

## Good News for the Disjunctivist about (one of) the Bad Cases

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I'm currently having a veridical experience; I see the banana on my desk, and it is as it looks to me to be (yellow and crescent-shaped). On the basis of my experience, I know that the banana is yellow and crescent shaped. Call this situation *the good case*.<sup>2</sup> There are other possible situations in which I have an experience that is *subjectively indiscriminable* from the kind of experience I have in good case – i.e., on the basis of introspection alone, I couldn't tell that such an experience isn't the kind of experience I have in the good case. For example, consider a situation in which I perceive nothing at all in my environment, and yet it still seems to me that I see a yellow, crescent-shaped banana (perhaps because my brain is being appropriately stimulated by a fancy machine). Call such a situation *the hallucinatory bad case*.<sup>3</sup> As a first pass, we can characterize *disjunctivism* about perceptual experience as making the following claim: "...the experiences in the good case and the hallucinatory bad [case] share no mental core, that is, there is no (experiential) mental kind that characterizes both cases" (Byrne and Logue 2009: ix). The rough idea is that the experiences in the good and hallucinatory bad cases (and veridical and hallucinatory experiences in general) are mental states of totally different kinds.<sup>4</sup>

Disjunctivism has been met with considerable skepticism, much of it attributable to two sources. First, many suspect that disjunctivism cannot accommodate certain features that the hallucinatory bad case obviously has. For example, it seems obvious that what it would be like for me to have the hallucinatory experience (i.e., the experience's *phenomenal character*) could be exactly the same as what it's like for me to have the veridical experience. But it's not obvious how this could be the case if the experiences are mental states of *totally different* kinds. Also, recall that the hallucinatory experience is subjectively indiscriminable from the kind of experience I have in the

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<sup>2</sup> The 'case' terminology is borrowed from Williamson 2000; you can think of a case as a centered possible world (i.e., a possible world with a designated subject and time). In the case just described, the subject is *me* and the time is *now*.

<sup>3</sup> Another example is a situation in which a green banana looks yellow to me (perhaps because of unusual lighting conditions). Call such a situation *the illusory bad case*. I will not discuss what disjunctivists should say about illusory bad cases in this paper; however, I take up this issue in Logue ms. Since I'll only be concerned with the hallucinatory bad case here, I'll sometimes just call it 'the bad case' for short.

<sup>4</sup> While disjunctivism is typically formulated as a claim about experiences in all sense modalities, discussions of the view are usually restricted to visual experiences for simplicity's sake. I will do the same in this paper.

good case. But how can disjunctivism explain this fact, if the experiences in the good and hallucinatory cases are mental states of totally different kinds? It seems that disjunctivism entails that there's nothing *in virtue of which* the hallucinatory experience is subjectively indiscriminable from the kind of experience I have in the good case.

Second, the disjunctivist cannot rest with the claim that the hallucinatory experience is a mental state of a totally different kind than the experience in the good case. In order to fully defend the claim the experiences differ, the disjunctivist must give an account of *what hallucination is*; i.e., he must give a detailed account of what hallucination consists in (and the respects in which it differs from veridical experience). But arguably, the most popular disjunctivist accounts of hallucination face apparently insurmountable obstacles.

As the title of this paper suggests, things aren't as bad for the disjunctivist as these worries might lead one to believe. The apparent trouble for disjunctivism arises from the fact that the formulations of the view considered by its opponents aren't typically constructed with sufficient attention to the view's motivations. If we begin by asking why one would want to be a disjunctivist in the first place, and then formulate disjunctivism in light of the answer, we end up with a much more promising view. In particular, I will argue that disjunctivism, properly formulated, can account for the fact that the hallucinatory experience is indiscriminable from and phenomenally the same as the kind of experience I have in the good case. Moreover, a proper formulation of disjunctivism reveals that accounts of hallucination that have been dismissed by most disjunctivists as untenable are more promising than is generally supposed.

In section 1, I will offer a formulation of disjunctivism that is rooted in its primary motivation (namely, preserving a view known as *Naïve Realism*). In section 2, I will explain how disjunctivism so formulated can account for the fact that the experiences in the good and bad cases can have the same phenomenal character. In section 3, I will explain how disjunctivism so formulated can account for the fact that the hallucinatory experience is subjectively indiscriminable from the kind of experience I have in the good case. In section 4, I will sketch the outlines of a disjunctivist account of hallucination inspired by the formulation of disjunctivism proposed in section 1.

### **1. Disjunctivism outlined and refined**

As it's usually stated, disjunctivism holds that the experiences in the good and hallucinatory cases are totally different kinds of mental state. However, as we will see in this section, this claim should be qualified in several ways. All of the qualifications are old news to a greater or lesser extent; but since not all of them are made every time disjunctivism is characterized, it's worth collecting them all in one place. Moreover, the dialectical utility of one of the qualifications has been underappreciated—even by disjunctivism's proponents. This qualification is intimately connected to the primary motivation for disjunctivism. In the first part of this section, I will outline this motivation, and in the second part, I will explain the qualifications to disjunctivism as I've characterized it so far.

### 1.1. Naïve Realism

The primary motivation for disjunctivism is to preserve a view known as *Naïve Realism*. Naïve Realism has been characterized in a number of ways, but it seems that the common theme underlying the various characterizations is the idea that veridical experience fundamentally consists in the subject perceiving entities in her environment.<sup>5</sup> This may sound close to trivial—doesn't practically everyone think that veridical experience involves the subject perceiving the world around her?<sup>6</sup> The answer to this question is 'yes', of course, but the claim that veridical experience involves perceiving entities in one's environment is not equivalent to the claim that veridical experience *fundamentally* consists in the obtaining of this perceptual relation. For example, many think that veridical experience involves perceiving entities, but that at the most fundamental psychological level it consists in the subject *representing* her environment as being a certain way (e.g., as containing a yellow, crescent-shaped banana).<sup>7</sup>

But what exactly does it mean to say that veridical experience *fundamentally* consists in something? Here's M.G.F. Martin's answer:

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<sup>5</sup> M.G.F. Martin typically characterizes Naïve Realism as involving the claim that the mind-independent objects of a veridical experience are *constituents* of that experience (e.g., see his 2004: 39). This is a consequence of Naïve Realism as I've characterized it. According to my characterization, a veridical experience fundamentally consists in the following state of affairs: the obtaining of the perceptual relation between the subject and the mind-independent objects of the experience. Thus, any constituents of this state of affairs are constituents of the experience (including the entities perceived). It's not clear how else to understand the idea of a mind-independent object being a constituent of an experience other than in terms of the experience being a state of affairs that has the object as a constituent; thus, I assume that Martin endorses a view along the lines of Naïve Realism as formulated in the main text.

Also, William Fish characterizes Naïve Realism as a thesis specifically about the *phenomenal character* of veridical experience, viz., that its phenomenal character fundamentally consists in the subject perceiving entities in her environment (2009: 15, see also Campbell 2002: 114-5 and Brewer 2008: 171 for similar claims). It's possible to accept this claim and reject the characterization of Naïve Realism in the main text: perhaps a veridical experience's phenomenal character fundamentally consists in the obtaining of the perceptual relation, but other aspects of veridical experience consist in something else entirely. I doubt that Naïve Realists intend to restrict their claim to phenomenal character; for one thing, such a view may not even require disjunctivism about perceptual experience, depending on what the other aspects of veridical experience are supposed to consist in. Given that Naïve Realists typically hold that disjunctivism is required to defend their account of veridical experience, it seems that the characterization of Naïve Realism in the main text is closer to what they're ultimately after.

