VERIDICAL HALLUCINATION, CAUSAL DEPENDENCE AND THE CONCEPT OF PERCEPTION

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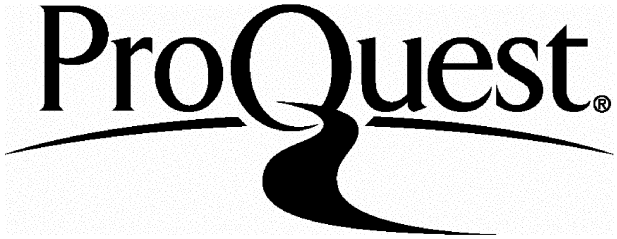

ABSTRACT

Does the Intentional theory of perception conflict with our ordinary "naive" concept of perception? Grice's thought experiment (1961) shows that the Intentional theorist must adopt the Causal Theory of Perception (CTP) if he is to claim that his theory does not conflict with our ordinary concept of perception. **Chapter 1** introduces the Intentional theory of perception, the Grice thought-experiment, and the CTP. **Chapter 2** examines Searle's account of visual experience and argues that if the Intentional theorist agrees that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment fails to see, then the concept of perception cannot be analyzed simply in terms of the veridicality of experience, no matter what one includes as part of the content of experience.

Does the CTP offer the best account of our ordinary concept of perception, or does it merely offer a formula for distinguishing those cases where we would ordinarily judge that the subject sees what is before him? In **Chapters 3** and **4**, in an attempt to answer this question I consider a question which Strawson poses (1974): If the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception, then what role does it play in that concept? I try to undermine the claim that the notion has any role to play.

Chapter 5 introduces the disjunctive theory as an alternative explanation of the subject's failure to see in the Grice thought-experiment (following Snowdon 1981 and 1990), and discusses the relation between the disjunctive theory and the CTP.

Chapter 6 presents the disjunctive theory as offering the best account of the epistemological aspects of our concept of perception.

The conclusion drawn is that the disjunctive theory leaves the CTP unmotivated, and it is suggested that even if the Intentional theory offers the best overall account of perceptual experience, it may still be in conflict with our ordinary concept of perception.

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CHAPTER ONE

What objects are we directly or immediately aware of when we have perceptual experiences? Are we in direct perceptual contact with objects in the external, physical world, or are we only ever indirectly aware of such objects? Is it the case that we are only ever directly aware of internal, mental objects or entities? In this chapter I want to introduce a theory of perception, which I shall call the Intentional Theory of Perception, that purports to offer a solution to this problem. The theory will be introduced as an attempt to put the experiencing subject in direct perceptual contact with objects in the physical world. Throughout I shall be focussing the discussion on visual perception. I first want to consider why there might be thought to be a problem for a theory that allows the subject such direct contact with the world.

The Problem of Hallucination

The possibility of hallucination or perceptual illusion has traditionally been used to raise difficulties for the view that we directly experience objects in the external world. Take a case of hallucination: What objects is a subject aware of when he hallucinates? When, for example, a subject has a hallucination of a flying pig, the subject is not aware of an object in the external world, for there is no flying pig there for him to be aware of. When a subject is having a complete hallucination (i.e. when none of the objects that the subject seems to see are actually in front of him) the subject cannot be aware of any objects in the external world, so there remain two possible kinds of

response to the question of the nature of the objects that the subject is aware of during such a hallucination.

Option (I) is to respond by saying that the subject is aware of objects that are not part of the external world.

Option (II) is to respond by saying that there are no objects of which the subject is aware.

Option (I)

What might motivate the claim that although during a hallucination we are not aware of objects in the external world, we are nevertheless aware of some other kind of objects which are not part of the external world? It might be a commitment to the idea that when I seem to see an object with a particular quality it is just phenomenologically obvious that there is an object there which possesses that quality. This idea can be generalized into a principle that Robinson calls the Phenomenal Principle (in Robinson 1994) which can be stated as follows: "If there sensibly appears to a subject to be an object that possesses a particular quality, then there is an object of which the subject is aware which does possess that quality." The idea is that when you are having a hallucination it is just obvious to inspection that you are aware of *something*. On this view the subject's experience is partially constituted by the object that he appears to see - the object itself is part of the experience. What explains the appearance to a subject of something being an object which is F is the fact that there is an object which is F of which the he is aware - whether the experience is genuine

or hallucinatory.

If one adopts option (I) can one consistently claim that a subject can be in direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world? A theorist who took option (I) and yet retained the view that a subject can be in direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world, would have to claim that when a subject hallucinates he is aware of a different kind of object than the object he is aware of when he genuinely perceives the world. When a subject hallucinates he is aware of internal, mental objects, not the external, physical objects he is aware of when he successfully perceives. What consequences would this have for a theory of perception?

The Common Element Thesis

For the theorist who adopts option (I), the object of experience is partly constitutive of the experience. So if this theorist wants to say that a subject can directly experience external objects, then he will have to say that the experience the subject has when he successfully perceives the world is not one he could have if he were hallucinating. A hallucination has a different kind of object constituting the experience, so the hallucination will be a different kind of experience. Does this present a problem for the theorist? The theory will violate what I shall call the "Common Element Thesis" (after Millar 1996). The Common Element Thesis is simply the claim that the experience a subject has when he successfully perceives an object is one that he could have if he were hallucinating.

Two kinds of reason are offered as to why we should be reluctant to give up the Common Element Thesis: The first concerns the possibility of the subjective indistinguishability of a successful perception and a hallucination. An experience a subject has when he successfully sees the world may be indistinguishable, from the subject's point of view, from a hallucinatory experience. It might be thought that two experiences that are subjectively indistinguishable must be of the same kind because what individuates a kind of experience is how the experience phenomenologically seems to the subject. The second kind of reason concerns the possibility of the causal indistinguishability of successful perception and hallucination. Consider the following passage from Robinson (1994):

> "It is theoretically possible by activating some brain process which is involved in a particular type of perception to cause an hallucination which exactly resembles that perception in its subjective character.... It is necessary to give the same account of both hallucinatory and perceptual experience when they have the same neural cause. Thus, it is not, for example, plausible to say that the hallucinatory experience involves a mental image or sense-datum, but that the perception does not, if the two have the same proximate - that is to say, neural - cause." (p. 151)

The argument here is not that two experiences that are subjectively indistinguishable must be of the same type, rather it is the claim that two experiences that have the same proximate cause must be of the same type. Robinson makes the following point to back up his claim: If the same type of brain state can be involved in a genuine perception and a hallucination, "how would the brain state know when it is required to produce an image to act as understudy for a genuine perception, and why should it bother to do so?"

So we might feel that there are persuasive reasons for wishing to retain the claim that the experience a subject has when he is successfully perceiving the world is one that he could have if he were hallucinating - i.e. it may be that any adequate theory of perception must not violate the Common Element Thesis. Adopting option (I) - i.e. the claim that we do experience objects when we hallucinate - therefore, presents us with the following dilemma: Either we deny the Common Element Thesis, or we accept that we are only ever aware of internal, mental objects and we are never in direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world. Under option (I), the Common Element Thesis and direct realism are inconsistent. Can adopting option (II) make available for us a theory which does not entail facing this dilemma?

Option (II)

Option (II) was the claim that during a completely hallucinatory experience, there are no objects that the subject is aware of - there are no objects of experience. The first thing to note is that this claim involves a denial of the Phenomenal Principle. The Phenomenal Principle has the following form: If A then B, where

A is "There sensibly appears to a subject to be an object which possesses a particular quality", and

B is "There is an object of which the subject is aware which does possess that quality".

The theorist going for option (II) must deny that the truth of A entails the truth of B. Is this compatible with the idea that an experiencing subject can be in direct

perceptual contact with the world? A theorist who wants to adopt direct realism and also adopt option (II) has to say that although the truth of A does not entail the truth of B, in a case of successful perception both A and B are true[1]. The theorist is going to have to claim that during a successful perception it sensibly appears to the subject as if there is an object x which is F and there *is* an object x of which the subject is aware, which is F. During a hallucination it sensibly appears to the subject as if there is an object x which is F, but there is *no* object of which the subject is aware. Can these claims be made compatible with the Common Element Thesis - i.e. the thesis that the experience a subject has when he is successfully perceiving the world is one which he could have if he were hallucinating?

Making direct realism and the Common Element Thesis consistent with option (II) rules out certain accounts of successful perception. The experience a subject has when he successfully sees the world obviously cannot be partially constituted by the object in the world that he takes himself to be aware of if this is an experience that the subject could have if he were hallucinating.

So far it has been established that direct realism and the Common Element Thesis are together inconsistent with option (I) - the claim that we are aware of objects when we hallucinate; so if direct realism and the Common Element Thesis are going to be

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[1]A direct realist adopting option (I) might claim that a subject can see an object without that object possessing some of the properties it appears to possess. However, here I am not counting this as a case of "successful perception".

compatible with each other then they will have to be consistent with option (II) - the claim that there are no objects that we are aware of when we hallucinate; and if direct realism and the Common Element Thesis are going to be compatible with option (II), then the experience a subject has when he sees the world cannot be partially constituted by the objects in the world that he takes himself to be aware of. An account needs to be given of how a subject can be in direct perceptual contact with an object in the external world, without that object being partially constitutive of the subject's experience. The Intentional Theory of Perception is supposed to provide such an account.

The Intentional Theory of Perception[2]

According to the Intentional Theory, a subject's experiences are psychological states that represent the world as being a certain way. Experiences are states of mind with content. The content of the state is how the world is represented as being. Just as I can have a belief with a content so in similar way I can have an experience with a content. This theory is not committed to the claim that the truth of A entails the truth of B - i.e. just because there sensibly appears to me to be an object which possesses a particular quality, it does not automatically follow that there *is* an object of which I am aware that possesses that quality. The content of an experience can be correct or incorrect just as the content of a belief can be true or false. When the content of an

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[2]The way I introduce the Intentional theory in this chapter is not the only way in which the theory can be introduced, and I do not consider all of the motives for adopting the theory.

experience is correct the experience matches the world - the world really is as it is represented as being. When a subject has a false belief that x is F, we need not think that the subject has to be in some relation to a private object x which is F, which is not an object in the physical world. We do not think that there has to be some principle for beliefs equivalent to the Phenomenal Principle for experiences to the effect that if a subject believes that there is some object possessing a particular quality, then there is some object which does possess that quality to which the subject is related. So similarly with experiences on this account, once we allow that experiences have intentional content we need not think of a subject's having an experience with the content that x is F as entailing that there *is* an x which is F to which the subject is related. The subject's experience with the content that x is F is one that the subject can have whether or not there is an object of which he is aware.

In explaining a hallucination as akin to a false belief, the Intentional Theory provides an account that is compatible with option (II) - the claim that in the case of a complete hallucination there are no objects of experience. So the Intentional theorist can consistently accept the Common Element Thesis and deny the claim that we are directly aware of objects that are not part of the external world. But can the Intentional theorist give an adequate account of how it is that we *are* aware of objects that are part of the external world? Under the Intentional Theory, the same type of experience can be on one occasion an awareness of an object and on another occasion an awareness of *no* object. How is this possible? What is it that allows a subject to

have direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world in certain circumstances and not in others, if it is not a difference in the kind of experience that the subject is having?

Veridicality

Under the Intentional Theory whether a subject successfully sees an object depends (in part) on the veridicality of the experience. That is to say, it depends on the correctness of the content of the experience - the world must be the way it is represented as being. If the subject's experience does not match the world in this way, then the subject does not see any objects - he is not aware of any objects. When a subject is directly aware of an object in the world, he is aware of that object in virtue of the veridicality of the content of that experience. It is important to note that on this view there are no objects getting in the way of the objects in the world that the subject is aware of - the experience itself is not an object that the subject must be aware of in order to be aware of the objects in the external world.

