

Perceptual Phenomenology and Direct Realism

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Abstract

I discuss the so-called “problem of perception” in relation to the Argument from Illusion: Can we directly perceive the external world? According to Direct Realism, perception provides direct and immediate awareness of reality. But the Argument from Illusion threatens to undermine the possibility of direct perception of the world. In *The Problem of Perception* (2002), A. D. Smith proposes a novel defense of Direct Realism based on a careful study of perceptual phenomenology. According to his theory, the intentionality of perception is explained in terms of three phenomenological features of perception: phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality, movement, and the *Anstoss*. He argues that this account of perceptual intentionality can resist a central premise of the Argument from Illusion, i.e. the “sense-datum inference.” After presenting Smith’s theory, I argue that he fails to distinguish two independent tasks for the direct realist, and that he underestimates the threat of the so-called “sense-datum infection.” My contention is that even if Smith’s theory of perceptual intentionality is correct, Direct Realism has not been saved from the Argument from Illusion. To resist the Argument from Illusion, it is not enough to merely consider how to block the sense-datum inference. The direct realist must also find a way to undermine the

sense-datum infection. If so, I suggest, Direct Realism cannot be defended by perceptual phenomenology alone.

Keywords: Perception, Direct Realism, Argument from Illusion, Intentionality

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I. Introduction

Consider the so-called “problem of perception”: Can we directly perceive the external world? Or, are ordinary physical things the immediate objects of perception? According to Direct Realism, perception provides, at least in veridical cases, direct and immediate awareness of reality. Yet it is well known that this intuitive position has been seriously threatened by the Argument from Illusion and the Argument from Hallucination. Although the problem of perception has a long history, whether it is or can be solved is still far from obvious.

Why should we worry about this problem? Traditionally, its importance stems from epistemological skepticism.¹ But there is a deeper worry. As Tim Crane points out, the problem is actually a kind of antinomy. He says: “perception seems intuitively to be openness to the world, but this fact of openness is threatened by reflection on illusions and hallucinations. Therefore, perception, as we ordinarily understand it, seems to be impossible (Crane, 2005).” On the one hand, phenomenology indeed gives a strong intuition that perception provides a direct access to the empirical world. But on the other hand, the philosophical implications of illusions and hallucinations, which are equally strong,

¹ The issue is: If we never perceive the external world directly, how can we be sure that the external world exists at all, or exists in the way we take it to be? If Direct Realism is disproved by the Argument from Illusion or the Argument from Hallucination, empirical knowledge is vulnerable to epistemological skepticism.

undermine the possibility of direct perception of the world. This worry makes the problem of perception urgent in contemporary philosophy, especially in relation to the discussion of the intentionality of perception. It is significant therefore to examine whether Direct Realism can be defended.

In this paper, I investigate a recent defense of Direct Realism based on a careful study of perceptual phenomenology. In *The Problem of Perception*, A. D. Smith gives a thorough treatment of the problem of perception (Smith, 2002). He examines many responses to the Argument from Illusion (and Hallucination), from both the analytic and the continental traditions, and concludes that none of them is successful. The central part of the book is his theory of perceptual consciousness, based on which he proposes a solution to the problem of perception. According to his view, defending Direct Realism requires an accurate understanding of the phenomenology of perceptual consciousness.

My plan for this paper is as follows. Section 1 briefly recapitulates the problem of perception and makes some preliminary remarks. Section 2 presents Smith's theory of perceptual consciousness and his solution to the problem. Sections 3 and 4 offer a critical examination of Smith's view. Section 5 offers some concluding remarks.

II.

Direct Realism is comprised of two parts. One is a metaphysical thesis about realism, according to which the world is essentially mind-independent. The existence of the physical world does not in any way depend on our perception or thought. The other part is a thesis about the intentionality of perception, which says that perceptual awareness provides a direct access to its object. According to Direct Realism, one directly perceives, at least in some cases,

mind-independent reality. In those cases, the immediate objects of perception are ordinary physical things in the world.²

The Argument from Illusion and the Argument from Hallucination are meant to demonstrate that we *never* directly perceive the mind-independent reality. The Argument from Illusion can be formulated as follows:

1. Sometimes perceptual illusions occur, in which ordinary physical objects are perceived as having some qualities that they do not really possess.
2. Whenever ordinary physical objects perceptually appear to have qualities that they do not really possess, we are aware of something that actually has those qualities.
3. Since in an illusory situation the ordinary physical objects do not possess the qualities that we perceive, we are not directly aware of those physical objects.
4. Because veridical perception and illusion can be phenomenologically indistinguishable, we do not directly perceive ordinary physical objects even in veridical perception. Therefore, we cannot be directly aware of ordinary objects in the world.³

The first premise seems plain and undeniable. The second premise (together with the third premise) is sometimes called the “sense-datum inference.” The fourth step, the “generalizing step”, entails the denial

² Indirect Realism shares the same metaphysical thesis with Direct Realism, but contends that perception *never* provides a direct and immediate access to reality. One perceives the external world *only in virtue of* perceiving something else, for example, sense data. Idealism (or Phenomenalism) is the view that we may enjoy direct awareness of reality, but contrary to Direct Realism and Indirect Realism, the world is mind-dependent. The ultimate nature of reality is either reducible to, or supervenient on, our perception or thought (Smith, 2002: 1-3; Crane, 2005).

³ For formulations of the Argument from Illusion and the Argument from Hallucination, cf. Smith (2002, ch. 1 & ch. 7); also, Ayer (1940); Crane (2005); Robinson (1994).

of Direct Realism. Smith argues that if Direct Realism has any chance of survival, the second premise must be refuted. Without blocking the sense-datum inference, Smith contends, it is futile to attack the third and fourth steps.⁴ Although controversial, I tend to agree with Smith on this point. Hence the sense-datum inference will be my focus. I will examine in sections 3 and 4 whether Smith's theory of perceptual consciousness succeeds in resisting it.

Although the Argument from Illusion and the Argument from Hallucination are intended to reach the same conclusion, i.e. the denial of Direct Realism, they involve different considerations and require separate treatments. By investigating Smith's theory, I intend to address the issue of whether, or to what extent, Direct Realism can be defended against the Argument from Illusion by perceptual phenomenology alone. So in this paper I will limit my discussion to the Argument from Illusion; following Smith, I will often just call it "the Argument".⁵ Whenever I speak of the problem of perception, I refer only to the problem raised and formulated by the Argument from Illusion. In the next three sections, I present and examine Smith's phenomenological solution to the Argument from Illusion. Before that, a few remarks on the characteristics of illusions and on the Argument are needed in order to appreciate the strength of the Argument, which in turn help clarify the task for the direct realist.

First, when the proponents of the Argument speak of illusions, they do not take this phenomenon as happening only rarely. Rather, they think, perceptual illusions are pervasive; in particular, they think

⁴ Other philosophers take the most threatening step of the Argument to be the generalizing move from illusory cases to veridical cases, cf. Austin (1962: 52); McDowell (1998: 386-37). For discussions, see Smith (2002: 25-34).

⁵ Addressing the issue of how Direct Realism responds to the Argument from Hallucination requires another paper, so in this paper I will not discuss those defenses of Direct Realism that target more specifically the Argument from Hallucination, for example, Disjunctivism. Cf. McDowell (1998), Austin (1962), Thau (2004).

that illusory experiences can take place in every sensory modality.⁶ Whenever an object is perceptually presented to a subject in a way other than it really is, the experience is illusory. When this happens, the subject can be deceived by the experience, but he need not be. It is possible for one to know that he is currently undergoing an illusion (Crane, 2005). It is also possible for one to undergo an illusion without being inclined to make any judgment about it (Siegel, 2005).

So understood, illusion is not something that takes place at the level of belief or judgment; it is a genuine perceptual phenomenon, that is, it has *phenomenology*. As for any perceptual experience, the phenomenology of an illusion has two aspects. Take a simple example of visual illusion. A blue suit, due to some weird lighting conditions, looks green to you. One aspect of your visual phenomenology is that it seems to you that there is a green suit in front of you. The phenomenology can be just the same *as if* there really is a green suit in front of you. We can call this aspect—that your experience (veridical or illusory) represents things to you in a certain way—the *intentional or representational aspect of experience*. The other aspect is *phenomenal character*. The suit is not presented to you merely in thought; it is presented to you as green in a *sensory* way. There is *something it is like* for you to see the blue suit to be green. The phenomenal character of your experience can be exactly the same *as if* when you undergo a veridical visual experience of a green suit. The proponents of the Argument claim that any account of perception must be *phenomenologically adequate*, that is, it must be able to do justice to these two aspects of the phenomenology of illusory experiences.

