I have received a number of interesting responses to my claim in yesterday’s post that it is possible for groups of people to have the same non-veridical vision (that is, hallucinations). I used the phenomenon of the Blessed Virgin Mary: she seems to appear a good deal, to groups of people – sometimes large groups. In this post I thought I would respond to two of the highly intelligent demurrals.

**DEMMURAL:**

As a former evangelical Protestant we believed that Roman Catholics who claim to see the Virgin Mary as a group are in a state of emotional hysteria and seeing an illusion not experiencing a group hallucination. An illusion is a distorted perception of something that really is present, such as seeing a stain on a wall or a cloud formation in a photograph and seeing the Virgin Mary or Jesus in it. Many thousands of Roman Catholics claimed to have experienced a visitation of the Virgin Mary in Fatima Portugal not due to seeing and hearing a woman in flowing robes speak the same words to them and perform the same actions but because many of them came to the conclusion that the sun had moved in an unusual pattern. This is not a group hallucination but an example of mass hysteria regarding an illusion.

**RESPONSE:**

This is a very interesting distinction between an “illusion” and a “hallucination.” The former...

THE REST OF THIS POST IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY. If you don’t belong yet, there is still hope! You can join and live the rest of your life contented and fulfilled. So JOIN! It won’t cost much and every penny goes to charity.

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