So is it the case that to be aware of an object is just to have a veridical experience? Does one see the world just in case one's experience represents the world as being the way it actually is? Is seeing an object simply a matter of having the right kind of information about that object? Someone who denied this would be claiming that it is possible that a subject has all the right kind of information about an object while

failing to see the object - it is possible that the world really is the way it seems to me to be, and yet I don't see the world. In other words, veridical hallucination is possible.

Veridical Hallucination

Usually the possibility of veridical hallucination is not explicitly argued for. Examples of veridical experience are given which our intuitions are supposed to persuade us are not cases of successful perception. Here is an example from Grice (1961):

A scientist makes it look to a subject as if there is a clock on the shelf in front of him by stimulating the subject's visual cortex. "If such treatment were applied when there actually was a clock on the shelf, and if [the subject's] impressions were found to continue unchanged when the clock was removed or its position altered, then I think we should be inclined to say that the [subject] did not see the clock that was before his eyes" (p. 61, Dancy 1988). This example is supposed to establish the claim that an experience can be veridical and yet the subject can fail to see the world. The thought-experiment also shows that we do not need to think of experience as an object that the subject is aware of, getting in the way of his direct access to the world, in order for us to think of the subject's experience as being "cut off" from the world[3]. If we agree that

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[3]This comment is directed at Millar (1996). There Millar argues that the disjunctive theorist misunderstands the Intentional theory. He suggests that the disjunctivist's arguments depend on the claim that their opponents think of experience as "interposing" between subject and world. But the Grice thought-experiment shows that we can think of a subject as being "cut off" from the world without thinking of his experience as an object of which he is aware. So there still remains the question as to whether the Intentional theory can put the subject "back in touch" with the world in an appropriate way. I discuss the disjunctive theory in Chapters 5 and 6.

on any adequate account of what it is to see an object the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see the clock, then what adequate account of the concept of seeing can the Intentional Theory give? The Intentional theorist cannot claim that to see an object - to be in direct perceptual contact with an object - is just for the subject to have the right kind of information about that object. Genuine perception cannot be equivalent to veridical experience. So the Intentional Theory as it stands has not provided us with an account of what it is to be directly aware of an object.

The Causal Theory of Perception

According to the Causal Theory of Perception it is part of the concept of "seeing" that necessarily if a subject 'S' sees an object or state of affairs in the world, then that object / state of affairs is causally responsible (in some appropriate way) for the experience undergone by 'S'[4]. What is distinctive of this theory is the idea that it is a *conceptual* requirement that the causal condition hold if the subject is to see the world. Someone who accepts that it is a general empirical truth that the causal condition must hold if a subject is to see the world is not thereby committed to the Causal Theory of Perception (CTP)[5]. If we adapt the Intentional Theory of Perception so that it becomes a version of the CTP, then the Intentional Theory may offer us an account of the

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[4]The experience must be caused "in the appropriate way" to rule out the possibility that an experience that is deviantly caused by the object it is of should count as a case of seeing. I discuss the problem of deviant causal chains in Chapter 3.

[5]Among those who hold the CTP I count Grice (1961), Strawson (1974), Pears (1976), Peacocke (1979), Lewis (1980), Davies (1983).

concept of seeing that allows that an experiencing subject can be in direct perceptual contact with objects in the world, that allows that the Common Element Thesis is not violated, and allows that the veridical experience had by the subject in Grice's thought-experiment is not a case of seeing. In Grice's thought-experiment the subject's veridical experience would not count as a case of seeing, because the experience is not caused in the appropriate way.

But what does this causal requirement add to the concept of seeing that the concept would otherwise lack? Under the Intentional Theory of Perception an experience, as a psychological state with content is comparable to other intentional states like belief. It is this feature of experience that makes the Common Element Thesis and direct realism consistent: An object does not have to be part of a subject's experience in order for the subject to be directly aware of the object. But under the CTP we have a disanalogy between experience and belief. Although an object does not have to be part of the subject's experience in order for the subject to be aware of the object, the object does have to cause the subject's experience in order for him to be aware of it. A subject can hold a belief about an object without that object being causally responsible for that belief at that particular time. Even under externalist theories according to which a subject must be in causal contact with an object in order to have beliefs about it, a subject can hold a belief about the object without the object being the cause of that particular belief on that particular occasion. What is it about the concept of seeing that makes it different from belief in this way?

One way to understand this question is to ask how a causal theorist could argue against someone who claimed that to see the world just is to have veridical experience. If this person claimed that in the Grice thought-experiment the subject *is* seeing the clock, how could the causal theorist argue against him? To ask these questions is to seek a solution to a problem that Strawson set himself (in Strawson 1974):

> "to determine how the general notion of causal dependence of sensible experience on facts about material objects fits into, or finds a place in, the naive concept of perception of material objects" (p. 75)

The causal theorist's claim is not merely that it is an empirical fact that for a subject to see an object the object must be causally responsible for the subject's experience. It is the stronger claim that it is part of the *concept* of seeing an object that the object be causally responsible for the experience. What is it about the concept of seeing an object in the external world, that requires that the object be causally responsible for the subject's experience? What is it about the concept of seeing that brings up this disanalogy with belief?

CHAPTER TWO

The kind of thought-experiment offered by Grice may be used to show that the concept of perception cannot be analyzed simply in terms of veridicality. We cannot say that to see an object just is to have a veridical experience. Seeing an object is not simply a matter of having the right kind of information about that object. In this chapter I want to consider whether it is possible for someone to accept that in the Grice thought-experiment the subject is not seeing the world, and yet still retain the claim that to see the world just is to have a veridical experience. If the concept of seeing can be analyzed simply in terms of the veridicality of experience, then we would no longer need to determine "how the general notion of causal dependence of sensible experience on facts about material objects fits into, or finds a place in, the naive concept of perception of material objects".

Someone who claims that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see the world, and yet claims that to see the world just is to have a veridical experience, will have to deny that in the Grice thought-experiment the subject is having a veridical experience. I want to use Searle's account of the content of visual experience in order to determine whether such a position is tenable.

Searle's Account of the Content of Visual Experience

Searle's account of visual experience is a version of what I have been calling the

Intentional Theory of Perception. A visual experience is a state with content. According to Searle the content of the state can be specified by stating what he calls its "conditions of satisfaction". These are the conditions which must obtain if the experience is to be veridical. What is unusual about Searle's theory, is what he includes as part of the content of such experiences. Searle claims that "what the Intentional content requires is not simply that there be a state of affairs in the world, but rather the state of affairs in the world must cause the very visual experience which is the embodiment or realization of the Intentional content" (p. 45 1983). So Searle includes a causal component within the content of every visual experience. Searle gives the following examples: "When I see a flower, part of the content of the experience is that this experience is caused by the fact that there is a flower there" (p. 123). If I see a yellow station wagon then the Intentional content of my visual experience can be made explicit in the following form: "I have a visual experience (that there is a yellow station wagon there and that there is a yellow station wagon there is causing this visual experience)" (p. 48). Searle sums up his claim by saying "The Intentional content of the visual experience requires as part of the conditions of satisfaction that the visual experience be caused by the rest of its conditions of satisfaction, that is, by the state of affairs perceived" (p. 48).

Searle's Account Vs. the CTP

In the last chapter I claimed that the Grice thought-experiment is often used to argue for the CTP. Such arguments generally have the following form:

(1) There are cases of "veridical hallucination" when we are inclined to say that the subject fails to see the world even though the world really is as it is represented as being - i.e. when the content of the experience is veridical.

(2) These cases of veridical hallucination are not cases of genuine perception because the state of affairs that the subject's experience is of are not causally responsible for the subject's experience.

(3) Therefore, it is necessary that if a subject is to see a state of affairs in the world, that state of affairs must be causally responsible for the subject's experience.

(1) is established through the use of an example, like the Grice thought-experiment.

It might be suggested that if Searle's theory is true, the argument outlined above does not work because (1) is not true. The Gricean thought-experiment is not a case of (1) because it is not true that in this case the world really is the way it appears to be. It appears to the subject as if the clock is causing her experience, whereas in reality it is not. In order for (1) to be true under Searle's theory, we would have to find an example where the subject fails to see the world even though the world is as it is represented as being, and under Searle's theory, that includes the appropriate part of the world being causally responsible for the subject's experience. If such an example could be thought of, then the argument for the CTP still does not work, because the absence of the causal condition could not be introduced in (2) as a means of explaining why (2) is true. This is because of the fact that if (1) is true then the causal condition already obtains.

Since the problem cases, like the clock example, when the subject fails to see the world, are cases where the subject's experience is not veridical, it might be suggested that Searle's theory can be used to analyze the concept of perception in terms of the concept of veridicality. In criticizing Searle, Millar claims "A plausible conjecture about what leads Searle to his contrary position is that he fails to distinguish between veridical experience and perception... Indeed I am inclined to think that Searle actually equates having a veridical experience of an F with perceiving an F" (1985). But Millar does not go on to consider what is wrong with equating veridical experience with perception. Why should Searle want to distinguish between veridical experience and perception? Maybe to perceive an F just is to have a veridical experience of an F.

Consider the following analysis of the concept of perception:

(A): A subject perceives a state of affairs in the world iff his experience is veridical.

For those accounts of visual experience which do not characterize the content of experience in the way that Searle does this analysis of the concept of perception would not be possible. The Gricean thought-experiments are used to show this. Cases of veridical hallucination are used to show that (A) is not true, and thereby show that the notion of a subject's experience being causally dependent on the objects of experience needs to find a place in our ordinary concept of perception. But under Searle's theory the cases of so called "veridical hallucination", like the clock example, do not show that (A) is not true, because they are not cases of veridical experience. It would still

be true that a subject's experiences have to be causally dependent on the objects of experience if the objects are to be perceived, but this is explained by the fact that an experience is a perception iff it is veridical, and an experience that is not causally dependent on the objects of experience is not a veridical experience. The notion of the necessary causal dependence of an experience on the objects of experience is explained in terms of the notion of veridicality. There is no longer a puzzle as to how the idea of causal dependence "fits into, or finds a place, in the naive concept of the perception of material objects".

Searle's account of the content of visual experience has been somewhat controversial. I now want to turn to some of the objections that have been made against Searle's account.

Searle's Critics

A number of critics have claimed to find problems with the idea of making the causal condition part of content of the experience. (Critics of this particular aspect of the theory include McCulloch, 1984; Millar, 1985; Armstrong, Burge and McDowell in Lepore and Van Gulick ed., 1991). Objections to Searle's account tend to fall into one of two broad categories. Critics either object that Searle's desire to make the causal condition part of the content of experience is unmotivated, or they complain that Searle is ascribing too much intellectual complexity to the content of an experience. I shall consider this second type of objection first: Searle's response to these objections

is to claim that they are based on a misunderstanding of his view. The objector complains that the content Searle ascribes to an experience is "too complicated or too sophisticated" (Burge 1991, p. 198). The content involves a causal element and a self-referential element which the experiencing subject may not have the intellectual sophistication to grasp. (This criticism is found in Armstrong, Burge, and McDowell, 1991). Searle replies, "I am not claiming that the perceiver has any consciousness of this articulation of these conditions at all....In the theory of Intentionality we are uncovering complexities in the actual content which may not be available to the agent" (p. 228, 1991). "The agent himself need have no 'knowledge of the causal relation'. The causal feature is simply a feature of the unreflective visual experience" (p. 234, 1991). When his critics argue that the subject of an experience may not have the conceptual capacity to refer to his own experiences, Searle responds by saying that it is not part of his claim that the subject refers to his own experiences.

