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Either/Or

Alex Byrne and Heather Logue

Perhaps it has sometimes occurred to you, dear reader, to doubt the correctness of the familiar philosophical proposition that the outward is the inward . . .

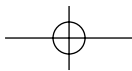
(Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*)

This essay surveys the varieties of disjunctivism about perceptual experience. Disjunctivism comes in two main flavours, metaphysical and epistemological. Metaphysical disjunctivism is the view usually associated with the disjunctivist label, and whenever ‘disjunctivism’ occurs here unprefixd, it refers to this view. After some initial discussion of (metaphysical) disjunctivism (sections 1–3), we explain epistemological disjunctivism in section 4. The rest of the essay is solely concerned with explaining and assessing metaphysical disjunctivism, a theory of the nature of perceptual experience. Our main (and provisional) conclusion is that although there is considerable insight in the vicinity, metaphysical disjunctivism is false.

1 DISJUNCTIVISM: THE BASIC IDEA

Like most disjunctivists, we will concentrate exclusively on visual experience. Borrowing some terminology from Williamson (2000), let a *case* be a centred possible world—a world with a marked subject and time. A *good* case is one in which the subject sees an object, and sees that it has such-and-such properties (at the time of the

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case). For example, there is a good case in which the subject is J. L. Austin who (at the time of the case) sees a single tomato against a plain background, and sees that it is red and spherical. In a good case of this sort, Austin's visual experience is *veridical* with respect to the tomato's colour and shape and (we may suppose) is not in any respect *non-veridical*; similarly for good cases in general.

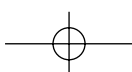
Starting with a particular good case—say, involving Austin and the tomato—we may define a case α to be *subjectively indistinguishable from the good case* ('subjectively indistinguishable' for short) if and only if, in α , the subject is not in a position to know by 'introspection' alone that he is not in the good case. More exactly, there is no proposition p incompatible with the subject's being in the good case such that he is in a position to know p by introspection alone. ('Introspection' is simply a placeholder for the normal first-person method of finding out about one's experiences and perceptual states, whatever that is, exactly.¹) The good case itself is trivially subjectively indistinguishable, because the subject cannot be in position to know what's false—in particular, that he's not in the good case. Since normal human perceivers are not in a position to know everything, innumerable other good cases are also subjectively indistinguishable; potential omniscience would not block indistinguishability anyway, because no subject is in a position to know everything by introspection alone. Another subjectively indistinguishable case is an *illusory* case—Austin sees the tomato, but it is not the way it looks. For example, the tomato isn't red, despite looking so. Yet another is an *hallucinatory* case—Austin 'seems to see' a red tomato, but in fact sees nothing, or at least no material object.² Illusory and hallucinatory cases are *bad* cases. Although bad cases involve illusions and hallucinations of any kind, when we speak of 'bad cases' in what follows we typically mean the specific ones just mentioned, corresponding to the good case involving Austin and the tomato.

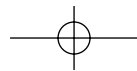
It is important to note that we are not *defining* this restricted kind of bad case as one that is subjectively indistinguishable and non-good. All such bad cases have this feature, but the converse is obviously problematic. For example, a case in which the subject is comatose is subjectively indistinguishable and non-good, yet is not one in which Austin is hallucinating or illuding a red tomato. On the other hand, we are not

¹ Presumably discovering that one sees a tomato by 'introspection' somehow involves exercising one's *visual* capacities—one discovers one sees a tomato by attending to the tomato before one's eyes (Evans 1982: 226–8; Dretske 2003). Just how this works is controversial, but we do not need to take a stand on the issue here.

² In some hallucinatory cases, the very same tomato present in the good case, with the very same colour and shape, is before the subject—a phenomenon known as *veridical hallucination*. Likewise, there are subjectively indistinguishable cases of *veridical illusion*: the subject sees the (red) tomato, which *looks* red, but only because of (say) some fluky occurrence in the subject's brain—given the lighting conditions, the (red) tomato would not look red to a normal subject. The (abnormal) subject does not see *that* the tomato is red. Note that veridical illusions are not 'illusory cases' as defined in the text; for simplicity we will set them aside. See, in particular, Johnston (2006); for discussion in connection with the disjunctivism defended by M. G. F. Martin, see Hawthorne and Kovakovich (2006: 162–3).

Obviously many real-life examples of perceptual experience are 'mixed'—they involve some combination of veridical perception, illusion, and hallucination. Again for simplicity these will be set aside.





precluding the possibility that a more refined account of subjective indistinguishability could supply a definition. Even though we have not given necessary and sufficient conditions for a case to be of the restricted bad kind, we assume that we have said enough to make the notion tolerably clear.³

On one view, the good case and the bad cases have a common mental core—in all such cases, the subject is having an experience of a certain kind, or is in a certain (experiential) mental state (at the time of the case). For instance, the good case and the bad cases might each involve experiences that represent that there is a red spherical thing before the subject, or experiences of seeing a red ‘circular’ sense-datum (the ‘red-prime’ terminology is from Peacocke 1983). As these examples illustrate, the common core is supposed to be quite specific—it is absent in dissimilar cases of perceptual experience. We can finesse various distracting details by saying that the alleged common core is at least absent in any good case in which Austin sees a green ovoid tomato. Although the nature of the common core is disputable, that there is one can seem nothing short of obvious.

The basic idea of disjunctivism, as it is predominantly characterized by its proponents, is that this ‘obvious’ view is false. At least some bad cases are mentally radically unlike the good case. All disjunctivists agree that hallucinatory cases are of this sort; they are divided on whether illusory cases should also be included. Since hallucinatory cases (at least) share no mental core with the good case, disjunctivists hold that the most perspicuous characterization of the class comprising the good and the bad cases is disjunctive—like the class of ravens-or-writing-desks.

Although traces of disjunctivism may be found in earlier authors, J. M. Hinton was the first to make the position explicit.⁴ In his article ‘Visual Experiences’ he contrasts seeing a flash of light with having “an illusion of a flash of light”, noting that we can truly say and think the following:

(A) I see a flash of light: actual light, a photic flash . . .

(B) I have an illusion of a flash of light . . .

(A v B) Either I see a flash of light, or I have an illusion of a flash of light. (Hinton 1967a: 217)

(Clearly Hinton is assuming that bad B-cases are subjectively indistinguishable from good A-cases.) He contrasts (A v B), which does not say “definitively what is happening”, with:

(Q) I psi—possible wordings: I see a flash, I have a visual experience of a flash—which does give a definite answer to the question ‘What is happening?’ (1967a: 220)

(Q) is supposed to describe something that happens when (and only when) (A) or (B) is true—the occurrence of a “perception/illusion-neutral entity” (in the

³ The extreme caution in this paragraph anticipates Martin’s view that a more sophisticated and elaborate account of subjective indistinguishability can be used to define bad cases. See section 6.2 and footnote 31 below.

⁴ Hinton does not use ‘disjunctivism’, though—that coinage appears to be due to Robinson (1985); see Martin (2006: 356, fn. 2).



terminology of Locke 1975: 467). That is, I psi iff I see a flash of light or I have an illusion of one. Unlike $(A \vee B)$, (Q) says “definitively what is happening”—namely, that I am the subject of a perception/illusion-neutral event of psi-ing.⁵ The difference between $(A \vee B)$ and (Q) is that while (Q) is true only if there is a mental event common to seeing a flash and having an illusion of one, the truth of $(A \vee B)$ is compatible with perceptions and illusions having no kind of mental event in common.⁶

Although Hinton’s reasoning is hard to follow, he does think that $(A \vee B)$ is the best that can be done: “I do not see”, he says, “how it can be shown that there is such a thing as my psi-ing” (1967a: 220). As he puts it in *Experiences*, there is no “kind of experience common *and peculiar*” to the good case and the bad cases—they have no “common element” (1973: 62). Essentially the same view is (apparently) expressed by later writers in slightly different terms:

Good and bad cases have no “highest common factor”. (McDowell 1982/1998: 386)

There is no “single sort of state of affairs” obtaining in good and bad cases. (Snowdon 1980–1: 186)

There is no “distinctive mental event or state common to these various disjoint situations”. (Martin 2004: 37)

(Various retractions and qualifications will be made below, in section 4, section 7.1, and section 7.2.)

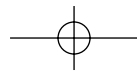
We said above that there is some disagreement among disjunctivists about the status of illusory cases. Some, like Snowdon, group them with the good case, on the left-hand side of the disjunction; others group them with hallucinatory cases, on the right-hand side, as illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Types of disjunctivism

R. H. S. disjunct: hallucination	R. H. S. disjunct: hallucination and illusion
Snowdon	McDowell, Hinton, Martin

⁵ Since (Q) (assuming there is such a proposition) and $(A \vee B)$ are plainly supposed to be *necessarily* equivalent, Hinton’s claim that (Q) (if it exists) says “definitively what is happening”, while $(A \vee B)$ doesn’t, is confusing. Hinton’s point is better put as follows: (Q) says that a particular kind of mental event is happening, while $(A \vee B)$ doesn’t. Contrast ‘A horse is being born’ with ‘Either a steed is being born, or a mare is being born’; the former, but not the latter, says that the birth of a particular kind of creature is happening.

⁶ Criticizing Hinton, Snowdon (1980–1: 184) points out that ‘I see an F’ is an unhappy way of characterizing the good case, because it carries no implications whatsoever about how things look—one may see what is in fact a big red tomato, even though it looks exactly like a small purple grape. It is harder to tell a similar story in which one sees a flash of light which does not look like a flash—this is one respect in which Hinton’s main example is ill-chosen. (To add to the confusion, Hinton considers—as (Q) illustrates—the possibility that *both* sides of the disjunction could be characterized by “I see a flash”; see Hinton 1967a: 221–3.) In fact, Snowdon’s point is made earlier in Hinton’s book *Experiences*: Hinton accommodates it by stipulating that ‘see’ in perception-illusion disjunctions means what he calls “plainly see” (1973: 42, 112).



A cursory reading of Snowdon and McDowell will confirm their position in this table. The placement of Hinton and Martin is not straightforward, so we will briefly note some evidence.

One might think that Hinton requires no comment at all—haven't we just seen that he puts illusions ("I have an illusion of a flash of light") on the right-hand side? But Hinton's main example of a flash of light might as well have been purposely designed to blur the crucial distinction between illusions and hallucinations. For, of course, a typical 'illusion of a flash of light' is quite unlike a typical illusion of a bent stick—when one has an illusion of a flash of light by having a phosphene experience, say, one is not seeing *anything*. That is, an 'illusion' of a flash of light is often an *hallucination* of a flash of light.⁷

However, in his paper 'Experiences', Hinton says he is "inclined to believe" that "I see blue" . . . is indistinguishable from the mere disjunction, 'Either I actually see an optical object that is blue in colour, or I am in some situation or other that is to me like that one' (1967b: 12). Here only the veridical case—a blue object looks blue to the subject—is on the left-hand side. Hence, for Hinton, illusions are grouped with hallucinations.⁸

Martin explicitly contrasts the good case with hallucinatory cases, and mentions illusions only in passing. But his emphasis is very much on the *veridical* nature of the good case, which suggests that it does not belong with illusory cases. And in 'On Being Alienated', he says that "perceptions fail to be the same kind of mental episode as illusions or hallucinations" (Martin 2006: 360; see also 361, 362), thus classifying illusions with hallucinations, not with (veridical) perceptions.⁹

2 THE ARGUMENT FROM ILLUSION/HALLUCINATION

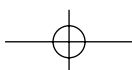
So far, we have somewhat imprecisely outlined disjunctivism about perceptual experience, and indicated one choice point for disjunctivists. Nothing has yet been said

⁷ Indeed, Hinton's illustration of an "illusion of a flash of light" is a phosphene experience (1967c; 1973: 40). (See also his 1973: 61: ". . . if there is such an optical object").

⁸ See also Hinton (1973: 116), where Hinton says that illusions (in "the ordinary general-cultural sense", which is apparently his official understanding of the word) comprise both illusions and hallucinations (in our 'standard philosophical' sense).

There is, incidentally, one apparently recalcitrant passage in *Experiences*: "the perception-proposition in a perception-illusion disjunction can very well be a proposition about how something looks: one kind of perception-illusion disjunction is exemplified by: 'Either I visually perceive an optical object which looks (a great deal, a little, hardly at all) like a two-dimensional coloured shape, or I am having the illusion of doing so'" (1973: 61).