<sup>6</sup> Except for the idealist, who thinks that all we perceive are our own ideas.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Harman 1990, Dretske 1995, Tye 2000, and Byrne 2001.

...entities (both objects and events) can be classified by both species and genus; for all such entities there is a most specific answer to the question, 'What is it?' In relation to the mental, and to perception in particular, I will assume that for mental episodes or states there is a unique answer to this question which gives its most specific kind; it tells us what essentially the event or episode is" (2006: 361, fn. omitted)

The idea seems to be that veridical experience fundamentally consists in  $x$  just in case the most specific characterization of veridical experience that we can give involves  $x$ . However, more explanation is required to fully understand what the debate between the Naïve Realist and her opponents is about. In particular, something needs to be said about why philosophers of perception have spilled so much ink in arguing over claims about an experience's most specific kind. What's so special about the most *specific* characterization we can give of a perceptual experience?

As the passage above hints by (apparently) identifying an experience's most specific kind with the kind that specifies its essence, the answer is this: an experience's most specific kind is "...the kind in virtue of which [it] has the nature it does" (Martin 2004: 60). To illustrate, let ' $S$ ' stand for the most specific characterization of my experience (whatever it is, exactly). Here's something special about  $S$ : my experience satisfies other psychological characterizations ultimately *in virtue of* being  $S$ . For example, my experience is a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana ultimately in virtue of being  $S$ ; my experience naturally gives rise to certain beliefs and behaviors (given certain background conditions) ultimately in virtue of being  $S$ . Of course,  $S$  doesn't specify the experience's fundamental kind by describing it in the language of *physics*. But it is supposed to specify the psychological "ground floor"—the most basic *psychological* characterization we can give of the experience. (Presumably, the experience falls under this psychological kind in virtue of certain non-psychological facts; e.g., neurological facts.)

The debate between Naïve Realists and their opponents is essentially about what ' $S$ ' picks out in the case of veridical experience. Some of the opponents think that my veridical experience is a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana ultimately in virtue of consisting in *my representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me*. By contrast, Naïve Realists think that my experience is a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana ultimately in virtue of consisting in *my perceiving this banana and its yellowness and crescent-shapedness*.

What about the hallucinatory experience? Since one can represent that  $p$  even if it's false that  $p$ , the opponent can give the same account as above: for example, the hallucinatory experience is a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana ultimately in virtue of consisting in *my representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me*. However, a Naïve Realist must give a completely different account of the hallucinatory experience: it can't satisfy any psychological description in virtue of consisting in *my perceiving something in my environment*, because hallucinations by definition don't involve perceiving any such thing. In this way, Naïve Realism gives rise to disjunctivism: since what the Naïve Realist says about

the good case is just plain false of the bad case, she must come up with a totally different account of the latter.<sup>8</sup>

One might be wondering: what exactly is at stake in the debate between the Naïve Realist and her opponents? In particular, why might we want to adopt Naïve Realism instead of, say, the representational account of experience sketched above? This is a difficult question that is beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>9</sup> For our purposes, let's just take it for granted that Naïve Realism is a view worth at least *considering*, and see whether we can secure a necessary condition of its truth—disjunctivism.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.2. Disjunctivism formulated in light of Naïve Realism

Now that we have Naïve Realism on the table as the primary motivation for disjunctivism, we're in a better position to see how strong the latter has to be in order to accommodate the former. This is the minimum that the Naïve Realist is committed to: the experience in the good case fundamentally consists in my perceiving the banana

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<sup>8</sup> This is actually a bit too quick. Mark Johnston holds that all kinds of perceptual experience fundamentally consist in the perception of “sensible profiles”—i.e., complexes of properties and relations that are instantiated by things in the subject's environment if her experience is veridical (2004: 134). The idea is that hallucinations typically involve perception of *uninstantiated* sensible profiles. So if Johnston's view is correct, veridical experience and hallucination can be given a non-disjunctivist account in terms of perception of sensible profiles. However, this view is only as plausible as the claim that we can perceive uninstantiated properties, which I find to be rather implausible (despite Johnston's arguments to the contrary). I don't have the space to pursue this issue here; and since the main focus of this paper is the viability of disjunctivism, I will set Johnston's view aside. But it should be noted that if Johnston's view is a live option, then Naïve Realism doesn't entail disjunctivism.

<sup>9</sup> I will touch on this question (in a very abstract way) in discussing a certain objection to disjunctivism, however (in section 2).

<sup>10</sup> One might think that there's a motivation for disjunctivism other than Naïve Realism: viz., the idea that disjunctivism provides a way out of arguments for skepticism about the external world (see, e.g., McDowell 1982, 2008). McDowell's way out of skepticism doesn't seem to presuppose Naïve Realism as I've characterized it, and so it might seem that there is an argument for disjunctivism that is independent of Naïve Realism. But arguably, this appearance is illusory: the view that McDowell argues for doesn't seem to be a thesis about the *metaphysics* of perceptual experience. Rather, it seems to be a thesis about the *evidence* a perceptual experience provides its subject—very roughly, that a veridical experience provides much better perceptual evidence for certain propositions about one's environment than a subjectively indiscriminable non-veridical experience would. And at least *prima facie*, this claim could be accommodated by a variety of theories of experience's metaphysical structure. Thus, it seems plausible that 'disjunctivism' as used by McDowell picks out a different view than the one under discussion here. (For more on the distinction between “metaphysical” and “epistemological” disjunctivism, see Byrne and Logue 2008, section 4.)

(and certain of its properties)<sup>11</sup>, and the experience in the hallucinatory bad case fundamentally consists in something else.

Disjunctivism got its name from the idea that the proper account of, say, an experience as of a yellow banana is disjunctive: *either* the subject veridically perceives a yellow banana, *or* she has a non-veridical experience as of a yellow banana, and these two disjuncts describe completely different states of affairs (hence the label ‘disjunctivism’). This characterization should be regarded as very loose—since Naïve Realism is compatible with all sorts of commonalities across the cases, disjunctivism should be formulated so as to be compatible with such commonalities as well.

First, Naïve Realism is intended to be compatible with the existence of *neural* commonalities across the cases. For example, suppose that the experiences in the good and bad cases have the same proximate neural cause. The Naïve Realist says that the experiences produced are of different fundamental kinds (in the sense outlined in the previous subsection); the experience in the good case fundamentally consists in my perceiving the banana, while the experience in the bad case consists in something else entirely.<sup>12</sup>

So, as a second pass, we might restrict disjunctivism to the claim that there are no *experiential* commonalities across the cases. But this characterization would be too strong: in both the good and bad cases, I’m having a perceptual experience. That’s an experiential commonality if anything is, and not one that the Naïve Realist (or anyone) should deny. This is why Hinton, who is often credited as the founding father of disjunctivism, characterizes the view as denying that there is a “...kind of experience common *and peculiar*” to the good and bad cases (1973: 62, emphasis in text). Following suit, Alex Byrne and I characterized disjunctivism as follows: “...the experiences in the good case and the hallucinatory bad cases share no mental core, that is, there is no (experiential) mental kind that characterizes both cases. More exactly, there is no such reasonably specific kind...” (2009: ix). So, as a third pass, we might characterize disjunctivism as the claim that there are no *reasonably specific* experiential commonalities across the cases—e.g., specific enough *not* to characterize a case in which I’m having an experience as of a red, round tomato.