Does Searle respond adequately to his critics in his claim that their criticisms are based on a misunderstanding of his view? Rather than being based on a misunderstanding of his view, these objections seem to be based on a principle that Searle apparently rejects. These criticisms of Searle's account seem to work only if we already accept the principle that the content that we ascribe to an experience should be limited by the concepts that the subject possesses. If we do not accept this principle, then we should not be persuaded by these objections to Searle. Perhaps there are possible objections to Searle's account that are targeted specifically against the idea

that *causality* and *self-referentiality* can be part of the content of the experience. But if there are such objections, what are they? If Searle's critics are simply arguing that the content of visual experience becomes too complicated under his account, then these objections will only work if we accept the principle that the content an experience has is only characterisable in a way that mentions concepts that the subject possesses. This principle which needs to be accepted for the objections to work against Searle, is by no means obviously true. Whether experiences can have non-conceptual content is an issue of much debate[6]. We will only know for sure if this objection to Searle works when the debate has been finally resolved. So this may not be the best way to attack Searle's account.

The other type of objection to Searle's account that I mentioned was the complaint that the idea of making the causal condition part of the content of a visual experience is essentially unmotivated. (See McCulloch 1984, and Millar 1985). What reasons does Searle offer for including a causal ingredient in the content of visual experience? Searle's critics tend to assume that there can be none. Searle seems to hint at different reasons at different places. At one point Searle claims,

> "I do not know of a demonstrative argument to show that visual perception includes a causal component in such a way that the analysis of the content must contain the causal self-referentiality that I allude to... In the end, perhaps it is one of those points of philosophy where you either see it the way I do or you don't. But there some arguments that I find quite compelling" (p.236, 1991).

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[6]For an account of non-conceptual content see Peacocke 1992, ch. 3.

I now want to turn to these arguments, in order to determine whether Searle's account can be motivated.

The Arguments For Searle's Account

Searle offers the following argument:

> "Suppose that I feel a sharp object pressing into my back. Suppose I can't see it, but I can feel it.... What is the intentional content of that feeling? Here it seems pretty clear that the "mode of presentation" is such that there is a sharp object pressing into my back and the fact that there is a sharp object pressing into my back is causing me to have this very sensation. I feel the object as causing me to have this sensation.... as far as perception in general is concerned there does not seem to me any difficulty in construing the causal self-referentiality as part of the content of the experience... What I wish to argue is that the content of the visual experience is just as much a matter of things happening to me; i.e. in vision, as in touch, the world is making things happen to me" (p. 236, 1991. See also p. 184).

In this argument Searle seems to be suggesting that when we have visual experiences we experience a causal relation. Elsewhere Searle claims that in a case of visual perception "we directly experience the causal relation, the relation of one thing making something else happen" (p.123, 1983). Searle mentions the researches of Michotte, (1954), and Piaget, (1974), which seem to support our common sense view that we really can experience one event as causing another (p.115, 1983). The mention of the case of tactual perception is supposed to remind us that there is nothing so unusual

about the idea of an experience of a causal relation in which the experience itself features as one of the relata. In sight as in touch, I experience the world as "making things happen to me." What Searle does not mention is that the researches of Michotte show that the causal relation between two events does not itself explain the occurrence of the experience of causation. Rather, what explains experiences of causation are certain types of movement[7]. In vision we do not experience movements between the objects of perception and our experiences of them. What about cases of tactual perception like the one mentioned by Searle?

What might explain the experience of causation in the case of tactual perception is the fact that "the sense of touch is partly constituted by one's awareness of one's own body" (Martin, 1993a)[8]. Examples of bodily awareness include kinaesthesia and one's sense of balance as well as bodily sensation. In the example of tactual perception that Searle gives, in which the subject experiences the felt object as causing the sensation, the subject will experience a force pushing into her or pushing her forward. The awareness the subject has of her own body tells her whether an object is impeding her body's movement, distorting her body's shape, pushing her forward. The experience of causation in the case Searle gives of tactual perception could then be due to the experience of a movement of certain kind. The subject experiences the movement of her own body as well as the movement of the object because her tactual experience of

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[7]See Bruce and Green 1990, pp. 333-8.

[8]See also Martin 1992, and O'Shaughnessy 1989.

the object is interdependent with the awareness she has of her own body. Since an awareness of one's own body is partly constitutive of an awareness of the objects of touch, the subject's awareness of her body's movement would be partly constitutive of her awareness of the object's movement. So this would explain the notion of the causal self-referentiality that Searle alludes to in the case of tactual perception: the subject is aware of the object's movement as causing her body's movement, but she is aware of the object's movement through her awareness of her body's movement.The case of visual perception is completely different. One does not experience certain kinds of movement between the objects of perception and our experiences, and an awareness of one's own body is not constitutive of an awareness of the objects of sight. Searle is wrong to suggest that visual experience can be compared to tactual experience as experience of the world "making things happen to me".

Searle should not justify his claim that the content of visual experience has a causal ingredient by suggesting that as experiencing subjects it seems to us as though we are experiencing a causal relation between the world and ourselves. But in comparing visual experience with the case of tactual perception that he mentions, this is just what he is doing. Whereas it may be plausible that in certain cases of tactual perception we experience the objects of experience as causing our experiences, the case of vision is entirely different because of the different role that bodily awareness plays in the different modalities of sight and touch.

In other places Searle seems to realize that it would be wrong to suggest that we actually experience a causal relation between the world and ourselves, but then these passages only succeed in making the comparison with touch rather elusive. After claiming, "Every experience of perceiving... is precisely an experience of causation" (p. 123, 1983), Searle goes on to say, "This statement would be misleading if it suggested that causation is the intentional object of these experiences, rather the underlying idea behind this way of expressing the point is that whenever we perceive the world we have self-referential Intentional states of the sort I have described and the relationship of causation is part of the content not the object of these experiences" (p. 124). But in the case of tactual perception that Searle compares with sight, the causal relation is an object of experience.

Another argument for the claim that the content of visual experience has a causal component can be found in a footnote on p. 124 of Searle 1983. Searle addresses himself to those who do not think that the content of visual experience has a causal component:

> "Suppose we had the capacity to form visual images as vivid as our present visual experiences. Now imagine the difference between forming such an image of the front of one's house as a voluntary action, and actually seeing the front of one's house. In each case the purely visual content is equally vivid, so what could account for the difference? The voluntarily formed images we would experience as caused by us, the visual experience of the house we would experience as caused by something independent of us. The difference in the two cases is a difference in the causal content of the two experiences"

The suggestion here is that the difference between perception and imagination is not explained by the relative vivacity of the two types of experience, but it is explained by a difference in the *content* of the two types of psychological states. Philosophers have suggested that the difference between an imaginative experience and a perceptual experience has to do with the fact that acts of the imagination are subject to the will / voluntary, in a way that perceptual experiences are not. Usually for these philosophers this difference is not something that is reflected in the content of the two types of psychological state, but Searle suggests that it should be. The difference between a perceptual experience and an imaginative experience is explained by the difference in the content of the two types of state. This is a difference in the "causal content" of the two types of state.

To see whether Searle's suggestion is plausible, we need to look in more detail at the account Searle gives of a visual perceptual experience. Searle will specify the content of a subject's visual perception of the house in front of him in the following way:
I have a visual experience (that there is a house in front of me and that there is a house in front of me is causing this visual experience).
The content is specified as a conjunction of two sets of conditions of satisfaction. The second set of conditions specifies that a state of affairs in the world is causally responsible for the experience. The first set of conditions specifies *which* state of affairs in the world is in that causal relation. While part of the content of the experience needs to represent itself as being in a causal relation with some part of the

world, another part of the content of experience needs to represent which part of the world it is that is in that causal relation.

Presumably, for Searle, there is something in common between the imaginative experience and the perceptual experience, namely that part of the experience that specifies (that there is a house in front of me). But it will not be part of the content of the imaginative experience that the house is causally responsible for the experience. So, under Searle's account, although the difference between an imaginative experience and a perceptual experience has to do with a difference in the content of these mental states, the contents of the states will have something in common. But there is a problem with this account.

That part of the content of the perceptual experience that is supposed to be common to the imaginative experience, in the case of the perceptual experience represents to the subject the fact that there *exists* an object with certain properties and a certain location relative to him. This part of the content of the perceptual experience is purporting to give the subject information about the external world. For this part of the content of the experience represents which object it is in the world that is causally responsible for the subject's experience. But we do not want to say of the imaginative experience that the representation of the house is purporting to give the subject information about the external world - not even the information that the object is there. It may be true that it is an image *of* the house, an object in the external world, but this representation is not

giving the subject any *information* about the object. Compare the following remark by Wittgenstein:

> "Auditory images, visual images - how are they distinguished from sensations [perceptual experiences]? Not by "vivacity". Images tell us nothing, either right or wrong, about the external world. (Images are not hallucinations, nor yet fancies)." (1981: 621)

How can Searle allow that the representation of the house in the perceptual experience *does* give the subject information about the external world, whereas in the imaginative experience it does *not*? Searle cannot say that the representation of the house purports to give the subject information about the world in the case of the perceptual experience because of the causal ingredient in the content of the experience. This is because the causal content of the experience is *dependent* on the fact that the representation of the house purports to give the subject information about the world. The representation of the house in the perceptual experience must purport to give the subject information about the world in order to inform the subject as to which part of the world is causally responsible for the experience.

If Searle cannot allude to the causal content of the perceptual experience in order to explain why the representation of the house purports to give the subject information about the external world in the perceptual experience and not in the imaginative experience, then how can he explain the difference between the representations of the house in the two types of case? If there is a way that Searle can account for the difference without alluding to the causal content of the mental states, then he does not

need the causal content to account for the difference between imagination and perception. So the motive for introducing the causal ingredient into the content of the experience is lost.

So the two motives, offered by Searle, for adopting his account of the content of visual experiences appear to be unfounded on closer examination. But perhaps a motive for adopting Searle's theory of the content of visual experience could simply be the fact that it explains why the subject does not see in the Gricean thought-experiments. We appreciate on an intuitive level the claim that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see the clock in front of him. Perhaps the reason why it is so intuitively obvious that the subject is not seeing the clock in front of him, is because it is just part of the phenomenology of our visual experience that the objects in the world are causing our experiences of them, and the phenomenology of experience is explained by the content of the experience, under the intentional theory.

In the last part of this chapter I shall argue that despite initial appearances, Searle's account of the content of visual experience cannot in fact be used to explain why the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see.

Searle's Account and Grice's Thought-Experiment

A consideration of Searle's account shows that it is not possible to analyze the concept of perception in terms of the concept of veridicality, no matter how we characterize

the content of experience. There are cases when we want to say that a subject successfully perceives the world even when the content of her experience is not totally veridical. There are cases of illusion when the world is not exactly the way that it is represented as being, yet nevertheless the subject successfully perceives many of its objects and features. Take the case of a stick appearing to bent when immersed in water. The actual stick in the world does not have the property it appears to have, so in this sense the subject's experience is not totally veridical. But nevertheless, the subject of the experience does successfully perceive the water and the stick and the rest of the environment. Even in a case of so called hallucination when a subject seems to see a pink rat run across his bedroom floor, we may still want to say that the subject successfully perceives the rest of the scene, his bed, the bedroom floor etc.. This shows that an experience can be partially veridical and still be a genuine perception. Now consider Searle's account of the content of visual experience. As I explained in the last section, the content of a visual experience can be specified as a conjunction of two sets of conditions of satisfaction: The second set specifying that part of the world is causally responsible for the experience, and the first set specifying which part of the world is causally responsible for the experience. In the Grice thought-experiment it appears to the subject as if there is a clock on the shelf in front of him, but the subject is not successfully seeing the clock. Can Searle's account of the content of experience explain why? Searle might say that this is not a case of genuine perception, because this is a case of non-veridical experience.The clock is not causally responsible for the subject's experience, and the clock is represented in the subject's

experience as being causally responsible for his experience.

The subject's experience needs to represent the fact that it is a certain part of the world (i.e. the clock) that is causally responsible for the experience, so part of the content of the experience will be specified by conditions of satisfaction which assert the existence of a clock with a certain location and certain properties. This set of conditions is the first conjunct mentioned above. In the case which Grice considers this set of conditions is satisfied. There really is a clock there with the location and properties that the subject's experience represents it as having. So under Searle's account of the content of visual experience, the experience that the subject has in this case is at least partially veridical, even if it is not totally veridical.