⁹ This quotation is perhaps misleading, because all Martin may have in mind is that perceptions fail to be the same "fundamental" kind of mental episode as illusions or hallucinations (for an explanation of Martin's "fundamental kind" terminology, see section 7.1); if so, then the quotation does not imply that there is no common element to the good case and the illusory cases (see again section 7.1). The probative point, though, is that Martin's *arguments* (see section 6 and section 7), although focused on hallucinations, may also be adapted for illusions—a task that we have left for the reader. See also Martin (2002a: 395, fn. 24).



about why the view might be thought attractive. The central motivations for disjunctivism found in the literature will be discussed much later, in section 6 and section 7. In this section and the next, we will consider an alternative route to disjunctivism, as a way of escaping from the argument from illusion (or the argument from hallucination).¹⁰ Although this route is not appealing, it will enable us to clear up something of an interpretive muddle concerning McDowell's 'disjunctivism'. We will argue that McDowell's view is very different from the kind of Hintonesque disjunctivism discussed so far.

Return to the particular good case in which Austin sees a red tomato. In a subjectively indistinguishable illusory case, Austin sees a non-red material thing (a green tomato, suppose); in a subjectively indistinguishable hallucinatory case he does not see anything material. The argument from illusion (hallucination) argues from a claim about illusory (hallucinatory) cases to the paradoxical claim that the good case is not a genuine possibility—that is, the good case does not exist. One version of the argument from illusion is the following.

1. The good case exists. (Assumption for *reductio*.)

Given (1), various subjectively indistinguishable illusory cases defined in terms of the good case also exist. Consider a particular illusory case in which Austin sees a green tomato:

2. In the illusory case, there is a red object *o* that Austin sees. (Premise)

Since the tomato in the illusory case is green, not red, and there are no other red material things Austin might see:

3. *o* is an 'immaterial' thing.
4. If Austin sees a red object in the illusory case, then he sees a red object of the same kind (material/immaterial) in the good case. (Premise)

Hence, from (2), (3), (4):

5. In the good case, Austin sees a red immaterial object.
6. If, in the good case, Austin sees a red immaterial object, he does not also see the tomato. (Premise)

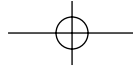
Hence, from (5), (6), and the stipulation that Austin sees the tomato in the good case:

7. In the good case, Austin sees and does not see the tomato.

Since the good case is a *possibility*, (7) is a contradiction. Our starting assumption (1) is supposedly the culprit—so the good case does not exist.

The argument from hallucination is structurally similar. In the more traditional version of the argument(s), the bitter contradiction of (7) is sweetened by the insertion of 'directly' in front of 'see' throughout the premises. Thus the traditional conclusion is simply that Austin *sees* but does not *directly* see the tomato in the good case.

¹⁰ For a recent discussion of both, see Smith (2002).



This is not supposed to threaten the existence of the good case, because allegedly one may see tomatoes ‘indirectly’. Unfortunately no one was ever able to explain satisfactorily what ‘indirectly’ was supposed to mean.¹¹ So if the traditional argument works at all, it can apparently be strengthened to the argument above, where the conclusion is obviously unacceptable.

The argument has three premises, and denying the third—(6)—does not seem promising. The culprit must therefore be either (2) or (4). Adapting A. D. Smith’s terminology slightly, (2) is the “sense datum” premise and (4) is the “generalizing” premise (2002: 25–6). On the usual diagnosis, the argument is unsound because the sense-datum premise is false. One may see something that *looks* red without seeing anything that *is* red. Similarly, one may hallucinate a red tomato, even though one sees nothing at all.

Although the sense-datum premise is widely thought to be false, in both its illusory and hallucinatory versions, there is at least a case to be made for the hallucinatory version.¹² So another option is to accept the sense-datum premise but deny the generalizing premise. Without too much wriggling, this option can be extracted from Austin’s *Sense and Sensibilia*.

3 ‘AUSTINIAN’ DISJUNCTIVISM

Austin’s flirtation with accepting the sense-datum premise (in its hallucinatory version), while denying the generalizing premise, occurs in this passage:

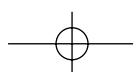
[In the] mirage case . . . we are supposing the man to be genuinely deluded, he is *not* “seeing a material thing”. We don’t actually have to say, however, even here that he is “experiencing sense-data”; for though, as Ayer says above, “it is convenient to give a name” to what he is experiencing, the fact is that it already has a name—a *mirage*. (Austin 1962: 32, footnote omitted)

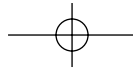
Here Austin could be read as conceding (perhaps only for the sake of the argument) that one is aware of an ‘immaterial object’ when one experiences a mirage, while implicitly denying that this has any untoward implications for the good case—one encounters immaterial objects like mirages very rarely; most of the time one sees material objects like oases.

Is this a kind of Hintonesque disjunctivism, where there is no mental “common element”? Not necessarily: the view is primarily a disjunctivism about the *objects* of experience, rather than a disjunctivism about the experiences themselves. (The distinction is due to Thau 2004: 195.) To adapt an example from Austin (1962: 50), a lemon and a lemon-like bar of soap are very different kinds of thing; that is consistent with the experience of the soap and the experience of the lemon being mentally exactly the same.

¹¹ The classic discussion of early attempts to explain it is Dretske (1969: 62–75); a notable later attempt is Jackson (1977: ch. 1), which relies on contentious claims about the analysis of sentences like ‘S sees o’; see also Armstrong (1976).

¹² See Smith (2002: 195).





Still, Hintonesque disjunctivism is not far away. Traditionally, one bears an especially intimate and somewhat mysterious relation of awareness—“acquaintance”—to sense-data (Russell 1912). So the Austinian disjunctivist might add that one is acquainted with immaterial mirages, but one merely sees material oases. On this Austinian/Hintonesque view, presumably the two sorts of experiences lack a common mental element.¹³

Despite the flirtation, Austin is not an Austinian disjunctivist.¹⁴ However, a similar position seems to be suggested in McDowell’s ‘Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge’, which is mostly taken up with a discussion of Wittgenstein’s views on ‘criteria’ and the problem of other minds. That problem starts with the assumption that our “best warrant for a psychological judgment about another person is defeasible evidence constituted by his ‘behavior’ and ‘bodily’ circumstances” (McDowell 1982/1998: 383). Given the assumption, the sceptic about other minds questions why this evidence, which is consistent with the absence of any psychology, is *ever* good enough for knowledge. And it is this assumption that Wittgenstein is said to deny: he “rejects the sceptic’s conception of what is given” (McDowell 1982/1998: 385). Sometimes one simply perceives that another person is sad, for instance, without this knowledge resting on evidence only contingently connected with the fact itself.

However, “[t]he possibility of such a position is liable to be obscured from us by a certain tempting line of argument”, namely the “argument from illusion” (McDowell 1982/1998: 385). That argument starts from the fact that an illusory bad case is subjectively indistinguishable from the good case, and derives the lemma that “one’s experiential intake—what one embraces within the scope of one’s consciousness—must be the same” (1982/1998: 386) in both cases. With this lemma in hand, the argument concludes that one’s “experiential intake” is *never* the “fact made manifest” (1982/1998: 390):

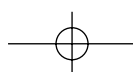
In a deceptive [illusory] case, one’s experiential intake must *ex hypothesi* fall short of the fact itself [that the tomato is green, for instance], in the sense of being consistent with there being no such fact. So that must be true, according to the argument, in a non-deceptive case too. (1982/1998: 386)

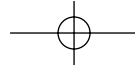
But accepting this argument is not—in a McDowellian word—‘compulsory’. Instead, we can:

say that an appearance that such-and-such is the case can be *either* a mere appearance *or* the fact that such-and-such is the case making itself perceptually manifest to someone. As before, the *object of experience* in the deceptive cases is a *mere appearance*. But we are not to accept

¹³ The Austinian/Hintonesque disjunctivist’s distinction between *seeing* and (*visual*) *acquaintance* may be thought of as equivalent to the traditional sense-datum theorist’s distinction between *indirectly seeing* and *directly seeing*.

¹⁴ See Thau (2004: 200–1). Alston (1999) comes close enough to the position, holding that in hallucinations “what appears to the subject is a particularly vivid mental image” (191); see also Locke (1967: 111–2), and Robinson (1994: 153). The “Selective Theory” discussed by Price (1950: 39–51) is a Berkeley-*sans*-God version of Austinian disjunctivism (compare Martin 1997: 95; Johnston 2004: 145).





that in the non-deceptive cases too the object of experience is a mere appearance, and hence something that falls short of the fact itself. On the contrary, *the appearance that is presented to one* in those cases is a matter of *the fact itself* being disclosed to the experiencer. So appearances are no longer conceived as *in general intervening* between the experiencing subject and the world . . . (1982/1998: 386–7, footnote omitted, boldface emphasis ours)

This passage can easily be read as saying that some strange entity, a “mere appearance”, “intervenes” between the subject and the world in an “experientially indistinguishable” (1982/1998: 386) illusory case, but is absent in the good case, in which something quite different, the “fact made manifest” (1982/1998: 390), is the object of experience. McDowell says little more about “mere appearances”, but given that this passage is part of his discussion of the traditional argument from illusion, it would not be unreasonable to take them to be sense-data. And here is Thau doing just that:

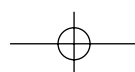
The argument from illusion has two stages. First, we’re asked to conclude that since the object of a non-veridical (i.e., inaccurate) perception isn’t a material thing, non-veridical (i.e., inaccurate) perceptions have some kind of odd nonmaterial object—John McDowell calls them “mere appearances”; but, of course, they’ve also been called “sense-data” . . . (Thau 2004: 194)

According to Thau, then, McDowell is an Austinian disjunctivist. Although Thau himself does not attribute Hintonesque disjunctivism to McDowell, that would be a natural extension of the position, as we have seen. And commentators frequently take McDowell and Hinton to be batting on the same team.¹⁵ These interpretations may be understandable but—as we will now argue—they are incorrect.

4 EPISTEMOLOGICAL DISJUNCTIVISM

In ‘Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge’, the possibility of a Wittgensteinian position on other minds is said to be obscured by the “argument from illusion”. Obviously McDowell has a version of the traditional argument in mind, which is about the perception of objects like tomatoes, not another’s sadness. Equally obviously, McDowell thinks that the traditional argument (as he construes it) obscures the possibility of a Wittgensteinian position *when it is adapted to the example of other minds*. In the *adaptation* of the argument the good case is one in which the subject is observing another person, and sees that she is sad, and an (illusory) bad case is one in which the Other is *not* sad, but is behaviourally the same as in the good case—hence *appearing* sad. (So the subject in a bad case is not in a position to know that he is not in the good case.) Now, what could McDowell mean by *agreeing* that “the *object of experience* in the deceptive cases is a *mere appearance*”? Since this claim is supposed to apply, not just to the traditional bad case (in which a non-red

¹⁵ See, for example, Byrne (2001: 202, fn. 7); Child (1994: 143–4); Crane (2005: section 3.4); Langsam (1997: 57, fn. 10); Martin (2006: 356–7, fn. 2); Robinson (1994: 247, fn. 6); Smith (2002: 197); Sturgeon (2000: 41).



tomato looks red), but also to the ‘other minds’ bad case, he cannot mean that the subject is aware of a *sense-datum* in these bad cases. A sense-datum in the traditional bad case would bear the apparent properties of the tomato; likewise, a sense-datum in the ‘other minds’ bad case would bear the apparent properties of the Other—and sad sense-data are not, we may safely say, in McDowell’s ontology. So McDowellian “mere appearances” are not sense-data.

In fact, McDowell means nothing alarming by talk of “appearances”: it is just a way of talking about how things look (sound, taste, etc.). And a “mere appearance” is “an appearance that such-and-such is the case, falling short of the fact [in the sense of being consistent with there being no such fact]” (1982/1998: 386). What is potentially confusing, of course, is McDowell’s claim that sometimes a “mere appearance” is the “object of experience”. But here he is charitably construed as saying that sometimes “what one embraces in the scope of one’s consciousness” is not the fact that such-and-such, but merely the fact that it appears to one that such-and-such.

