a hallucination indiscriminable from a veridical perception is that it produces the same effects as a veridical perception would have done. Fish formalises his definition as follows:

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<sup>104</sup> Although it is controversial in psychology whether hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness, and whether a ‘hypnotic hallucination’ is different from other forms of hallucination. See e.g. Sakari Kallio and Antti Revonsuo, “Hypnotic phenomena and altered states of consciousness: a multilevel framework of description and explanation,” *Contemporary Hypnosis* 20 (2003): 111-64.; Giuliana Mazzioni et al., “Suggested visual hallucinations in and out of hypnosis,” *Consciousness and Cognition* 18 (2009): 494-99.

<sup>105</sup> Fish, *Perception, Hallucination, And Illusion*, 94.

For all mental events,  $e$ , in doxastic setting  $D$  with cognitive effects  $C$  (in its subject),  $e$  is a pure hallucination of an  $F$ , if and only if

- $e$  lacks phenomenal character, and
- there is some possible veridical visual experience of an  $F$ ,  $V$ , that has a rational subject who is in  $D$  and produces  $C$ , and
- $C$  is nonempty.<sup>106</sup>

Notice that where Martin did not claim that a hallucination lacked phenomenal character entirely – Martin just claimed that the phenomenal character of a hallucination was exhausted by its being indiscriminable from a veridical perception – Fish does claim this, and indeed, makes this the first condition in his definition of a hallucination. Although it appears to the subject that a hallucination does have phenomenal character, Fish believes this is nothing more than mere appearance: for how could it seem otherwise to the subject if the hallucination brings about all the same effects as a veridical perception would have done? Not only does a hallucination of, say, a tree, bring about that I believe there is a tree in front of me, but also that I believe that I am having the experience of seeing a tree. Thus, even if the hallucination does not really have phenomenal character, it certainly appears to have phenomenal character to the subject undergoing the hallucination.

A second important difference with Martin's definition, is that Fish's definition "provides an account of what makes a hallucination indiscriminable on a particular occasion; it states the conditions that need to be met for a mental event to be indiscriminable from a veridical perception at a particular time rather than indiscriminable per se."<sup>107</sup> Indeed, since Fish wants to eliminate phenomenal character, he believes it is impossible to give an account of indiscriminability per se. Believing that this is possible derives, according to Fish, precisely from the mistaken idea that a hallucination and a veridical perception share a common phenomenal character.

A last important distinction between Martin's and Fish's definitions of hallucinations, is that Fish disposes of Martin's through-(introspective-) reflection clause. Recall that Martin introduced this clause to include experiences of people who knew they were going to hallucinate as hallucinatory experiences. A person who is told that he will undergo an artificially induced hallucination of a white picket fence, knows that he is later not veridically perceiving a white picket fence. However, he knows this, not on the basis of introspective reflection, but on testimony from whoever told him he was going to have that hallucination. Fish already incorporates such possible hallucinations in his definition by referring to the doxastic setting  $D$  of the hallucination. Take a look again at the example of the person who is told that he

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 95.



will undergo a hallucination of a white picket fence. Suppose this person is then blindfolded and put in front of a white picket fence, after which the blindfold is removed. Even though in this case the person *is* veridically perceiving a white picket fence, he will not believe he is because of the false testimony. Thus, a veridical perception of a white picket fence would in this doxastic setting *D* have the same consequences as a hallucination of a white picket fence. The same goes for the earlier mentioned example of Sturgeon, who hallucinated the crying of his daughter, but knew it was only a hallucination. If his daughter had in fact been crying, he would have reacted in the same way, so his hallucination is correctly determined to be a hallucination on the basis of Fish's definition. So Fish is able to deal with resisted hallucinations without resorting to Martin's through-reflection clause.

