

Fiona Macpherson and Dimitris Platchias (Eds.), *Hallucination: Philosophy and Psychology*

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*Hallucination: Philosophy and Psychology* is an edited MIT press collection that contributes to the (analytic) philosophy of perception. This collection is a significant addition to the literature both for its excellent choice of texts, and its emphasis on the case of hallucinations. Dedicating a volume to hallucinatory phenomena may seem somewhat peculiar for those not entrenched in the analytic philosophy of perception, but it is easy enough to grasp their significance. Theories of perception aim to give a fundamental characterization of perceptual experience, which are experiences with a *sensory* phenomenal character. Such perceptual experiences (henceforth experiences) include cases of successfully perceiving something, but also some cases of merely seeming to perceive. This is because *prima facie*, some cases of seeming to perceive are more than merely *thinking* that one does (such cases would be instances of thought not perception); they are cases of *misperceiving*. Hallucinations are thought to be such cases. In undergoing them, one's experience has a sensory character much like, possibly even identical to, successful cases of perception. This makes hallucinations a central explanandum for theories of perceptual experience.

The focus on hallucinations, however, is justified by more than their being a case of misperception. Hallucinations are thought to have a distinguishing feature that makes them particularly significant and problematic for a theory of experience. This can be brought out by comparing them to the other major category of misperception, illusions. Typically the difference between these cases is glossed by saying "In a hallucination, perceptual contact is missing; [while] illusions are misleading guides to what is in the environment"<sup>1</sup>. The idea is that illusions allow us to perceive the object despite the misleading appearance. Thus a partly submerged pencil looks bent but is straight, but it is *that* very pencil which is seen as bent. By contrast hallucinations are thought to be more extreme. The hallucination has a sensory character, e.g. a cat appears to the hallucinator, yet *that* cat is simply not there. Moreover there may be nothing remotely cat-like at all where the hallucination appears to be located; one may be looking at a plain white wall, or indeed be altogether blind. Thus plausibly hallucinations possess a 'world-severing' nature, they 'cut us off' from the world around us by showing us something that is not there.

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<sup>1</sup> Siegel 2012, p.34

This world-severing construal of hallucinations has had considerable impact through philosophical history. If hallucinations of this sort are possible, then the simplest view of experience - that they simply relate us to the world - requires modification. Thus the case for indirect realism in early modern and early analytic philosophy are easily launched from observing that such hallucinations are possible (this is the argument from hallucinations), and in the early phenomenological tradition we also the impact of these cases, for instance, on Husserl, who makes use of the *epoché* partly by way of eliminating issues raised by hallucinations.<sup>2</sup> The contemporary philosophy of perception is similarly affected by these cases. Two views currently dominate the analytic scene, intentionalism (sometimes representationalism) and relationalism (sometimes naïve realism). Intentionalist views construe experience as consisting most fundamentally in a way of representing the world. Experiences thus involve 'entertaining' a representational content with the difference between veridical and nonveridical cases depending on the relation obtaining between that content and what it represents.<sup>3</sup> By contrast relational views take experiences to consist most fundamentally in an 'immediate' relation (sometimes called *acquaintance*, following Russell) to worldly objects. The difference of interest between these views (there are many other important differences)<sup>4</sup> is that while intentionalism leaves room for perceptually representing the world to be thus and so regardless of whether it is or not, relationalists think that experiences simply relate us to the world, so what is perceived must both exist and be present to the perceiver.

Given their commitments, intentionalists generally have an easier time with hallucinations. For the intentionalist, entertaining a content when the object is absent is sufficient for hallucinating. This produces a natural connection between intentionalism and a conjunctive analyses of experience. On this sort of analysis, there is a common factor shared by perceptions and hallucinations, and it is this factor which accounts for the sensory character of experiences. External factors then further specify whether the case is a hallucination or ordinary perception. Relationalists, by contrast, cannot give this same straightforward response since experiences always depend on the presence of worldly objects. Typically what is suggested in place is a disjunctive analysis of experience, where perceptions and hallucinations lack a common factor sufficient for sensory character. The indiscriminability of perceptions and hallucinations is then explained through some other route, for instance, by arguing as Martin (2006) does that

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2 For instance in *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl excludes the evidence of the world's existence on the basis that "the whole unitarily surveyable nexus...can prove to be an illusion, a coherent dream" (p.57 of the original text). For more on this issue in Husserl and also Heidegger, see McManus 1996.

3 How the content is entertained varies from one view to another (e.g. see Pautz 2010, Siegel 2012, and Schellenberg 2011). It is also worth noting that is not an intentionalist commitment that perception be indirect. The commitment is to saying that one perceives worldly object (usually directly) by entering a representational state with a certain content, not that one perceives worldly objects by *perceiving* a representational content.

4 For more on these differences, see the works cited.

hallucinations are most fundamentally characterized by their possessing the epistemic property of being indiscriminable from corresponding perceptions. This is not to say that all intentionalist views are conjunctivist (for instance Tye 2011) or all relationalist views are disjunctivist (for instance Johnston 2004). However, there is clearly an affinity between these pairs of views, and for the sake of organizing what follows, I assume these pairs go hand in hand.