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<sup>11</sup> For ease of exposition, I’ll leave out ‘and certain of its properties’ in further descriptions of the Naïve Realist account of veridical experience.

<sup>12</sup> Some think that this claim runs afoul of a “same cause, same effect” principle (e.g., see Robinson 1994, chapter 6). The idea is that if the experiences in the good and bad cases have the same proximate neural cause, then the experiences must be mentally exactly alike (and thus be of the same fundamental kind). I won’t discuss this objection here, as it has been exhaustively addressed by Martin (see his 2004: 55-7). The basic idea behind his response is that the principle employed assumes that being in a certain neural state is sufficient for bringing about the experience in the good case, but that begs the question against Naïve Realism (which holds that veridical experiences have mind-independent objects as constituents, and thus that neural activity cannot be sufficient for a veridical experience). In any case, the important point for our purposes here is that disjunctivism isn’t supposed to *entail* that the good and bad cases have no neural commonalities. Although one might think that disjunctivism is falsified by the existence of such commonalities, all parties to the debate recognize that disjunctivism is at least *intended* to be compatible with them.

But again, this characterization would be too strong: in both the good and bad cases, I'm having a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. This characterization is specific enough not to characterize a case in which I'm having an experience as of a red, round tomato, but it does characterize both the good and bad cases. Moreover, the Naïve Realist has no reason to deny this reasonably specific commonality—all she needs to say is that the ultimate psychological facts in virtue of which the bad case experience is an experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana are *different* than the ultimate psychological facts in virtue of which the good case experience is of that kind.

So let this be our fourth and final pass: according to disjunctivism, the good and bad cases have no reasonably specific, *fundamental* experiential commonalities. A reasonably specific experiential commonality is fundamental just in case it characterizes what the experiences fundamentally consist in, i.e., each experience satisfies all other psychological characterizations ultimately in virtue of having the common property. This seems to be what Martin is after when he characterizes disjunctivism as a view that "...seeks to resist the rejection of Naïve Realism...by insisting that the fundamental kind of event that one's sensory experience which is a veridical perception of the table in front of one is is a kind of event which just could not occur were one hallucinating" (2004: 43). For we've finally reached a commonality that the Naïve Realist cannot accommodate: the good case experience fundamentally consists in my perceiving the banana, but the bad case experience *must* fundamentally consist in something else. Thus, the good and bad cases cannot have any reasonably specific, fundamental experiential commonalities.<sup>13</sup>

While at least some disjunctivists make this "fundamentality" qualification in articulating the view,<sup>14</sup> it is rarely made explicitly (if at all) in characterizations offered by the view's critics.<sup>15</sup> This is unfortunate; for as we will see in the following sections, this qualification is crucial to disjunctivism's plausibility.

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<sup>13</sup> Alex Byrne and I have argued that the mere denial of reasonably specific, fundamental experiential commonalities isn't sufficient for disjunctivism on the following grounds: Hinton is widely regarded as the founder of disjunctivism, and he explicitly denied that the good and bad cases had *any* reasonably specific experiential commonalities. But "...if disjunctivism allows that there *is* a mental element common to the good and bad cases, then *Hinton's* characterization of the view is incorrect—an undesirable result" (2008: 81). I've changed my mind. Arguably, we shouldn't hold our characterization of disjunctivism hostage to Hinton. Hinton's main argument for his version of disjunctivism was the claim that it had default status; a claim for which he offered little in the way of argument. And while Martin went to great lengths to supply the missing argument (see his 2004, section 3), the one he supplies is problematic (as Byrne and I have argued: see our 2008: 73-9). In short, given that the *primary* motivation for disjunctivism is Naïve Realism, the most charitable characterization of disjunctivism is the *weakest* claim required to preserve it.

<sup>14</sup> In addition to the Martin quote above, see, e.g., Martin 2006: 360-1, Fish 2009: 36-7, and Soteriou 2009: section 2.1.1.

<sup>15</sup> See the characterizations of disjunctivism offered in, e.g., Burge 2005: 25, Lowe 2008: 99, Smith 2008: 82, and Byrne and Logue 2009: ix. For exceptions, see Siegel 2008: 205 and Sturgeon 2008: 116.

Note that disjunctivism as I've formulated it doesn't incorporate a particular account of either "disjunct". This contrasts with many formulations of disjunctivism found in the literature. For example, some formulate disjunctivism in such a way that it entails, or at least strongly suggests, that Naïve Realism is true.<sup>16</sup> And some formulate disjunctivism in such a way that it entails, or at least strongly suggests, a particular way of accounting for hallucination.<sup>17</sup> The latter should be avoided: even if a particular account of hallucination compatible with disjunctivism is implausible, it doesn't follow that disjunctivism itself is implausible (given that there may be alternative accounts of hallucination in the offing). And although disjunctivism should be formulated *in light of* Naïve Realism, it shouldn't be formulated so as to *entail* Naïve Realism. For at this stage of inquiry, it's conceivable that Naïve Realism will turn out to be considerably more plausible than disjunctivism. In that case, we should re-evaluate the argument that Naïve Realism requires disjunctivism (so that we don't throw out the baby with the bathwater).<sup>18</sup> Alternatively, it's conceivable that disjunctivism will turn out to be considerably more plausible than Naïve Realism. Even if it turns out that the primary motivation for disjunctivism is implausible, it would still be good to keep tabs on whether disjunctivism is available for any other theoretical purposes we might want to put it to. For these reasons, it's best not to muddy the waters by mixing the bare minimum *comparative* claim about the good and bad cases that the Naïve Realist is committed to with *specific* accounts of either the good case or the bad one.

Now that we've arrived at this bare minimum comparative claim, let us see how it fares against the objections made against disjunctivism.

## **2. Disjunctivism and phenomenal character**

As I noted at the start, what it's like for me to have a hallucination as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana could be exactly what it's like for me to veridically perceive the yellow, crescent-shaped banana sitting on my desk right now. That is, the experiences in the good case and the bad case could have exactly the same phenomenal character. This seems as plain as day: after all, when I imagine what it would be like to have a hallucination as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana, I do so by imagining having an experience with exactly the same phenomenal character as the veridical one I'm currently having. However, given that sameness of phenomenal character would be a reasonably specific, fundamental experiential commonality across the cases, then disjunctivism as outlined above entails that the experiences cannot have the same phenomenal character.

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<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Snowdon 2005: 136-7, Siegel 2008: 205, and Sturgeon 2008: 116.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Hawthorne and Kovakovich 2006: 146. Martin also sometimes incorporates his preferred account of hallucination into his characterization of disjunctivism, which, incidentally, is why he suggests that the mere denial that hallucinations can be of the same fundamental psychological kind as veridical experience would not "...capture the key thought behind disjunctivism" (2006: 368).

<sup>18</sup> For example, we might want to reconsider the non-disjunctivist version of Naïve Realism articulated by Johnston (see fn. 8 above).



One disjunctivist response is to bite the bullet and embrace the conclusion that the experiences cannot have the same phenomenal character. William Fish goes so far as to suggest that hallucinations lack phenomenal character entirely (2009: 81). On his view, there's nothing it's like to hallucinate, although the subject of a hallucination mistakenly believes that her experience has phenomenal character. Fish goes to great lengths to defend this view, but one might wonder: is such an extreme and revisionary position the disjunctivist's only option?