#### **4.4. Revisiting cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators and hypnotic experiences**

Now that we have had the opportunity to look at Fish's account of indiscriminability and several of the differences with that of Martin, we must ask ourselves whether it fares any better in the light of the previous objections. Let us begin by considering cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators again. What could Fish say about the hallucination of a dog, for instance? At first glance, this does not create a problem for his proposed definition. To determine whether a dog is hallucinating, we must investigate whether the dog is in a mental state that has similar cognitive effects as a veridical perception. This focus on cognitive effects instead of on knowledge, makes the case of a hallucinating dog a lot easier to handle. For we can count the behavioural responses of the dog as cognitive effects of the hallucination. Thus, if a dog is hallucinating, say, a sausage, then the dog must react in the way he would have done were he actually perceiving a sausage.

One objection to this account, raised by Siegel,<sup>108</sup> lies in the possibility of animals who lack behavioural responses to a hallucination because of, for example, lethargy arising from a certain illness. Fish discusses this problem in a footnote:

To insist that it is possible for the cat to have such a hallucination in the absence of any behavioral evidence would seem to take for granted that we can identify a mental state as a hallucination by reference to certain intrinsic features it has. Once again, though, the present account rejects this claim—mental states only qualify as hallucinations inasmuch as they have the right kinds of effects. In the case of animals, however, I do not profess to have any particular intuitions as to what these effects are—I leave answering that question to those who are engaged in these fields of research.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Siegel, "The Epistemic Conception of Hallucination."

<sup>109</sup> Fish, *Perception, Hallucination, And Illusion*, 104-5, fn. 26.

So according to Fish, if an animal shows no behavioural responses whatsoever, the supposition that it could still be hallucinating would be grounded in the Common Element conception of hallucination that the disjunctivist rejects. Perhaps it is possible that the animal is hallucinating without showing behavioural responses, but then there should be other cognitive effects present that are the same as those effects that are present in the case of veridical perception. Still, there is a residual doubt about Fish's approach. Before exploring this doubt though, let us look at how Fish's account of indiscriminability is able to handle Smith's very bad case of hypnotic experience.

For Martin, the problem with hypnosis was that the subject undergoing it could not possibly know that he was not having a veridical perception, while we would not want to count the hypnotic experience as a hallucinatory experience. For Fish, hypnotic experiences also appear to constitute a problem, since a subject under hypnosis who was made to believe that he was looking at a tiger, might very well respond in the same way as he would have done were he veridically perceiving a tiger. That is, the cognitive effects *C* of a subject's hypnotic state in doxastic setting *D* could be the same as those of a rational subject's veridical perception in *D*. The way out for Fish lies in his first condition: the mental event *e* is not allowed to have phenomenal character. Contrary to this condition, the experience of a subject under hypnosis can reasonably be supposed to possess phenomenal character: "[t]here is no reason to assume that, to make you think such a thing [that your experience is peculiar in some way], the hypnotist would have to proceed by altering the phenomenal character of your experiential state in some special, peculiar way."<sup>110</sup> Thus, by pointing to the presence of phenomenal character, Fish has a response to the problem constituted by hypnosis.

In fact, phenomenal character is not only important in this response, but also appears to be the key issue in the debate about the indiscriminability of hallucinations. As we saw, according to Fish phenomenal character is not present in the case of hallucination. Smith and Siegel both assume that phenomenal character *must* be present in a hallucination, and this is what grounds their objections. Siegel believes that it is the phenomenal character that is responsible for the cognitive effects of a hallucination, while Fish holds that it is the cognitive effects of a hallucination that make us believe phenomenal character is present. This is exactly why Siegel maintains that it should be possible for an animal to have a hallucination without showing any behavioural responses, while Fish believes that an animal would not be having a hallucination in this case. In the objection Smith raises, again phenomenal character is the underlying issue. According to Smith, the difference between a subject who hallucinates a tree and a subject who is hypnotised to believe

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 83-4.

he perceives a tree is that in the former case, the tree is phenomenally present, while in the latter it is not. Fish, on the other hand, believes that in the former case, the tree is not phenomenally present, while in the latter case other objects (not the tree!) are phenomenally present, and this is what grounds the difference.

