Comments on Matthew Conduct's "Naïve realism without disjunctivism about experience"

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In his paper "Naïve realism without disjunctivism about experience" Conduct defends a form of naïve realism. He defines naïve realism as the view that in perception, or "perceptual experience", the objects of experience are "presentational". "Presentational" is then glossed as involving two features: in having a perceptual experience the subject stands in a relation to the object of perception such that that object is a "constitutive" element of the experience.

The possibility of hallucination, which Conduct calls "perfect non-perceptual experience", typically leads a naïve realist to embrace disjunctivism about experience, the view that hallucinations and perceptual experiences are fundamentally different kinds of psychological states. Conduct defends a form of naïve realism that maintains that hallucinations and perceptual experiences are experiences of the same kind, but is nonetheless in *some sense* disjunctivist about the *objects* of experience. The main idea is that hallucinations and perceptual experiences are experiences of the same kind, both are relations to objects and those objects are constitutive of the experiences in question.

Conduct seems to vacillate about whether the objects to which hallucinations and perceptual experiences are related have to be of the same kind. For instance on p. 1 he says "the difference between perceptual and non-perceptual experience will lie in the nature of the objects that are so presented", but on pp. 9-10 he says, "the naïve realist supposes that the object of experience in a perceptual experience is the object of perception, a normal object in the world. But how is this possible, if the object of experience in such a case is also the same kind of thing as the object of experience in a causally matching non-perceptual experience, which is not a normal object?" (I'll come back to this point.)

Part of the challenge for the 'object-disjunctivist' is to explain the sense in which a hallucination is a relation to a mind-independent object in a way that respects the idea that experiences are part of the natural causal order.

Conduct seems to take up one of Mike Martin's proposals for how to understand the objects of hallucination. "The physical basis of a causally matching perfect non-perceptual experience brings into existence the object of that experience, which is then sensed by the subject…objects can be generated out of, or depend for their existence upon, physical processes and events that are not parts of those objects." (p. 8) Virtual objects, construed as genuine objects, which supervene on certain physical objects, are given as an example of how this is possible. He does not, however, answer Martin's challenge that we have no reason to posit that these objects are anything more than mind-dependent.

But what are the objects of hallucinations and in what sense are they generated out of or depend for the existence on physical processes?

Conduct turns to Mark Johnston to answer the first question. The objects of hallucinations are "sensory profiles", a complex of uninstantiated universals. In turn, the objects of veridical perceptions are instantiations of these sensory profiles by physical objects. So, hallucinations and perceptual experiences have something in common, they both are relations to sensory profiles, but they differ in that in veridical perception, sensory profiles are instantiated by physical objects.

It's not clear to me in what sense uninstantiated universals are "generated or depend on" physical processes of the brain. And in what sense do uninstantiated universals account for the sensory phenomenology (e.g. what it's like to see colors) that ordinarily accompanies hallucinations?

Appealing to a complex of properties to give a theoretical account of hallucinations leaves out an important aspect of the phenomenology that hallucinations and veridical perceptions share. That is, it is part of the *experiential qualitative character* of many hallucinations and perceptual experiences, that they seem to be experiences of individual particular objects. It doesn't seem to me that a complex of properties can account for this fact.

Finally, I'm not sure I see the difference between Conduct's view and an indirect realist view. For example, consider a sense data view that construes sense data as mind-independent

entities. Both Conduct's view and the sense data view construe hallucinations as relations to some property-like entity. The main difference seems to be that on Conduct's view hallucinations are relations to uninstantiated universals. But this fact seems to make the sense data view more desirable, because sense data were in part meant to capture the sensory phenomenology essential to hallucinations and perceptual experiences.