Second, as Smith characterizes it, the strength of the Argument lies in the sense-datum inference. It says that when a subject who experiences an illusion perceives an ordinary physical object as having some properties that it does not really possess, the subject is aware of

⁶ Austin (1962) disagrees with this view, but I will leave it aside here. See Smith (2002, ch. 1) for discussion.

something that actually has those properties. Continuing with the above example, the sense-datum inference is motivated by the following set of questions: When the blue suit looks green to you, *in virtue of what* does it look green to you? Although the suit in front of you is not green, it seems undeniably that you are visually aware of something green. How do we make sense of this fact? Also, as mentioned above, an illusory and a veridical experience can share the same phenomenology, i.e. they can be qualitatively identical. How shall we explain the qualitative identity or subjective indistinguishability? The Argument claims that the only possible answer to these questions is to “recognize that a veridical and a matching illusory experience have a *shared sensory character* (Smith, 2002: 40).” That is, a veridical and a matching illusory experience *actually* possess the same sensory qualities.⁷ Based on this point, the Argument further claims that the only way to accommodate this is to introduce something other than ordinary physical things as the immediate objects of all perceptual experiences, which amounts to the denial of Direct Realism.⁸

⁷ At one point, Smith discusses a modified version of the sense-datum inference which distinguishes between “sensory quality” and “sensible quality” (Smith, 2002: 51). According to this version, “sensible quality” refers to “the perceptible qualities of normal physical objects.” “Sensory quality” refers to “the intrinsic features of sense-data (if there are such things).” But Smith argues at once that the distinction does not affect the force of the sense-datum inference (Smith, 2002: 53-54). Whether there are sense data is controversial in this paper. In order to give Smith’s view the best try and then evaluate it fairly, here I will understand “sensory quality” in a more neutral way and take it to mean the phenomenal character of experience.

⁸ One way to resist the sense-datum inference is to consider perceptual experience as a kind of mental representation (Harman, 1990). This is the strategy taken by reductive representationalism (or intentional theories of perception). According to this position, it is a general point about the nature of representation that the object of representation need not be the way it is represented to be, or need not exist at all. There is no need to bring in sense data as the immediate objects of experiences because illusory experiences are regarded as a kind of misrepresentation. The reason why your experience of a blue suit is an illusion can be explained by saying that the suit is misrepresented as green, rather

So understood, the Argument is intended to demonstrate that “the kind of direct awareness of the physical world that is embodied in Direct Realism is *impossible*. No possible physical object could ever be directly perceived by any possible subject (Smith, 2002: 23, author’s italics).” This is a version of the Argument that aims for the strongest conclusion. According to this version, Direct Realism is *incoherent* because, on the one hand, it recognizes the fact that illusions are possible, but on the other hand, it is incompatible with this possibility (Smith, 2002: 21-22). There is not even one perceptual situation in which one directly perceives worldly objects. The only way to make sense of perceptual illusions is to introduce some sort of mental entities that are fundamentally different in kind from ordinary physical things, e.g. sense data, as the immediate objects of perception. Since the conclusion of the Argument is so strong, the task for the direct realist would be to show that in at least some situations it is possible to account for the direct objects of experiences without appealing to sense data or anything of that sort. And this account should explain how the idea of direct perceptual access to the external world can be compatible with the possibility of illusions.

A third and final preliminary remark is that the gist of the Argument is negative, that is, to undermine Direct Realism. The sense-datum theory, on the other hand, is a positive account of objects of perception that draws on the Argument as one of its main supports. It is familiar to everyone that the sense-datum theory has been criticized by all sorts of arguments.⁹ However, if the sense-datum theory is refuted, it does not follow that the Argument from Illusion is less threatening. It is possible for one to be fully convinced by the Argument, but

than by saying that there are certain sense data involved in your experience that possess the green quality. Whether this position works is an important and controversial issue. But since my main purpose is to investigate Smith’s phenomenological solution to the Argument, I will not address it in this paper. For the record, Smith argues that this position fails; cf. Smith (2002: 40-47). Also, cf. Martin (2002).

⁹ For example, cf. Austin (1962), Huemer (2001, 2004).

not accept the sense-datum theory. Should that be the case, it would not be any good news for the direct realist. So one cannot defend Direct Realism just by criticizing the sense-datum theory; the Argument itself must be rejected. I now turn to Smith's solution to the Argument.

III.

According to Smith, the Argument has successfully established that the same sensory qualities can be present in a veridical perception and in a subjectively indistinguishable illusion (Smith, 2002: 65). The sense-datum inference amounts to the fact that there must be something other than normal physical objects actually possessing the perceived sensory qualities to serve as the object of illusory experience. Since both veridical perception and illusion are experiences that possess an "irreducible sensory character," Smith thinks that the direct realist must find a way to show that the sensory qualities are present as *intrinsic properties of the experiences themselves*, not as *the objects of experiences* (Smith, 2002: 58, 62, 64). The thought is that, since the same sensory qualities can be shared by veridical perception and illusion, they must not be considered as characterizing the objects of perceptual awareness, otherwise the sense-datum inference will be irresistible. The only way to avoid introducing sense data as the immediate objects of experiences is to say that the shared sensory qualities are characterizing the experiences themselves, i.e., they are properties of experiences. This would enable the direct realist to claim that only ordinary things in the world serve as the direct objects of experiences. The way Smith attempts to carry out this response can be briefly presented as follows.

In Smith's usage, "perceptions" and "perceptual consciousness" refer to states of awareness that not only possess a sensory character but also exhibit intentionality or world-directedness, that is, having things in the world as their objects (Smith, 2002: 65-66). On the other hand, "mere sensations" refer to states of awareness that are merely sensory but not intentional (Smith, 2002: 66, 135, 137). "Sensory ex-

periences”, “sense-experiences”, and “experiences”, (and what I call “sensory states”) are more generic terms that cover both perceptions and mere sensations (Smith, 2002: 125-126).¹⁰ Smith defines sensations as bearers of sensory qualities (Smith, 2002: 66, 187). When sensations are called “*mere* sensations”, they characterize states that are merely sensory but do not possess intentionality (Smith, 2002: 58, 66). When sensations are called “*perceptual* sensations”, they characterize states that are not merely sensory but also intentional, i.e. perceptions. Perceptions, in Smith’s theory, involve both (perceptual) sensations and intentionality; they differ from mere sensations in the intentional aspect, but can share the same sensory aspect with mere sensations.

The point of this terminology is that it allows Smith to formulate the debate between the sense-datum theorist and the direct realist without using the traditional “act-object” model of perception.¹¹ According to Smith’s formulation, the sense-datum theorist identifies sense data as bearers of sensory qualities, i.e. sensations (including mere and perceptual sensations), and then argues that all experiences have sensory qualities or sensations as their immediate objects (Smith, 2002: 186; 2006: 412-413). The direct realist, on the other hand, intends to show that, although perceptions are essentially sensory, in that they involve perceptual sensations, it does not follow that perceptual sensations or sensory qualities are the immediate objects of perceptions (Smith, 2002: 62, 64, 66; 2006: 412-413).

Faced with the Argument, according to Smith, the central issue for the direct realist is: “*How does perceptual consciousness differ from merely having sensations* (Smith, 2002: 66, author’s italics)?” Or, what is the difference between sensory states that exhibit intentionality and

¹⁰ Depending on context, sometimes Smith uses “sensations” to refer to mere sensations, but sometimes he uses this term in the more generic way (Smith, 2002: 129, 133).

¹¹ Smith thinks that if the “act-object” model is accepted, Direct Realism will not be able to withstand the Argument from Illusion, and he thinks that the model can be rejected (Smith, 2002: 54-60).

those that do not? Smith thinks that a correct answer to this question will eventually provide an adequate solution to the problem of perception. Later I will discuss how this issue relates to the task of the direct realist mentioned in the last paragraph. For now it suffices to note that Smith considers them to be closely related, and he thinks that to address the issue just stated and to fulfill the task mentioned earlier require a theory of perceptual consciousness (Smith, 2002: 34-35, 66, 133). I will say more about these in the next section.