Thus, using Siegel's and Smith's objections will only result in begging the question: they assume similarity of phenomenal character between veridical perception and hallucination, which is exactly what Fish rejects. A similar mistake is made when Siegel argues against Fish that it should be possible for a subject to have a hallucination and then suddenly expire before the causal consequences come about.<sup>111</sup> Fish correctly responds when he writes:

In addressing this objection, recall that, on the definition given above, a mental event qualifies as a hallucination only inasmuch as it has the same cognitive effects as a certain kind of veridical perception would have had. If a mental event does not have these effects, then it is not a hallucination. So Siegel misrepresents the claim on the table when she says that a subject might hallucinate yet expire before the relevant effects occur. What might occur is that the subject undergoes a mental event that would have had the relevant effects—would have become a hallucination—had the subject not expired first.<sup>112</sup>

Although this reply might look counterintuitive, perhaps even outrageous, at first glance, this should not count too much in favour of Smith's and Siegel's view. For they have difficulty with the intuition that experience is transparent, as was established earlier.<sup>113</sup> Fortunately, I do not believe that we remain stuck with Fish's counterintuitive proposal, for I intend to give a non-questionbegging argument against the idea that hallucinations do not possess phenomenal character.

#### **4.5. Hallucination and memory**

The argument I present against Fish's eliminative account of the phenomenal character of hallucination, derives from an argument presented by Martin against the idea that perceptual content must be conceptual.<sup>114</sup> In his argument Martin focuses on the relation between experience, attention, and memory. It appears that it is possible that one has a certain experience but fails to notice all aspects of this experience.

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<sup>111</sup> Siegel, "The Epistemic Conception of Hallucination," 217.

<sup>112</sup> Fish, *Perception, Hallucination, And Illusion*, 100.

<sup>113</sup> See section 3.3.

<sup>114</sup> M.G.F. Martin, "Perception, Concepts, and Memory," *The Philosophical Review* 101 (1992): 745-763. Page references are to the reprint in York H. Gunther, ed., *Essays on Nonconceptual Content* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), 237-50.

However, on recalling the experience at a later time, one might very well notice new aspects of it:

Suppose that someone, Archie, is looking for a cuff link. He looks in a drawer but fails to notice it and continues searching the room. Eventually he gives up and leaves for dinner. On the way to dinner, he agitatedly thinks back to his search of the room. Having a relatively good visual memory, he recalls how things looked as he searched. Suddenly he realizes that the cuff link was in the drawer but that he had failed to notice it.<sup>115</sup>

A natural explanation of Archie's behaviour is the following. First, Archie did not notice where the cuff link was and therefore continued his search. Later, on recalling his experience, Archie focused on a previously unnoticed aspect, which made him realize that the cuff link was in the drawer. The belief that the cuff link was in the drawer was not present at first (why else would Archie continue his search of the room?) but on later recalling his experience Archie did acquire this belief.

Now Martin believes this relation between experience, attention, and memory constitutes an argument against conceptualism, because it shows that the content of perception is not constrained by the concepts one has at that moment. One could later acquire new concepts and then apply them to the memories you have of earlier experiences. Since I take the conceptualist to claim only that perceptual content is not nonconceptual, I do not believe this is a promising argument against him.<sup>116</sup> For our purpose here the relevant point to make is that a similar line of thought could be applied to hallucination, and that this can be used as an argument against Fish's account. Recall that according to Fish a hallucination in a certain situation is, roughly, a mental event with no phenomenal character and the same effects as a veridical perception would have had in that situation. This rules out the possibility that one has a hallucination but fails to notice a certain aspect of it, which could subsequently be discovered in recalling the hallucination. Thus, it cannot be the case that I hallucinate an object, fail to notice the colour of this object because I am distracted in some way, and later recall which colour the object had. Fish actually admits denying a similar possibility:

The suggestion is that one might hallucinate a doorknob, say, but not form any beliefs about either doorknobs or one's experiences because one is so occupied with thinking about pure mathematics. While intuition may suggest that such a situation is possible, my definition of hallucination denies that it is: because the definition requires that the set

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<sup>115</sup> Martin, "Perception, Concepts, and Memory," 240.