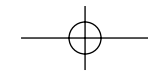
It needs to be emphasized that in ‘Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge’ McDowell is chiefly concerned with the *epistemology* of perception, not its metaphysical structure. He is not particularly interested in the question of whether there is a Hintonesque “common element” to the good and bad cases.¹⁶ This concern with epistemology explains why McDowell focuses on locutions of the form ‘S sees that p’ and ‘It looks to S as if p’, unlike Hinton, who mostly concentrates on ‘S sees an F’.¹⁷ And McDowell’s main point is that in the good case, the (perceptual) *evidence* (or, as he sometimes says, the “epistemic warrant”) one has for believing that the world is thus-and-so is considerably *better* than the (perceptual) evidence one has in the bad cases.

The view McDowell opposes can be motivated by the fact that the bad cases are subjectively indistinguishable from the good case—in a bad case, the subject is not in a position to know that he is not in the good case. If the subject’s evidence in a bad case is weaker than his evidence in the good case, then in the bad case he is not in a position to know what his evidence is—else he would be in a position to know that he is not in the good case. But surely one always *is* in a position to know what one’s evidence is. So the subject’s evidence in the good case must be the same in any bad case. In other words, “the true starting point in the space of reasons must be something common to the favourable and the potentially misleading cases (like having it look to one as if things are thus and so)” (McDowell 1995/1998: 397). (The classic critical exposition and discussion of this line of thought is Williamson 2000: ch. 8.)

Thus McDowell’s “highest common factor”, “what is available to experience in the deceptive and the non-deceptive cases alike” (1982/1998: 386), is *perceptual evidence*. And one problem with the highest common factor view is, of course, that it tends to lead to scepticism. The subject’s (perceptual) evidence in the bad cases is very impoverished, being solely a matter of how things appear. That evidence plainly does not

¹⁶ As Snowdon recognizes (2005: 139–40).

¹⁷ This difference between McDowell and Hinton is noted in Snowdon (1990: 131–2), Martin (2002a: 395, fn. 24), and Martin (2004: 44).



entail that (for example) there is a red spherical thing before the subject—but might it nevertheless *justify* the belief that there is a red spherical thing before the subject? “Anyone who knows the dreary history of epistemology knows that this hope is rather faint” (McDowell 1995/1998: 396). Hence, even if “the world is doing me a favor” (1995/1998: 396) by placing a ripe tomato on the table in good light with nothing funny going on, I do not know there is a red spherical thing before me.¹⁸

On the view McDowell recommends, the subject’s evidence in the good case is much better than in the bad cases: “When someone has a fact made manifest to him, the obtaining of the fact contributes to his *epistemic standing* on the question” (McDowell 1982/1998: 390–1, emphasis ours). Let E be the strongest perceptual evidence that the subject has in the bad cases. Say that E is *good enough* evidence if and only if, in the good case—an ordinary perceptual situation where the world is not playing any tricks—the subject knows propositions about the external world (that there is a red spherical thing before her, say) on the basis of E. The good case and the bad cases have a *common justifying element* if and only if E, the evidence the subject has in the bad cases, is good enough.

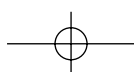
Now, since McDowell agrees with the sceptic that E is not good enough, he denies that there is a common justifying element. *Unlike* the sceptic, McDowell also denies that E is the strongest evidence in the good case; that is, he denies that there is a highest common factor. According to McDowell, either one knows that there is a red spherical thing before one, or it merely seems that one has evidence good enough for knowing there is a red spherical thing before one (the bad cases). We can call this view *epistemological disjunctivism*.¹⁹

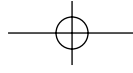
Epistemological disjunctivism is not a rival to metaphysical disjunctivism; in fact, as we will explain immediately below (section 5), the latter leads naturally if not inexorably to the former. However, epistemological disjunctivism is quite compatible with the denial of metaphysical disjunctivism. Indeed, in ‘Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge’, McDowell seems to presuppose that metaphysical disjunctivism is false—more exactly, that there is a Hintonesque common element at least in the *illusory* cases. It “look[s] to one exactly as if things [are] a certain way” (1982/1998: 385) in the good case and the illusory cases, and there is the strong suggestion that this is a perfectly proper mental respect of similarity.²⁰ The presence of a Hintonesque common element is confirmed in McDowell’s contribution to this volume: the central thesis of “the disjunctive conception” is that “the two sides of the disjunction differ in epistemic significance . . . This difference in epistemic significance is of course

¹⁸ For more on the sceptic’s ‘argument from underdetermination’, see Byrne (2004).

¹⁹ Williamson (2000) rejects the highest common factor view (and notes that McDowell agrees (Williamson 2000: 169, fn. 2)), and is no sceptic, but does not officially take a stand on whether one’s evidence is good enough in the bad cases. Although one may guess he thinks that it probably isn’t. In any event, he is not clearly an epistemological disjunctivist.

²⁰ It should not be assumed that McDowell holds that there is a common element in the *hallucinatory* cases. He might think that demonstratives should figure in instances of ‘It looks to one exactly as if things are a certain way’ (e.g. ‘It looks to one exactly as if *this* is red and spherical’), and if so then since the demonstrative does not refer in hallucinatory cases, the existence of a common element is problematic (compare McDowell 1986/1998). For more discussion see section 5, section 9, and footnote 56.





consistent with all sorts of commonalities between the disjuncts. For instance, on both sides of the disjunction it appears to one that, say, there is a red cube in front of one” (this volume: fn. 15). On *this* point—about the Hintonesque common element—Putnam has McDowell exactly right:

McDowell does indeed insist on the existence of *this* kind of “common factor.” Part of the content of a nonveridical experience can indeed be the same as part of the content of a veridical experience. Both experiences can “tell one” (incorrectly, in the nonveridical case) that there is a yellow door in front of one, for example. (Putnam 1999: 154)²¹

McDowell, though, deserves a slap on the wrist for encouraging the widespread tendency to misinterpret his views. The relevant section of ‘Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge’, he unwisely conjectures in a footnote, “grew out of an unconscious recollection of Hinton’s articles ‘Experiences’ and ‘Visual Experiences’” (1982/1998: 387, fn. 33).

5 METAPHYSICAL DISJUNCTIVISM AND SOME FOILS

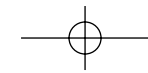
We now begin our assessment of metaphysical (Hintonesque) disjunctivism—the view that there is no kind of (reasonably specific) mental state or event common to the good case and the bad cases. Admittedly, this is only as clear as the notion of a mental state or event, but we will assume that it is clear enough. Leading candidates for mental statehood include *x believes that the tomato is red*, *x sees the tomato*, and *x sees that the tomato is red*. (One might demur at the last two examples on the ground that a subject’s being in the state entails, respectively, that the tomato exists and that it’s red; we will touch on this later in this section.) Examples of states specified in mental vocabulary that are *not* mental states include *x either believes that the tomato is red or sees the tomato*, *x does not see that the tomato is red* and—an example from Williamson (2000: 27–8)—*x truly believes that the tomato is red*.

As we saw in the previous section, epistemological disjunctivism can readily be combined with the rejection of metaphysical disjunctivism. But what about the converse? That is, could metaphysical disjunctivism be combined with the rejection of epistemological disjunctivism? Not happily. For illustration, suppose that Austinian-cum-Hintonesque metaphysical disjunctivism is true: in a certain hallucinatory bad case, Austin is acquainted with sense-data; in the good case, he simply sees the tomato.²² Consider Austin’s evidence for the proposition that there is a red spherical thing before him: in the bad case, his perceptual evidence is nothing stronger than

²¹ Although Putnam nails his colours to the disjunctivist mast (1999: 153), his use of this terminology is idiosyncratic. (Perhaps this is explained by Putnam’s unholy trinity of ‘disjunctivists’—James, Austin, and McDowell.) A Putnamian disjunctivist is simply someone who takes a standard ‘intentionalist’ line on illusions. There is no red (or red’) sense-datum or experience in an illusory case; instead, the illusory experience “*portrays the environment as containing*” a red thing, and so has redness “intentionally”, not “adjectivally” (Putnam 1999: 154). Far from being (metaphysical) disjunctivism, this is the view’s chief opposition (see the following section).

²² Austinian disjunctivism is not necessarily Hintonesque; in other words, it is not necessarily a version of metaphysical disjunctivism (see section 3).





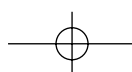
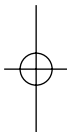
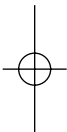
facts about sense-data; in the good case, his perceptual evidence must be quite different, since there are no sense-data in the good case. What is that perceptual evidence? Perhaps it is, simply, that there is a red spherical thing before Austin, or something else that entails this proposition (e.g. that *this* is red' spherical, and before Austin). Alternatively, perhaps it is nothing stronger than the fact that *this* (the tomato) looks to be red, spherical, and before Austin. Either way, these are not items of evidence available in the hallucinatory bad case, where the tomato is absent. In order to *reject* epistemological disjunctivism, two claims must be established. First, that there is a certain overlap of evidence E in both cases. Note that the common evidence E can only be as strong as the *disjunction* of the evidence peculiar to both cases: for instance, either there is something red and spherical before Austin, or such-and-such facts about sense-data obtain.

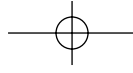
(Further note that the disjuncts should not concern the particular tomato—that *this* looks red and spherical—or *particular* sense-data—that *this* is red' and circular'. The first proposition is not entertainable by Austin in the bad case, in which the tomato is entirely absent; the second is not entertainable in the good case, in which sense-data are entirely absent. Hence a disjunction with either of these disjuncts cannot be E, because it is not available as evidence in both cases.)

Second, and more heroically, it must be established that E is *good enough* evidence—in the good case, Austin knows that there is something red and spherical before him *on the basis of E*, and not *solely* on the basis of evidence peculiar to the good case. If uphill struggles are sensibly avoided, the road from metaphysical disjunctivism will lead to epistemological disjunctivism.

Here are two distinctions between varieties of metaphysical disjunctivism, both of which we touched on earlier, and which we will appeal to in what follows. One is a distinction between a disjunctivism that classifies the illusory cases with the good case—*Veridical Illusory v Hallucinatory (VI v H)* disjunctivism—and one that classifies them with the hallucinatory case—*Veridical v Illusory Hallucinatory (V v I/H)* disjunctivism. The other distinction concerns what can be said about the right-hand side of the disjunction. According to *positive* (metaphysical) disjunctivism: “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). That is, there is a specific kind of mental state or event that characterizes the right-hand side of the disjunction (and, hence, according to the disjunctivist, not the left-hand side). Austinian-cum-Hintonesque disjunctivism is an example, where the hallucinatory case supposedly involves acquaintance with sense-data. According to *negative* (metaphysical) disjunctivism, there is (at least sometimes) no such further characterization of the right-hand side. Martin is the main proponent of negative disjunctivism: certain hallucinations, he thinks, have “no positive mental characteristics other than their epistemological properties of not being knowably different from some veridical perception” (2004: 82).²³

²³ It is pretty clear that Hinton's view is similar: “A perfect . . . illusion of a given perception or other reality should be thought of as follows. It is an illusion of that reality, such that if you





Disjunctivism can be brought into sharper focus by considering some alternatives. The polar opposite position is what we may call the *Cartesian view*, which takes indiscriminable experiences to be mentally exactly alike, and conversely:

CV Experience e is mentally exactly alike experience e^* iff e is indiscriminable from e^* .²⁴

Let us assume that ‘ a is indiscriminable from b ’ is to be elucidated as in Williamson (1990: ch. 1), in terms of the ‘inability to activate the knowledge that a is distinct from b ’, and that experiences are particular (‘token’) events. The Cartesian view as expressed in CV needs qualification. Even if experiences e and e^* are mentally alike, a subject may not be in a position to tell that e and e^* are distinct because e and e^* are the experiences of other people. Alternatively, even if she undergoes both e and e^* , she may not be in a position to tell that they are distinct because she has forgotten undergoing e . On the other hand, she may be able to tell that e and e^* are distinct because she can tell that they occur at different times, or because an informant says so—it would not follow that e and e^* are *mentally* different. Suitably qualified, the Cartesian view is something along these lines:

CV+ Let S be an alert conceptually competent normal human subject with an excellent memory, and let e and e^* be two of her experiences. Then: e is mentally exactly alike e^* iff S is never in a position to know by introspection alone that e is mentally different from e^* .