In explaining the distinction between perception and mere sensation, Smith says:

[O]ur first task ... is to show how some sensation can be intrinsically world-directed (or even just body-directed), thereby avoiding the dual component theory, while yet recognizing that no type of sensation is necessarily so directed. Something other than thought and conceptualization can be sometimes present and sometimes absent, in such a way that the distinctive intentionality of perceptual consciousness is thereby installed. (Smith, 2002: 132)

According to Smith, the direct realist must show that, on the one hand, not all sensations are mere sensations. Some sensations are intentional, i.e., perceptions. When a sensory state is intentional, it is *intrinsically* intentional. That is, the intentional aspect is not an independent, separable factor from the sensory aspect; the two aspects of perception are not contingently attached together, but mutually constitutive (Smith, 2002: 185). On the other hand, sensations are *not necessarily intentional*, i.e. some sensations are indeed mere sensations (Smith, 2002: 123, 125). Smith's view is that what explains the intentionality of perception are some *non-sensuous* and *non-conceptual* aspects of sensory experience. He calls these aspects non-sensuous because they are not themselves some sort of sensory qualities, and mere sensations do not have them. They are also non-conceptual because possessing these aspects has nothing to do with whether the subject possesses the relevant concepts. Smith contends that these aspects are intrinsic to some sensory states and are sufficient to show that those sensory states that have

them are genuine perceptions, i.e. sensations that exhibit intentionality (Smith, 2002: 133, 159, 161). By paying careful attention to the phenomenology of perception, he claims that there are three such aspects, briefly presented as follows:

(i) *Phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality*. When we have genuine perceptions, the objects are presented to us as spatially distant from our sense organs. The phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality considered here is not a physical property of objects, but an experiential spatial relation between the subject and the objects of experience. It is experiential because it itself is experienced by the subject. This spatial relation is intrinsic to perceptions. Smith says,

In vision, for example, objects are characteristically seen, when genuine perceptual consciousness is involved, as more or less distant from us— specially, from our eyes (or eye). And sounds are heard as being at varying distances from us— specially from our ears (or ear) ... [T]he same kind of spatiality is also found in touch. Although when we feel an object that object is usually felt as being in contact with us, we feel an object to be a three-dimensional solid body localized beyond our body's surface. (Smith, 2002: 134)

In perception, objects are experienced as outside and over against our sense-organs. This spatial sense of over-againstness is intrinsic to our perceptions of external objects, but lacking in mere sensations. The feature of phenomenal spatiality reveals that an object is always perceived from one perspective, that there is more to the object than what is “directly registered in sensation,” and that other perspectives are available to us to explore the object's other aspects, e.g. the back and the bottom, that are currently hidden from us. When we change positions or angles, our changing experience, “is immediately taken as embodying merely differing perspectives on a single, intrinsically unchanging object (Smith, 2002: 135).” On the other hand, according to Smith, mere sensations do not have this feature of spatiality. They have no hidden sides because we are not aware of them through the exercise of sense organs that are distinct from them (Smith, 2002: 135). When a

position or viewing angle is changed, one can only talk about different sense data; there are no such things as different perspectives on the same sense datum. The possibility of having different perspectives on a single object is an essential feature of perceptual intentionality; it marks an important difference between perceptions and mere sensations.

(ii) Movement of sense-organs in relation to perceived objects. Perception often involves movement. Either objects move past us, where we experience ourselves as stationary relative to the objects, or we move past objects, where we experience the moving of our body and perceive the objects as stationary relative to us. In either case, movement gives rise to changing sensations and “we come to enjoy different perspectives on perceptible objects (Smith, 2002: 141).” For example, we can manipulate a notebook computer with our hands to explore and perceive its various sides, shapes, textures and colors, etc. Again, Smith’s thought is that movement grounds the difference between perceptions and mere sensations because it provides the possibility of having different perspectives on the same object, which is absent in having mere sensations.

(iii) *The Anstoss*. When we touch objects through bodily movement, such as pushing or pulling against something, we feel that the object exerts a certain impact on us *from outside*. The impact, whether great or small, is an obstacle that we experience during our activities. Smith calls this phenomenon “the *Anstoss*.” He says: “This phenomenon is that of a *check* or *impediment* to our active movement: an experienced obstacle to our animal striving, as when we push or pull against things (Smith, 2002: 153).” When the feature of the *Anstoss* is involved in sensory experience, “an object is presented to consciousness *otherwise than by sensation*. Here an object is manifest to us in the sheer check to our active movement— a check that is not embodied in sensation (Smith, 2002: 159).” That is, in virtue of the *Anstoss* the object is presented and experienced as *external* to us and *against* our activity. This sense of externality and againstness is completely lacking in mere sensations. Smith says, “it is our activity, rather than our senses,

that reveals something foreign to us (Smith, 2002: 160).” The *Anstoss* is not a matter of the qualitative or sensory character of experience. Rather, it is about the agency of the subject and an external resistance that it faces. Hence the *Anstoss* serves as the third phenomenological feature that distinguishes perceptions from mere sensations.

Each of these three aspects of perceptual experience reveals a sense in which the object of experience is *independent of us*, by providing either the possibility of having different perspectives on the same object, or by revealing an external check on our activities. This sense of independence is not embodied in mere sensations at all. Smith argues that these three features are basic and plain phenomenology, and hence must be recognized by any plausible theory of perceptual experience. Based on this phenomenological study, Smith proposes his answer to the Argument from Illusion.

Smith argues that the sense-datum inference can be refuted because it fails to accommodate the above three fundamental features. Regarding the *Anstoss*, he says:

[T]he unique non-sensory nature of the *Anstoss* allows it to slip through the Argument’s net. For the Argument’s central claim was that when we perceive, we are immediately aware not of normal physical objects, but of sensations. In the case of the *Anstoss*, however, it is just such focal sensations that are absent. There is simply no such sensuous item to interpose itself between us and the external physical force that we experience. We experience it, therefore, directly. (Smith, 2002: 165)

The Argument from Illusion says that the immediate objects of our perceptions are not ordinary physical objects but sense data that are mere sensations. But there is no room for sense data in the case of the *Anstoss*, because by its very nature the *Anstoss* is an experiential yet non-sensuous relation about a foreign force against our activity. Since the phenomenon of the *Anstoss* is not about sensations at all, the Ar-

gument simply does not apply to situations where the *Anstoss* is the focus.

Regarding phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality and movement, Smith contends that these two aspects show that the conclusion of the Argument is incompatible with what psychologists call “perceptual constancy.” (Smith, 2002: 170-178). For our purposes, what is significant about perceptual constancy is not its underlying neuropsychological mechanism but its phenomenological features. Here is how Smith characterizes this phenomenon:

The term “perceptual constancy” is used by psychologists to refer to any veridical perceptual situation in which an unchanging physical feature of an object gives rise, because of its changing relation to the perceiver, to changing proximal stimulation at our sense-organs, while the perceived feature of the object appears unchanged. Now, when such changing proximal stimulation gives rise to *changing sensations*, we shall have a “constant” perception despite inconstant sensation. (Smith, 2002: 170-171)

When I move towards a car (or a car moves towards me) and keep my eyes on it, my visual sensations of the car change in a systematic way—it gradually occupies a larger area in my visual field. However, the size of the car does not appear to change; it does not look to me as getting bigger. This is called “size constancy.” When I walk around the Taipei 101 Building, looking at it and other buildings in the vicinity, the sensory characters of my visual experiences vary with respect to my pace, direction, and eye orientation. Yet the positions of these buildings do not seem to alter at all; they appear to me as located in the same places throughout the time. This is called “position constancy.” Perceptual constancy is a pervasive phenomenon. Other forms of perceptual constancy include “color constancy,” “lightness constancy,” “shape constancy,” “loudness constancy,” etc.

It is not difficult to see that perceptual constancy essentially involves phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality and movement. For

example, it is due to the fact that objects are perceived as located in a three-dimensional space that their positions can appear to be unchanged. And it is because of movement, either an object moves past us, or we move past it, that we can experience varying sensations as providing different perspectives on the same object whose size remains constant in the experience.