We have already established that there are experiences that are examples of genuine perception even though they are not totally veridical. So we cannot analyze the concept of perception in the following way:

"An experience is a genuine perception iff it is totally veridical".

But we cannot analyze the concept of perception in the following way either:

"An experience is a genuine perception iff it is partially veridical",

because even under Searle's account of the content of visual experience, in Grice's thought-experiment the subject has a partially veridical experience, and we want to say that the subject does not perceive any objects in the world. Under Searle's theory, some experiences which are partially veridical will be successful perceptions and other

experiences which are partially veridical will fail to be successful perceptions. Searle needs an account of the concept of perception which will show why some cases of partially veridical experience are not perceptions. Analyzing the concept of perception simply in terms of veridicality will not allow him to do this. Searle needs to be able to help himself to a version of the argument made use of by the CTP in order to show why an experience needs to be causally dependent on the objects of perception for the experience to be a case of perception. Searle cannot use the argument as it stands, because under his theory premise (1) will not be true. He will have to change the argument in the following way:

(1') There are cases of *partially* veridical hallucination when we are inclined to say that the subject fails to see the world even though the world is *partly* the way it is represented as being.

(2') These cases of partially veridical hallucination are not cases of genuine perception, because the state of affairs that the subject's experience is of are not causally responsible for the subject's experience.

(3') Therefore, it is necessary that if a subject is to see a state of affairs in the world, then that state of affairs must be causally responsible for the subject's experience.

So Searle cannot analyze the concept of perception simply in terms of veridicality. The claim that it is part of the content of visual experience that the experience itself is causally dependent on the objects of experience, cannot further any understanding of how "the general notion of causal dependence of sensible experience on facts about material objects perceived fits into, or finds a place, in the naive concept of perception

of material objects". If Searle is failing to distinguish between veridical experience and perception, as Millar suggests, then we can now see what is wrong with failing to make this distinction. Even under Searle's account of the content of visual experience, a distinction has to made between the concepts of veridicality and perception, in order to account for a subject's failure to see the world in cases like Grice's thought-experiment.

This consideration of Searle's account of the content of visual experience has shown that if we characterize a visual experience as a psychological state with informational content about the environment, and we accept that the subject of the Gricean thought-experiments does not see, then we can never analyze the concept of perception simply in terms of that information being correct, no matter what we include as part of the information that the state carries. It is not possible for a theorist to hold on to the claim that the subject of a Gricean thought-experiment does not see, and yet still retain the idea that the concept of seeing can be analyzed simply in terms of the notion of veridicality.

From this discussion of Searle, we can conclude that the claim that it is part of the content of every experience that the objects seen are causing the subject's experience, is not motivated. And even if the causal dependence of experience on objects seen was part of the content of the experience, this would not explain the role of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception. So what does motivate the claim that

the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception?

CHAPTER THREE

If we accept that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see the clock in front of him, and also accept that this fact cannot be explained in terms of the non-veridicality of experience, then we need to provide an alternative explanation of why it is that the subject is not seeing. The CTP offers such an explanation. It is part of our concept of seeing that the objects of experience should be causally responsible, in an appropriate way, for the experience. At the end of chapter one, I suggested that the causal theorist should give an account of the role that this notion of causal dependence plays in our concept of seeing. What does this notion of causal dependence add to our concept of perception? We want, as Strawson put it,

> "to determine how the general notion of causal dependence of sensible experience on facts about material objects fits into, or finds a place in, the naive concept of perception of material objects" (1974, p. 75).

In this chapter I want to consider whether we can provide a solution to this problem.

Strawson poses this problem after already having made use of a Gricean thought-experiment to establish the conclusion that this notion of causal dependence *is* part of our naive concept of perception. He now wishes "to inquire into the *way* it fits into our general concept of perception" (p. 69). What is it about our concept of perception that entails that sensible experience should be dependent on facts about material objects?

It might be suggested that the Grice thought-experiment itself reveals a very simple answer to this question: The purpose of this causal notion is to distinguish the concept of perception from veridical hallucination. However, this solution to Strawson's problem will be inadequate until an account is offered of what it is about veridical hallucination that requires us to distinguish it from cases of genuine perception. If we want to explain how this notion of causal dependence fits into our concept of perception by claiming that the causal component is necessary to distinguish cases of perception from veridical hallucination, we cannot explain the need to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination in terms of the fact that veridical hallucination lacks the causal component that is part of our concept of perception. If the fact that we need to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination is going to be used to give an illuminating explanation of the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception, we must provide an explanation of the distinction between veridical hallucination and perception that goes beyond the simple claim that veridical hallucination lacks the causal component that is part of our concept of perception. If we do not provide such an explanation, then we will not have given an adequate solution to Strawson's problem. This is not just because the explanation of the place of the causal component in our concept of perception would be circular. It is because the circle would be so small: The explanation of the place of a causal component in our concept of perception is that it is needed to distinguish cases of perception from veridical hallucination, and the explanation of the need to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination is that veridical hallucination lacks the causal component that is

part of our concept of perception. To see what is required of an adequate solution to Strawson's problem let us re-examine the argument used by the causal theorist that was mentioned in the last chapter.

The argument has the following form:

(1) There are possible cases of veridical hallucination when the subject fails to see the world even though the world really is as it is represented as being.

(2) These cases of veridical hallucination are not cases of genuine perception because the state of affairs that the subject's experience is of are not causally responsible for the subject's experience.

(3) Therefore, it is necessary that if a subject is to see a state of affairs in the world, that state of affairs must be causally responsible for the subject's experience.

How is this argument supposed to move from (1) to (2)? Is (2) the only possible explanation of (1)? Snowdon has made use of the disjunctive theory of perception to point out the possibility of an explanation of (1) which is different from (2)[9]. The disjunctive theory is offered as an alternative explanation of (1) (Snowdon 1981 and 1990). Once the disjunctive theory has been pointed out as an option the causal theorist can either show that

(a) the disjunctive theory is objectionable,

(b) the causal theory is preferable to the disjunctive theory, or

(c) although the causal theory and the disjunctive theory are compatible, we still need

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[9]I shall go into the detail of the disjunctive theory in Chapter 5.

(2) as an explanation of (1).

In short, the causal theorist needs to be able to give an account of why (2) is to be the preferred explanation of (1). And if the causal theorist wants to show that claim (3) of the argument is a *conceptual* truth about perception, then he needs to show that (a), (b), or (c) is true by arguing about what the concept of perception entails. So an adequate answer to Strawson's problem should help him achieve this. If the causal theorist is to say that the role of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception is to distinguish between perception and veridical hallucination, then he will need to give an account of the need to distinguish between perception and veridical hallucination that will show why (2) is the best explanation of (1). Given that the causal theorist's suggestion is not the only possible way of distinguishing veridical hallucination from perception, the causal theorist needs an account of what it is about the concept of perception as opposed to that of veridical hallucination, that makes his explanation the best explanation of the distinction. So a satisfactory solution to Strawson's problem should provide an account of why premise (2) of the Grice argument should be accepted - i.e. it should show why the CTP is the best explanation of the distinction between perception and veridical hallucination.

A satisfactory solution to Strawson's problem is supposed to provide a motivation or "rationale" for the CTP. But isn't that what the argument from Grice's thought-experiment provides? If Grice's thought-experiment does show us anything about the concept of perception, it should rather be seen as a way of making us realize that the

notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of seeing, but it does not show us what *role* this notion has in our concept of seeing. A solution to Strawson's problem should be seen as offering an explanation of why or how the argument from the Grice thought-experiment works. As Child says (1993), the argument from the Grice thought-experiment:

> "is sometimes presented as the claim that a causal element is needed in order to *distinguish* seeing from veridical hallucination.... [But] the point of bringing out the causal difference between vision and hallucination is not to allow us to distinguish states of affairs which were indistinguishable before. Rather, it is to yield a philosophical *understanding* of the distinction. Now a philosophical understanding of vision essentially involves a conception of what vision is." (p. 142)

An answer to Strawson's problem will provide an explicit characterization of this conception of vision. But before I go on to examine an attempt to provide a solution to Strawson's problem, I want to consider another argument that is supposed to show that this notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of seeing. This is the 'defeating conditions argument', found in Child 1993.

Defeating Conditions Argument

Child suggests that if we consider our ordinary concept of vision it can be shown that "grasp of the idea that something that is seen is causally affecting the subject is an essential part of mastery of the concept" (p. 164). Child denies that "one could have a complete grasp of the mental concept of vision yet lack any idea that seeing is, or

depends on, a physical process, or that it is causal". So Child's argument is aimed against those who claim that it is possible for a subject to have a mastery of the concept of seeing without the subject grasping the idea that what they are seeing is causing their experiences. Child suggests that

> "There is no prospect for an understanding of vision which does not include the causal notions that an experience cannot be a case of seeing *o* if it could not have been caused by *o*, or if it was demonstrably caused by something other than *o*. Mastery of the concept of vision, in other words, directly involves the mastery of causal notions and conditions." (p. 165)

The claim is that one cannot master the concept of vision without mastering the idea that experience is caused by the seen object. If this is true then the CTP will have been established. Here is Child's argument for the claim:

> "If one has the concept of vision, one must know that *S* will stop seeing something if she shuts her eyes, or if we interpose something opaque between her and the object, or if the object is moved away; and to know that is to know that something cannot be seen if it is prevented from, or cannot be, causally affecting *S*". (p. 165)

Child anticipates the following non-causalist response,

> "The non-causalist says that the fact that *S*'s eyes were closed defeats the claim that *S* saw *o* because it is simply built into the concept of vision that one cannot see when one's eyes are closed: the concept of vision has various defeating conditions, of which this is one: and that is a basic fact about the concept which cannot, and need not, be explained." (p. 166)

Child claims that this non-causalist response is inadequate for the following reason,

> "The concept of vision has a range of different defeating conditions. It is compelling to ask what *unifies* those conditions, and what explains why the concept has just the conditions of application it does. Now the non-causalist cannot give any answer to that question. For him, the defeating conditions of vision are defeating conditions simply in virtue of being built into the concept of vision: there is no further account to be given and nothing which unifies them. But it is implausible to think that all these conditions are separate and individually built into the concept, so that it is simply an arbitrary matter that our concept of vision has just the defeating conditions it does. And it is difficult to reconcile that idea with our ability to recognize new conditions as defeating the application of the concept of vision, or not, simply on the basis of our possession of the concept. By contrast, the causal theory offers a satisfying account of what unifies the various defeating conditions and allows to recognize new ones." (p. 166-7)

Child's argument for the claim that it is part of the concept of vision that the seen objects causally affect us, rests on the claim that in order to master the concept of vision we must master certain of its defeating conditions[10] and our mastery of these defeating conditions can only be explained by our mastery of the idea that the objects seen are causally affecting us. To refute Child's argument we need to show that it is possible for there to be an alternative account of what unifies our mastery of the defeating conditions which is not mastery of the idea that the seen objects are causally affecting us. I want to argue that there is such an alternative available.

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[10]It seems that Child has in mind just the main defeating conditions of vision. There will be various defeating conditions that many of us do not have mastery of - eg. medical conditions that may prevent the optic nerve from functioning properly. But from the truth of this claim, we do not want to conclude that we cannot master the concept of seeing.

I suggest that under our pre-scientific, 'naive' view of perception we need *not* think of the objects that we see as causally affecting us. When I look around at the objects around me I do not think of them as causally affecting me. It does not appear to me as if they are *doing* anything to me, they are just there. Even when I put my hand in front of my eyes I do not think of my hand as stopping the objects I previously saw from doing anything to me. When I put an opaque object between me and the cup in front of me, I do not naively (pre-scientifically) think of that opaque object as preventing the cup I had previously been seeing from causally affecting me. Rather, I think of the opaque object as preventing *me* from doing something, namely seeing the cup.