I think not. Rather than accepting the claim that the experiences in the good and hallucinatory cases cannot have the same phenomenal character, the disjunctivist can instead reject a presupposition of the problem posed. In particular: the conclusion that the experiences cannot have the same phenomenal character was generated using the assumption that *sameness of phenomenal character would be a reasonably specific, fundamental experiential commonality across the cases*. Now, the phenomenal commonality under discussion would certainly be an experiential one, and it would be specific enough not to characterize a case in which I see a red, round tomato (what it would be like to see a red, round tomato would of course be very different). But is it a *fundamental* experiential commonality?

Arguably, no. When we're giving a theory of perceptual experience, part of what we're trying to do is to say what it is in virtue of which experiences have the phenomenal character they do. This claim is supported by the fact that *non-disjunctivists* typically treat phenomenal character as non-fundamental. The opponent of Naïve Realism discussed in section 1, for instance, thinks that the experiences in the good and bad cases have the specific phenomenal character they do in virtue of my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me—e.g., if an experience's phenomenal character supervenes on its representational content, then the experience has the phenomenal character it does in virtue of its consisting in the subject's representing her environment as being a certain way. Alternatively, a non-disjunctivist of another stripe might account for phenomenal character in terms of intrinsically non-representational qualia: on such a view, the experiences in the good and bad cases have the specific phenomenal character they do in virtue of instantiating the same types of qualia.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the Naïve Realist would say that the good case experience has the phenomenal character it does in virtue of my perceiving the banana and some of its properties, while the experience in the bad case has its phenomenal character in virtue of something else. In short, the disjunctivist can say that the experiences in the good and bad cases have the same phenomenal character, because the phenomenal commonality isn't a fundamental one. Although the facts *in virtue of which* the experiences have this phenomenal character are different, the experiences are phenomenally the same.<sup>20</sup>

One might be uncomfortable with this proposal for the following reason: according to the disjunctivist, there's no explanation of the fact that the experiences in the good and bad cases have the same phenomenal character. If the experience in the

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<sup>19</sup> For a view along these lines, see Block 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Martin considers and rejects a similar proposal because he believes it is incompatible with his specific account of hallucination (see his 2006: 372). However, since I will grant the opponent of disjunctivism that his account of hallucination is false for the sake of argument in section 4, we need not worry about this issue here.

good case has its phenomenal character in virtue of my perceiving a banana, and the experience in the bad case has its phenomenal character in virtue of something else entirely, it appears to be nothing more than a *brute fact* that what it's like to have the experiences is the same. There's no underlying commonality we can appeal to in order to explain why what it's like to have one is the same as what it's like to have the other.

However, upon reflection, it's not clear whether discomfort with the proposal is warranted on such grounds. First, one might wonder whether it is the job of our theory of *perceptual experience* to explain why the experiences are phenomenally the same. Instead of explaining phenomenal sameness in terms of *psychological* sameness, we could explain phenomenal sameness in terms of *neurological* sameness or similarity. For example, the disjunctivist could say that the reason why the experiences in the good and bad cases have the same phenomenal character is that they are both the results of the same kind of neural processing.<sup>21</sup>

However, suppose that the disjunctivist cannot explain why the experiences are fundamentally the same. Why exactly is this a mark against the view? In particular, why do we *need* an explanation of the fact that experiences are phenomenally the same? Given that there are surely brute facts *somewhere* in nature, why can't this be one of them?

One might respond by suggesting that the *point* of giving a philosophical theory of perceptual experience in the first place is to explain why veridical and hallucinatory experiences can have the same phenomenal character. This may well be right. But presumably this isn't our *only* aim. We have other aims in theorizing about perceptual experience as well (e.g., illuminating its epistemological role). It might turn out that no one theory of perceptual experience can do everything we want it to. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the only theory that can provide a satisfactory account of experience's epistemological role cannot explain why veridical and hallucinatory experiences can have the same phenomenal character. In that case, we'd have to figure out which desideratum is more important.

To be perfectly clear: I'm not claiming that we *are* in a dialectical situation like this. I'm simply claiming that, for all that's been said here, it's an epistemic possibility. My point is this: one cannot simply dismiss disjunctivism on the grounds that it fails to satisfy *one* desideratum on a theory of perceptual experience. For there are other desiderata, and maybe—just maybe—disjunctivism is a necessary condition on satisfying one of them.

Figuring out whether or not this is the case would require a systematic investigation into what exactly the desiderata of a philosophical theory of perceptual experience are, and whether Naïve Realism is uniquely positioned to satisfy any of them. Those tasks are beyond the scope of this paper. For our purposes here, it suffices to note that we cannot dismiss disjunctivism on the basis of this objection *without having first carried out these tasks*.

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<sup>21</sup> See Thau 2004: 249 for a proposal along these lines. Of course, this strategy wouldn't explain phenomenal commonalities across the good case and a hallucinatory case in which the subject is an alien with a radically different perceptual apparatus from mine. In cases like this, the disjunctivist would have to fall back on the next response.

### 3. *Disjunctivism and indiscriminability*

We've just considered an objection to disjunctivism to the effect that it cannot account for the fact that the experiences in the good and bad cases have the same phenomenal character. One might raise an analogous objection in terms of subjective indiscriminability. An experience is *subjectively indiscriminable* from a kind of experience K just in case one is not in a position to know by introspection alone that it isn't one of the K's.<sup>22</sup> The experience in the hallucinatory bad case is subjectively indiscriminable from the kind of experience I'm having in the good case, viz., a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana—I'm not in a position to know by introspection alone that my experience in the bad case isn't a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. But we might ask: in virtue of what does the hallucinatory experience have this indiscriminability property? We tend to suppose that indiscriminability facts are (typically) grounded in commonalities.<sup>23</sup> To illustrate: Let's say that an object *o* is *perceptually* indiscriminable from the kind *yellow crescent-shaped banana* iff it is not possible to know by perception alone that *o* isn't a yellow crescent-shaped banana. We might ask: in virtue of what does a given object have this indiscriminability property? The natural answer is that it has this property in virtue of having *other* properties in common with yellow, crescent-shaped bananas: in particular, yellowness and crescent-shapedness. I can't tell that the object isn't a yellow, crescent-shaped banana just by looking at it because it is exactly the same color and shape as such a banana. But it might seem that the disjunctivist cannot make an analogous move to explain the fact that my experience in the bad case is subjectively indiscriminable from the kind of experience I have in the good case, as she denies that the cases have any reasonably specific, fundamental experiential commonalities.

In light of the proposal made in the previous section, the reader might spot the gap in this reasoning straight away. For perhaps we could explain the fact that my

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<sup>22</sup> This explication of the subjective indiscriminability relation is due to Martin (see his 2004 and 2006). Note that phenomenal sameness and subjective indiscriminability are distinct but closely related. If what it's like to have a hallucination is the same as what it's like to have a certain kind of veridical experience, then presumably the hallucination is subjectively indiscriminable from that kind of veridical experience. (For it's not clear how one could discriminate the hallucination from that kind of veridical experience on the basis of introspection if it's *phenomenally exactly like* veridical experiences of that kind.) But the converse doesn't hold: if a hallucination is subjectively indiscriminable from a certain kind of veridical experience, it still could be phenomenally different from experiences of that kind (perhaps the phenomenal difference is so slight that it's inaccessible to even careful introspection). (By 'introspection', I just mean the distinctive way one has of coming to know about one's own mental states—whatever that is, exactly.)