How does the phenomenon of perceptual constancy help the direct realist respond to the Argument from Illusion? When sensory experiences exhibit some form of constancy, there are variations in sensations, but the object of experience appears to be unchanged. Smith says, “the changing sensations always manifest to us a changing *relation* in which an intrinsically unchanging object comes to stand to us (Smith, 2002: 172).” The idea here is that the phenomenology of perceptual constancy contains two parts. First, what appears to change is the *perspectival relation* between the object and the subject, i.e. it is the way in which the object is presented to us that appears to alter. But, second, this changing relation always reveals that it is the same unchanging object to which one bears such a relation in perception. According to Smith, the second part is what enables the direct realist to resist the sense-datum inference. As sensations, sense data simply cannot explain why the object of experience remains unchanged with respect to changing sensations. Consider size constancy, Smith says:

For what must a sense-datum theorist say of the typical situation in which an object is seen to approach me? He must say that the sense-datum, that which is “given to sense,” that of which I am most fundamentally and immediately aware, *gets bigger*. But that of which I am most fundamentally and immediately aware, what is *given* to me, does not appear to change at all in such a situation. This is a plain phenomenological fact. (Smith, 2002: 178, author’s italics)

If sense data are the immediate objects of my visual experience of a stationary car as I walk towards it, the car should appear to me as getting bigger in size. This is simply not the case. It is a phenomenological fact that the car appears to me to be the same size in experience re-

ardless of my spatial relation to it and the fact that the visual sensations of it keep changing. The same point applies to other forms of constancy as well. Therefore, Smith concludes, the Argument from Illusion fails to undermine Direct Realism because it fails to accommodate the phenomenology of perceptual constancy.

We now have Smith's view on the table. In the following, I raise some issues for this solution.

IV.

There are many issues involved in Smith's theory; not all of them can be fully addressed here. In this section I focus on what I take to be the most crucial issue for Smith's solution to the problem of perception. It concerns the direct realist's task. Facing the Argument from Illusion, what is required for a defense of Direct Realism? I intend to take a closer look at how Smith formulates the task and how it relates to his theory of perceptual consciousness. My concern will be: Suppose Smith's theory of perceptual consciousness correctly distinguishes perceptions from mere sensations; does it successfully save Direct Realism from the threat of the Argument from Illusion?

In order to see the task of the direct realist, it is important to ascertain what the Argument has accomplished. Here is Smith's point of view:

[T]he only thing that the Argument has demonstrated beyond any shadow of reasonable doubt is that sensory qualities that are not the qualities of a perceived physical object are really present in illusory perceptual experience, and that these same qualities are equally present in veridical perceptions. (Smith, 2002: 54)

If the Argument has successfully proved that both a veridical and a matching illusory experience can share the exact same sensory qualities,

what needs to be done in order to defend Direct Realism? I want to point out that Smith in fact gives two formulations of the direct realist's task. I will argue that the two formulations actually describe different and mutually independent tasks. Both formulations were mentioned in the last section; it is the relation between them that will be under examination in this section.

The first formulation is stated several times by Smith in his book. He says:

The task that falls to us if we are to withstand the Argument is, therefore, no mean one. We need to develop an analysis of perception that recognizes the real, unreduced presence of sensory qualities in perceptual experience as inherent features of such experience, and yet in such a way that we can deny that such qualities are objects of awareness. (Smith, 2002: 61)

If sensory qualities are regarded as the objects of experiences, or if they are taken to be properties of the objects of experiences, then, since in an illusory case the perceived physical object does not possess these properties, the sense-datum inference would force us to concede that sensory qualities are properties of something else, i.e., sense data. The notion of sense data is defined as bearers of sensory qualities; if the sense-datum inference goes through, then sense data would have to be considered as the immediate objects of experiences. Together with the generalizing step, the Argument would indeed refute Direct Realism. So Smith asserts that

[I]f Direct Realism is to have a hope of being defended, they [i.e., sensory qualities] must be taken as qualifying sensations or sense-experiences themselves, rather than classically conceived sense data. (Smith, 2002: 62)

The *only* way to avoid this [i.e., the Argument] is to construe sensory qualities as real qualities of experience itself. In this way alone may it be possible to construe them as not objects of awareness. (Smith, 2002: 64, author's italics)

So the first formulation of the direct realist's task is about the relation between sensory qualities and the object of experience—the direct realist has to argue that the former *must not* be construed as properties of the latter. Now consider what I take to be Smith's second formulation:

We can therefore state what has emerged at the very heart of our Problem by asking: *How does perceptual consciousness differ from merely having sensations?* For what the Argument from Illusion brings out is that perceptual consciousness and mere sensation have something in common. Both are experiences possessing an irreducible sensory character. There is a presentational immediacy in both. (Smith, 2002: 66, author's italics)

As mentioned in the last section, in Smith's usage, "perceptual consciousness" refers to states of awareness that not only possess a sensory character but also exhibit intentionality or world-directedness, and "mere sensations" refers to states of awareness that are merely sensory but not intentional. According to this formulation, the direct realist's task is to give an account of the intentionality of perception, which is supposedly lacking in mere sensations. Smith takes this task as accomplished by his theory of perceptual consciousness. As we have seen, it explains the intentionality of perception in terms of phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality, movement and the *Anstoss*. Smith justifies this formulation by saying:

Making out such a distinction is mandatory for a Direct Realist, since all change in the experience of a sensation must be attributed to a change in the character of the sensation itself—a change either in quality, intensity, extensity, or location—just as the sense-datum theory claims. On the other hand, it is of the essence of perception that there can be changes in the character of the perceptual experience of an object that do *not* involve changes in the object of perception at all—as any illusory appearance of change in an object testifies. In short, a

notion of *objectivity* applies to perception in a way that it does not to sensation. (Smith, 2002: 66, author's italics)

The point of this passage is basically that once we explain what the intentionality of perception consists of, we can see how to resist the sense-datum theory. Having seen Smith's view in the last section, it should be clear by now that this passage is mainly talking about perceptual constancy. The direct realist's task is then to argue that the sense-datum theory fails to explain certain facts about perception—it fails to accommodate the phenomenology of perceptual constancy.

I claim that these two formulations state different tasks. Let me say this first: If they are independent tasks, and if both are essential to a defense of Direct Realism, then the direct realist has to fulfill both of them. Fulfilling one of them does not imply automatically fulfilling the other. To see that they are different, consider that one can legitimately ask: suppose, for the sake of argument, that the sense-datum theory is not able to account for perceptual constancy, why does it mean that sensory qualities cannot be regarded as the object of experience? I think this is an important question. It may turn out that the success of Smith's defense of Direct Realism depends on a plausible answer to this question. Let's consider what Smith says regarding the connections between the two formulations.

First, it is important to recall that Smith identifies sense data with sensations, i.e. the bearers of sensory qualities.¹² Second, as mentioned

¹² For textual evidence, consider the following two passages:

Making out such a distinction is mandatory for a Direct Realist, since all change in the experience of a sensation must be attributed to a change in the character of the sensation itself—a change either in quality, intensity, extensity, or location—just as the sense-datum theory claims. (Smith, 2002: 66)

For what must a sense-datum theorist say of the typical situation in which an object is seen to approach me? He must say that the sense-datum, that which is “given to sense,” that of which I am most fundamentally and immediately aware, *gets bigger*. (Smith, 2002: 178, author's italics)

in the last section, Smith uses the term “perceptual sensation” to refer to the bearer of sensory qualities that characterize perceptions (Smith, 2002: 61). After giving the first formulation, he says:

Perception is sensuous in a way that mere thought is not because it involves *perceptual sensation*. Our problem is, therefore, to see how such sensations can fail to be our immediate objects of awareness whenever we perceive. (Smith, 2002: 61, author’s italics)

So, if perceptual sensations are always somehow present to, or in, consciousness whenever perception occurs, how can we avoid saying, equally, that we are aware of *them*, and hence but indirectly aware of normal physical objects, whenever we perceive? The only way to preserve Direct Realism is to make a distinction between being present to consciousness in the way that (perceptual) sensation is, and being present—and directly present—to consciousness in the way that the immediate object of perceptual awareness is. This is a subtle distinction; but on it hangs the fate of Direct Realism. (Smith, 2002: 66, author’s italics)

How may the direct realist recognize the involvement of sensory qualities in perceptual consciousness without taking the bearers of these qualities as the immediate object of perception? Smith’s suggestion is that one has to distinguish between the two ways for something

The first passage is about the distinction between perception and mere sensation, according to which it is the sense-datum theorist’s view that every change in the experience of a mere sensation is a change in the mere sensation itself. The second passage describes how the sense-datum theorist would comment on size constancy, according to which when the subject’s perspectival relation to the object changes, the sense datum changes accordingly. These two passages fit well with each other, and clearly show that Smith construes sense data as sensations. Also, in (2006: 413), Smith says that: “the only sort of sense-datum theory that is pertinent to the working out of the position defended in part one of my book is one that identifies sense-data with sensations.”

to be present to consciousness. This distinction is supposed to enable the direct realist to say that although perceptions are sensory in character, the subject is not aware of sensory qualities as the immediate object of perception. This is essentially the task stated by the first formulation. If this strategy works, it will make room for the direct realist to claim that the immediate objects of perception are ordinary physical objects.