My suggestion is that under our naive, untutored view we think of perception as something *we* do. On a 'naive' conception, seeing the cup is something I do - it is not something the cup does to me. When something opaque comes between my eyes and the cup I am prevented from doing what I was previously doing. I need not think of the opaque object as preventing the cup from doing what it was previously doing to me. Of course it is an empirical truth that in order for me to be able to do the seeing, the cup must be causally affecting me. But that need not be part of our naive concept of perception, and need not be part of a unifying explanation of the defeating conditions of vision.

We can master the concept of vision and its defeating conditions by thinking of seeing

as something we do, rather than as something objects do to us. By thinking of seeing in this way, we think of the defeating conditions of vision as those conditions that prevent *us* from being able to do something - i.e. see. So in claiming that it is not part of our naive concept of perception that we think of the objects of experience as causally affecting us, we are not automatically committed to the idea that the defeating conditions of vision are an arbitrary matter that can have no unifying explanation. To allow just the *possibility* of thinking of seeing as something we do, rather than something objects do to us, shows that it is not a *conceptual* truth that we need to think of objects as causally affecting us in order for us to have the concept of seeing with a mastery of its defeating conditions - so Child's argument is refuted. But it also seems likely that this is in fact how we naively think of seeing: When someone has their eyes shut or blindfolded, they are more likely to express the defeating condition by saying "I can't see", rather than something like "The objects around me can't causally affect me". The subject expresses the defeating condition as something *he* is prevented from doing, rather than as something the objects around him are prevented from doing to him.

Perhaps the fact that we naively think of seeing as something that *we do* is often overlooked in philosophical discussions of the concept of seeing because the emphasis of the debate shifts to the notion of a subject 'having experiences'. Talk of perceiving the world in terms of 'having experiences', makes it natural to think of the concept of perception as a concept of something that happens to us. Of course the notion of a

subject 'having experiences' is an important part of a philosophical account of perception, but this should not distort the fact that we do not naively think of seeing the world in terms of 'having experiences of the world'.

In the last chapter, during the discussion of the difference between perception and imagination, I said that it is often suggested that imagination is subject to the will in a way that perception is not. The claim that we naively think of perception as something that *we do* need not be in tension with this suggestion. The claim that we think of seeing as something that we do is perfectly compatible with the claim that *what* we see is not up to us.[11]

In this section I have argued against the argument for the CTP based on the claim that mastery of the concept of vision entails mastery of its main defeating conditions which in turn entails mastery of the idea that what is seen is what is causing the subject's experience. I now want to return to Strawson's problem: How does the notion of causal dependence fit into, or find a place in our concept of seeing?

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[11]There are a number of complications involved that are being overlooked here. There is a sense in which what I see can be up to me; and there is also a sense in which what I imagine may not be up to me. I discuss these complications in Chapter 6.

Strawson's Problem

With the CTP comes the problem of deviant causal chains, and an adequate solution to Strawson's problem should also be of relevance to this issue. In order for an experience to be a successful perception rather than a veridical hallucination, it must not only be caused by the state of affairs perceived, it must be caused in the "right way". It must not be caused in a deviant way. Philosophers have constructed thought-experiments to show that an experience might be caused by the state of affairs that the experience is of, and yet the experience would still not be a perception of that state of affairs. It would be another veridical hallucination. To give an example from Lewis: the scene before my eyes consists of a wizard casting a spell. His spell causes me to hallucinate at random, and the hallucination I have just so happens to match the scene before my eyes (Lewis 1980). In this case I do not see the scene before my eyes even though my experience was caused by the state of affairs my experience is of. Peacocke has said

> "The notion of perception is an everyday one, and as such, it is reasonable to require any elucidation of it to have an answer to the question 'what is the point of the distinction [between deviant and non-deviant chains]'? Further, an adequate answer to this question should not appeal to or go beyond everyday nontechnical interests of those employing the concept" (Peacocke 1979, p. 108-9).

There have been many attempts to give an account that specifies the right, appropriate way in which an experience must be caused to be a perception[12] (- i.e. an account that

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[12]Eg. see Peacocke (1979), Davies (1983), Owens (1992).

gives a specification of the distinction between a deviant and a non-deviant chain), but less has been written on giving an answer to Peacocke's question, "what is the point of the distinction?" This is a question that Searle has echoed: "Why does it matter to us how the causal chain works? Why do we care whether or not it was caused in the right sort of way?" (Searle 1983, p. 139). An adequate solution to Strawson's problem should provide an answer to the question.

I now want to consider the response that Strawson gives to the problem that he sets himself. In "Causation in Perception", Strawson seems to be arguing in the following way: The notion of causal dependence is needed to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination, and we need to distinguish perception from veridical hallucination because a veridical hallucination is an "undependable" experience: "If we take [an experience which is not causally dependent in the appropriate way] to be the perception it seems to be then we will normally be mistaken in our [perceptual belief]". Since, for Strawson, a veridical hallucination's causes do not include the obtaining of appropriate facts about the scene before the subject, "it could be no more than a flukish coincidence or outsize piece of luck if, nevertheless, appropriate facts did happen to obtain". Strawson claims that any experience that is not causally dependent in the appropriate way is for this reason "an essentially undependable experience" (p. 70).

> "If an experience occurs for which the dependence condition does not hold, and if the subject of the experience believes [that things really are the way they seem to be], then he will normally be mistaken in that belief.... We would say in such a case that he is wrong

> in taking the experience to be the perception it seems to be, even if, by a fluke, he happens to be right in his belief in the appropriate facts. The concept of perception is too closely linked to that of knowledge for us to tolerate the idea of someone's being merely flukishly right in taking his experience to be the perception that it seems to be. Only those experiences that are in a certain way dependable are to count as the perceptions they seem to be" (p.71).

Strawson seems to be arguing that the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception because it distinguishes those experiences that are, in a certain way, "dependable". A veridical hallucination is not a perception because it is "undependable". Even if an experience gives the subject the right information about the way the world is, the experience does not count as a perception if it is not a "dependable" experience. The two questions that Strawson's account immediately give rise to are, (i) what is it for an experience to be dependable? and (ii) why should an experience be dependable for it to count as a perception? An experience is not dependable, in Strawson's sense, if it merely gives the subject the right information about the way the world is. This is why a veridical hallucination does not count as a perception. An experience that is dependable should not be "flukishly" or "coincidentally" right about the way the world is. An experience is flukishly right if it is produced in such a way that the subject would normally be mistaken if he believed that things really were the way they seemed to be. So what makes an experience dependable is the way it is produced - it must be produced in a way that will normally yield accurate representations of the world. This gives an answer to question (i). To

turn to question (ii), why does Strawson think that it is part of our concept of perception that an experience should be in this way dependable? Strawson suggests that this has something to do with the fact that "the concept of perception is closely linked to that of knowledge", but he does not elaborate on this point. If we assume that experience should be distinguished from belief, then perceiving the world cannot be the same as knowing about the world, since only belief can have the epistemic status of knowledge. There are belief theories of perception which identify an experience with a belief. The usual way to object to this type of theory is to point out that we sometimes do not believe what we seem to see. - eg. a subject can look at an example of the Muller-Lyer illusion and believe that the lines are the same length. This will not alter the fact that he experiences the lines as being different lengths. One can have an experience and reject the content of the experience - i.e. one can reject that the world really is as it is represented as being. However, one cannot reject the content of a belief. To have a belief just is, by definition, to accept the content of that belief. Therefore, experiences should be distinguished from belief. The belief theorist's response that an experience is just a belief about how things appear seems inadequate, because we take our experiences to be about objects and events in the world, and not to be about appearances of objects and events in the world.

So if an experience is not a belief, and only a belief can have the epistemic status of knowledge, what then is the nature of the link between the concept of perception and that of knowledge that Strawson has in mind? How should we understand Strawson's

claim that a subject is "wrong" in taking an undependable experience to be the perception that it seems to be, even if the experience gives the subject the right information about the way the world is? If the subject ends up with a correct belief about the way the world is, why is the subject "wrong" to take the experience to be the successful perception that it seems to be? Strawson seems to assume that a successful perception must be capable of contributing to the epistemic status of a connected perceptual belief. The subject of an undependable experience is wrong in believing that the world really is the way it appears to be, in the sense that he is unjustified in believing that the world is that way. An undependable experience does not give the subject a reason for believing that things really are the way they appear to be. When Strawson says that a subject is "wrong" to take a veridical hallucination to be the perception that it seems to be, he is making a comment about the epistemic status of the subject's perceptual beliefs. So it seems that Strawson's answer to his own problem (at least in "Causation in Perception") is that the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception, because of the role that successful perceptions are supposed to have in our epistemology. It is part of our concept of perception that successful perceptions must be capable of contributing in some way to the epistemic status of perceptual beliefs. And the claim is that the causal ancestry of a successful perception is in some way supposed to be capable of making this contribution to the epistemic status of perceptual beliefs. I now want to rule out one way in which this claim might be understood.

It might be thought that the causal ancestry of an experience contributes to the epistemic status of a perceptual belief by making true some belief about the origin of the experience, which justifies the perceptual belief. For example, it might be thought that my belief that there is a table in front of me is justified by my belief that my experience of the table is caused by the table. The fact that the table is causing my experience would then make true my belief about the origin of my experience, which is justifying my belief that the table is there. The suggestion would be that in the Grice thought-experiment, the subject's belief that there is a clock in front of him is based on a false belief - the belief that his experience of the clock is caused by the clock. So the subject would be "wrong" to take his experience to be the successful perception it seems to be.

This cannot be the right way to understand the claim that the notion of causal dependence is part of the concept of perception because of the way that the causal ancestry of an experience contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief. To see why, consider the following thought-experiment:

A subject knows that he is being experimented on by a neuroscientist, and he knows that the neuroscientist is making him have only veridical experiences. Any perceptual beliefs that the subject has are based on the belief that the neuroscientist is trustworthy in his claim that he will engineer only veridical hallucinations, and that he is capable of so doing. The subject's perceptual beliefs are not based on the belief that the objects his experiences are of are causing his experiences, because the subject knows that it is

the neuroscientist who is responsible for his experiences.

Do we want to say that the subject of this thought-experiment is seeing the objects in front of him? Most causal theorists will answer 'no'. There is a sense in which the subject's experiences are causally dependent on the objects they are of, in that the objects are causally responsible for the neuroscientist's experiences, which in turn causally influence the neuroscientist's actions in experimenting on the subject. But the causal theorist will probably consider this to be a case in which the subject's experiences are only deviantly caused by the objects they are of. Strictly speaking, the subject's experiences are caused by the neuroscientist and are responsive to his intentions and abilities.

If we claim that the subject does not see the objects before him, in what way are this subject's experiences significantly different from those of a subject who does successfully see his environment? The subject in the above thought-experiment is not "wrong" in believing that things really are the way they appear to be, because the trustworthiness and ingenuity of the scientist make true the belief which justifies his perceptual beliefs. So if Strawson's account of the way in which the role of the notion of causal dependence fits into our concept of perception is correct, then the way in which the causal ancestry of a successful perception contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief, cannot simply consist in making true some belief which justifies perceptual belief. So in what way must we understand the claim that the causal

ancestry of perception contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief, if Strawson's account is to work?