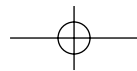
Let us adapt our running choice of the good case by supposing that the tomato seen by Austin is later annihilated, keeping the proximal causes of Austin’s brain states constant. In the terminology of Johnston (2004), Austin undergoes a “subjectively seamless transition” from seeing the tomato to having a tomato-hallucination. Austin is never in a position to know by introspection that his two experiences differ mentally. According to disjunctivism, they are mentally completely different; according to the Cartesian view, they are mentally exactly alike. The Cartesian view thus rejects the claim that x sees *the tomato* is a mental state.

Although the Cartesian view has some intuitive appeal, for familiar reasons it is incorrect. Consider an alert (etc.) subject S who is looking at a patch that is darkening very slowly. Initially the patch is white, and after five minutes has changed to black. An empirical fact: S will never be in a position to know that her present experience differs mentally from her experience a short while ago. Yet this cannot imply that the two experiences are mentally exactly alike, otherwise her initial experience (as of a white patch) would be mentally exactly alike her final experience (as of a black

are involved in the illusion then you cannot tell, simply by being involved in it, that it is not that reality” (1973: 145; see also 76).

²⁴ Compare Millar (1996: 77): “the very idea of an experience is such that if A has an experience E and B has an experience E' , and being in E is experientially indistinguishable from being in E' , then E and E' are the same experience”. The epistemological expression ‘indistinguishable’ strongly suggests something like CV, but we are not sure that this is Millar’s intent.





patch), which is absurd. The problem is, of course, that the Cartesian view has the obtaining of an intransitive relation defined over S 's experiences (i.e., *indiscriminability in mental respects by S*) being a necessary and sufficient condition for the obtaining of a transitive one (i.e., *sameness in mental respects*).²⁵

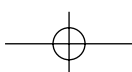
Why would one think that some bad cases are mentally *exactly* alike the good case? If there is some justification for this other than the Cartesian view, it is not clear what it is. So, given that *x sees the tomato* and *x sees that the tomato is red and spherical* are, on the face of it, mental states in good standing, opponents of disjunctivism should adopt the *moderate view*: the good case and the bad cases (both illusory and hallucinatory) are different in significant mental respects, despite having a common mental element.

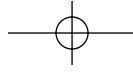
What is that common element? If we set sense-data aside, then there are two options: first, qualia, taken to be introspectible non-intentional properties of experiences; second, the representational content of experience. Since the idea that experience has representational content is a good deal less controversial than the idea that experiences have (non-intentional) qualia, we will exclusively consider the second option.

There are two ways of spelling out a content-based version of the moderate view. One is *abstract intentionalism*: the representational content of visual experience is not object-dependent (at least with respect to objects in the perceiver's environment). (That is, the content is "abstract" in the sense of Tye 2000: 62.) For the sake of a simple example, we may pretend that, according to abstract intentionalism, the content of Austin's experience in the good case is that $\exists x(x$ is red, spherical, and before Austin). In the bad cases, the content is exactly the same. This is not to say that the good case and the bad cases are mentally exactly alike—for that, sameness of representational content is necessary but not sufficient. The abstract intentionalist, we may suppose, holds that Austin is in the mental state of seeing that the tomato is red in the good case—Austin is not in this state in any hallucinatory case, and is not in this state in any illusory case where the tomato is a different colour.

The other moderate view is *particular intentionalism*: the representational content of visual experience is object-dependent. For the sake of a simple example, we may pretend that, according to particular intentionalism, the content of Austin's experience in the good case includes the proposition that Tom is red, spherical, and before Austin, where Tom is the seen tomato. In the *illusory* cases, the content also includes this proposition. However, this proposition can hardly be included in the content in every hallucinatory case—in many of these, Tom does not even exist. It might thus appear that the particular intentionalist is forced to adopt a version of VI v H

²⁵ Graff argues that, "contrary to widespread philosophical opinion, phenomenal indiscriminability is transitive" (2001: 905). It might superficially appear that Graff's argument is at odds with the claims of the above paragraph. This would be a misreading, however. Graff's conclusion is simply that "*looking the same as* (in a given respect)" (2001: 905) is transitive. As Graff points out, this is not (or not obviously) an epistemic relation; in particular, it is not the relation of indiscriminability as characterized by Williamson (see Graff 2001: 910 and fn. 6). For helpful further discussion of indiscriminability, see Hellie (2005).





metaphysical disjunctivism: there is a common element across the good case and the illusory cases, but not across hallucinatory cases in general. However, as we will explain in section 9, particular intentionalists need not be friends of disjunctivism.

There are three contenders in the ring, then: disjunctivism, abstract intentionalism, and particular intentionalism. We now turn to the claim that disjunctivism should start the contest as the odds-on favourite.

6 METAPHYSICAL DISJUNCTIVISM AS THE DEFAULT VIEW

In the following section, we assess Martin's elaborate argument for disjunctivism; in this section we examine a weaker strategy, designed to secure disjunctivism as the starting point of any philosophical exploration of perception, if not its final destination. Since we will be conspicuously ignoring Snowdon's important early papers, a word of explanation is in order.

Snowdon is sometimes classed with Hinton and McDowell as a disjunctivist (for example see Martin 2004: 43). But he has not endorsed it in print, at least. The main burden of 'Perception, Vision, and Causation' is to argue against the causal theory of perception, considered as "in some sense, a conceptual truth" (Snowdon 1980–1: 176). In that paper, Snowdon argues as follows: if disjunctivism is true, then the causal theory is false; disjunctivism is not a *conceptual* falsehood; hence the causal theory is not a conceptual truth.²⁶ As he points out at the end of his paper, "an assertion of the disjunctive theory is not needed for a rejection of the present causalist view" (1980–1: 191), and indeed he makes no such assertion. Snowdon reaffirms his lack of public commitment to the disjunctivist cause in this recent retrospective comment:

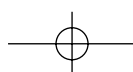
There is the issue of whether disjunctivism, so explained, is true or false. But there is also the issue whether efforts at conceptual analysis of perceptual concepts are entitled to assume the falsity of disjunctivism. My own earlier papers in effect were arguing that they were not so entitled. (2005: 137, fn. 15)

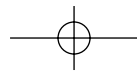
6.1 Hinton's challenge

Hinton takes disjunctivism to embody the default view of perceptual experience. In 'Phenomenological Specimenism' he writes:

Although I contend that no neutral experience report satisfies Condition PS [that is, refers to "psi-ing"—a kind of mental event that occurs in both the good and bad cases], I do not undertake to prove that. I am not adopting the method of pointing to something that I can demonstrate to be a mistake, and suggesting or showing that it is common to a certain class of doctrines. Instead I am just taking a stand until overwhelmed by contrary reasoning. (Hinton 1980: 38)

²⁶ For an argument that disjunctivism is compatible with the causal theory, see Child (1994: ch. 5).





A clue to Hinton's motivation may be found in passages like the following, where Hinton describes the alternatives to disjunctivism:

The view that in all cases of seeing (and visual hallucination) we actually see a mental picture or image is now widely rejected, and I for one would also want to reject the marginally different view that a sort of as-it-were-picture-seeing occurs as a common constituent of illusion and true perception. (Hinton 1967b: 10)

Hinton seems to be assuming that if disjunctivism is false, then either the sense-datum theory or a marginally different as-it-were-sense-datum theory is true.²⁷ Of course, this assumption would be rejected today (see section 5). Arguably, whatever the default view is, it should *rule out* the sense-datum theory—in which case, given Hinton's assumption, the prize goes to disjunctivism. But this is only a reconstruction of Hinton's motivation, because he gives no explicit argument.

6.2 Martin's reinforcement of Hinton's challenge

In 'The Limits of Self-Awareness' Martin undertakes to provide what Hinton did not, an argument that disjunctivism is innocent until proven guilty:

When Michael Hinton first introduced the idea, he suggested that the burden of proof or disproof lay with his opponent, that what was needed was to show that our talk of how things look or appear to one to be introduced more than what he later came to call perception-illusion disjunctions . . . The aim of this paper is [in part] . . . to explain the way in which Hinton was correct in his challenge. Properly understood, the disjunctive approach to perception is the appropriate starting point for any discussion of the nature of perceptual experience. (2004: 37–8)

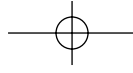
According to Martin, the disjunctivist's opponent, but not the disjunctivist, is committed to a "substantive epistemic principle" (2004: 50), and hence a non-disjunctivist position "carries more theoretical burdens" (2004: 51). It will be convenient to divide Martin's overall argument into three parts. The first part defends a claim about a "conception of perceptual experience" (2004: 48) that, Martin thinks, should be accepted on all sides. The second part characterizes the disjunctivist's opponent. And the third part purports to show that the first part's "conception of perceptual experience", together with the characterization of the second part, implies that the disjunctivist's opponent must embrace the "substantive epistemic principle".

According to the first part's conception of perceptual experience, "some event is an experience of a street scene just in case it couldn't be told apart through introspection from a veridical perception of the street as the street" (2004: 48). Or, as Martin puts it in 'On Being Alienated':

The notion of a visual experience of a white picket fence is that of a situation being indiscriminable through reflection from a veridical visual perception of a white picket fence as what it is. (Martin 2006: 363)

²⁷ A slightly different—and perhaps better—interpretation: the appeal of the "common element" is a hangover from the sense-datum theory, and should not have survived the theory's demise (compare Hinton 1973: 66).





A situation is “indiscriminable through reflection [introspection] from a veridical visual perception of a white picket fence” just in case the subject in the situation is not in a position to know via introspection that she is not having a veridical visual perception of a white picket fence (Martin 2006: 364–5).²⁸ It will be helpful to represent this using the apparatus of cases. A case, recall, is a centred possible world—a world with a marked subject and time. Let ‘ $E_p(\alpha)$ ’ abbreviate ‘in case α , the subject has a visual experience as if p ’, ‘ K_α ’ abbreviate ‘in α , the subject is in a position to know via introspection that’, and ‘ V_p ’ abbreviate ‘the subject (veridically) visually perceives that p ’.²⁹ Then the claim of the first part may be expressed as follows:

Exp $E_p(\alpha)$ iff $\sim K_\alpha \sim V_p$

(Compare (Martin 2006: 11); in Exp and the theses below, universal quantification over cases is tacit if it is not explicitly supplied.³⁰)

There are some pressing and difficult questions about the exact intended interpretation of Exp and whether, so interpreted, it is true—let alone whether it is common ground between the disjunctivist and her opponent. But here we can simply work with an intuitive understanding of Exp, leaving it largely unchallenged.³¹

²⁸ Compare the explanation of a ‘subjectively indistinguishable case’ in section 1. This notion of indiscriminability is like Williamson’s in its use of ‘not knowably not’; it is unlike Williamson’s in that the relevant items of knowledge are not negations of identities (‘this apple \neq that orange’) but rather negations of predications (‘this apple is not an orange/lacks the property *being an orange*’) (Martin 2006: 363–4, fn. 15). It would therefore be a mistake to take Martin’s notion of indiscriminability to be a relation between particular experiences; see Sturgeon (2006). (Having said that, sometimes Martin does talk of two perceptual episodes being indiscriminable, for example his 2004: 76; compare Siegel 2004: 109, fn. 5.)

A terminological note: Martin uses ‘perception’ and ‘perceives’ so they apply only to the good case, not the hallucinatory cases; we have followed him in this.

²⁹ ‘At the time of α ’ has been left tacit; ‘the subject’ is stipulated to refer directly to the subject of the case when it appears in the scope of ‘knows’.

³⁰ Thus (Exp) is a universally quantified schema, with ‘ p ’ being the sole schematic letter.

³¹ Most of the literature on Martin’s version of disjunctivism has focused on Exp, which as Martin recognizes, has some problems. The most immediate are these:

Right-to-left:

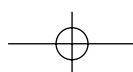
(RLi) Due to “excess of alcohol or lack of interest in the matter” (2004: 76; cf. 2006: 380), the subject may not be in a position to know that she is not veridically perceiving a tomato, which we may suppose she isn’t. Yet Exp implies that she is having an experience of a tomato.

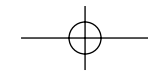
(RLii) Due to conceptual incapacities, a dog (2004: 76; 2006: 379) is not in a position to know that he is not veridically perceiving a tomato, which we may suppose he isn’t. Yet Exp implies that he is.

(RLiii) Similarly, a comatose subject, or an “insentient stone” (2006: 383), is not in a position to know that she/it is not veridically perceiving a tomato. Yet Exp implies that she/it is.