<sup>23</sup> Except when the indiscriminability is the result of unconsciousness, lack of cognitive sophistication, etc. If Merly is not able to tell by introspection that she's not veridically perceiving a yellow banana because she's in a coma, or because she's a cat and thus incapable of forming beliefs about her experiences, the fact that her state is subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a yellow banana is solely due to her cognitive deficits (rather than to any commonalities between the situations).

experience in the bad case is subjectively indiscriminable from the kind of experience I have in the good case in terms of *non-fundamental* experiential commonalities across the cases. Now, some non-fundamental experiential commonalities are clearly poorly suited to this task. Both cases involve a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana, for example. But it won't do to explain the indiscriminability fact in terms of *this* commonality. What we're after is an answer to the following question: In virtue of what is my hallucinatory perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana? Simply saying that both cases involve a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana fails to shed any light on the answer to this question.

However, there is another potential explanation of the indiscriminability fact: namely, that the experience in the bad case has the same *phenomenal character* as a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. What it's like for me to hallucinate a yellow, crescent-shaped banana in the bad case is the same as what it's like for me to veridically perceive a yellow, crescent-shaped banana in the good case, and my hallucination is subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana in virtue of this phenomenal commonality.

The first proposal failed because it cast part of the explanandum as explanans: the task is to explain the subjective indiscriminability of one perceptual experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana from a certain kind of perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana, and so an attempt to explain the indiscriminability fact in terms of both cases involving a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana would miss the point. By contrast, the phenomenal character of the experiences isn't the explanandum in this context, so it's a legitimate candidate for explanans. Of course, phenomenal character is an explanandum in its own right; ultimately, we want to know the facts in virtue of which a given experience has the phenomenal character it does. But that doesn't mean phenomenal character doesn't have its own explanatory roles to play.

But suppose that the disjunctivist cannot account for the indiscriminability fact in this way.<sup>24</sup> She could respond to the demand for an explanation of the indiscriminability fact in the same way as she should respond to the demand for an explanation of the fact that the experiences in the good and bad cases are phenomenally the same. That is, she could explain the fact in terms of neurological commonalities rather than psychological ones. Or, failing that, she could question the demand for such an explanation in the first place. Explaining the indiscriminability fact is just one

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<sup>24</sup> As we'll see in the next section, some disjunctivists hold that hallucinations are *fundamentally* states that are subjectively indiscriminable from veridical experiences of a certain kind. In section 2, I proposed that a hallucination has its phenomenal character in virtue of whatever the disjunctivist wants to say it fundamentally consists in. But if a hallucination fundamentally consists in being subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a certain kind, and thus has its phenomenal character in virtue of this indiscriminability property, then it doesn't have this indiscriminability property in virtue of its phenomenal character (given that the relation expressed by 'in virtue of' is asymmetric). Thus, a proponent of such an account of hallucination will have to fall back on the response I'm about to propose.

desideratum of a theory of perceptual experience among many; and given that it's an open question whether Naïve Realism is uniquely positioned to satisfy a more important desideratum, a failure to explain the indiscriminability fact shouldn't be assumed to be a deal breaker.

#### **4. How should the disjunctivist account for hallucination?**

So far, I've argued that disjunctivism can accommodate (i) the fact that the experiences in the good and bad cases can have the same phenomenal character, and (ii) the fact that the hallucination in the bad case is subjectively indiscriminable from the kind of experience I have in the good case, all the while maintaining that the experiences involved are fundamentally different. But of course, it's not enough for the disjunctivist to say that hallucination consists in something fundamentally different than what veridical experience consists in. He also owes us a substantive account of hallucination. Hallucination cannot consist in what the Naïve Realist says veridical experience fundamentally consists in (*viz.*, perception of things in one's environment). So what *does* hallucination fundamentally consist in, if not that? The key to the disjunctivist responses to (i) and (ii) was to appeal the fact that disjunctivism, charitably construed in light of its primary motivation (preserving Naïve Realism), allows for *non-fundamental* experiential commonalities across the good and bad cases. The aim of this section is to exploit this feature of disjunctivism in order to defend a way of accounting for hallucination that has been too hastily dismissed.

There are two broad types of substantive disjunctivist accounts of hallucination: *positive* and *negative* accounts.<sup>25</sup> A negative account characterizes hallucination in terms of veridical experience. For example, Martin's preferred account of hallucination is that it fundamentally consists in subjective indiscriminability *from a veridical experience* of a certain kind—e.g., the most basic mental characterization of the experience in the hallucinatory bad case is that it is an experience that I can't tell apart from a *veridical* experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana just by introspecting. In this account, hallucination is characterized "...solely by saying that it is like what it is not" (Dancy 1995: 436).

By contrast, a positive account of hallucination characterizes it independently of veridical experience. Dancy, for one, finds such an account preferable: as he says, "...there may be available a *more direct* characterization of the second disjunct, and in a totally explicit version of the theory it would indeed be characterized in that better way" (Dancy 1995: 436, emphasis mine). For example, a disjunctivist might hold that while veridical experience fundamentally consists in perceiving mind-independent objects, hallucination fundamentally consists in *representing one's environment as being a certain way*, or in *acquaintance with mind-dependent objects and their properties*.

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<sup>25</sup> The 'positive' and 'negative' terminology is borrowed from Byrne and Logue 2008: 69, although used differently here. (Here I'm counting being subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a certain kind as a reasonably specific *experiential* property, which leads to a different account of what negative disjunctivism is.)

Notice that these characterizations of hallucination don't mention veridical experience at all.

Martin doesn't think that positive disjunctivism is a viable option. In this section, I will begin by outlining his case against positive disjunctivism, and present the version of negative disjunctivism that he endorses in light of this argument (along with a sketch of some of the obstacles his view faces). Next, I will argue that Martin's case against positive disjunctivism fails, and that proper recognition of the fact that disjunctivism permits non-fundamental experiential commonalities across the good and bad cases opens the door to a promising version of positive disjunctivism.

#### 4.1. *Martin's case against positive disjunctivism*

Martin's argument against positive disjunctivism has two stages. First, he argues that if positive disjunctivism is true, the good and bad cases have a reasonably specific experiential commonality. Second, he argues that the reasonably specific experiential commonality would also be a *fundamental* one, thus undermining disjunctivism.

Suppose that positive disjunctivism is true—say, that hallucination fundamentally consists in representing one's environment as being a certain way. Arguably, there is a type of neural state that is the proximate cause of the experience in the bad case. Given that hallucination consists in perceptual representation, then this type of neural state is sufficient for my entering into a certain representational state: say, my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me. Plausibly, such a neural state could be the proximate cause of my experience in the good case, and it is hard to deny that this neural state would be sufficient for my entering into the same kind of representational state in that case.<sup>26</sup> In short, the idea is that if representational properties (or any other kind of reasonably specific experiential property) are allowed into the account of hallucination, then they can't be kept out of the account of veridical experience. Thus, positive disjunctivism entails that the good and bad cases have a reasonably specific experiential commonality (e.g., my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me).

So far, disjunctivism as we've characterized it remains intact. The first stage of Martin's argument has established that positive disjunctivism entails that there are reasonably specific experiential commonalities across the good and bad cases. But as I argued above, disjunctivism is perfectly compatible with such commonalities. The next stage of Martin's argument aims to show that the sort of reasonably specific experiential properties the positive disjunctivist would appeal to in her account of hallucination are bound to constitute *fundamental* commonalities across the cases.