To make Strawson's account work we must understand him as claiming that it is the causal ancestry of the perception itself which contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief. It is not that the causal ancestry of the perception makes true some belief which contributes to the justification of the perceptual belief. An experience contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief simply in virtue of the fact that it is "dependable". What makes an experience dependable is the way in which it is produced. An experience is dependable if it is produced in a way that normally gives rise to true belief. We can understand the claim that an experience needs to be dependable in order to be a successful perception, in terms of familiar Reliabilist terminology: For an experience to be a successful perception, that experience must be produced by a mechanism that is a reliable indicator of the truth.[13] Compare the following comments made by Strawson in a later paper (1979):

> "The idea of the presence of the thing as accounting for, or being responsible for, our perceptual awareness of it is implicit in the pre-theoretical scheme from the start. For we think of perception as a way, indeed the basic way, of informing ourselves about the world of independently existing things: we assume, that is to say, the general reliability of our perceptual experiences; and that assumption is the same as the assumption of a general causal dependence of our perceptual experiences on the independently existing things we

[13]Reliabilist claims are made in different ways by Armstrong (1973), Dretske (1981), Goldman (1986), Alston (1989).

take them to be of" (p.103)

Strawson is arguing here that it is part of our concept of perception that our experiences are reliable, and the assumption that our experiences are reliable is "the same as" the assumption that the objects that our experiences are of are causally responsible for our perceptual experiences.

So to summarize, what I am taking to be Strawson's account of the place of our notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception can be explained in the following way: The idea of the objects of experience being causally responsible for our experiences is part of our concept of perception, because this just is what it is for an experience to be reliable. And it is part of the concept of perception that an experience that is a successful perception will be reliable, because we think of perception as a "basic" way of informing ourselves about the world. We must read into this claim the idea that it is part of our concept of perception that a successful perception must be reliable because involved in the concept is the idea that perception makes a contribution to the epistemic status of perceptual beliefs. For we could say that a veridical hallucination is a "basic" way of informing ourselves about the world, if by this we just mean that it is a non-inferential way of informing ourselves about the world.

So the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception is ultimately explained by the fact that it is part of our concept of perception that a

successful perception contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief. What relevance does this account of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception have to the problem of deviant causal chains?

Deviant Causal Chains

The answer that this solution to Strawson's problem would offer to the question "what is the point of the distinction between deviant and non-deviant causal chains?", would be that those experiences that are non-deviantly caused by the states of affairs experienced give the subject of the experience reason to believe that things really are the way that they appear to be, whereas those experiences that are deviantly caused by the states of affairs experienced do not give the subject reason to believe that things really are as they appear to be. If a subject's experience is caused in a way that does not give the subject a reason for believing that the world really is the way it appears to be, then the subject does not see the world, even if his experience is caused by the state of affairs that he seems to see. In the example from Lewis, the wizard's causing the subject to hallucinate at random does not give the subject a reason to believe that things are as they seem.

An experience will give the subject a reason to believe that things are as they seem if the experience is reliable. An experience that is deviantly caused by the state of affairs the experience is of will not be reliable, and this is why the experience will not be a

successful perception. So on this account of the role of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception, all experiences which are non-deviantly caused by the objects of experience will be reliable, whereas all experiences deviantly caused by the objects of experience will be unreliable.

An account of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception is ultimately supposed to provide an explanation of why the subject of the Grice thought-experiment fails to see the clock in front of him. On this account, the subject does not see the clock because his experience is not capable of contributing to the epistemic status of his perceptual beliefs about the clock - the subject's experience is not reliable. In the next chapter I shall consider an objection to this account.

CHAPTER FOUR

Strawson argues that the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of seeing, is explained by the fact that it is part of our concept of seeing that successful perceptions are "reliable"/ "dependable". He claims that the assumption of "the general reliability of our perceptual experiences" is "the same as the assumption of a general causal dependence of our perceptual experiences on the independently existing things we take them to be of" (p. 103, Strawson 1979, in Dancy 1988). Strawson says that the assumption of reliability is *the same as* the assumption of causal dependence, because it is the notion of reliability that is explaining the role of causal dependence in our concept of seeing. If an experience can be reliable *without* being causally dependent on its objects, then we will have to say either that the notion of causal dependence is not after all part of our concept of seeing, or we will have to give an alternative account of the role of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of seeing. For Strawson's account to work it is not enough for him to say that the notion of causal dependence can be used to explain the reliability of successful perception - he must say that the idea that successful perceptions are causally dependent on their objects is the *only possible* explanation of their reliability.

A possible line of objection to Strawson's account would, therefore, be to show that a perceptual experience can be "reliable" without being causally dependent on the objects the experience is of. I shall now consider an objection along these lines made

by Dummett (1979).[14]

Dummett's Objection

Dummett can be interpreted as agreeing with Strawson that it is part of the concept of perception that a subject's successful perceptions should contribute to the epistemic status of the subject's perceptual beliefs. Dummett claims that it is part of the concept of perception that a successful perception gives the subject a reason for taking the object to be there. However, Dummett does not agree that this idea needs to be explained in terms of the idea of causal dependence. He writes:

> "I do not believe that the notion of cause, as such, is integral to the concept of perception: all that is integral to the latter concept is that any perceptions should always afford some ground, even if one that can in some cases be overridden, for supposing things to be as I perceive them to be" (p. 35, 1979).

In order to prove his point, Dummett then offers an example where the subject's experiences are not causally dependent on the state of affairs they are of and yet they provide the subject with a reason to believe that things are as they seem:

> "If someone agrees with Malebranche, that the presence of the object and my perception of it are joint effects of some further cause, his belief does not violate the concept of perception, so long as he allows that my perception supplies a reason for taking the object

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[14]This objection is mentioned in Snowdon 1981, and discussed in detail in Child 1993.

to be there." (p.35-36, 1979).[15]

In what way does this subject's experience provide him with a reason for taking the object to be there? If it is the "reliability" of the experience which provides the subject with a reason, then we have a counterexample to Strawson's claim that the reliability of successful perception is *the same as* the causal dependence of experience on its objects. We have a case where the subject's experience is reliable, in the required sense, *without* being causally dependent on the objects it is of. But does the experience the occasionalist subject have provide him with a reason for holding perceptual beliefs that is significantly different from the kind of reason that a normal, non-occasionalist subject's experiences provide? Child seems to think so:

> "Now suppose that my experiences and material objects are indeed joint effects of a common cause. We can certainly allow that, *if I know that fact about the relation between my experience and material objects*, then my having this particular experience does give me a reason for taking there to be an appropriate object present. But this presupposes that I already have a way employed in gaining the general knowledge that occasionalism is true, which is an essential part of my reason for forming the specific belief. But what is this way? Recall Strawson's point that perception is a *basic* way of informing ourselves about the world... The possibility of perception's giving us reasons for forming beliefs about the world must be consistent with its basic part in epistemology. And whilst experiences conceived as occasionalism conceives it may give a reason for beliefs about the world to someone who already knew that occasionalism was true, it is entirely unclear how it could play the requisitely basic role." (p. 175, Child 1993).

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[15]Dummett credits this point to John Foster.

In the last chapter I discussed two ways in which we can understand the claim that the causal ancestry of a perception contributes to the epistemic status of perceptual belief: Either (a) the causal ancestry of the perception just makes true some belief about the origin of the experience which justifies the perceptual belief; or (b) the causal ancestry of the perception *itself* justifies the perceptual belief. Child assumes that in the occasionalist scenario, the way the subject's experience gives the subject a reason to hold perceptual beliefs, falls under (a). Child assumes that the occasionalist subject's experience must give the subject a reason to hold his perceptual beliefs by making true a belief that justifies his perceptual belief - i.e. the fact that the subject's experience and the material object are joint effects of a common cause *makes true* the subject's belief that occasionalism is true, which is justifying the subject's perceptual belief that the object really is there. Child objects that "this presupposes that I already have a way of knowing about the world, a way employed in gaining the general knowledge that occasionalism is true." But it should be clear that this objection can be equally pressed against someone who claims that the normal non-occasionalist subject's experiences justify his perceptual beliefs by making true some belief about the origins of the experiences - i.e. this objection can be pressed against anyone, whether occasionalist or not, who holds that successful perceptions contribute to the justification of perceptual beliefs in way (a). Consider the claim of a casual theorist of perception who says that the fact that a subject's experiences are causally dependent on the objects of experience makes true the subject's belief about the causal origins of the experience, which justifies his perceptual beliefs. We can echo Child's objection to the

occasionalist and claim that this presupposes that the subject already has a way of knowing about the world, a way employed in gaining the general knowledge that the CTP is true, which is an essential part of the subject's reason for forming a specific perceptual belief.

In the last chapter I argued that if Strawson's account of the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception is to work, we should understand the claim that the causal ancestry of a perception contributes to the justification of perceptual belief in way (b). So why can't we understand the claim that the occasionalist's experience contributes to the justification of his perceptual belief in way (b)? On this understanding, the way the occasionalist's experience is produced *itself* contributes to the justification of the perceptual belief. It is not that the way in which the occasionalist's experience is produced makes true some belief about occasionalism which justifies his perceptual belief.

The fact that the occasionalist subject's experience and the objects they are of are joint effects of a common cause makes the experiences reliable indicators of the truth. It is the reliability of the occasionalist's experiences which allows them to contribute to the epistemic status of the subject's perceptual beliefs. It is not that the reliability of the subject's experiences makes true some belief about the experiences which justifies the perceptual beliefs. So we can understand the way in which the occasionalist's experience gives the subject a reason to hold perceptual beliefs as the same as the way

in which the non-occasionalist's experience gives the subject a reason to hold perceptual beliefs. For the non-occasionalist and the occasionalist alike, it is the reliability of the experience which gives the subject a reason to hold perceptual belief.

Child emphasizes Strawson's point that perception is the *basic* way of informing ourselves about the world - that perception has a basic role in epistemology, and then Child says that "it isn't entirely clear how the occasionalist's experiences can play the requisitely basic role". But what is unclear to me is how, on Strawson's account, we can assign any kind of "basic" role to the non-occasionalist experience that cannot also be assigned to the occasionalist experience. If the claim that perception has a basic role to play in epistemology is just to be understood as the claim that a perception gives the subject a non-inferential reason to hold perceptual beliefs, then the occasionalist's experience can also give the subject a non-inferential reason for holding perceptual beliefs.

So Dummett appears to have provided an example of a case where the subject's experience is reliable, in the required sense, without being causally dependent on the objects the experience is of. Therefore, Strawson cannot explain the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception solely in terms of the reliability of perception. Does this mean that we should abandon Strawson's account? Child has suggested an alternative way of defending Strawson's account against the Dummett counterexample.

Child's Defence of the CTP

Child claims that a response to Dummett's objection needs "to show that it is only if experiences are caused by things in the world that they can inform us about the world" (p. 170, 1993). Child suggests that the causal theorist could show this "by arguing that a subject who was causally isolated from the world could not even possess concepts of the things and kinds in the world". The occasionalist subject is causally isolated from the world and so his experiences are not about the material objects in the world. But why should we accept that a subject causally isolated from the world cannot be informed about the world?

Child writes,

> "The principle that the causalist needs is that, at some level, it is only if one is (or has been) in causal contact with *F*s that one can have the concept of an *F*" (p. 170).

Child then points out that this principle needs to be restricted, because

> "it is clearly possible to possess concepts of some properties with which one has had no causal contact, by having a specification of them in simpler terms" (p. 171).

So Child thinks that an argument can be made against Dummett's counterexample to the CTP, by using the principle **(A): In order to be informed about any material objects in the world, it is necessary that one is (or has been) in causal contact with some objects in the world.** Child cites Davidson and Burge as making use of some version of the principle. Davidson writes

> "we must, in the plainest and methodologically most basic cases, take the objects of a belief to be the causes of that belief". (Davidson, 1983).

Burge claims,

> "we build up intentional type attributions by determining the types of objective entities whose instances regularly causally affect the creature's sense organs and are normally discriminated perceptually by the creature" (Burge, 1986).