(RLiv) ‘Zombies’, notoriously, are not in a position to know that they are entirely experience-free. Exp implies wrongly that the idea of a zombie is incoherent (compare 2006: 375–6).

(RLv) Arguably, when one has an experience solely of a determinate shade (red₁₉, say), one is not in a position to know that one is not experiencing (a fortiori not veridically perceiving) a slightly different shade (red₁₈ or red₂₀, say) (Williamson 2000: ch. 4). In which case, according to Exp one is *not* having an experience solely of red₁₉.





Now to the second part. Martin “further elaborates” the position of the disjunctivist’s opponent as follows:

A perceptual experience is a kind of event which has certain distinctive features $E_1 \dots E_n$ [e.g. “being the presentation of such and such mind-dependent qualities, as the sense datum theory supposes. Or we might instead take them to be representational properties, as an intentional theory would press”] . . . [a] the possession of these features [is] necessary and sufficient for an event to be an experience . . . [b] in addition, an event’s possession of them is introspectible by the subject of the experience. (Martin 2004: 47)

It is clear from the context that the “distinctive features $E_1 \dots E_n$ ” are supposed to be necessary and sufficient, not for being a perceptual experience in general, but for being a relatively specific kind of perceptual experience—“as of a street scene” (49), to use Martin’s main example.³² If we take the opponent to hold the schematic thesis that features $E_1 \dots E_n$ are necessary and sufficient for having an experience as if p , and let ‘ $F_p(\alpha)$ ’ abbreviate ‘in case α , the subject is undergoing an event with features $E_1 \dots E_n$ ’, then the opponent holds:

(a) $E_p(\alpha)$ iff $F_p(\alpha)$

The condition that the features are “introspectible by the subject of the experience” seems to amount to the claim that (necessarily) when they are present, the subject is in a position to know that they are (cf. Martin 2006: 390). So, letting ‘ F_p ’ (without the attached ‘ (α) ’) abbreviate ‘the subject is undergoing an event with features $E_1 \dots E_n$ ’, the opponent also holds:

(b) if $F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha F_p$

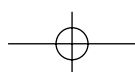
As with the first part, various questions of interpretation arise, but let us set them to one side and see how Martin puts the two parts together to force the opponent to accept the “substantive epistemic principle”.

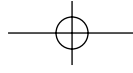
Left-to-right:

(LR) “Consider an hallucination of an Escher-like scene with an impossible staircase” (2004: 80); one presumably could know by introspection that one was not *veridically* perceiving such a staircase, in which case Exp implies that one is not hallucinating an Escher-like scene after all; see also Siegel (2004: 94).

In ‘The Limits of Self-Awareness’, Martin responds to (RLi) and (RLii) by appealing to an “impersonal” conception of indiscriminability (2004: 75). In ‘On Being Alienated’, he gives the same reply to (RLi) (2006: 381); the reply to (RLii) (which, we take it, contains the seeds of his reply to (RLiii)) still appeals to impersonal indiscriminability, although the dialectic is considerably more serpentine (2006: 383–96). For criticism see Hawthorne and Kovakovich (2006) and Siegel (2004); for a more sympathetic view see Sturgeon (2006). Martin responds to (RLiv) as one might expect, by denying the zombie intuition (2006: 378–9). For his response to RLv and related problems see his (2004: 76–9) and (1997: 98–9). Here there are complications because in ‘The Limits of Self-Awareness’ Martin explains the difficulty in terms of the “intransitivity of indiscriminability”, which does not apply to indiscriminability as Martin explicitly characterizes it in ‘On Being Alienated’ (see footnote 29 above, and the corresponding main text). For criticism see Hawthorne and Kovakovich (2006). Martin’s response to (LR) is to switch to talk of the indiscriminability of “aspects of the experience” from aspects of a veridical perception (2004: 81). (Compare Siegel 2004: 110, fn. 6.)

³² *Pace* Siegel (2004: 102); of course, having *some* “distinctive features” or other of this kind is supposed to be necessary and sufficient for being a perceptual experience in general.





The argument of the third part begins by noting that Exp and (a) imply that “there cannot be any situation which is indistinguishable for its subject from actually perceiving a street scene and which lacks the relevant properties [the “distinctive features”]” (2004: 50). That is, Exp and (a) imply that there is no case α such that $\sim K_\alpha \sim V_p$ and $\sim F_p(\alpha)$, or, equivalently, for all cases α :

- (1) if $\sim F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha \sim V_p$

Martin’s argument then proceeds as follows:

[i] In turn, one must assume that a subject couldn’t but be in a position to discriminate a situation which lacked $E_1 \dots E_n$ from one which possessed [them]. [ii] Here I just assume that for one situation to be indiscriminable from another requires only that it not be possible to know that it is distinct in kind. [iii] Therefore to deny it is possible that a situation which is distinct in kind from an event possessing $E_1 \dots E_n$ is not possibly knowable as distinct in kind, is to claim that for any situation distinct in kind from an event possessing $E_1 \dots E_n$ it is possible to know that it is distinct. (Martin 2004: 50, endnote omitted)

(i) can be recast as follows:

- (2) necessarily, a situation lacking $E_1 \dots E_n$ is discriminable from a situation with $E_1 \dots E_n$

(ii) gives the operative account of indiscriminability, which we explained above when introducing Exp.³³ Given that, (2) amounts to:

- (3) if $\sim F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha \sim F_p$

And (iii), despite the misleading ‘therefore’, simply notes a logical equivalence:

- (4) $\sim \exists \alpha (\sim F_p(\alpha) \text{ and } \sim K_\alpha \sim F_p)$ iff $\forall \alpha (\text{if } \sim F_p(\alpha) \text{ then } K_\alpha \sim F_p)$

Martin’s argument ends here, with the following paragraph stating the conclusion:

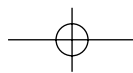
Adopting this position is to attribute a privileged epistemic position to the subject of experience. For, according to it, a responsible subject who wishes to determine how things are with him or herself through reflection must not only correctly identify phenomenal properties of a specific sort [the “distinctive features”] when they are present, but also they cannot be misled into judging them present when they are not. It is not merely that the properties which determine an event as an experience are held to be self-evident on this view—that the presence of such properties indicates to the subject that they are present when they are present. It must also be the case that the absence of such properties when they are absent is equally detectable by the subject, so that there is always some way that a subject could tell that he or she was not so experiencing when not doing so. It is to attribute to responsible subjects potential infallibility about the course of their experiences. (Martin 2004: 50–1, emphasis ours)

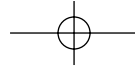
³³ Restricted to perceptual examples, (ii) amounts to this:

A situation (case) α lacking F_p is indiscriminable from any case with F_p iff $\sim K_\alpha \sim F_p$

Equivalently:

A situation (case) α lacking F_p is discriminable from any case with F_p iff $K_\alpha \sim F_p$





We can now identify the substantive epistemic principle to which the disjunctivist's opponent is committed. It is "potential infallibility about the course of [experience]", namely:

SEP if $F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha F_p$ & if $\sim F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha \sim F_p$

And SEP is derived from one claim that the opponent is said to hold at the outset, namely:

(b) if $F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha F_p$

together with:

(3) if $\sim F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha \sim F_p$

Looking back over the argument as we have unpacked it, (3) follows from (i) (see the last-but-one quotation), together with the account of indiscriminability stated by (ii). But (i) is not supported by any explicit argument.

As mentioned earlier, assuming that the opponent accepts Exp, the first part's characterization of perceptual experience, she is committed, as Martin notes, to:

(1) if $\sim F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha \sim V_p$

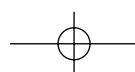
Although Martin does not say that (3) (or, equivalently, (2)) follows from (1), it is clear that this is his route, on behalf of the disjunctivist's opponent, to (3). Here's how we take the argument to go. For illustration, suppose the feature distinctive of a perceptual experience of a red tomato is the presentation of a red' sense-datum. Assume (1): if the subject is not having a perceptual experience of a red tomato (that is, if F_p —the presentation of a red' sense-datum—is absent), he is in a position to know that he is not having a *veridical* perceptual experience of a red tomato. Presumably the disjunctivist's opponent will say that one comes to know that one is not veridically perceiving a red tomato by inferring it from the absence of red' sense-data. But this implies that the subject is in a position to *know* that red' sense-data are absent—else the conclusion that he is not veridically perceiving would not itself be knowledge.³⁴ Hence, from (1):

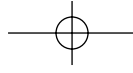
(3) if $\sim F_p(\alpha)$ then $K_\alpha \sim F_p$

However, although Martin is quite correct in taking his opponent—as she is officially characterized—to be committed to a "substantive epistemic principle", this does not show that disjunctivism is the default view. Instead, it shows that the opponent's position has been characterized far too strongly.

In fact, the disjunctivist's opponent need not even accept (a), the commitment to necessary and sufficient conditions for perceptual experience, at least if this is

³⁴ We should read 'know that red' sense data are absent', not 'de dicto', but as 'know something that is incompatible with the presence of red' sense data'—the subject need not conceive of red' sense data as such. Similar remarks go for 'the subject knows he is undergoing an event with features $E_1 \dots E_n$ '. Compare Siegel (2004: 103–4).





understood in a reductive way, which is apparently Martin's intent.³⁵ But this is not the main complaint, so for the sake of the argument let us assume that the opponent holds (a).

(b)—one half of SEP—is just built into the opponent's position at the very start. Even granting the commitment to (a), there is no evident reason for doing this.

The commitment to (3)—the other half of SEP—is derived from the controversial Exp:

$$\text{Exp } E_p(\alpha) \text{ iff } \sim K_\alpha \sim V_p$$

Hence if the opponent rejects Exp, she is free also to reject (3). Moreover, adapting the reasoning that led us from (1) to (3), Exp all by itself seems to imply an equally substantive principle which, letting 'E_p' abbreviate 'the subject has an experience as if p', can be put as follows:

$$(5) \text{ if } \sim E_p(\alpha) \text{ then } K_\alpha \sim E_p$$

That is, if the subject in case α does not have a perceptual experience as if p, she is in a position to know that she is not having a perceptual experience as if p.

By Exp, whenever the subject does not have a perceptual experience of a red tomato, she is in a position to know that she is not having a *veridical* perceptual experience of a red tomato. Suppose she is not having a perceptual experience of a red tomato—she is merely imagining a red tomato, say.³⁶ It is hard to see how the subject could be in a position to know that she is not *veridically* perceiving a red tomato, if she was not also in a position to know that she is not *perceptually experiencing* a red tomato. Any indication that she is not veridically perceiving, only imagining, is presumably also an indication that she is not perceptually experiencing. Hence (5) is true. And since (according to Martin) Exp is a commitment of *disjunctivism*, that theory carries no lighter epistemological baggage than some of its rivals. The argument for disjunctivism's default status therefore fails.

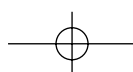
7 MARTIN'S ARGUMENT FOR DISJUNCTIVISM

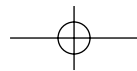
We now turn to the most sophisticated and detailed argument for disjunctivism in the contemporary literature, developed by Martin in a series of rich and intricate papers.³⁷

³⁵ Knowledge is a useful analogy here: according to the anti-disjunctivist about knowledge, belief is a common element to 'the good case' (knowing) and 'the bad case' (merely believing)—this does not commit her to giving reductive necessary and sufficient conditions for knowing. Compare Williamson (2000: 32–3).

³⁶ Assuming, with Martin (2002a: 413–14), that imagining is not to be classified as perceptually experiencing.

³⁷ For reasons of space, we are ignoring the argument for disjunctivism that appears in Martin (2002a: 402–19) (although not in Martin's most recent writings). This argument, which turns on issues about sensory imagining, deserves a lengthy treatment. Another equally important omission from this paper is any discussion of the pro-disjunctivist case made in Campbell (2002: ch. 6).





Unlike the previous argument, it does not merely purport to show that the disjunctivist's opponent "carries more theoretical burdens", but rather attempts to establish disjunctivism outright. As before, a division of the argument into parts will be convenient. The first part is an argument for the denial of something Martin calls the "Common Kind Assumption"; the second part is an argument from the denial of the common kind assumption to disjunctivism—specifically, *negative* disjunctivism.

7.1 Part 1: from naïve realism to the denial of the common kind assumption

"The prime reason for endorsing disjunctivism", Martin says, "is to block the rejection of a view of perception I'll label *Naïve Realism*" (2004: 38).

