

Preface

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Philosophers and scientists interested in cognition have for a long time been intrigued by abnormal states of consciousness and, specially, by hallucinations. These uncommon states involve an alteration of habitual mental patterns and a modification of the cognitive links between agent and world, changing thus our ordinary experience of reality. Hallucinations have been traditionally evoked in order to, among other things, support philosophical skepticism, defend indirect theories of perception, investigate the nature and mechanisms of consciousness, articulate the idea of veridical perception, analyze other mental states and cognitive functions, clarify and delimitate our mental-health concepts, explore therapies in clinical psychology, appreciate neuropharmacological effects, inspire the work of artists, conduct and assess inquiries in cognitive neuroscience, describe phenomena in social anthropology and, finally, better understand what William James called ‘the varieties of religious experience’.

This notwithstanding, the hallucinatory experience itself—whether in regard to its conceptual analysis, precise phenomenology, underlying mechanisms, explanatory models, epistemological implications or methodological approach—remains puzzling and understudied in the academic community. To make matters worse, the information we have about hallucinations is scattered in a myriad of fields and disciplines such as art, psychiatry, history, ethnobotany, anthropology, psychology, neurosciences, philosophy and religion.

This special issue modestly proposes to start reversing this by providing a state-of-the-art and multi-disciplinary perspective for approaching hallucinations or aspects thereof. So it is only natural that here we find articles from diverse disciplinary horizons such as psychology, psychiatry, cognitive neuroscience, and philosophy. As for the contents covered in this issue, there is a wide span of topics: hallucinogenic plants, their classification and effects on consciousness; relationships between sensory and non-sensory hallucinations; myth-busting techniques for optimal investigation of

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hallucinations; auditory verbal hallucinations in the hypnagogic and hypnopompic states, and as a case study for the cognitive sciences and phenomenology; conceptual and methodological procedures to approach hallucinations; hallucinations as they relate to imagery and memory illusions; epistemology of the Ayahuasca hallucinogenic experience; hallucinations, philosophy of perception and disjunctivism; dreaming and hallucinating. Indeed, an interdisciplinary (and, ideally, integrating) approach to hallucinations is clearly desirable given the complexity and scope of the subject, and this journal's orientation has made this possible.

My gratitude therefore goes in the first place to Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, the general editors of this journal, for their kind invitation to be special editor of this issue. Many thanks as well to the impressive staff of Springer, and especially to Charisse Cometa. I also appreciate the initiative and efforts of Markus Werning for helping launch and support this project. I want to thank the *Institut Jean-Nicod* and the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* in Paris, and specially Jérôme Dokic, for their kind sabbatical invitation that allowed me to study hallucinations earnestly. The same goes for Alexandre Lehmann, Guillaume Dumas, Jesús Vega and all the speakers and staff that participated in the seminars, workshops and conferences on hallucinations and modified states of consciousness held in Paris since 2006—and still going on! (more info: <http://hallucinations.risc.cnrs.fr>). Finally, my gratitude goes to all the reviewers and authors (whether their manuscripts made it to this issue or not) for helping develop a worthy and growing field of study.