It should be clear that the acceptance of principle **(A)** does not in itself entail the truth of the claim that a subject can only see the objects his experience is of if those objects are causing the subject's experience. For example, it is possible for there to be a theorist who accepts principle **(A)** and yet claims that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment is in fact seeing the objects his experience is of. This theorist could claim that if the subject of the Grice thought-experiment had previously been in causal contact with objects in the world, then the subject's experience could concern the objects in the scene before him. Someone who accepts principle **(A)** does not sacrifice the ability to explain false belief or hallucination. Under the Intentional Theory of Perception, a subject can have an experience with the same content whether or not he is successfully perceiving. So when a subject is having a hallucination he is having an experience with a content that he could have in a case of successful perception. A subject can have an experience with a certain content when the objective entities the experience is of are not actually causing the experience, so long as the objective entities of that type have in the past been causally responsible for experiences of that type. Therefore, the acceptance of principle **(A)** is consistent with a denial of the claim

that a subject's experience has to be caused by the object of experience in order for the subject to see the object.

Since the acceptance of principle **(A)** is consistent with the claim that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment is seeing the world, perhaps the CTP can be defended by a conjunction of principle **(A)** and the claim that a successful perception must be "reliable". This seems to be Child's strategy. So one way of trying to show that Child's defence of the CTP is unsuccessful would be by giving an example of an experience that is, (a) not caused by the state of affairs that the experience is of, (b) reliable, and (c) one which did get its content through the subject's causal interaction with objective entities in his environment. Dummett's example, as it stands, does not satisfy (a) to (c) because it does not satisfy condition (c).

Consider the example of a subject for whom occasionalism is now true, but for whom occasionalism has not always been true. The subject had, in the past, causally interacted with the objects in his environment, so the principle is not violated. Does the change in the occasionalist's environment, from a non-occasionalist one to an occasionalist one entail that the subject's experiences immediately change their content to experience as of whatever it is that is causing them? Surely the theorist who accepts principle **(A)** will have to allow that at least the first experiences the subject has after the change will have the same content as they had before the change. If the theorist does not, then he will have trouble trying to explain cases of misperception or

hallucination, where the content of an experience is not as of whatever it is that is causing it. So we seem to have with this admittedly outlandish thought-experiment, an example that satisfies (a), (b) and (c); and thereby one which constitutes an objection to Child's defence of the CTP.

One can, in principle, accept some version of the idea that a subject needs to causally interact with the world in order for his experiences to have a content concerning the world, and still be an anti-causalist. Child claims that,

> "the anti-causalist must deny every version of the principle; she holds that it is conceptually possible for experiences to inform a subject about a world with no part of which she has ever, or could ever, causally interact, however remotely." (p. 171)

This claim is too strong. The anti-causalist need not deny every version of the principle. The anti-causalist can accept the principle while remaining an anti-causalist. The anti-causalist who uses Dummett's counterexample to distinguish between the notion of "reliability" and the notion of "causal dependence", can accept some version of the principle and just stipulate that occasionalism has not always been true for the subject of the occasionalist scenario - the subject has, in the past, interacted with the objects his experiences are of. So an acceptance of the claim that it is part of the concept of perception that principle **(A)** is true and an acceptance of the claim that it is part of the concept of perception that a successful perception must be "reliable", do not together entail the CTP. An amended version of Dummett's example remains an objection to the claim that the idea of the reliability of experience entails the idea that the experience is causally dependent on the objects the experience is of.

Conclusion

There may, of course, be many objections to occasionalism, and it might be claimed that, given occasionalism is not true, our experiences must be causally dependent on the objects they are of in order to be reliable. But the point of using the occasionalist example is to make a claim about the concept of perception - what would and would not be a violation of the concept. So the usefulness of the example is its role in answering the question, *if* occasionalism were true would the subject be seeing the material objects? Can the occasionalist, *in principle*, see the material objects?

What impact does an answer to this question have on an account of the concept of seeing? If Dummett's example is successful in showing that a subject's experience can be reliable without being causally dependent on the objects the experiences are of, then Strawson's account of the place of the notion of causal dependence in our concept of perception fails.The claim that the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception because of the epistemic contribution that the causal relation between object and experience makes to perceptual belief, is not tenable. If Strawson's account fails then what account can we give of the way in which the notion of causal dependence is supposed to fit into our concept of seeing? Is it just that the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception because it captures the idea that we intuitively think that a successful perception *depends* on the objects it is of. Is the CTP the only way of capturing the idea that successful perception depends on the objects perceived? If there is an alternative way of capturing this notion of

dependence, which does not make mention of a causal relation between object and experience, then what does this mean for the CTP? These are questions that I shall address in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Intentional theory of perception was introduced in chapter 1 as a means of achieving two goals. The theory puts the subject in direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world and also adheres to the Common Element Thesis. The latter goal is achieved because it is part of the theory that the experience a subject has when he hallucinates could be one that the subject has when he sees the world. Because the Intentional Theory does not violate the Common Element Thesis, the theory needs to give an account of why the same experience can be in some circumstances an experience of no objects, and in other circumstances a direct experience of objects in the world. What conditions need to be in place in order for the subject to be in direct perceptual contact with objects in the world?

The Grice thought-experiment is supposed to show that the veridicality of an experience is not sufficient to put the subject in direct perceptual contact with the world. In chapter two it was argued that this remains true no matter what one includes as part of the content of the experience. So if one accepts that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see the objects before him, then seeing an object is not the same as having the right kind of information about the object, no matter what one includes as part of that information.

The causal theorist claims that it is part of the concept of perception that if a subject is

successfully perceiving an object, then that object is causing the subject's experience. But what are the grounds for making such a claim? It is not part of the content of experience that the objects we see are causing our experiences of them (as was shown in chapter 2). So the fact that the objects we experience cause our experiences is not part of the phenomenology of experience. It might be part of the concept of perception that successful perceptions have a certain epistemological role to play. But any epistemological contribution that a causal relation between object and experience can make is one that can be made without such a causal relation (as was shown in the last chapter). So is the ground for claiming that the notion of causal dependence is part of our concept of perception simply the claim that we intuitively think of a successful perception as being *dependent* on the objects of experience - i.e. we see the object because it is there?

If there is an alternative explanation of this intuition, which does not depend on the idea that it is part of our concept of perception that the object of experience causes the experience, then the causal theorist will need to show why the alternative explanation violates our concept of perception[16]. If the causal theorist cannot show that the alternative account violates our concept of perception, then we will have an account of our intuitions about the Grice thought-experiment, which is compatible with our concept of perception, and which does not need to invoke the notion of causal dependence. I now want to introduce the alternative account.

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[16]Cf. Snowdon 1981 and 1990.

The Disjunctive Theory

In chapter 1 I argued that if we accept that, (a) we can be in direct perceptual contact with objects in the external world; and we accept that, (b) it is possible for us to hallucinate; and we accept (c) the Common Element Thesis, then we must accept that a certain account of what it is to see an object must be ruled out: We cannot accept that, (d) the experience a subject has when he sees an object in the external world is partially constituted by that object. Putting the point in this way makes it seem odd that someone would want to adopt (d). Given that (a), (b) and (c) appear to be so plausible, and we have a theory that makes (a), (b) and (c) consistent (i.e. the Intentional Theory), what would motivate the adoption of (d)?

We can think of someone who adopts (d) as one whose primary concern is to characterize the kind of perceptual contact that we have with objects in the world when we see them. As Child puts it, for such a theorist, in the order of explanation, "what is fundamental is the idea of a state of affairs in which a subject sees something" (p. 144, 1993). The priority is to characterize what it is like to be in direct perceptual contact with objects in the world. If we try to characterize in a "naive" way what it is like to see objects in the world, then it might be claimed that when I see objects in the world around me, how things appear to me to be (the phenomenology of my experience) seems to depend (at least in part) on the nature of the objects and how they are arranged. For us it is as though the world appears to be a certain way because it is that way. In chapter 2 it was argued that the causal dependence of experience on

the objects seen is not part of the phenomenology of experience. So if it *seems* to us as though how things appear to be is dependent on how they are, then this dependence cannot be causal dependence. So what kind of dependence is involved?

If we say that when a subject sees the world his experiences are *constituted* (at least in part) by the objects around him, then this entails that his experiences *depend* on the nature and location of those objects. But the notion of dependence being invoked here is distinct from that of causal dependence. So if it seems to us as though how things appear to be depends on how they are, and the experiences' casual dependence on the objects of experience is not part of the phenomenology of the experience, then perhaps the dependence involved here is that of *constitutive* dependence. On this naive view, then,

> "the kinds of physical object and qualities that one's experience is of, or as of, must exist or be realized in order for one to have an experience of the kind one does when veridically [successfully] perceiving. One's perceptual experience having the PHENOMENOLOGICAL character it does is constituted...according to this view by one's physical environment being so." (Martin, 1994)[17]

Child puts the point by saying that on such a view, "an object is actually a *component* of the experience *S* has when he sees it" (p. 161, Child 1993). Robinson compares this "naive" view of perception with the Sense-Datum Theory. On the Sense-Datum Theory,

> "sense-data themselves, it would seem, partially *constitute* rather than *cause* experiences... In

[17]The discussion of the disjunctive theory in this chapter has been influenced by comments made by Martin during lectures and seminars, as well reading Martin 1994.

> naive realism, the external object plays the same role as the sense-datum does for the sense-datum theorist, by being not so much the cause of the experience as its principal constituent" (p.66, Robinson 1994).

So under the "naive" view of perception being introduced here, the best characterization of the experience a subject has when he sees the world is that the experience is (at least partially) constituted by the objects in the world being seen. And this is the starting point of a discussion of the concept of seeing.

The possibility of illusion or hallucination can then be introduced as a problem for such a view. Given that it is possible for a subject to have hallucinatory experiences that are not constituted by objects in the external world, what are the consequences for the naive view of perception? The possibility of an experience not constituted by objects in the world does not in itself create a problem for the "naive" view, but conjoined with the Common Element Thesis it does. One way of looking at the Sense-Datum Theory is to see the theorist as being persuaded by the truth of the Common Element Thesis while not wishing to give up the insight of the naive view that the experience one has when successfully perceiving is constituted by the objects / entities of which one is directly aware. But while this Sense-Datum theory retains one aspect of the naive characterization of successful perception, it sacrifices another crucial aspect of the naive characterization. Under the naive characterization of successful perception, the objects seen are experienced as existing independently of our awareness of them. The Sense-Datum Theory accepts one

aspect of the naive view of successful perception but rejects another[18]. If we want to retain both aspects of the naive view of perception, we have to give up the Common Element Thesis.

The naive view of successful perception was introduced as the best characterization of what it is like to see objects in the world. If this view is to be rejected, then the onus is on the opponent to show why we should give up our best account of seeing the world. It is up to the proponent of the Common Element Thesis to persuade us of his claim.

The Common Element Thesis is the claim that the experience a subject has when he successfully perceives the world is one he could have if he were hallucinating. If the experience a subject has when he successfully perceives the world is constituted by objects in the world, then that is not an experience he could have if he were hallucinating and the objects he appeared to see were not before him. The experience a subject has when he hallucinates may be subjectively indistinguishable from a successful perception; so someone who denies the Common Element Thesis will have to say that two experiences can be subjectively indistinguishable and yet of different kinds. So how is the opponent of the Common Element Thesis supposed to characterize a hallucination? Is a hallucination constituted by different kinds of objects?

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[18]This is, of course, an oversimplification of the various versions of, and arguments for, the Sense-Datum theory.

On the naive view a hallucination can be explained derivatively in terms of the more fundamental notion of seeing: A hallucination is an experience that is not a successful perception (in which the experience is constituted by the objects in the world that appear to be there), but it is subjectively just like one. This leaves it open as to whether there are "objects" that the subject is aware of when he is hallucinating. As Child puts it, on this view,

> "The idea of hallucination is derivative from that of seeing: a hallucination is simply a state of affairs in which the subject is not seeing anything, but which is for her just like a case of vision [successful perception]" (p.144, 1993).