According to naïve realism (NR):

[I]t is an aspect of the essence of such experiential episodes [e.g. episodes of seeing tomatoes] that they have . . . experience-independent constituents [e.g. tomatoes]. (Martin 2006: 357)

Or:

Some of the objects of perception—the concrete individuals, their properties, the events these partake in—are constituents of the experience. No experience like this, no experience of *fundamentally the same kind*, could have occurred had no appropriate candidate for awareness existed. (Martin 2004: 39, emphasis ours)

"Fundamental kind" is an important term of art for Martin:

I will assume the following: entities (both objects and events) can be classified by 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 [its "fundamental kind" (2004: 43)]; it tells what essentially the event or episode is. (2006: 361, footnote omitted)³⁸

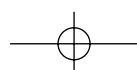
Thus, naïve realism holds that the experience in the good case (veridically perceiving a tomato, say) is of a fundamental (essential) kind K such that no experience in the absence of tomatoes could be of kind K.

According to Martin, "Naïve Realism is inconsistent with two assumptions which are common to much of the philosophical discussion of perception" (2004: 39).

The first is *experiential naturalism* (EN), that "our sense experiences, like other events or states within the natural world, are subject to the causal order, and in this case are thereby subject just to broadly physical causes (i.e. including neurophysiological causes and conditions) and psychological causes (if these are disjoint from physical causes)" (2004: 39–40; compare 2006: 357).

The second is the *common kind assumption* (CKA), that "whatever [fundamental] kind of mental event occurs when one is veridically perceiving some scene, such as

³⁸ There is one occurrence of 'state' in this quotation, which is prima facie at odds with the restriction to "entities (both objects and events)". In any case, Martin's official position is that experiences are events (2006: 354).



the street scene outside my window, that kind of event can occur whether or not one is perceiving” (2004: 40; compare 2006: 357). To illustrate this, return to the good case mentioned three paragraphs back, in which the veridical perception’s *fundamental* kind is K. According to CKA, an experience of kind K can occur even if one is not seeing a tomato, but merely hallucinating one.

The argument for the inconsistency, in brief, is (roughly) this. Let *e* be the experience occurring in the good case. By NR, *e*’s fundamental kind, K, is such that no event of kind K could occur in the absence of tomatoes. By CKA, the experience in an hallucinatory case is of kind K; somehow tomatoes must be around in hallucinatory cases, even though they are not seen. But, by EN, an hallucinatory case can obtain “through suitable manipulation of mind and brain” (Martin 2006: 358); that is to say, in the absence of tomatoes. Contradiction.

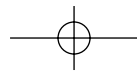
Let us grant the inconsistency; one of the assumptions therefore has to go. Not NR, because it “best articulates how sensory experience seems to us to be just through reflection” (2006: 354; see also 2004: 42). And not the anodyne EN either; hence CKA has to be thrown overboard.

Now Martin himself can be read as suggesting that not even a minimal version of disjunctivism is established at this stage: so far, we have “not yet captur[ed] a key thought behind disjunctivism” (2006: 368). However, that same paper (“On Being Alienated”) begins by saying that “Disjunctivism . . . seeks to preserve a naïve realist conception of veridical perception . . . the disjunctivist claims that . . . the experiential episode [in the good case] is of a kind which could not be occurring were you having an hallucination” (2006: 354), which gives the impression that NR&~CKA suffices for disjunctivism. And in “The Limits of Self-Awareness” Martin describes someone who “resist[s] the problem of perception in a way that retains both Naïve Realism and Experiential Naturalism” as “the disjunctivist” (2004: 53). Whatever Martin’s considered view may be, *Snowdon’s* current position is that NR&~CKA (or something close to it) is the kernel of disjunctivism.³⁹ In the article mentioned just before section 6.1 above he characterizes disjunctivism as follows:

The experience in a perceptual case reaches out to and involves the perceived external objects, not so the experience in other cases. (Snowdon 2005: 136–7)

This formulation has two parts. The first is a claim about “perceptual cases” (where one sees an object like a tomato). This is more-or-less naïve realism. The second part of Snowdon’s formulation of disjunctivism is that in the “other cases” (where one hallucinates a tomato), the experience does *not* “reach out and involve” any tomatoes, or indeed any “external object”. This is the claim that the naïve realist fundamental kind K is not instantiated in hallucinatory cases. With the harmlessly oversimplified assumption that K will be instantiated in hallucinatory cases just in case both NR and CKA are true, the second part of Snowdon’s formulation amounts

³⁹ See also Crane (2005: section 3.4); Soteriou (2005: 178). In McDowell (1986/1998: 204, emphasis ours) the “*innocuous* disjunctive conception of subjective appearances” is a watered-down version of NR&~CKA.



to $NR \rightarrow \sim CKA$. Hence the conjunction of the two parts is (approximately) equivalent to $NR \& \sim CKA$.

Although terminological squabbles are not very profitable, there is good reason for not allowing $NR \& \sim CKA$ to count as a kind of disjunctivism. As Martin points out (2004: 54, 58, 60; compare 2006: 360–1), $NR \& \sim CKA$ is consistent with the experiences in the good and bad cases falling under the *same* (psychological) kind $K\ddagger$ —all that is ruled out is that $K\ddagger$ is the *fundamental* kind of experience occurring in the good case. And 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.⁴⁰ And in any case, a common element makes 'disjunctivism' an inapposite label.⁴¹

So, we do not yet have an argument for disjunctivism.⁴² But we *do* have the first part of Martin's overall case for disjunctivism, which we will now examine.

Although the argument from naïve realism to the denial of the common kind assumption is not entirely plain sailing, the main problem is with the premise. First, notice that naïve realism, as Martin explains it, is not the usual version, which is not a claim about the essence of some of our sensory episodes.⁴³ In fact, Martin's opening statement of the position in 'The Limits of Self-Awareness' is much weaker:

The Naïve Realist thinks that some at least of our sensory episodes are presentations of an experience-independent reality. (2004: 38)

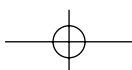
Suppose the quotation is elaborated by saying (as Martin does) that "[s]ome of the objects of perception—the concrete individuals, their properties, the events these partake in—are constituents of the experience" (2004: 39). Still nothing follows about the essence of experiences—presumably one may hold that the tomato is a "constituent" of one's experience, and that *this very experience* could have occurred in the absence of the tomato. Why does the naïve realist feel the need to go further, and proclaim that "[n]o experience like this, no experience of fundamentally the same kind, could have occurred had no appropriate candidate for awareness existed" (2004: 39)?

⁴⁰ Snowdon, incidentally, thinks that the "common element" view opposed by Hinton is that the experiences in the good and bad cases "have the same nature and, therefore, do not reach out to, or involve as constituents, items external to the subject" (2005: 136). But Hinton went far beyond denying that the experiences have the same nature: see footnote 23.

⁴¹ The analogue of NR for knowledge is that (a) in 'the good case' (where the subject knows) knowing is the subject's "fundamental" mental state. The analogue of $\sim CKA$ is that (b) in 'the bad case' (where the subject merely believes), the subject doesn't know. This is consistent with believing being an element common to both cases. This overall position, including believing as a common element is, more-or-less, Williamson's. And it doesn't seem to be a kind of disjunctivism—at any rate, Williamson explicitly denies that it is (2000: 47–8), and Martin agrees (2006: 370–1; compare his 1997: 88–9).

⁴² It is worth pointing out that naïve realism, at least as officially explained by Martin, is not even a *necessary* component of disjunctivism (compare Martin 2002a: 395, fn. 25). That Austin's experience in the good case lacks a "common element" does not imply that it has the tomato as a *constituent*.

⁴³ Naïve realism is often taken to be (approximately) the claim "things are what they seem" (Russell 1950: 15). See also, for example, Price (1950: 26–7); compare Langsam (1997: 53); Robinson (1994: ch. 2); Smith (2002: 44).



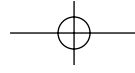
Put another way: suppose that one is forced to *deny* this claim about essence—why would that be bad? The denial is perfectly consistent with the claim that we see tomatoes and never see sense-data, that nothing mental or immaterial ‘intervenes’ between us and tomatoes, and so on. Let the essences look after themselves—we can still perceive the world as ‘directly’ as we would wish.

Thus, it is unclear why we need to go to the mat to rescue Martin’s industrial-strength naïve realism. But the problem is deeper. According to Martin, naïve realism is “the best articulation of how our experiences strike us as being to introspective reflection on them” (2004: 42).⁴⁴ And part of the motivation for ‘direct realist’ views (of which Martin’s naïve realism is a species) is, as he notes, that “our sense experience is transparent— . . . experientially we are presented with a mind-independent realm and not simply some array of mind-dependent qualities or entities whose existence depends on this awareness” (2004: 39). The usual transparency claim is that in undergoing a sense experience, one is never aware *of* the experience itself—if one is aware of any events at all, they are events in one’s environment, like flashes and bangs, not events in the head. Indeed—as stressed in Dretske (2003)—transparency makes it extremely hard to see how one knows that one has experiences in the first place. But at the very least, the transparency of experience fits nicely with the view that in having an experience of, say, a tomato, although one may be in a position to learn something about the essence of the *tomato*, one is not in a position to learn much of anything about the essence of the *experience*.

Something stronger may be said. We have so far played along with talk of ‘experiences’, conceived of as particular events or episodes, like collisions or cocktail parties, about which various theories may be offered. Following this section, we will continue to play along—and certainly for many purposes such talk is harmless. But are there really any such episodes? Undeniably, we *do* see tomatoes. But why think that when one sees a tomato something happens that should be labelled one’s ‘experience of the tomato’? For the naïve realist, the reason cannot be because we notice our experiences, as we might notice a flash of light or a car backfiring—the proponent of transparency should deny that we are aware of any such things. The experience cannot be one’s ‘seeing the tomato’: seeing itself is not an event, episode, or process (Vendler 1957).⁴⁵ Obviously vision involves various processes beginning at the tomato and continuing into the visual pathways. However, we can only label such a process ‘the experience’ if we can be assured that the subject is generally in a position to know that it occurs. True, sometimes accessible perceptual events *will* occur: if one scrutinizes or observes the tomato, then (if grammar is any guide) there is an event of scrutinizing or observing, which is available for one to speculate about. But what if one *doesn’t*

⁴⁴ It should be emphasized that Martin does not take naïve realism to be particularly naïve: it is a sophisticated philosophical gloss on, or elaboration of, what Martin thinks “we all pre-theoretically accept concerning the nature of our sense experience” (2006: 404). Martin himself does not take naïve realism to be obvious or uncontroversial, remarking that “[t]he commitment to Naïve Realism is probably not shared by most readers” (362). If there is a properly so-called ‘naïve’ picture of sense experience, it is probably the seventeenth-century view that we only perceive our own ‘ideas’.

⁴⁵ See also Bennett (1988: 4–9), who argues (following other work of Vendler’s) that “‘imperfect nominals’ like ‘Austin’s seeing the tomato’ name facts, not events.



scrutinize or observe the tomato, but merely sees it? One may not be in a position to know much about one's experiences, conceived of as particulars (specifically, events, or something similar), simply because there aren't any.⁴⁶

Transparency goes naturally with *modesty about experience*—we know little of the nature of experiential episodes.⁴⁷ What's more, it goes naturally with *scepticism about experience*—there are no experiential episodes to begin with. Hence naïve realism, in so far as it is motivated by transparency, is a position with some serious internal tensions.

7.2 Part 2: the argument from explanatory redundancy

So far, let us suppose, NR&~CKA has been established. That is, if the fundamental kind of experience in the good case is K, then K is a “Naïve Realist” kind (by NR), and is not instantiated in the hallucinatory case (by ~CKA). But now, Martin argues, there is a problem. Consider an hallucination with the same proximal causes as the perception, and suppose that the hallucination falls under a mental kind, K†. Given sameness of proximal causes, the perception also falls under K†. But then K† would seem to pre-empt K in the good case, rendering it explanatorily idle. Since K is *not* explanatorily idle, we are forced to deny that the hallucination falls under K†. The most that can be said about the hallucination is that it has the negative epistemological property of being not knowably different from the perception—negative disjunctivism is true.