Suppose that the good and bad cases have the reasonably specific experiential commonality of my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me. The cases will also have other reasonably specific experiential commonalities (experiences as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana and their phenomenal character), as well as doxastic and behavioral commonalities (in both cases, I believe that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me, and I'll reach

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<sup>26</sup> For a much more thorough presentation and discussion of this argument, see Martin 2004: 52-8. Since I will grant Martin *this* part of his argument against positive disjunctivism, there's no need to rehearse the details here.

out and grasp it if I fancy a banana-flavored snack). Now, how do all these aspects of the cases fit together? Recall that what an experience *fundamentally* consists in is that in virtue of which it satisfies all other psychological characterizations—its psychological “ground floor”, if you like. It’s tempting to say that the phenomenal, doxastic, and behavioral commonalities obtain ultimately in virtue of the representational commonality—my experience has the phenomenal character it does, and the doxastic and behavioral effects it does, ultimately in virtue of the fact that I perceptually represent my environment as being a certain way. That is, it’s quite tempting to say that the experiences in both cases fundamentally consist in perceptual representation.

However, the Naïve Realist cannot yield to this temptation, since she holds that the ultimate psychological ground of my *veridical experience’s* phenomenal character, doxastic effects, and behavioral effects is the fact that I perceive the banana on my desk. Even worse, it seems that the Naïve Realist cannot reasonably insist on this for the good case while holding that the experience in the bad case fundamentally consists in perceptual representation. For what the experiences have in common (phenomenal character, etc.) is most naturally accounted for in terms of something else they have in common (e.g., consisting in perceptual representation). As Martin puts the worry:

We have the same resultant phenomena in introspectively matching cases of perception and hallucination, and we know...that where we have causally matching situations we have the same kinds of event in hallucination and in perception. So the common kind of event between hallucination and perception seems better correlated with these common phenomena than the kind of event unique to perception and so seems to screen off the purely perceptual kind of event from giving us an explanation (Martin 2004: 62).

In short, the idea is that if we admit reasonably specific experiential commonalities across the good and hallucinatory cases, they will effectively “screen off” the obtaining of the perceptual relation from playing the role the Naïve Realist claims it does (i.e., serving as the ultimate psychological ground of phenomenal character, doxastic effects, and so forth).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> For the details of the “screening off” argument, see Martin 2004: 58-68; for discussion of this argument, see Byrne and Logue 2008: 83-7. Martin suggests that even if the reasonably specific experiential property had by hallucinations is also had by veridical experiences, the obtaining of the perceptual relation could still do *some* explanatory work: e.g., it could be the ultimate psychological ground of the fact that a subject believes certain *singular* propositions. However, Martin still worries that the presence of such a reasonably specific experiential property in a case of veridical experience would screen off the obtaining of the perceptual relation from explaining the experience’s *phenomenal character*, and “[i]t would be a severe limitation on the disjunctivist’s commitment to Naïve Realism, if the Naïve Realist aspects of perception [i.e., the obtaining of the perceptual relation] could not themselves shape the contours of the subject’s conscious experience” (2004: 64). (For a recent detailed critical discussion of Martin’s “screening off” argument, see Hellie forthcoming. I should note that the arguments presented in that paper also impugn the version of disjunctivism I will defend, but I do not have the space to respond to them here.)

To review: on the basis of quite plausible causal considerations, we can show that any positive characterization of hallucination results in a reasonably specific experiential commonality across the good and bad cases. And on the basis of quite plausible considerations about how best to account for certain properties the cases have in common, it seems that such a reasonably specific experiential commonality will also be a fundamental one. Since disjunctivism holds that there are no reasonably specific fundamental experiential commonalities across the cases, it appears that positive disjunctivism is self-undermining.

#### 4.2. *Negative disjunctivism*

If Martin is right that the disjunctivist cannot give a positive account of hallucination (as most have taken him to be), he must give a *negative* account. As mentioned above, Martin's proposal is that the mental nature of a "causally matching" hallucination, i.e., a hallucination with the same proximate neural cause as veridical experiences of a certain kind, is exhausted by the property of being *subjectively indiscriminable* from veridical experiences of that kind (Martin 2004: 71).<sup>28</sup> For example, the experience in the bad case simply consists in the property of being subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. Of course, the experience in the good case has this indiscriminability property trivially (nothing is discriminable from a kind of which it is in fact an instance). But Martin argues that this property doesn't "screen off" the obtaining of the perceptual relation on the grounds that the explanatory power of the former is dependent on the explanatory power of the latter (2004: 70). Plausibly, being in a state that is *subjectively indiscriminable from* a veridical experience of a yellow banana can play a role in explaining, say, my belief that there is a yellow banana before me only if *actually perceiving* a yellow banana can play such an explanatory role. To borrow an example of Martin's: that James was in a state subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a big fat hairy spider wouldn't explain his shrieking if his *veridically perceiving* such a spider couldn't explain his shrieking either (Martin 2004: 68).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Since Martin's argument against positive disjunctivism applies only to *causally matching* hallucinations, it doesn't compel us to reject positive disjunctivism for hallucinations that *don't* have the same proximate neural cause as a veridical experience of some kind. However, it's not entirely obvious that there are any hallucinations of the latter variety (although, of course, they cannot be ruled out *a priori*).

<sup>29</sup> Although I won't be defending Martin's account of hallucination, I should note two ways in which it interacts with proposals advanced in previous sections. First, as I explained above in note 24, accounts of hallucination in terms of subjective indiscriminability are incompatible with explaining said indiscriminability in terms of shared phenomenal character. Second, as I mentioned in footnote 20, Martin considers and rejects a proposal along the lines of the one defended in section 2; viz., that the experiences in the good and bad cases have the same phenomenal character in virtue of different facts. He rejects it because he believes it is incompatible with his account of hallucination (2006: 372). For the record, I'm not convinced that this is the case. However, since I will grant the disjunctivist's opponent that Martin's account of hallucination is false for the sake of argument, we need not delve into this issue here.



This account of hallucination has been subject to intense scrutiny, and it's far from clear that it has withstood said scrutiny. A thorough investigation of the objections is beyond the scope of this paper; I'll just summarize one of them to give the reader a sense of the obstacles this account of hallucination faces. One powerful objection stems from the fact that Martin characterizes subjective indiscriminability in terms of *knowability*: an experience is subjectively indiscriminable from a certain kind of veridical experience iff it is not possible for the subject to *know* by introspection alone that her experience isn't of that kind. Given this characterization of subjective indiscriminability, the possibility of "cognitively unsophisticated" hallucinators constitutes a challenge for Martin's account. A toad, say, can have a hallucination as of a yellow, crescent-shaped thing, but arguably it doesn't have beliefs (and therefore knowledge) about anything. Such a creature's hallucination as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana is indiscriminable from *any other kind of mental state*—the toad is never able to know that the mental state it's in isn't of any given kind, simply because the toad isn't able to know *anything*.<sup>30</sup> On Martin's proposal, a hallucination as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana fundamentally consists in the property of being subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. But on what grounds can Martin claim that a toad's hallucination fundamentally consists in this *particular* indiscriminability property, when it has so many others (e.g., the property of being subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a *red tomato*, or the property of being subjectively indiscriminable from a *desire* to eat more flies)?

Martin responds to the objection from cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators by articulating a notion of *impersonal* (in)discriminability (2004: 75-6, 2006: 379-96). The idea is that while a toad's hallucination as of a yellow, crescent shaped banana is subjectively indiscriminable from all kinds of mental states *for the toad given its cognitive capacities* (or lack thereof), there is still a perspective from which the toad's hallucination is subjectively discriminable from, say, a veridical experience of a red, round tomato, and is non-trivially subjectively *indiscriminable* from a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana.