While the value of this collection can be most clearly seen in relation to the intentionalist/relationalist debate, with the focus on hallucinations moving us towards the heart of one fundamental dispute between the views, the collection deals with more than just this debate. The chapters divide into psychological and philosophical papers, and the psychological papers present recent work on hallucinations that is of significance to anyone thinking about these phenomena. The empirical pieces begin with Ffytche's detailed paper on Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) which is one of the more robust cases of visual hallucination. He argues that of two possible characterizations of hallucinations (one that treats them as genuinely perceptual, and another that treats them as mental imagery akin to imagining or remembering), CBS cases are genuinely perceptual (which may lend support to intentionalism). The fourth paper by da Silva also explores visual hallucinations, in this case those had by normal and Parkinson's disease populations. The paper concludes that such hallucinations are primarily due to the malfunctioning of visual systems and systems related to deep sleep. The second and third papers, by Bentall & Varese, and Fernyhough & McCarthy-Jones, turn the focus to auditory hallucinations and the question of source monitoring (both also link this to developmental factors), where the idea is that (at least) auditory hallucinations may be internally generated but not experienced as such because the hallucinator fails to monitor their inner speech. The final intriguing paper by Naish starts with an argument for the reality of hypnosis through experiments focusing on time-distortion when hypnotized, and then argues that cases of hallucination may also be partly due to time-distortion (for instance, one might explain self-monitoring failures by appeal to time-distortion).

The philosophy papers might be broadly divided into three themes (though there is an overlap of issues throughout), with two outliers. Some papers defend intentionalism, doing so by either articulating a way of thinking about the view (Dorsch, Schellenberg), or raising worries about the alternative (Robinson). Other papers attempt the same on behalf of relationalism, two (Hellie, Kennedy) present new proposals for dealing with hallucinations, and two present new arguments for old ways of defending relationalism (Nudds, Aranyosi). The third group of papers turn their focus to hallucinatory phenomenology in specific, with Philipps focusing on hearing and hallucinating silence, and Farkas discussing the felt reality of hallucinations. The two outliers are Pagandiotis' and Coates' papers, which both leave aside intentionalism and relationalism, and instead focus on how other views deal with hallucinations. Pagandiotis' paper

discusses the tenability of the indirect realist's explanation of hallucination, arguing that contrary to established opinion, indirect realism is unable to account for these phenomena without assuming intentionalism, and Coates' paper attempts an explanation of hallucinatory phenomena from the critical realist perspective emerging out of Sellars' work. Both should be interest to proponents or opponents of these views.

Turning to the intentionalist papers, these begin with Dorsch's insightful piece which provides a detailed argument for an intentionalist view that procures relationalist advantages. While the denial of any straightforward opposition between intentionalist and relationalist views is not new (both Schellenberg 2010 and Tye 2011 defend views with intentionalist and relationalist features), Dorsch's paper gives a new defense of this idea by considering various worries afflicting both conjunctive and disjunctive views, and concluding with a view that overcomes these worries by maintaining that experiences involve awareness of *both* the world and our own conscious experience. Related to Dorsch's piece is Schellenberg's which also marries intentionalist and relationalist insights. Her discussion carries forward the view she has previously articulated (e.g. in Schellenberg 2010, 2011) on which experiences are moderately externalist, with contents partly individuated by worldly objects, and partly individuated by the employment of perceptual capacities. Common to these two view is the idea that some part of experience is independent from the surroundings and thus allows us to account for hallucinatory phenomenology, while another part is (equally fundamentally) not, and this allows us to preserve the relationalist insights. The final paper in this group is Robinson's which focuses on rejecting the disjunctive response to cases of causally matching hallucinations (these are hallucinations that are supposed to be due to replicating the entire internal state of a perceiving subject in the absence of an appropriate object). Robinson argues that three ways of rejecting these hallucinations (endorsed by John McDowell, Michael Martin, and Mark Johnston) all fail. Without disjunctivism, Robinson concludes that relationalism is left confronting the large burden of dealing with these cases.

In the relationalist papers we see the continuing centrality of the disjunctive strategy for dealing with hallucinations, as well as Martin's (2006) proposal on which hallucinations are characterized in merely epistemic terms. The first two contributions propose alternatives to Martin's conception. Hellie presents an interestingly new view on which hallucinations are themselves a disjunctive category. This strategy is unique in providing a positive characterization of hallucinatory phenomena (which relationalists are often accused of failing to do), while also preserving Martin's (2006) idea that we have no insight into the nature of hallucinations apart from recognizing their indistinguishability from corresponding perceptions. Such a view is possible because different hallucinations may have different fundamental natures, and although we cannot distinguish those, all types of hallucinations can be picked out by their

indistinguishability from corresponding perceptions. The next proposal comes from Kennedy who revises his 2009 proposal. Here he argues that relationalists should de-emphasize the idea of phenomenal character in favor of a more relationalist friendly conception of first person access to the world, which, of course, strongly emphasizes object-dependence. He argues the phenomenal character simply does not 'cut experiences at the joints', and so while an appeal to general contents adequately describe hallucinatory phenomenal character and can be accepted by relationalists, this in itself has no propensity to undermine the fundamentally relational nature of experience. Unlike these two proposals that seek to replace Martin's view, Nudds' paper argues on behalf of the epistemic conception of hallucinations (and thus opposes Robinson's paper). On the one hand Nudds thinks that relationalist commitments preclude a positive account of hallucinations, and on the other hand such an account is unnecessary since the appeal to introspective indistinguishability - which one can get from the negative epistemic property - adequately explains hallucinations.