Sketched slightly less roughly, the second part of the argument itself divides into three parts—2(a), 2(b), and 2(c):

Part 2(a)

Assume that the experience in the hallucinatory case is “brought about through the same proximate causal conditions as [the] veridical perception [in the good case]”—that the experience is a “causally matching hallucination” (2006: 368). Let K† be a kind that subsumes the experience in the hallucinatory case. Then (by the argument of this part):

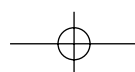
C(a): the experience in the good case is also of kind K†. ⁴⁸

(As noted before, this conclusion is consistent with ~CKA.)

⁴⁶ Rather ironically, Hinton himself approaches this point in Part I of *Experiences*; he does, however, think that “my experience of seeing a flash” is an “event”, albeit in some exceptionally thin sense (1973: 30).

⁴⁷ Martin describes his own view of perceptual experience as “modest”, because it eschews commitment to any metaphysical characterization in terms of representational properties, awareness of sense-data, and the like (2004: 48). This contrasts with his decidedly *immodest* view of what introspection can tell us about the nature of veridical perceptions.

⁴⁸ It would be more accurate to say that the conclusion is that *some event* (perhaps not the veridical experience with K) in the good case has K† (see Martin 2004: 59–60). We are using the stronger formulation for simplicity. (This part of Martin's argument is adapted from Robinson 1995, and Robinson 1994: ch. 6.)



Part 2(b)

Let the fundamental kind of experience in the good case be K (a naïve realist kind, from Part 1). By \sim CKA (also from Part 1), the experience in the hallucinatory case is not of kind K ; hence $K \neq K^\dagger$. Suppose for reductio that kind K^\dagger is a “positive mental characteristic” (2004: 73) (specified in terms of representational properties or sense-data, say). By 2(a), the experience in the good case is of kind K^\dagger . And (by the argument of this part):

C(b): K^\dagger makes “the Naïve realist aspects of the perception [i.e., K] . . . explanatorily idle” (2004: 71).

Part 2(c)

The experience in the hallucinatory case has the “negative epistemological property” (2006: 398) K^c of being indiscriminable from (not knowably distinct from) the experience in the good case: in other words, in the hallucinatory case, the subject is not in a position to know that he is not in the good case. Trivially, the experience in the good case also has this negative epistemological property. But (by the argument of this part):

C(c): Although K^c can indeed do some explaining, it does *not* make K explanatorily idle.

So, putting the three parts together, and assuming that the “Naïve realist aspects” of the good case are *not* “explanatorily idle”, the hallucinatory case does *not* fall under any such positive mental kind K^\dagger :

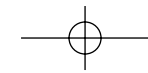
[T]here are certain mental events, at least those hallucinations brought about through causal conditions matching those of veridical perceptions, *whose only positive mental characteristics are negative epistemological ones*—that they cannot be told apart by the subject from veridical perception. (2004: 73–4, emphasis ours)

That is, *negative* disjunctivism is true.⁴⁹

As Martin emphasizes, the restriction to “causally matching hallucinations”—those hallucinations that share the same proximate causal conditions as veridical

⁴⁹ ‘In The Limits of Self-Awareness’, Part 2(a) is set out in the form of premises and conclusion on pp. 53–4. Parts 2(b) and (c) are more discursive. Part 2(b) starts with the second paragraph on p. 60 (“But this is not the only way . . .”), and ends with “. . . as not common to perception and hallucination” in the last paragraph on p. 64. The Part 2(c) argument for the explanatory virtues of the indiscriminable-from-the-good-case property starts at the top on p. 65 and ends (bar a few loose ends) with the first paragraph of section 7 on p. 68. The argument that the indiscriminable-from-the-good-case property does not screen off K starts with the first full paragraph on p. 69 and runs to the end of section 7 on p. 70. However, given that Martin concedes that the screening off argument of Part 2(b) doesn’t work as stated (see below), the second argument of Part 2(c) is apparently not needed.

In ‘On Being Alienated’, an abbreviated version of Part 2(a) is on pp. 368–9. On p. 370 it is stated without argument that “a threat of explanatory pre-emption of the common feature [K^\dagger] overcomes the claim of that which is peculiar to the case of veridical perception [K], but the explicit Part 2(b) argument only gets started at the bottom of p. 370 (“It is instructive to compare . . .”) and ends at the top of p. 372 (“ . . . is of no avail”). Part 2(c) is absent.



perceptions—is crucial. A more general version of this argument, applying to hallucinations in general, would fail at the first step (2(a)). Thus, Martin says, disjunctivists can be agnostic about how to characterize bad cases that are *not* causally matching hallucinations: “[disjunctivism] is not inconsistent with the view that there are some experiences among the non-veridical ones which fit the characterisations offered by sense-datum or intentional theories” (2004: 52).

Now one might think that if our criticisms of Part 1 are correct, then there is no need to spill more ink on Part 2, since it draws on a premise of Part 1, naïve realism, together with its conclusion, namely the denial of the common kind assumption. But this would be mistaken. Part 1 only comes into play in Part 2(b), where it is used to secure the assumption that kind K is a “Naïve realist aspect” of the experience in the good case, and is not instantiated in the bad case. No controversial claims about the essences of mental events are needed for this result: all we need is the bland assumption that the experience in the good case has K (perhaps contingently), and the experience in the bad case doesn’t. The naïve realism of Part 1 is redundant.

So, Part 2 cannot be left unaddressed. Part 2(a) deploys causal considerations to show that the good case is also of kind K†. The idea (put very roughly) is that since an experience’s having K† just depends on local neural activity (unlike an experience’s having K, which partly depends on what is in the subject’s environment), and since the relevant neural activity occurs in the good case, the experience in the good case also has K†. Even without the fine details, Part 2(a) looks promising. The role of Part 2(c) is basically to allay the suspicion that the argument of Part 2(b) proves too much, rendering K explanatorily idle no matter what. Part 2(b), then, is where the action is.

Part 2(b) opens by noting that the hallucinator’s actions can be explained:

[H]allucinations no less than perceptions are liable to coerce our beliefs and move us to action . . . (2004: 61)⁵⁰

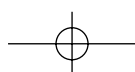
That is, the hallucinator’s actions are (partly) explained by K†. But K† is also instantiated in the good case, so it will apparently screen off K from doing any explanatory work:

We have the same resultant phenomena in introspectively matching cases of perception and hallucination . . . the common kind of event [K†] 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 [K] from giving us an explanation. (2004: 62, endnote omitted)

Martin then says that “[t]his concludes the second step [Part 2(b)] in the argument” (2004: 63).

However, by Martin’s own lights, this does not conclude Part 2(b). In fact, it hardly commences it. For, as Martin goes on to concede, it just isn’t true that K† is better at explaining than K. As Williamson and others have (in effect) argued, the relational

⁵⁰ One might wonder how Martin’s “impersonal” notion of indiscriminability (see footnote 31), abstracting as it does from subjects’ cognitive limitations, can be used to account for this fact: compare his (2004: 68).



nature of K makes it *better* correlated with worldly outcomes than $K\uparrow$, and so it is better placed than $K\uparrow$ to explain those outcomes:

Why was John able to pick up the glass that was on the table? Because he could see it, and could see where it was. (Martin 2004: 64)

An alternative explanation, appealing to the conjunction of the fact that John is facing a glass and is fortuitously hallucinating one, would not be as good, because one is much more likely to pick up a glass if one is *seeing* it. Given the complex feedback between perception and action required to pick up a glass, someone veridically hallucinating a glass is most unlikely to be able to pick it up.⁵¹

So, “one can at least rebut the challenge that the disjunctivist’s conception of sensory experience [i.e. K] is guaranteed to be explanatorily redundant” (64). In other words, the screening off argument just given doesn’t work as it stands. Moreover, once the Williamsonian point has been taken on board, surely something stronger can be said: K is, simply, *not* explanatorily idle. Taken at face value, the conclusion of the Part 2(b) argument is *false*.

However, that is evidently not how the conclusion is supposed to be interpreted. As Martin says at the start of the Part 2(b) argument, the worry about explanatory idleness is, specifically, that K plays no role in explaining “the phenomenal aspects of experience” (2004: 59). And immediately after noting the Williamsonian point about explanation, he claims that:

[t]his [Williamsonian] strategy does not address the question whether there are any common properties to the two situations which are distinctive of the subject’s conscious perspective on the world. Nor yet the question whether, if there are any, why they can only be explained by what is common to perception and hallucination rather than what is distinctive of perception.

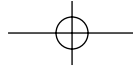
It would be a severe limitation on the disjunctivist’s commitment to Narve Realism, if the Narve realist aspects of perception could not themselves shape the contours of the subject’s conscious experience. Yet this aim would be frustrated if we rested with the above responses [e.g., the point that *seeing the glass* is not explanatorily idle], since *so far no reason has been offered to show why we must think of the fabric of consciousness as relational, and as not common to perception and hallucination.* (2004: 64, emphasis ours)⁵²

By “the contours . . . of conscious experience” and “the fabric of consciousness”, Martin presumably means what he earlier called the “phenomenal aspects of experience”. The problem is supposed to be, then, that $K\uparrow$ screens off K from explaining *the phenomenal aspects of the subject’s experience in the good case*. Notice that this quotation clearly implies (correctly) that such screening off is *consistent* with naïve realism. Hence, we may think of Martin’s (friendly) opponent as holding (a) naïve realism,

⁵¹ See Williamson (2000: ch. 2); Yablo (1997).

⁵² Summing up the worry at the end of the paper, Martin says that:

[I]f we assume that the causally matching hallucination is an event which represents the presence of a tree—that is, its having such representational properties are taken to explain why the experience is as it is and has the consequences that it does—then the explanation we can give of the salient features of the hallucination should equally be applicable to the case of veridical perception (2004: 71).



(b) that the naïve realist K earns its explanatory keep, and (c) that the phenomenal aspects of the experience in the good case are best explained by K^\dagger rather than K. According to Martin, this whole package is consistent. Evidently (c) is supposed to be highly problematic, but what is not clear to us is why Martin thinks this.

Pending some further clarification of why (c) is so bothersome, we may reasonably take Martin's argument to fail at exactly this point.

8 AGAINST $V \vee I/H$ METAPHYSICAL DISJUNCTIVISM

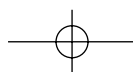
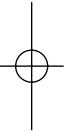
In the previous two sections we have raised some objections to Martin's argument that disjunctivism is the default view, and his direct argument for disjunctivism. It is now time to go on the offensive. In this section we will argue against $V \vee I/H$ disjunctivism; in the next section we will argue against $VI \vee H$ disjunctivism.

The argument against $V \vee I/H$ disjunctivism is extremely simple, if not simple-minded; we can give it without raising theoretical questions about the representational content of experience. According to $V \vee I/H$ disjunctivism, there is no specific mental state or event common to the good case and the illusory cases. Return to our example of Austin and the tomato: in the good case, Austin sees that the tomato is red and spherical; in an illusory case he sees the tomato, but it is not the way it looks. Consider two illusory cases: in I_1 , the tomato is red and ovoid; in I_2 , the tomato is green and spherical. In I_1 , Austin sees that the tomato is red, but misperceives the tomato as spherical; in I_2 , Austin sees that the tomato is spherical, but misperceives it as red.

We are seeking a common mental element, specific enough to be absent in any good case in which Austin sees a green ovoid tomato (see section 1). The common element cannot be *x sees that the tomato is red*, because the subject is not in that state in I_2 ; similarly, it cannot be *x sees that the tomato is spherical*. What about *x sees the tomato*? Although in every illusory case Austin sees the tomato, this state is not specific enough—Austin is in that state in a good case in which he sees a green ovoid tomato, which happens to be the very same tomato he sees in 'the' good case. But of course we have left out the obvious candidate: *the tomato looks red and spherical to x*. In every illusory case, the tomato looks red and spherical to Austin, as it does in the good case.

It might be objected that this is not to identify a *mental* state, because one can only be in the state if the tomato exists, but with the demise of the Cartesian view, this complaint has no apparent basis. The point can be reinforced by noting that if *the tomato looks red and spherical to x* is *not* a mental state, this is presumably because it is some sort of hybrid, consisting of being in an 'inner' tomato-independent mental state appropriately caused by the tomato. However, a credible hybrid analysis remains completely elusive.