The question is how to draw such a distinction? It is for the purpose of answering this question that Smith introduces what I call his second formulation, by saying: “We can therefore state what has emerged at the very heart of our Problem by asking: *How does perceptual consciousness differ from merely having sensations?*” (Smith, 2002: 66, author’s italics) Now we have two distinctions: one is between two ways for something to be present to consciousness, the other between perceptions and mere sensations. Smith’s thought is that by successfully making the latter distinction the direct realist can make the first distinction and hence save Direct Realism. That is, by fulfilling the task stated in the second formulation (call it the second task), Smith thinks that the task stated in the first formulation (call it the first task) can *thereby* be fulfilled (cf. also Smith, 2006: 412-413).¹³ It is on this point that I intend to take issue with Smith. In contrast to him, I think it is not the case that fulfilling the second task implies fulfilling the first. In the remainder of this section, I argue that even if Smith’s theory successfully accounts for the distinction between perceptions and mere sensations, it does not prevent sensory qualities (or the bearers of sensory qualities) from being the immediate objects of experiences.

We have already seen that, according to Smith’s theory of perceptual consciousness, what distinguishes perceptions from mere sensations are the three non-sensuous aspects of perception: phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality, movement and the *Anstoss*. How are these

¹³ In (2006: 413), Smith says that “Chapter Six of my book is devoted to making sense of and defending the distinction”, where the distinction refers to “the distinction between being an object for consciousness and being merely in consciousness.”

fundamental features supposed to help the direct realist to draw the distinction between the two ways mentioned above for something to be present to consciousness? According to Smith's view, it must be that they reveal the *non-sensory features of the objects of experiences* to the subject. Mere sensations are sensory through and through; there is no non-sensory aspect contained in, or revealed by, the experiences of mere sensations. Perceptions are different; perceptions present an object as having both *sensory* and *non-sensory features to the subject*. The phenomenology of perception contains both sensory and non-sensory aspects. The non-sensory phenomenological aspects characterize the object of perception in various ways, including being outside and over against our sense-organs, being constant with respect to the subject's movement, being an alien force against the subject's agency, etc. Smith's thought is that these are not sensory qualities but are still essential features of the object of experience. Whenever the subject is having a perception, he must be aware of some of these non-sensory features as the immediate object of his experience. Moreover, when the subject is aware of these non-sensory features, he is *not* aware of any sensory qualities or their bearers as the immediate object of experience. Sensations, Smith says, "are not objects for consciousness either in relation to the *Anstoss*, nor in relation to the perceptual constancies (Smith, 2002: 187)." Thus, the non-sensory features explain how perceptions may involve sensory qualities without having sensory qualities or their bearers as the immediate objects of experience (cf. also, Smith, 2006: 416).

The problem is: Are these considerations sufficient to block the sense-datum inference? I think not. At most, the considerations above show that in perceptions the subject is immediately aware of certain non-sensory features. Does this preclude the subject from being immediately aware of some perceptual sensations or sensory qualities? No. As far as I can see, there is nothing in Smith's account of perceptual intentionality that shows that besides those non-sensory features there are no sensory qualities that may also be the immediate object of experience. If so, in the case of illusion, the issue arises again: if the

physical object does not really have the sensory qualities perceived by the subject, what else except sense data actually possess those qualities?

Let me elaborate this point. When Smith presents the Argument from Illusion, he makes a point about the force of the Argument: “we require only one feature of any perceptible object to be subject to illusion for the Argument to go through for the entirety of that object as perceived by that sense (Smith, 2002: 33).” This is what he calls the “sense-datum infection,” according to which, for the Argument to reach its conclusion, the subject does not have to suffer illusions with regard to every perceptible feature of the object. It requires only one property perceived by the subject that does not actually belong to the object. Here is Smith’s example of the sense-datum infection:

[S]uppose that we see a red tomato that looks black as a result of unusual lighting. We conclude, by the second and third steps of the Argument, that we are aware of a black sense-datum distinct from any physical tomato. Now although in this situation the shape of the tomato is not, we may suppose, subject to illusion, we cannot maintain that we are directly aware visually of the tomato’s shape, because, simply in virtue of one of the visible features of the tomato being subject to illusion, a sense-datum has replaced the tomato as the object of visual awareness as such. For the shape you see is the shape of *something black*, and the tomato is not black. I shall refer to this as “sense-datum infection.” (Smith, 2002: 26, author’s italics)

This is an example of partial illusion. According to the idea here, although the visual experience of the shape of the tomato is not illusory, it does not alter the case that what one directly perceives is a sense datum that actually possess the property of blackness. Because, as Smith says, “the shape you see is the shape of *something black*, and the tomato is not black.” Since Smith uses this idea to argue against other

views, he appears to accept the force of the sense-datum infection (Smith, 2002: 33).¹⁴

Now I claim that the sense-datum infection applies to Smith's account of perceptual intentionality as well. Although perceptual constancy and the *Anstoss* show that in perceptions we are aware of certain non-sensory features, we are also aware of some sensory features.¹⁵ As long as one of the perceived sensory features is subject to illusion, it is yet to be seen how Smith's account may avoid sense data as bearers of these features and as the immediate objects of experiences.

Continue with the same example above and bring size constancy into consideration. Suppose I move towards the red tomato, which I illusorily see as black, and keep my eyes on it. My visual sensations of the tomato change in a systematic way—it gradually looms larger in my visual field—yet the size of the tomato does not look to me as getting bigger. In this example, the sense datum theorist can agree that size constancy is part of the phenomenology of the experience of the tomato. But does that block the sense-datum inference? No. The reason is the sense-datum infection. As Smith says in the quote above, “simply in virtue of one of the visible features of the tomato being subject to illusion, a sense-datum has replaced the tomato as the object of visual awareness as such.” Even if the subject directly perceives the non-sensory features revealed by size constancy, the illusorily perceived color property remains as a challenge to the direct realist. If the tomato really is not black, what is it about size constancy that may prevent a sense datum from actually being black and hence being the immediate object of experience? Other forms of perceptual constancy seem to face the same difficulty. Since perceptual constancy is based on phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality and movement, these two

¹⁴ Smith uses the sense-datum infection to argue against the so-called New Realism and Thomas Reid's theory of perception (Smith, 2002: 29-34, 80-81).

¹⁵ The awareness of both non-sensory and sensory features of perceptual experiences can be implicit.

fundamental features of perceptual intentionality have not been shown to be immune to the sense-datum infection. If so, even if they successfully distinguish between perceptions and mere sensations, they still fail to resist the sense-datum inference.

With regard to the *Anstoss*, Smith thinks that it is not a matter of the sensory character of experience. When the *Anstoss* is involved in experience, he says, “an object is presented to consciousness *otherwise than by sensation*. Here an object is manifest to us in the sheer check to our active movement—a check that is not embodied in sensation (Smith, 2002: 159).” In the case of the *Anstoss*, the object is presented and experienced as external to us and against our activity, and the sense of externality and againstness is completely lacking in mere sensations. Hence, Smith claims that the sense-datum infection does not extend to the case of the *Anstoss* (Smith, 2002: 288 n73).

I disagree. I think Smith’s characterization of the *Anstoss* does not make it immune to the sense-datum infection. It is not obvious how the experience of externality and the experience of againstness of a foreign object can be totally independent of sensations. Suppose it is correct that the *Anstoss* grounds the difference between tactile perceptions and mere sensations, does it imply that it can be completely separated from the sensory character of experience? It seems not. When I push against a wall while standing still, and when I kick a ball while running, I experience the *Anstoss* in both cases, but *what it is like* to experience the *Anstoss* in each case is different. We experience a foreign force impacting on us only by experiencing its intensity, quality and orientation, which surely involves particular sensory qualities. Smith’s account of the *Anstoss* has not shown that besides the *Anstoss* the related sensory qualities are not perceived as the immediate object of experience. If so, in the case of illusion, the issue arises again: if the external object does not really have the sensory qualities perceived by the subject, what else except sense data actually possess those qualities? Without an answer to this question, Smith’s account will still be vulnerable to the sense-datum infection.