However, Siegel (2008) argues that this appeal to impersonal indiscriminability runs into trouble once we try to specify what it amounts to. She suggests that the most natural explication of impersonal indiscriminability is in terms of a counterfactual about knowledge, such as the following: if an "ideal introspector" were in the toad's situation, she would not be able to know by introspection alone that she was not having a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. However, we must ask: what is it to be in the toad's "situation"? Plausibly, to be in the toad's situation is to be hallucinating a yellow, crescent-shaped banana, which, according to the account of hallucination under consideration, *just is* being in a state that is indiscriminable by introspection alone from a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. But now the proposed explication of impersonal indiscriminability is trivial: it says that if an "ideal introspector" were in a state such that she couldn't know by introspection alone that it wasn't a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana, then she would not be able to know by introspection alone that she was not having a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. Any attempt to explicate impersonal indiscriminability in terms of a counterfactual about knowledge will result in a trivial

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<sup>30</sup> For a related objection, see Siegel 2008: 210-4.

claim, because any such counterfactual will make reference to the toad's "situation" (which, by Martin's lights, can be specified only in terms of indiscriminability). Thus, it appears that there is no non-trivial explication of impersonal indiscriminability available to a disjunctivist of Martin's stripe.<sup>31</sup>

An appeal to the notion of impersonal indiscriminability isn't the only possible response to the problem posed by cognitively unsophisticated hallucinators. In order to explain how a frog can subjectively discriminate its banana-hallucination from, say, a desire to eat more flies, one might appeal to a less sophisticated cognitive notion in explicating subjective indiscriminability (e.g., Sosa's "animal knowledge" as outlined in his 1991), or one might offer an alternative characterization of subjective indiscriminability, one not in terms of knowledge (e.g., Fish's account of subjective indiscriminability in terms of experiences' *effects* in his 2008 and 2009: Ch. 4). However, as Siegel argues, these strategies face their own problems.<sup>32</sup>

I've only presented a small sliver of the debate about indiscriminability accounts of hallucination to give a sense of how complicated it is; on the basis of what's been said here, we're certainly not in a position to conclude that negative disjunctivism is hopeless. However, I will concede this to the disjunctivist's opponent for the sake of argument. For I don't think that the failure of negative disjunctivism means the failure of disjunctivism. In the last part of this paper, I will argue that Martin's case against positive disjunctivism is flawed, and sketch the beginnings of a positive account of hallucination.

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<sup>31</sup> The dialectic is more complicated than I've let on. As Siegel notes, Martin recognizes the difficulties of giving a counterfactual account of impersonal indiscriminability (2006: 383). Martin's alternative derives from his conception of introspection, which is basically that it is *not* a mode of accessing some bit of reality that exists independently of that access. Rather, one's experience is *constituted* by one's introspective awareness of it: "[i]t seeming to the subject that things seem a certain way to her can constitute things seeming that way to her" (Martin 2006: 395). Given this conception of introspection, "[t]hat which in us is simply a mode of self-awareness is what we attribute to other creatures even when we do not take them to be self-aware. So [the negative disjunctivist can] attribute experience to the dog through attributing a *specific take on the world*, without thereby supposing that the dog is self-aware" (Martin 2006: 395, emphasis mine). The idea seems to be that we can explicate the notion of impersonal indiscriminability in terms of having a "specific take on the world". But what is it to have a specific take on the world? Martin reminds us that this shouldn't be explicated in terms of a counterfactual (2006: 396, fn. 44). In the absence of another explanation of what having a specific take on the world amounts to, however, this alternative is unconvincing.

<sup>32</sup> For Siegel's response to the "animal knowledge" strategy, see her 2008: 213-4. For her criticism of Fish's alternative account of subjective indiscriminability, see her 2008: 214-7; for Fish's response, see his 2009: 99-100, 103-104. For considerations that can be marshaled in further objections to indiscriminability accounts of hallucination, see Siegel 2008: 218-23, 2004: 93-5, Johnston 2004: 124-7, and Sturgeon 2006: 208-10.

### 4.3. Positive disjunctivism revisited

Recall that Martin's argument against positive disjunctivism had two stages. First, the *causal argument*: on the basis of the fact that a hallucination can have the same proximate neural cause as a veridical experience, Martin concludes that the good and bad cases have reasonably specific experiential commonalities (provided that the experience in the bad case is a *causally matching* hallucination). Second, the *screening-off argument*: on the basis of considerations having to do with how best to account for certain phenomenal, cognitive, and behavioral commonalities across the cases, Martin concludes that the reasonably specific experiential commonalities are also fundamental. I will accept the first stage of Martin's case against positive disjunctivism for the sake of argument.<sup>33</sup> However, the second stage of the argument isn't sound. To see this, it's helpful to represent the screening-off argument as follows:

1. The good and bad cases have the reasonably specific experiential commonality of my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me. (conclusion of the causal argument, given that we account for hallucination in terms of such representational properties)
2. The good and bad cases have certain phenomenal, doxastic, and behavioral commonalities closely related to the experiences I have in those cases. (premise)
3. These phenomenal, doxastic, and behavioral commonalities are best explained in terms of some other feature the cases have in common, e.g., my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me. (screening-off premise)
4. If the phenomenal, doxastic, and behavioral features closely related to an experience are best explained in terms of X, then the experience fundamentally consists in X. (premise)
5. The experiences in the good and bad cases fundamentally consist in my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me. (from 2, 3, and 4)
6. Contra disjunctivism, the experiences in the good and bad cases have a reasonably specific fundamental experiential commonality (from 1, 5)

It seems that there is plenty of room for the positive disjunctivist to deny premise 4. That premise would have us move from the claim that the relevant class of phenomenal, doxastic, and behavioral features of the good case are *best explained in terms of* my representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me to the claim that my experience in that case *fundamentally* consists in that

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<sup>33</sup> It's not entirely clear that this stage of the argument is sound, however (e.g., see Johnston 2004: 138-9).

representational property (in other words, that the *ultimate psychological fact in virtue of which* the case has these features is my instantiating this representational property). Now, since the subject of debate is the *metaphysics* of perceptual experience, I have no qualms about moving from the claim that Y is *best explained in terms of* X to the claim that Y *obtains in virtue of* X (since the sense of ‘explanation’ in play here is plausibly metaphysical rather than, say, causal). However, just because Y obtains in virtue of X, it doesn’t follow that Y obtains *ultimately* in virtue of X (i.e., that Y *fundamentally* consists in X). For Y might obtain in virtue of X, which in turn obtains in virtue of Z.

In terms of the example we’ve been working with, the following suggestion seems coherent (at least on the face of it):

*Bad case:* The *ultimate* psychological fact in virtue of which it has the relevant class of phenomenal, behavioral, and doxastic features is my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me.

*Good case:*

- It has the relevant class of phenomenal, behavioral, and doxastic features in virtue of my perceptually representing that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me.
- But the *ultimate* psychological fact in virtue of which I perceptually represent that there is a yellow, crescent-shaped banana before me is the fact that *I perceive the banana* (and certain of its properties).

Essentially, the idea is that just because the bad case experience fundamentally consists in this representational property, it doesn’t follow that the good case experience does—even if both involve the instantiation of that property. For it is open to the positive disjunctivist to say that in the good case, the instantiation of the representational property obtains in virtue of a *further psychological fact*: viz., the fact that I see the banana. In short, the general form of the suggestion is that the sort of reasonably specific experiential properties that the positive disjunctivist will appeal to in order to account for hallucination might in some cases (i.e., good ones) be instantiated in virtue of the obtaining of the perceptual relation, while in others (i.e., hallucinatory bad ones) they are not instantiated in virtue of any other psychological property. Only in these latter cases will the reasonably specific experiential property in question be fundamental. In this way, the positive disjunctivist can deny that the good and hallucinatory bad cases have reasonably specific *fundamental* experiential commonalities.