Obviously the previous complaint is not one that the *disjunctivist* can accept—an example of a tomato-entailing mental state is provided by the good case itself. Instead, the disjunctivist will presumably point to the gap between a psychological locution's being non-disjunctive, and its picking out a state or event with a unified mental



nature. The disjunctivist has to exploit this gap elsewhere—for example, she cannot allow that ‘a visual experience of a red tomato’ (compare section 6.2) picks out an event of a distinctive mental kind. And if this move is acceptable for ‘a visual experience of a red tomato’, why not also for ‘looks red’, ‘looks spherical’, and the like?

This objection would have some merit if $V \vee I/H$ disjunctivism were the default view, or if there were a persuasive argument for it. But from the previous two sections, there appears to be no reason to believe this. The parallel between ‘a visual experience of a red tomato’ and ‘looks red’ is anyway not convincing: the former occurs mostly in philosophy papers, while the latter is a central component of ordinary psychological talk. Denying that *the tomato looks red to x* is not a mental state is scarcely more appealing than denying that *x believes that the tomato is red* is a mental state.

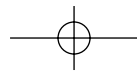
Moreover, expressions like ‘looks red’ are (arguably) needed to characterize the *good* case properly. If so, ‘looks red’ cannot be given a disjunctive analysis, since such an analysis would be partly in terms of the good case, and hence circular. In section 1, the good case was described as one in which Austin sees the tomato, and “sees that it is red (and spherical)”. In the context, that was sufficient for getting across the idea of the good case. But in fact, it is possible to see that the tomato is red—moreover, see that the tomato is red *on the basis of vision*—even if the tomato does not *look* red. Imagine that objects are red if and only if they are shiny. Tomatoes are red (and shiny); they also look shiny, but they do not look red. Imagine, further, that one knows this fact. One may know by looking that the tomato is red—thus one may see that the tomato is red (compare Hinton 1973: 31).⁵³ (Perhaps we can generate a similar example without relying on background knowledge: imagine a creature who is ‘hard wired’ to take visibly shiny objects to be red, which they are. Reliabilist sympathizers, at least, will allow that the creature can see that the tomato is red.)

Obviously the good case was not intended to be of this kind. To make that intention explicit we apparently need to stipulate that the tomato *looks* red in the good case—or else explain the good case using the philosophical jargon of ‘veridical perception’. The first strategy precludes giving a disjunctive account of *the tomato looks red to x*; the second just invites the question ‘And what is a ‘veridical perception of a red tomato’, precisely?’

9 AGAINST $VI \vee H$ METAPHYSICAL DISJUNCTIVISM

In hallucinatory cases, the subject does not see the tomato, and so it does not look red. If there is a specific mental state or event common to the good case and the hallucinatory (and illusory) cases, it cannot be the one previously identified. But what about *it is to x as if there is something which looks to him (x) to be red and spherical* (borrowing Snowdon’s phrase for anti-disjunctivist purposes), *x seems to see a red spherical thing*, or *it looks to x as if there is a red spherical thing before him*? The former locution is a piece of philosopher’s argot which is itself in need of explanation: there should be no presumption that it picks out a mental state. The problem with the latter two locutions

⁵³ For some relevant discussion, see Dretske (1969: 78–93); Jackson (1977: ch. 7).



is that their obvious readings are epistemic—as in ‘I seem to be out of gas/putting on weight/drunken’, ‘It looks as if I’m out of gas/putting on weight/drunken’, etc. A rough paraphrase of ‘I seem to see a red spherical thing’, for example, would be ‘I have evidence that supports the hypothesis that I see a red spherical thing’; hence ‘I seem to see a red spherical thing’ does not even purport to ascribe a distinctive kind of mental state.

The issue of the common element is unlikely to be settled by interrogating folk psychology. A small dose of high theory is needed, and here we need to return to the two main foils distinguished in section 5, *abstract* and *particular* intentionalism. Recall that the abstract intentionalist holds that the content of Austin’s experience in the good case is the proposition that $\exists x(x$ is red, spherical, and before Austin); the particular intentionalist holds that the content includes the proposition that Tom is red, spherical, and before Austin (where Tom is the seen tomato). As noted in section 5, if abstract intentionalism is correct, then the content of the experience in hallucinatory cases is exactly the same as the content in the good case, and hence (metaphysical) disjunctivism of any kind is false.

However, abstract intentionalism might well be doubted. First, as Martin has (in effect) argued, its motivations are quite suspect.⁵⁴ Second, empirical theories of vision sometimes take the contents of experience to be particular (in particular, the “visual indexes” of Pylyshyn 2003). Third, and more ambitiously, one might attempt to run a transcendental argument for particular intentionalism as a necessary condition for perceptually-based singular thought (compare Brewer 1999: ch. 2).

It would take us too far afield to examine the case for particular intentionalism in detail. Still, we may fairly conclude that arguing against disjunctivism by assuming abstract intentionalism is a risky business.

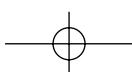
So suppose that particular intentionalism is true. To adapt a famous example from Strawson (1950: 333), the hallucinatory cases are then analogous to uttering ‘This is red and spherical’, while demonstrating nothing.

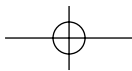
With this analogy in mind, one might see the common element in the *predication* of redness and sphericity—predication that fails for lack of a suitable subject. Cashing out the metaphor of ‘failed predication’ is by no means trivial.⁵⁵ Fortunately, though, there is an easier strategy.

The notion of the content of experience is usually explained in terms of the way the experience ‘presents/represents the world as being’, the experience’s ‘correctness conditions’, the conditions under which the experience would be ‘veridical’, and the like. (For some quotations, see Byrne 2001: 201; Travis 2004: 58–9.) These explanations are of course vague, but may be none the worse for it. The crucial point is that, although one may imagine various ways of injecting more precision, none will *rule out* abstract contents entirely. For instance, it might be suggested that the content

⁵⁴ Martin (1997: 92–4); see also Martin (2002b); Soteriou (2000).

⁵⁵ For some suggestions, see Hawthorne and Kovakovich (2006); Johnston (2004); Siegel (2005: section 5.1). As the Strawson analogy indicates, this issue is to a large extent a replay of the debate about the Evans/McDowell position on singular thought: see, for example, Segal (1989); for the connection with hallucination, see Smith (2002: ch. 8); Martin (2002b).





of experience should align closely with the intuitive conception of a visual illusion, that the contents should be ‘cognitively impenetrable’, that they should be confined to the output of ‘early vision’, or that they should be ‘non-conceptual’. None of these suggestions is inimical to the idea that the content of experience is (partly) abstract. That is why we said that, according to the particular intentionalist, the content of the experience in the good case *includes* the proposition that Tom is red, spherical, and before Austin. As far as we can see, no theoretically well-motivated precisification of the notion of perceptual content will have the consequence that abstract contents—for instance, the proposition that $\exists x(x$ is red, spherical, and before Austin), or something similar but fancier—are not represented in the good case.

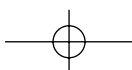
Further, we can motivate the idea that experience has abstract content with certain examples of ‘semi-veridical illusions’. Consider the following Gricean case (modified from Martin 2002b: 10). Suppose one is looking at a scene with a green tomato on the left and a red tomato of exactly the same shape on the right. The green tomato is (very!) cleverly illuminated to look red, and the red tomato is cleverly illuminated to look green. One views the tomatoes through a prism, which has the effect of transposing their apparent locations. It appears to one that there is a green tomato on the left and a red tomato on the right, and indeed there is. There may well be a temptation to say that one’s experience is, with respect to colour and location, *inaccurate* or *illusory*—one perceives what is in fact the rightmost red tomato as being green and on the left. But on the other hand, there is also a temptation to say that one’s experience is, with respect to colour and location, *accurate* or *veridical*—there is a green tomato on the left, just as there appears to be. If the content of the experience is *entirely* particular, this last temptation must be resisted.

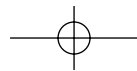
If veridical and illusory experiences have abstract content, then hallucinatory experiences can hardly be exempt. (Compare the analogous position for thought: if one *accepts* that, in the ‘good case’, when the subject says ‘This is red and spherical’, she believes (*inter alia*) that *there is* something red and spherical, one should *also* accept that the subject believes this abstract proposition in an hallucinatory case, where the demonstrative ‘this’ does not refer.⁵⁶) And if the experiences in the hallucinatory cases have abstract content then we have found a common element.⁵⁷

The upshot of the last six paragraphs is this: *if* experience has representational content at all, then VI v H disjunctivism is false. Now notice that the VI v H disjunctivist is under some pressure to accept the antecedent. In an illusory case, things look exactly the same to Austin as they do in the good case, where this ‘sameness in look’ is supposed (by the VI v H disjunctivist) to be a genuine respect of mental overlap. In the good case, things *are* as they look, and the experience is *accurate*; in an illusory case, things *aren’t* as they look, and the experience is *inaccurate*. There are certain propositions that jointly specify ‘the way things look’ in the good and illusory cases

⁵⁶ This (plus agreement with the antecedent) seems to be McDowell’s position (1986/1998: 236, fn. 17).

⁵⁷ In the terminology of Hawthorne and Kovakovich (2006), we are denying that “strong singularism” is tenable. In taking perceptual experience to have (at least) abstract content, we are *not* denying the importance or primacy of object-dependent content (compare, again, the analogous position for thought).





(that this is red and spherical, that there is something red and spherical before me, etc.), and which give the accuracy conditions of the experiences: these propositions are true in the good case and false in the illusory cases. But this is, in all but name, the almost orthodox view that experience has representational content. The VI v H disjunctivist plainly cannot reject out of hand the possibility that the experience in hallucinatory cases has false content, since she admits that this is the correct account of illusion. And once that option is explored a little further, its attractions become clear, or so we have argued. To adapt Russell on naïve realism: VI v H disjunctivism, if true, is false; therefore it is false.⁵⁸

10 SUMMARY

Our main points are these:

1. Epistemological disjunctivism (McDowell) should be sharply separated from metaphysical disjunctivism (Hinton et al.). (section 4)
2. Metaphysical disjunctivism leads naturally to epistemological disjunctivism, but not conversely. (section 5)
3. There's no compelling argument for (metaphysical) disjunctivism, or for taking it to be the default view of perceptual experience. (sections 6 and 7)
4. V v I/H disjunctivism is false. (section 8)
5. As is—more tentatively—VI v H disjunctivism. (section 9)

And, finally: the default position is not the Cartesian view, (metaphysical) disjunctivism, or naïve realism, but the *moderate view*. But we must admit that the appeal

⁵⁸ Alston would resist the step from accuracy conditions to the propositional (representational) content of experience, on the grounds that when a tomato looks red to one, this is a form of “non-conceptual cognition” of the tomato. According to him, this rules out views on which perceptual experience has propositional content (1999: 184). We lack the space to discuss this properly, but we think that in whatever defensible sense experience is ‘non-conceptual’, this is *compatible* with experiences having propositional content. (Johnston argues against “accounts that recognise *only* propositional acts of sensing” (2006: 279, our emphasis); this conclusion is also compatible with experiences having propositional content.)

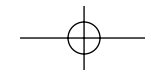
A more radical view is defended by Travis (2004). According to him, it is a mistake to say that illusions involve *any* kind of inaccuracy at the level of experience—any inaccuracy is entirely a matter of the judgements the subject would tend to make. We cannot possibly do Travis's view justice here. Briefly, though, we find his model of illusion unconvincing. He thinks an illusion is a matter of taking feature A of the perceived scene to indicate that the scene has feature B, which in fact it does not. To use his example, the Müller-Lyer lines “have a certain look” (feature A), which one might take to “indicate that it is two lines of unequal length that one confronts” (feature B) (2004: 68). Whatever the “certain look” is, exactly, it is intended to be a feature of the lines that has nothing to do with the subject who is perceiving them; compare (Austin 1962: 43), on “petrol looks like water”. We think (but do not argue here) that this account is neither necessary nor sufficient for illusion. On Travis's view, the good case is a perception of the tomato's redness, an illusory case is a perception of some *other* feature of the tomato (a “certain look”, presumably), and an hallucinatory case is an entirely different kettle of fish. Assuming that the good case *also* involves perceiving the “certain look”, Travis is a VI v H disjunctivist; see also Travis (2005).



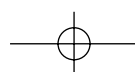
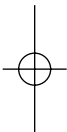
of the moderate view is largely due to the disjunctivists' insightful emphasis on the difference between the good and bad cases. So it is they—not forgetting, of course, Kierkegaard—who should get most of the credit.

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