<sup>116</sup> Since it would still be possible to apply new concepts to a previously conceptualized content. Thus, one could apply the concept *ball* to a perceptual content that earlier contained the concept *round, red object that children play with*.

of cognitive effects be nonempty, if the mental event in question does not yield any cognitive effects at all, it cannot qualify as a hallucination.<sup>117</sup>

However, the argument I gave is a bit different. It is about the possibility of remembering a certain hallucination, and then discovering new aspects of it. And this possibility is unjustifiably excluded by Fish. In fact, since Fish denies phenomenal character of hallucination, the entire relation between hallucination and memory is a bit unclear. What is it exactly that you are recalling when you think back to a hallucination if not its phenomenal character?

Fish's strongest reply would have to be that when we recall a hallucination, we recall the higher-order beliefs about our supposed experience. We remember having hallucinated a red object, since we remember the belief that we have hallucinated a red object. Moreover, since Fish holds that hallucinations must have the same cognitive effects as veridical perception, this means memory should always work by recalling higher-order beliefs. This rules out *entirely* the possibility of noticing something new in recalling an experience, since that belief should have been acquired before. I see no reason to exclude this possibility, and take it as counting against Fish's proposed criterion of the indiscriminability of hallucination that it does exclude it. If Fish still intends to defend his rejection of this possibility, the burden of proof lies squarely on his shoulders.

#### **4.6. Reinterpreting Martin's criterion for indiscriminability**

The disjunctivist now appears to be in an unhappy position. It seems phenomenal character must be present in a hallucination, thus ruling out Fish's account of indiscriminability, but the account allowing phenomenal character, developed by Martin, was previously seen to be problematic. However, if we interpret Martin correctly, we shall see that his account also has the ability to reply to the objections raised by Smith and Siegel.

Let us recall Martin's notion of hallucinations and indiscriminability. According to Martin, the phenomenal character of a hallucination is entirely exhausted by its being indiscriminable from a veridical perception. This indiscriminability in turn implies that the hallucination cannot possibly be known through introspective reflection not to be a veridical perception. Now, as we have seen, the core of Siegel's and Smith's objections lies in their idea that phenomenal character must be present in hallucination. In fact, we could rephrase Siegel's argument as claiming that beliefs are not necessary for the phenomenal character of a hallucination, and Smith's argument as stating that beliefs are not sufficient to

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<sup>117</sup> Fish, *Perception, Hallucination, And Illusion*, 112.

guarantee phenomenal character of a hallucination. As a starting point for a reply to these objections, the following remark by Martin is relevant:

[...] [T]he disjunctivist needs to stress the connection between phenomenal consciousness and a point of view or perspective on the world. The negative epistemological condition when correctly interpreted will specify not a subject's cognitive response to their circumstances—and hence their knowledge or ignorance of how things are with them—but rather their perspective on the world. This is sufficient for it to be true of a subject that there is something it is like for them to be so. In that way we can say of the subject of causally matching hallucination that they must indeed possess phenomenal consciousness precisely because, in meeting the relevant condition for the negative epistemological property, they thereby possess a point of view on the world.<sup>118</sup>

The mistake Siegel and Smith both make when interpreting Martin's negative epistemological criterion of indiscriminability, is that they take the introspective knowledge to be a type of higher-order knowledge of mental states. Instead, what Martin wants to convey is that a subject undergoing a hallucination has a certain perspective on the world; it seems to him that the world appears to him in some way. *This* is the kind of knowledge that is meant in the criterion of indiscriminability. To be fair, this is not immediately clear from the way Martin formulates his criterion, but it does follow from his discussion of phenomenal consciousness and introspection underlying the entire previously cited article. According to Martin, introspection is not a separate, higher-order faculty by means of which we turn our eye towards our experiences in analogue with how we perceive objects in the world. By assuming such a view we might come to believe that there must be a common element between hallucination and perception since they both look the same to our eye of introspection. Instead, Martin takes introspection to coincide with experiencing itself: it is to have a point of view on the world. When we introspect our experience, we do not view this experience from a higher-order perspective; rather, we attend more closely to what is already presented in the experience.