I have suggested that there is a region of logical space that the positive disjunctivist could occupy that has been overlooked in the screening-off phase of Martin’s argument. But one might worry that this bit of logical space isn’t a very hospitable place for the positive disjunctivist to settle. In particular, one might be troubled by the idea that “...one thing can be fundamentally F, [and] something else can be F and yet not be fundamentally F” (Martin 2004: 61). For example, one might think it would be strange if hallucination fundamentally consisted in perceptual representation, while veridical experience consisted in perceptual representation but not *fundamentally* so.

Note that this worry as stated applies to both positive and negative disjunctivism alike. For the negative disjunctivist holds that hallucination fundamentally consists in the property of being subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a certain kind, while veridical experience consists in this property but not *fundamentally* so. However, the negative disjunctivist has a ready reply to this worry: as we noted above, although my experience in the good case has the property of being subjectively indiscriminable from a veridical experience of a certain kind, the explanatory power of this property is *dependent* on that of *being* a veridical experience of that kind. The veridical experience has the indiscriminability property but does not fundamentally consist in this property because it also has *another* property (being a perceiving of a banana) that is clearly more psychologically basic. By contrast, since my experience in the bad case doesn't have this other property, it could well fundamentally consist in the indiscriminability property.

Now, one may not be entirely satisfied with this reply, but arguably it goes at least *some* way towards addressing the worry under discussion. However, it seems that the positive disjunctivist cannot give an analogous reply. If the experience in the hallucinatory case fundamentally consists in perceptual representation, or in acquaintance with immaterial sense-data, it consists in properties that have explanatory power *independently of veridical experience* (as does the experience in the good case, thanks to the causal argument). For example, we might ask: what about my current perceptual experience makes it natural to form the belief that there is a yellow banana in front of me? One possible answer: because my experience consists in my perceptually representing my environment as containing such a banana. This explanation seems to work regardless of whether or not we can *also* give a viable explanation in terms of the fact that I see the banana. So it would seem that while negative disjunctivism may lose a bit of plausibility as a result of this worry, positive disjunctivism fares considerably worse.

However, if we step back for a moment and consider the worry more carefully, it becomes less clear that it is all that worrying. The idea was that it would be strange if something could be fundamentally F while something else is F but not fundamentally so. Now, it's not obvious that appeal to an abstract metaphysical principle *in the absence of any argument for it* should carry much dialectical force. We are perfectly entitled to ask *why* it should strike one as strange or surprising if something could be fundamentally F while something else is F but not fundamentally so. If the answer turns out to be that many of us simply have a deeply rooted aesthetic preference for symmetry in our metaphysics, then (arguably) the principle need not constrain our inquiry. In short, this worry is a genuine one only if the disjunctivist's opponent can produce a compelling argument for the metaphysical principle at its core. The burden is on the disjunctivist's opponent to show that the principle is true, rather than the burden being on the disjunctivist to show that it is false (contrary to what Martin seems to be suggesting in his 2004: 61).

Nevertheless, there does seem to be an objection in the vicinity that is more troubling (at least on the face of it). According to the version of positive disjunctivism that I've sketched, in the good case I perceptually represent that there is a yellow banana before me in virtue of the fact that I perceive the banana before me—indeed, my perceiving this banana is the ultimate psychological fact in virtue of which my experience has all the other features it does (its phenomenal character, doxastic effects,

etc.). Moreover, in the bad case, I also perceptually represent that there is a yellow banana before me. But there's no further *psychological* fact in virtue of which this is the case. Presumably, it is the case in virtue of the fact that I am in a certain neurological state. The claim that there's no further psychological fact in virtue of which I'm in this representational state in the bad case raises what seems to be a troubling question. If there's no further psychological fact in virtue of which I'm in this representational state in the bad case, what *positive reason* is there to say that there *is* some such further psychological fact in the *good* case? The fact that I perceive the banana in the good case seems to be crammed into the experience's metaphysical structure in a rather *ad hoc* manner just so we can rescue positive disjunctivism from Martin's screening-off argument.

This *prima facie* attractive line of thought constitutes an understandable failure to grasp what's become a painfully nuanced dialectic. In particular, the answer to the question posed in that line of thought—what reason is there for thinking that there is some further psychological fact in virtue of which I'm in the representational state in the good case?—has a straightforward answer. Namely: the reason for thinking that there is some further psychological fact in the good case is *whatever reason we have for thinking Naïve Realism is true*. We must not lose sight of the fact that the primary motivation for disjunctivism is Naïve Realism. Naïve Realism says that the experience in the good case fundamentally consists in my perceiving the banana, i.e., that all other psychological features of this experience ultimately obtain in virtue of the fact that I perceive the banana. Whatever reason we have for thinking this is true is *ipso facto* a reason for thinking that the obtaining of the perceptual relation is part of the metaphysical structure of the good case experience, and that it is the ultimate psychological fact in virtue of which I perceptually represent that there is a yellow banana in front of me.

Of course, for all I've said here, it could be the case that there's *no* good reason to think that Naïve Realism is true. Whether there's any good reason to endorse Naïve Realism is a contentious issue that I don't have the space to discuss here—that issue deserves a paper (perhaps even a book) of its own. But in this paper, I've set out to answer the following rather restricted question: assuming that Naïve Realism is worth at least keeping on the table as a live option, but also that negative disjunctivism is false, is there any hope for disjunctivism? I hope to have said enough to convince the reader that this question should be answered in the affirmative. But of course, the assumptions made in restricting the question require further examination in their own right.

## 5. Conclusion

I began this paper by refining the formulation of disjunctivism so as to render it as the *weakest* claim the Naïve Realist must commit to in order to preserve her account of veridical experience. The result was a view compatible with all sorts of commonalities across the good and bad cases—even reasonably specific experiential commonalities, and even “substantive” ones (e.g. not just my having a perceptual experience as of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana, but also my *perceptually representing* my environment as being a certain way). What's crucial for the Naïve Realist is that reasonably specific experiential commonalities are not fundamental; that in the good case, any reasonably

specific experiential feature the good case has in common with the bad one obtains *in virtue of* my bearing the perceptual relation to the banana.

This refinement of disjunctivism puts it in a good position to avoid some of the most compelling objections that have been raised against the view. In particular, as I argued in section 2, this version of disjunctivism can explain why what it is like for me to hallucinate a yellow, crescent-shaped banana can be the same as what it is like for me to veridically perceive the banana on my desk. And, as I argued in section 3, it can explain why the hallucination I have in the bad case is subjectively indistinguishable from a veridical experience of a yellow, crescent-shaped banana. Perhaps most importantly, it can be elaborated in terms of *positive* disjunctivism, thus allowing the Naïve Realist to eschew negative disjunctivism and all the difficulties it brings.

Of course, I've only just sketched what such a positive disjunctivism might look like. Since a lot of conceptual ground-clearing was required to even bring that position into view, I've only been able to argue for a new research program rather than a fully articulated position. But given that Naïve Realism is a view worth taking seriously, and that it requires endorsing some form of disjunctivism, this is a research program that both the disjunctivist and her opponents should explore.

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