Usually when we push or pull against something we feel “pressure sensations” at the point of contact. But Smith gives two examples to argue that such sensations are not necessary for the experiences of the *Anstoss*. He says:

We can feel such a check to our agency even if the relevant body-part is anaesthetized, or if we use some implement to feel the object’s renitent bulk. In both of these cases, certain sensations will indeed be present: in the first, there will, at least usually, be muscular sensations, and in the second, there will (normally) be pressure sensations where we are holding the implement. Such sensations, however, do not occur *where* we feel the obstacle to our action. In the first case, the obstacle is certainly not felt as being in our muscles, but as resisting our anaesthetized bodily extremity; and in the second, the resistance is felt at the other end of the implement we are using. Here, sensations are not playing their usual role of themselves presenting the object that is perceived, but have a more ancillary function. (Smith, 2002: 159-160, author’s italics)

In these examples, the sensations involved in the *Anstoss* are not experienced at the same location where the resistance is felt. One might go so far as to suggest that the experience of the *Anstoss* does not depend on any particular sensation, that is, no particular sensation is necessarily attached to the *Anstoss*. Even so, it does not mean that the experience of the *Anstoss* involves no sensation at all. For Smith, perceptions are essentially sensory states. As a kind of tactile perception, the *Anstoss* is no exception. As Smith says in the quote above, “In both of these cases, certain sensations will indeed be present.” Again, nothing in Smith’s account prevents sensations themselves from being the immediate object of experience.

I have argued against Smith’s defense of Direct Realism. Whether the immediate objects of experience are ordinary physical objects or sense data, on the one hand, and how perceptions are different from mere sensations, on the other hand, are two independent issues. Answering the second does not imply answering the first. For the sake of

argument, I have assumed that phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality, movement, and the *Anstoss*, as described by Smith, do succeed in distinguishing between perceptions and mere sensations. My contention is that, even so, they do not relieve the worry about the sense-datum infection. Therefore, I conclude, even if Smith's theory of perceptual consciousness is correct, Direct Realism has not been saved from the threat of the Argument from Illusion.

V.

In this section, I consider three possible responses to my contention.

(1) One way to avoid taking sensory qualities or their bearers as the immediate objects of experience is to deny their existence. This is the strategy of reductive representationalism (Harman, 1990). As I mentioned in section 1 (see footnote 7), there is a modified version of the sense-datum inference discussed by Smith which distinguishes between "sensory quality" and "sensible quality" (Smith, 2002: 51). According to this version, "sensible quality" refers to "the perceptible qualities of normal physical objects" while "sensory quality" refers to "the intrinsic features of sense-data." Reductive representationalism argues that there are no such things as sensory qualities. According to this position, experiences are *transparent*, that is, experiences have no intrinsic properties. Through introspection all that we can be aware of are sensible qualities of normal physical objects. I also mentioned that, according to this view, perceptual experiences are taken to be a kind of mental representation (Harman, 1990). One can avoid saying that sensory qualities or sense data are the immediate objects of experience because illusory experiences can be regarded as a kind of misrepresentation (see footnote 8).

Many philosophers find reductive representationalism attractive, but whether successful or not, this strategy is not available to Smith

because he rejects it as phenomenologically inadequate (Smith, 2002: 40-47). He says, “Any account of perception that cannot fully acknowledge the sensuous character of perceptual experience can be simply dismissed (Smith, 2002: 47).” In Smith’s theory, sensory qualities are intrinsic properties of experience, and he holds that experiences do have intrinsic properties. The issue that I raised in the last section is that Smith’s theory, because of the sense-datum infection, has not shown how to recognize the existence of sensory qualities without taking them as the immediate objects of experience.

(2) As remarked in section 1, the Argument from Illusion is intended to demonstrate that “the kind of direct awareness of the physical world that is embodied in Direct Realism is *impossible* (Smith, 2002: 23, author’s italics).” The conclusion of the Argument is that there is not even one perceptual situation in which one directly perceives worldly objects. Based on this, one might say that the task for the direct realist is to provide counter-examples, that is, to show that in at least some situations it is possible to account for the direct objects of experiences without appealing to sense data or anything of that sort. Smith thinks this task is achieved by his theory of perceptual consciousness, according to which cases that involve perceptual constancy and the *Anstoss* demonstrate that sense data are not the immediate objects of experiences.

Now, concerning the burden of proof, Smith might respond to me as follows. I argued in the last section that (i) even if in some cases we directly perceive a single unchanging object or an alien force that does not really prevent us from also being aware of sensory qualities as objects of experiences, therefore, I argued, (ii) the sense-datum inference is still threatening. Smith might contend that if (i) must be conceded, (ii) still does not follow. All that is needed to defend Direct Realism is to offer plausible counter-examples against the view that in all cases we only directly perceive sensory qualities or sense data. The burden is on the sense-datum theorist to argue that those counter-examples fail. It is mistaken to say that the direct realist also needs to show that, besides

the objects revealed by the three fundamental non-sensuous aspects, we are not directly aware of anything else.

To evaluate this response, consider some important passages in the concluding part of Smith's solution to the Argument:

[T]he Argument that we have been wrestling with concerns illusion, not hallucination. It does not presuppose that we fail to be directly aware of normal physical objects when we experience an illusion: that is part of what it is supposed to prove. Until this is achieved, we are allowed to assume that we *are* so aware of such physical objects. It is not we who have to prove that we are; it is the proponent of the Argument who has to prove that we are not. (Smith, 2002: 186, author's italics)

The *only* proof that is offered, however, proceeds by pointing out that the sensory qualities that feature in illusory perceptual experience are inherent in sense-experience itself. It forces us to recognize sensory qualia. This, however, does not constitute the proof; it is but one stage of it. What has to be shown in addition is that we are *directly aware* of these sensory qualities—or, rather, of whatever it is that possesses them—as objects. Only then will the normal object be edged out of its presumed position as object of immediate awareness. (Smith, 2002: 186, author's italics)

So all we have to show, in order to block the Argument, is that we are not directly aware of whatever it is that possesses such qualities, so that awareness of the latter does not cognitively mediate our awareness of normal physical objects. Showing that such bearers are sense-data would carry the Argument through; but that, I have suggested, is what has not been, and cannot be, demonstrated. (Smith, 2002: 186-187)

An alternative is that what bear such qualities are sensations. As soon as this is said, however, phenomenological considerations do become relevant. It can be shown, and I have shown, the way in which sensations, though “in” consciousness, are not objects for conscious-

ness. They are not objects for consciousness either in relation to the *Anstoss*, or in relation to the perceptual constancies. (Smith, 2002: 187, author's italics)

The first two passages say that with regard to the dialectic burden Direct Realism should be treated as the default position. It is the sense-datum theorist who needs to prove that Direct Realism is wrong, not the other way around (Smith, 2006: 411). The third and fourth passages state what Smith considers as sufficient for resisting the sense-datum inference. In the cases of perceptual constancy and the *Anstoss*, Smith argues, sensory qualities are not objects for consciousness.

Now, I agree that the default status should be granted to Direct Realism. In a recent defense of his position, Smith says that "all I need to do is to give a plausible account of a way in which sensations can fail to be objects of awareness (Smith, 2006: 414)." I agree with him on this point. Unfortunately, this has not been achieved with Smith's theory. If my argument in the last section is correct, the sense-datum infection threatens to edge the ordinary physical object out of its presumed position as the immediate object of awareness.