Looking at Siegel's objection of cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators, this means that she has interpreted 'knowledge' in Martin's criterion in a far too strong way. Martin's use of 'knowledge' is not at all meant as specifying that a subject must have a specific type of beliefs about what he is experiencing. Siegel is aware of the possibility of such a response though:

Disjunctivists might try responding that dogs do not after all lack the kind of knowledge involved in the indiscriminability properties. To follow this strategy, the disjunctivist

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<sup>118</sup> Martin, "On Being Alienated," 378.

would first have to identify a general cognitive ability that dogs as well as cognitive sophisticates actually have, so that the notion of indiscriminability could be formulated using that notion. [...] So long as there could be a perceiver who lacked the ability to have the suitably undemanding kind of knowledge, however, the dog problem will return. To follow this strategy, disjunctivists would thus have to argue that any creature capable of having hallucinatory experiences is also capable of having this kind of knowledge.<sup>119</sup>

Although Siegel is sceptical in finding such a cognitive ability that all creatures capable of hallucination have, this scepticism might not be justified. It is, in fact, exactly that ability that makes these creatures into potential hallucinators: the ability to experience, to have a point of view on the world. Knowledge through introspective reflection should not amount to more than just being able to experience the world from a certain perspective. If a creature cannot possibly know that he is not having a veridical perception, the presented scene appears the same to it in both cases. What we learn from Fish is that our evidence for this kind of knowledge is, in the case of animals, to be found in their behavioural responses. How do we know that an animal does not know that it is not having a veridical perception, *i.e.* that the presented scene is no different to the animal than a scene that would be presented if it were having a veridical perception? Well, if we find a dog barking and straining at his leash as if there were a cat present, then we have good evidence that it appears to the dog that a cat is present. If in fact, no cat is present, then this can count as evidence for the fact that the dog hallucinated a cat. This can be so even if the phenomenal character of the experience is not reducible to (or eliminable in favour of) the behavioural effects. What the disjunctivist will deny, of course, is that the phenomenal character in this case is identical to the phenomenal character of a veridical perception of a cat. The fact that the experience is indiscriminable from a veridical perception, need not mean that the experience must be a veridical perception.

Smith's case of hypnotic experiences can now also be dealt with. When a subject is under hypnosis, there is no reason to suppose that his visual experiences are somehow altered by the hypnotist (as Fish also remarked). The introspective knowledge that comes with having a perspective on the world *is* present, it is just that the hypnotised subject is not in a position to make use of it.<sup>120</sup> The problem here is again a bad interpretation of what Martin means by 'knowledge'. If we take Martin to be alluding to certain higher-order beliefs about the experience, then Smith's example is convincing. For a subject hypnotised to believe he is perceiving a white picket fence might well have the same relevant higher-order beliefs as a subject who is

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<sup>119</sup> Siegel, "The Epistemic Conception of Hallucination," 213.

<sup>120</sup> Even this might give too much credit to Smith's argument; as my supervisor Dr. Lievers noted, hypnotised subjects can often know that they are hypnotised.

actually perceiving a white picket fence, thus making the situation in this sense indiscriminable. But, as we have seen, this is exactly not the kind of knowledge Martin is talking about.

Smith and Siegel might still not be convinced by the disjunctivist's answer. Their intuition would be that this appeal to introspective knowledge is just not open to the disjunctivist, since that would show the disjunctivist does allow a certain common element. Here we are back at the question begging move that we saw earlier used against Fish. The need for a common element is exactly what the disjunctivist denies: hallucination and perception can both appear similar without having the same phenomenal character.<sup>121</sup> So Martin's account of indiscriminability, when correctly interpreted, has nothing to fear from the objections raised by Siegel and Smith. Hallucination and veridical perception are two different mental events, the latter of which has the property of being a veridical perception, while the former only has the property of being indiscriminable from it; the property of being impossible to know through introspective reflection not to be a veridical perception.

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<sup>121</sup> See section 3.3.