The final piece on behalf of relationalism is Aranyosi's. Like Nudds' view, it defends a disjunctive treatment of perceptual states, but in this case does so by making use of the phenomena of silence and deafness. Since those two are indistinguishable, Aranyosi argues that this reveals that one might have indistinguishable states with radically different natures. Silence is also the theme of Philipps' paper, which along with Farkas', focuses on hallucinatory phenomenology. Philipps considers Sorensen's (2008) discussion of silence which implausibly entails that the permanently deaf hallucinate silence. He undertakes a correction of this account and in doing so fleshes out two ways of understanding how silence might be perceived, and how this affects views like relationalism on which all experiences have objects. Between Aranyosi's and Philipps' papers, we see a new focusing on 'null' experiences which may indicate a fruitful new route emerging in the quest to understand hallucinations, especially given the importance of pure or complete hallucinations (hallucinations that involve no veridically experienced objects). The collection ends with Farkas' paper which focuses on the felt sense of reality of hallucinations. Using empirical findings, she extracts and elaborates ideas on, for example, the felt independence and publicness of hallucinations. The piece thus fits well with the psychological papers in this collection since it helps organize and expand on the features of hallucinations discussed there.

Finally, it is also worth noting that the collection begins with an introduction to the theme of hallucinations, as well as a chapters introduction. The latter is by Platchias and is a useful guide for those looking to read on specific topics. The former is by Macpherson, and like other introductions she has written (e.g. her introduction to OUP's collection on the senses), her discussion is well organized, considers the overarching issues of the collection, and does so without sacrificing nuances and details. Of particular significance is her separation of four

conceptions of hallucination, two of which are disjunctive (one contingent, the other not), one which is a common kind conception, and finally one which traces hallucinatory phenomenology to the imagination or memory. This division helps us sort through the different views endorsed throughout the collection.

We see various interesting trends emerge in this edited volume. One is the idea that the difference between relationalist and intentionalist views is not as clear cut as philosophers initially thought. Dorsch, Hellie, Kennedy, and Schellenberg all provide views that, in one way or another, combine elements of both views. However, it still seems as if there is a divide between those views that allow a common factor sufficient for sensory character, and those that reject this idea. One way of understanding the continued centrality of the epistemic conception endorsed by Martin is that it is a conception which rejects this common sensory core in favor of a merely epistemic core. Another trend (which I previously mentioned) is that of considering a wider class of perceptual phenomena, like the seemingly objectless case of silence. In my view this is a promising trend which might be expanded to include other infrequently discussed perceptual cases such as *ganzfelds* and reflections (to give two examples). A third promising trend is that of paying more attention to empirical research on hallucinations. Hallucinations have typically been discussed from the armchair (much as Descartes contemplated his skeptical hypothesis after retreating from his everyday life), and this seems an outdated trend given the more serious integration with the sciences that we now see throughout the philosophy of mind (e.g. the relevance of empirical work to theorizing about successful cases of perception or attention). This can only improve our chances of understanding these difficult phenomena.

Relatedly, but on a more critical note, despite the many pathways considered in this collection, we see the assumption that hallucinations possess what I called a ‘world-severing’ character remain unchallenged. This presupposition about hallucinations, that if they have a sensory character, it is one that occurs in the absence of actually perceived objects, informs the entire collection of essays. Most of the papers admit to this character and attempt an explanation of it, while others admit to this character, and thus deny the existence of genuinely perceptual hallucinations (i.e. hallucinations with a sensory character). A few papers consider (e.g. Robinson and Aranyosi both wonder whether we should accept ‘philosopher’s hallucinations’) or allow for the possibility of (e.g. Hellie, since he thinks hallucinations may come in all sorts) rejecting this world-severing construal, but do not pursue the idea. This omission is unfortunate because if hallucinations do not have such a character, then they may not raise the worries we think they do for relationalism. For instance, both Chalmers (2005) and Gallagher & Zahavi (2008) argue for a limited version of this idea, where envatted brains are perceptually related to the world around them. Watzl (manuscript) and Ali (dissertation) have also both argued that no hallucination cuts us off from the world; hallucinatory sensory character is simply the result of



being unusually related to the world. This however is just to say that the volume might have been more expansive in one way, and this hardly detracts from the value of this well thought out collection.

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