Both Smith and I agree that the Argument is a serious threat against this default position. So, as Smith says in the third and fourth passages above, the direct realist has tried to show that sensory qualities "are not objects for consciousness either in relation to the *Anstoss*, or in relation to the perceptual constancies." However, in proposing his solution, Smith neglects, or at least underestimates, the potential threat of the sense-datum infection. Although perceptual constancy and the *Anstoss* reveal an unchanging object or an external force to the subject, as long as illusions are possible they can be "infected" by sense data. Although perceptual constancy and the *Anstoss* themselves are not sensory qualities, they are only *part* of perception. As Smith insists, perception is sensory in nature. The fact that perception contains non-sensuous aspects is perfectly consistent with the fact that in perception the subject is also aware of sensory qualities. Hence, when il-

lusions happen, besides directly perceiving an unchanging object or an object that exerts a force against the subject's activity, the subject *also* directly perceives some sensory qualities that the object does *not* possess. Moreover, due to the sense-datum infection, simply in virtue of one of the sensible features of the object being subject to illusion, a sense-datum has replaced the object as the direct object of awareness. This undermines the counter-examples proposed by Smith. The sense-datum theorist will again ask: What else except sense data might actually have those qualities? The direct realist, as defended by Smith's theory, still has not offered an answer to that question.

(3) A defender of Smith's view might try to argue that, on the one hand, experiences do have intrinsic properties, i.e. the sensory qualities perceived by the subject, but, on the other hand, there is a way to say that they are not the immediate objects of experience. If so, the sense-datum inference can be avoided. Traditionally, this is the stance of Adverbialism, which holds that the role of sensory qualities is not to characterize the object of experience but to characterize the ways in which one's experience is modified. The main idea is to eschew the so-called "act-object" model of perception (Smith, 2002: 54-58). Yet, it is well known that Adverbialism faces insurmountable difficulties (Jackson, 1977). It is also rejected by Smith himself (Smith, 2002: 57-59).

However, there is an alternative account that might assist Smith's theory in achieving the same goal. In *Elements of Mind* (2001), Tim Crane suggests a particular version of intentionalism that allows one to say that perceptual experience is a kind of intentional state *and* has certain intrinsic properties.¹⁶ According to Crane, perception is understood as a relation between a subject and the intentional content of experience. The intentionality of perception, as well as other kinds of in-

¹⁶ It must be pointed out that the original purpose of Crane's intentionalism was not to defend Smith's theory. What is discussed here is that a defender of Smith's view might find recourse in Crane's theory to respond to my criticism.

tentional states, has a relational structure which involves not only intentional content but also *intentional mode*. Crane explains his view as follows:

Intentional modes are the relations one stands in to the contents of one's intentional states. Obvious examples are belief, hope, and the other propositional attitudes (I could have used the word "attitude" rather than "mode" ...). Desire, thought, intention, perception, love, fear, regret, pity—these are all intentional modes ... The simple idea is that a person's intentional state is individuated by two things: the intentional mode and the intentional content. (Crane, 2001: 32)

With regard to perception, the role of intentional content is to specify the object of perception in a certain way, and the role of intentional mode is to specify the relation between the subject and the content of perception. The intentional modes of perception include "seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching (Crane, 2001: 139)."¹⁷ They specify different sorts of sensory relations that a subject might bear to the object of perception.

Concerning phenomenal character, Crane's view is that "the phenomenal character of a state is fixed not just by the content, but by the content and the intentional mode (Crane, 2001: 85)." My experience of seeing a cat, and your experience of touching the same cat are phenomenally different; the phenomenal difference is explained not only by the fact that the contents of the two experiences are different, i.e. they specify the object in different ways, but also by the fact that the intentional modes are different, i.e. while I stand in a visual relation to the cat, your relation to it is tactile. This version of intentionalism provides a possible strategy to respond to my criticism. A defender of Smith's view might now say that sensory qualities can be regarded as intrinsic properties of perception because their role is not to character-

¹⁷ Crane considers bodily sensation as a kind of perception, so he takes proprioception and kinesthesia as intentional modes as well.

ize the object or the content of perception, but to characterize the *mode* of perceptual experience. That is, sensory qualities specify the sensory relation between the subject and the content.

Recall that I made the criticism that Smith's account of the *Anstoss* fails to show that, besides the *Anstoss*, the related sensory qualities are not perceived as the immediate objects of experience. The defender might now reply that the role of sensory qualities has to do with the fact that what the subject is having is a tactile perception, not a visual or auditory one. In this sense, sensory qualities characterize the mode of experience rather than the object. My argument in the last section has not ruled out the possibility that, rather than being the immediate objects of experience, the sensory qualities are intrinsic properties of perception qualifying the mode; this enables the direct realist to escape the sense-datum inference.

This strategy is quite sophisticated, but, again, whether successful or not, it is ultimately not available to Smith. Here are two reasons. First, we must examine: how would Crane's view explain the sensory character of illusion? Suppose you are experiencing a visual illusion: a white wall looks yellow to you. The sense-datum theorist asks: *in virtue of what* does it look yellow to you (Smith, 2002: 36)? It is true that Crane's intentionalism is importantly different from reductive representationalism in that it does not neglect "the distinctively sensory character of perceptual consciousness" (Smith, 2002: 46). However, as a version of intentionalism, it takes perceptual experience to be a form of intentionality or mental representation (Crane, 2005: 2006). The way it avoids the sense-datum inference is to say that the sensory qualities that a subject perceives in an illusory experience are not *instantiated* by some sort of objects, but are *misrepresented* by the experience.¹⁸ According to intentionalism, the yellowness that the subject perceives is,

¹⁸ Concerning the distinction between instantiation and representation of sensory qualities, cf. Crane (2005; 2006: 140), and Martin (2002: 392-395).

in Smith's terms, only "intentionally present" but not "actually present" to consciousness (Smith, 2002: 42).

This view is rejected by Smith. He says:

When a wall perceptually looks yellow to you, a certain sensory quality is realized in your experience, whether or not the wall is yellow . . . A proponent of the Argument claims that . . . a veridical and an illusory appearance of yellow have something *actually* in common. (Smith, 2002: 40)

[T]he only thing that the Argument has demonstrated beyond any shadow of reasonable doubt is that sensory qualities that are not the qualities of a perceived physical object are really present in illusory perceptual experience, and that these same qualities are equally present in veridical perceptions. (Smith, 2002: 54)

It is Smith's view that a veridical perception and a matching illusion can be "qualitatively identical" (Smith, 2002: 40). What he means, as the above passages show, is that the exact same sensory quality, say, yellowness, is *instantiated* in a veridical and a subjectively indistinguishable illusory experience. On this point, Smith fully agrees with the sense-datum theorist. This contrasts with intentionalism, including Crane's version, according to which, as Smith describes it, "When I look at the white wall I see yellowness; this, however, is an 'intentional seeing,' no more requiring a *real instantiation* of the quality (Smith, 2002: 43, my italics)." Since Crane's intentionalism is importantly at odds with Smith's theory, it is doubtful whether the former can help defend the latter.

Now, one might think that in order to defend Smith's position it is not necessary to take in Crane's whole theory. One can retain the idea that, *pace* intentionalism, sensory qualities are instantiated rather than represented by perceptual experience. All that is needed is Crane's claim that what sensory qualities characterize is the intentional mode rather than the object of experience. This leads to the second reason why the strategy in question is not available to Smith. The point of ap-

pealing to Crane's claim is to allow one to say that sensory qualities are intrinsic properties of experiences, and that the "act-object" model of perception can be avoided. However, according to Smith, this by itself is not enough to defend Direct Realism. He says:

For even if sensory qualities are inherent qualities of sense-experience itself, it is far from clear how we can avoid the conclusion that we are *aware of them* as objects whenever we are perceptually conscious, or that we are immediately aware of the experience itself that exhibits such qualities. (Smith, 2002: 59-60)

The fact that they are not regarded as being ontologically distinct from the experiencing subject in no way shows that they are not themselves objects of awareness. In fact, it is far from immediately clear how they could fail to be. (Smith, 2002: 61)

Smith's view here is that just by saying that sensory qualities are intrinsic properties of experiences does not prevent the experiences themselves from being the objects of awareness. It will not help defend Direct Realism because "On such a view perceptual experience would be *self-presenting*, and the upshot of the Argument would be that we are only ever aware of our own experiences, with such experiences themselves constituting the 'veil of perception' (Smith, 2002: 61)." So, Crane's view of sensory qualities will not be accepted by Smith.

Now, one might think that it would be too hasty to reject Crane's suggestion. Since sensory qualities characterize the intentional mode, when perceiving sensory qualities the subject is directly aware of the intentional mode. But, according to Crane, the intentional mode of perception is the relation between the subject and perceptual content, not between the subject and the object of experience. So why can't the direct realist say that in perception the subject is *both* directly aware of the intentional mode *and* directly aware of an ordinary physical object?