# Conclusion

I have argued that disjunctivism about perception and hallucination can be maintained in a specific form, and that this opens up the possibility to uphold naïve realism in the face of the argument from hallucination. This latter argument presented a threat for naïve realism as it purported to show that perception could not be direct in the naïve realist's sense: since subjectively indistinguishable hallucinations are possible in which there are no objects present in the world to perceive, and since these hallucinatory experiences are the same fundamental kind of mental event as perceptual experiences, mind-independent objects cannot play an essential role in the constitution of perceptual experiences. Disjunctivism contests the second premise of the argument from hallucination: hallucination and veridical perception are fundamentally of a different kind, even though they might appear similar to the subject who has them. These epistemological appearances of hallucination and perception cannot, according to the disjunctivist, ground the ontological conclusion that they must be of the same fundamental kind.

Not only is disjunctivism a genuine theoretical option; it is an option that should be preferred to other theories, like sense-datum theory and intentionalism, that accept the argument from hallucination. Both sense-datum theory and intentionalism introduce an intermediary between subject and the world, which make them susceptible to familiar sceptical questions about the existence of that world and our way of attaining genuine knowledge about it. Sense-datum theory even implies, with its introduction of sense-data as mind-dependent objects of perception, an ontological addition of which we should be very sceptical. Disjunctivism, on the other hand, offers a defence of naïve realism, a theory of perception with great explanatory potential. Naïve realism offers the best explanation of why perceptual experience strikes us as being about objects in the world; it fits with the transparency of these experiences. Further, it gives us a way of removing the strength of the sceptical challenge by showing that we *can* stand in direct contact with the world itself. Finally, it allows us to specify perceptual content by reference to objects in the world itself, and also makes it understandable how it is possible to acquire the object-dependent content which is necessary for demonstrative reference. A theory of perception which has such explanatory potential should not be set aside too easily, and it counts in favour of disjunctivism that it defends such a theory.

However, not every form of disjunctivism is tenable and plausible. A specific restriction on disjunctivism arises from the bad-to-good causal argument against disjunctivism. If the same causal chain is present in a hallucinatory experience and in a veridical perceptual experience, then the veridical perceptual experience should also

incorporate the effect present in the hallucinatory experience. Although I have raised doubts about the validity of the causal argument based on its questionable empirical assumptions, there is still a good way a disjunctivist can accommodate its conclusion. To do so, the disjunctivist must only permit the property of being indiscriminable from a veridical perception as a property of causally matching hallucinations. This property is one it trivially shares with veridical perceptions, and one that does not make the property of being a veridical perception explanatorily redundant since the former is parasitic on the latter. The disjunctivist is thus driven to negative disjunctivism because of the causal argument.

The indiscriminability criterion the negative disjunctivist adheres to in his characterisation of hallucination, ought to allow hallucinatory experiences to have phenomenal character. Once one tries to define the indiscriminability of hallucination from veridical perception by concentrating solely on the similarity of their effects, as Fish does, counterintuitive answers must be given to problems raised by the possibility of cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators and hypnotic experiences. Nevertheless, counterintuitive answers are not necessarily wrong answers; to show in a nonquestion-begging way that denying the phenomenal character of hallucination is problematic I have pointed to the relation between hallucination, attention, and memory. If one denies that hallucinations have phenomenal character, one denies that one could, in recalling a certain hallucination, notice a new experiential aspect of that hallucination. Because excluding this possibility appears to be false, we should not deny hallucinations to have phenomenal character. This leaves us with M.G.F. Martin's definition for the indiscriminability of hallucination: a hallucination is indiscriminable from a veridical perception if it is impossible to know through introspective reflection that the hallucination is not a veridical perception. Once we see that the knowledge in this condition is meant as that which each creature has when it has a certain point of view on the world, and not as a collection of higher-order beliefs about one's own mental states, the fear for loss of phenomenal character should disappear. The phenomenal character of hallucination still remains different from that of a veridical perception, since the phenomenal character of a hallucination is exhausted by its being indiscriminable from a veridical perception, while the phenomenal character of the veridical perception itself is constituted by the objects in the world.

Thus, Martin's negative disjunctivism can escape the causal argument to defend naïve realism against the argument from hallucination. Perception is fundamentally different from hallucination, which makes it possible that perception relates us directly to objects in the world, even though hallucination only appears to do so.

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