Again, this response is not available to Smith. As pointed out above, Smith insists that sensory qualities are instantiated rather than represented by experience. The difference between instantiation and

representation is that, unlike the latter where it makes sense to talk about misrepresentation, there is no such thing as *mis-instantiation* of qualities. Now, consider the above example again. Since the wall is white and not yellow, in virtue of what does it look yellow to you? The defender of Smith's view might answer: in virtue of the illusory experience instantiating the sensory quality of yellowness. This will not block the sense-datum inference. Because the sense-datum theorist will continue to ask: in virtue of what does the illusory experience instantiate the yellowness? It cannot be explained by the wall's real color, since it is not yellow. The sense-datum theorist will claim that the only tenable answer is: the yellowness is instantiated because the experience of yellowness is an experience of a sense datum that actually possesses this sensory quality.

As a version of intentionalism, Crane's view can make room for misrepresentation and does not have to commit to the existence of bearers of sensory qualities. This approach is rejected by Smith. Smith's way is to defend Direct Realism by his theory of perceptual intentionality. He appeals to phenomenological features such as perceptual constancy and the *Anstoss*, and intends to reach the conclusion that the bearers of sensory qualities in illusory experiences remain as ordinary physical objects. If my argument in the last section is correct, this phenomenological solution to the Argument is afflicted with the sense-datum infection.

VI.

I have argued in this paper that Smith's defense of Direct Realism against the Argument from Illusion is not successful. Whether the immediate objects of experience are ordinary physical objects or sense data, on the one hand, and how perceptions differ from mere sensations, on the other hand, are two independent issues. A theory about the latter does not by itself remove the worry about the sense-datum infection. Although I find Smith's view wanting in this regard, I think his theory

of perceptual consciousness does make a good contribution towards understanding the intentionality of perception. His discussion on phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality, movement, and the *Anstoss* does tell us a great deal about the difference between perception and mere sensation.¹⁹ What I have argued in this paper is that because of the sense-datum infection, his account of perceptual intentionality is insufficient to solve the Argument from Illusion. I think something is missing in Smith's theory. To resist the Argument from Illusion, it is not enough to merely consider how to block the sense-datum inference. One must also find a way to undermine the sense-datum infection. This requires further work. Here, I want to conclude by making an observation regarding the sense-datum infection and how the direct realist might begin to respond to it.

Consider the question raised in the beginning of this paper: whether, or to what extent, Direct Realism can be defended against the Argument from Illusion by perceptual phenomenology alone? Based on my criticism of Smith's theory, it seems that Direct Realism cannot be defended against the Argument from Illusion by phenomenology alone. This, of course, is not saying that perceptual phenomenology is irrelevant, but it does suggest that the direct realist cannot appeal exclusively to phenomenology. Certain considerations regarding the underlying metaphysics of perception are also needed. For example, I suggest, a principle of *the unity of consciousness* is needed in order to defend Direct Realism. A full development and defense of this idea would have to wait for another occasion. Here, I intend only to point out a possible direction for the direct realist. Let me explain.

Both perceptual experiences and mere sensations are conscious states; they embody sensory consciousness. Many philosophers argue that usually the conscious states of a subject are *unified*. For our purposes, we can speak of *the unity of experience*. There are the unity of single sensory modality and the unity of cross-modalities. Take a sim-

¹⁹ Cf. Siegel (2006 b) and Smith (2006) for a recent exchange concerning this issue.

ple example. When I see a red car on the street through the window of my office, whether the experience is veridical or illusory, I do not just perceive the color of the car, I also see its shape, location, movement, etc. Moreover, I do not perceive these properties separately; they are unified in the sense that they are experienced together, and experienced as belonging to a single object—the car. This is the unity of single sensory modality. Besides seeing the car, at the same time I also have other sorts of experiences: while sitting on a wooden chair, I hear the sound of the car, holding a coffee cup in hand, tasting the flavor of cappuccino, thinking about what to do on Sunday afternoon, etc. These are different experiences, but they also seem to be phenomenally unified in the sense that not only are they my experiences and they are experienced together, but also they are experienced as various components of a stream of consciousness (Dainton, 2000; Tye, 2003; Bayne and Chalmers, 2003; Bayne, 2004). This is the unity of cross-modalities. For our purposes here, we can just focus on the unity of single sensory modality.

These descriptions seem to be phenomenologically correct. I think that the phenomenology of the unity of experience by itself will not refute the sense-datum theory. The sense-datum theorist can well claim that the sense data involved in an experience are unified in such a way that can accommodate its phenomenology. Behind the sense-datum infection, I suggest, is the idea of the unity of experience. Consider again Smith's example of the sense-datum infection:

[S]uppose that we see a red tomato that looks black as a result of unusual lighting. We conclude, by the second and third steps of the Argument, that we are aware of a black sense-datum distinct from any physical tomato. Now although in this situation the shape of the tomato is not, we may suppose, subject to illusion, we cannot maintain that we are directly aware visually of the tomato's shape, because, simply in virtue of one of the visible features of the tomato being subject to illusion, a sense-datum has replaced the tomato as the object of visual awareness as such. For the shape you see is the shape of *something black*, and the tomato is not black. I shall refer to

this as “sense-datum infection.” (Smith, 2002: 26, author’s italics)

Smith does not further explain this passage. This example in fact involves the unity of single sensory modality. I suggest that the reason why the veridical visual experience of the shape of the tomato does not alter the case that what one directly perceives is a sense datum is that the experience of the shape and the experience of the color are united—they are parts of a more comprehensive experience. It is because experience embodies unity that the sense-datum theorist can claim that “simply in virtue of one of the visible features of the tomato being subject to illusion, a sense-datum has replaced the tomato as the object of visual awareness as such.” So I think the basis of the sense-datum infection is the unity of experience: the components of an experience share the same object. The sense-datum theory contains a principle of the unity of experience in its favor: if one part of the comprehensive experience has a sense datum as its immediate object, then the sense datum becomes the immediate object of the whole experience.

If this observation is correct, in order to resist the sense-datum infection, what the direct realist needs to do is to construct a competing principle of the unity of experience. The direct realist must explain how various sensory qualities are unified with the object of experience in a way that cannot be accommodated by sense data. Concerning Direct Realism and the Argument from Illusion, I suspect, an account of the unity of experience would involve an explanation of *the unity of the object of experience*, an explanation of how various features are bound together to form a single object of experience. By contrasting the unity of sense data with the unity of physical objects, the direct realist might develop a different principle of the unity of experience to argue against the sense-datum infection. This direction of defending Direct Realism requires a metaphysical account of sense data and ordinary physical

objects. Such an account, I suspect, would go beyond the phenomenological features of perception.²⁰

²⁰ I want to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments.

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知覺現象與直接實在論

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摘要

本文探討知覺哲學的核心問題：我們能否直接知覺到外在世界？此即著名的「知覺問題」(the problem of perception)。根據直接實在論(Direct Realism)，知覺提供了對於外在世界直接的覺察(direct awareness)。但這樣的立場遭到「錯覺論證」(the Argument from Illusion)的嚴重威脅。在《知覺問題》(2000)一書中，A. D. Smith對於知覺現象(perceptual phenomenology)進行仔細的研究，而提出了一個新穎的理論來辯護直接實在論。按照Smith的理論，知覺的意向性(intentionality)是由三個特性來解釋，分別是：現象上的三度空間性(phenomenal three-dimensional spatiality)、運動(movement)、以及the *Anstoss*。Smith試圖論證：他這樣的解釋能夠抵禦錯覺論證最關鍵的前提，即所謂的「感覺與料推論」(the sense-datum inference)。

在陳述完Smith的理論之後，我將論證兩件事：第一，關於直接實在論的辯護者所應完成的任務，Smith的討論其實涉及到兩個彼此獨立的課題，而他卻未能區分開來。第二，Smith的理論低估了所謂的「感覺與料感染」(the sense-datum infection)的影響。這兩項論點的結果是：即使Smith對於知覺意向性的解釋是正確的，

他對於直接實在論的辯護仍是失敗的。我認為：單憑對於知覺現象（perceptual phenomenology）的理解，無法使直接實在論免於威脅；光是考慮如何抵擋「感覺與料推論」，並不足以反駁錯覺論證。直接實在論的支持者還必須設法回應「感覺與料感染」才行。本文最後會對此提供初步的建議。

關鍵詞：知覺、直接實在論、錯覺論證、意向性