The opponent of the Common Element Thesis is labeled the Disjunctive Theorist because of the way in which he characterizes that which is common to successful perception and subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. Common to both is the fact that it looks to the subject as if there is an F there; but on the disjunctive account, this is made true either by the subject seeing something which looks to him to be an F, or by its merely seeming to the subject as if he sees something which looks to him to be an F.[19] The disjunctivist does not treat what is common to successful perception and hallucination as a single type of experience characterizable as such. As Robinson puts it, "on the disjunctive analysis seeing and hallucination are not to be analyzed into a shared element plus differing extra features" (p. 175, Robinson 1985). We can contrast this with the Intentional theorist who *does* treat that which is common to successful

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[19]Versions of this disjunctive analysis can be found in Hinton 1973, Snowdon 1981 and 1990, McDowell 1982.

perception and hallucination as a single type of experience with a certain content.

In chapter 1 I mentioned two types of argument for the Common Element Thesis, one from subjective indistinguishability and the other from causal indistinguishability. I do not want to go into any possible responses that the disjunctivist might make to these arguments, but I just want to make explicit what the disjunctivist is going to have to deny: The disjunctivist is going to have to deny that if two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable they are of the same type; and he is going to have to deny the claim that two mental states are always of the same type if they have the same proximate - i.e. neural - cause. The acceptance or non-acceptance of the Common Element Thesis will be part of the wider internalism / externalism debate. As I said earlier, if we accept that the "naive" theory has the best characterization of what we ordinarily take seeing the world to consist in, then the onus is on the proponent of the Common Element Thesis to persuade us to accept his side of the debate. I shall now turn to the implications that this naive, disjunctive account of perception has for the Grice thought-experiment and the CTP.

The Disjunctive Theory and the CTP[20]

The Intentional theory of perception provides an account of that which is common to successful perception and subjectively indistinguishable hallucination, but it also needs

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[20]The discussion of the relation between the disjunctive theory and the CTP is influenced by Snowdon 1981 and 1990.

to provide an account of the difference between them. The Grice thought-experiment shows that it is part of our naive, ordinary view of perception that having the right information about an object does not, in itself, put the subject in direct perceptual contact with that object. The Intentional theorist who wants his account of perception to conform as much as possible to our ordinary concept of perception, concludes that there must be some further condition necessary to put the subject in direct perceptual contact with the world. This further condition is the causal relation between the object and the subject's experience.

On the disjunctive conception of perception, there is not a single type of experience common to hallucination and successful perception. The experience a subject has when he sees the world is partly constituted by the objects in the world that he appears to see. A subjectively indistinguishable hallucination will not be constituted by the objects the subject appears to see. The experience the subject of the Grice thought-experiment has is not constituted by the objects that the subject appears to see - his experience does not *depend* on the objects of experience - and this is why he does not see those objects. It seems to the subject of the Grice thought-experiment as though he is seeing the objects before him. His experience seems, to him, to *depend* on the nature and location of those objects, whereas in fact it does not. This is not to say that the subject's experience seems, to him, to be caused by the objects of experience. It is rather that his experience seems, to him, to be partly *constituted* by those objects.

So the disjunctive theorist can offer an account of why the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see the objects before him, and can capture the idea that we think of successful perception as being dependent on the objects perceived without mentioning a causal relation between the experience and the objects of experience. If the causal relation is not needed to explain why the subject of the Grice thought-experiment fails to see, then where does this leave the CTP? If the disjunctivist's account is the best explanation of our intuitions about the failure of the subject to see in the Grice thought-experiment, then the CTP seems to be left unmotivated.

The strategy of this chapter has not been to argue that the disjunctive theory is true and therefore the Intentional theory is false and therefore the CTP cannot be true. And it has not been argued that the disjunctive theory is incompatible with the CTP. The point of introducing the disjunctive theory was to question the motive for adopting the CTP. The strategy of leaving the CTP unmotivated is one that Snowdon adopts:

> "what I hope to have some sort of case for is not so much a rejection of the causalist view-point as non-acceptance of it" (p. 208, Snowdon 1981)

Child summarizes Snowdon's strategy in the following way:

> "the causal theory of vision is committed to a particular conception of experience: the conception may in fact be unobjectionable: but there is an alternative conception which cannot be ruled out a priori: since there are no a priori grounds for preferring the conception of experience required by the causal theory. we cannot accept the causal theory as a conceptual truth about vision." (p. 143, 1993)

A response from the causal theorist might be that the account of our intuitions concerning the Grice thought-experiment offered by the CTP leaves the disjunctive theory unmotivated. So how are we to choose between the accounts? The best account will be the one that best characterizes our *intuitions* about our ordinary concept of perception. The use made by the CTP of the Grice thought-experiment appeals to our *ordinary judgements* about the concept of perception. Against someone who claims that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment sees, we can only say that he has the wrong idea of what we ordinarily mean by seeing. So if we think that the disjunctive theory offers the best account of our intuitions about the Grice thought-experiment, then the causal theorist's explanation will be redundant.

It might be suggested that the falsity of the Disjunctive theory will motivate the CTP. But even if the Disjunctive theory turns out to be untenable, the causal theorist still needs to show that the disjunctivist has not provided the best explanation of our intuitions about the subject's failure to see the objects before him in the Grice thought-experiment. Perhaps the Intentional theory will turn out to be the best account of perception. This does not entail that the Disjunctive theory does not provide the best account of our intuitions about perception. Perhaps the disjunctivist provides the best account of our "naive" intuitions about perception. And perhaps these naive intuitions do turn out to be false on closer consideration. Why then should we accept the Intentional theorist's alternative account of our naive intuitions? Perhaps the CTP is really just an attempt to retain some of our naive intuitions about perception, which

turn out to be untenable on closer consideration. The causal theorist needs to show that the disjunctivist does not provide the best account of our naive intuitions concerning why the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see. The causal theorist needs to show that his theory provides the best explanation of our intuitions concerning the subject's failure to see.

The causal theorist may be able to come up with a formula, compatible with his theory, for distinguishing those cases when we would intuitively say that the subject sees (e.g. when the subject's veridical experience is caused "in the appropriate way" by the objects of experience). But this does not make that formula part of our ordinary concept of perception.

So we should think of the CTP and the disjunctive theory as competing explanations of our intuitions about our ordinary concept of perception. Which one fares better? Can the notion of causal dependence explain anything about our intuitions about perception which the disjunctive theory cannot?

Under the disjunctive theory, the fact that the nature of a subject's experience depends on the world can be explained in terms of the claim that "the world *constitutively* determines the content of experience" (p. 168, Child 1993). But can the idea of "constitutive dependence" fulfill all the roles that the causal theorist claims that the notion of causal dependence plays in our concept of perception? Child argues that,

> "On the causal view, the causal relation between object and perceiver... causally explains the occurrence, or persistence of S's experience... But the non-causal view omits [this] form of explanation; it offers no naturalistic explanation of the occurrence or persistence of experience at all. To say that S had an experience as of an F because circumstances were normal and there was an F in front of him... does not explain why the event of S's having an experience occurred (or even why the state of S's having an experience persisted)" (p. 169, 1993)

The causal theorist is surely not saying here that the scientific details of how or why an experience occurs or persists should be part of our ordinary concept of perception. Rather, the claim is that under our ordinary concept of perception it should make sense to be able to scientifically enquire into how or why our experiences occur and persist when we see objects in our environment. Something is going on that enables us to see objects and something is going on that allows us to continue to be aware of those objects. We should be able to derive these simple claims from our ordinary concept of perception. In chapter three I argue that we "naively" think of seeing as something that *we do*. If we think of perception in this way, then it makes sense to think of the occurrence and persistence of experience as something that can be scientifically investigated. It makes sense to enquire into the conditions that enable us to see objects in the world and enable us to continue to be aware of them. The presence of an object is not a sufficient condition for us to see the object. Certain other conditions must be in place if we are to see the objects around us - e.g our eyes must be open, the lighting conditions must be appropriate. We can think of these conditions as ones which allow *us* to be able to see the objects. We need not think of them as conditions

which allow the objects to cause experiences in us. The fact that the objects we see are causally related to our experiences of them does turn out to be a condition that must be in place in order for us to see them. And so the causal relation between our experiences and the objects of our experiences explains the occurrence and persistence of our perceptions. But we can think of this as explanation at the scientific level. The fact that seeing is something that we do explains the occurrence and persistence of experiences at the more intuitive level.

Conclusion

If the disjunctive theory can account for any of our intuitions about the Grice thought-experiment that the CTP can account for, are there any intuitions that the disjunctive theory can account for that the CTP cannot?

In chapter 4 it was argued that the notion of causal dependence cannot be introduced as part of our concept of perception by alluding to the epistemological contribution that a causal relation between object and experience can make to perceptual belief. Can the disjunctivist's idea of *constitutive dependence* give a better account of our intuitions about the distinctive epistemological role of successful perception that is part of our concept of perception? I shall turn to this question in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

Strawson argued that it is part of our concept of perception that successful perception must be "reliable" (1979). In discussing the Grice type of thought-experiment, Strawson writes

> "We would say in such a case that he [the subject] is wrong in taking the experience to be the perception it seems to be, even if by a fluke, he happens to be right in his belief in the appropriate facts. The concept of perception is too closely linked to that of knowledge for us to tolerate the idea of someone's being merely flukishly right in taking his experience to be the perception it seems to be." (p. 71, 1974)

We can understand Strawson as claiming that the Grice thought-experiment brings out certain intuitions we have about the epistemological role of successful perceptions. For an experience to count as a successful perception, it must not just give rise to *true* perceptual belief - it must give the subject a *reason* to hold that perceptual belief. In chapter 4 it was argued that if the causal relation between an experience and its object accounts for the kind of epistemological contribution that we "naively" think successful perception makes to perceptual belief, then we should accept that the occasionalist's experience can make the same kind of epistemological contribution to perceptual belief. We should either accept that the occasionalist subject's experience makes the right kind of epistemological contribution to perceptual belief, or deny that the causal relation between object and experience accounts for the kind of epistemological contribution that we "naively" take successful perception to make to perceptual belief.

How does the disjunctive theory fare in accounting for our intuitions concerning the epistemological role of successful perception? I want to tackle this question by first examining Davidson's well known objections to any non-doxastic theory of justification.

Davidson Against Non-Doxastic Theories

If it is part of our naive, ordinary concept of perception that successful perceptions somehow give the subject a reason to hold perceptual beliefs based on them, then it is part of our ordinary concept of perception that a doxastic theory of justification is false. A doxastic theory of justification is one that claims that "nothing can enter into the determination of epistemic justification except our beliefs" (Pollock 1987, p. 19). Davidson expresses this view by claiming that "nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief" (1983, p. 310). Davidson claims to find a problem with any view that allows experiences to justify beliefs. If Davidson's objections present difficulties for any view that allows that experiences have an epistemic role, then any suggested explanation of the subject's failure to see, in the Grice thought-experiment, which alludes to the epistemological role of successful perception, will be undermined.

For Davidson, experiences do not have content. They are just causal intermediaries between the world and the subject's beliefs. This means that for Davidson there is no problem of veridical hallucination. Since experiences do not have content they cannot

be veridical, and so the problem does not arise. But do Davidson's objections to a non-doxastic theory of justification rest on the claim that experiences do not have content?

Davidson claims that there are two questions that give rise to problems for a non-doxastic theory, they are:

"[1] What is the relation between sensation [experience] and belief that allows the first to justify the second? and,

[2] why should we believe that our sensations [experiences] are reliable, that is, why should we trust our senses?" (1983, p. 310).

It is often suggested that the Intentional theory of perception can give an adequate response to Davidson's objections.[21] I want to consider these problems separately, and suggest that even if the Intentional theory can respond to Davidson's first question, the second one will remain as an obstacle to the non-doxastic theory of justification.

First to deal with [1]: Can we give an account of the relation between sensation / experience and belief that allows the first to justify the second? Davidson claims that the relation cannot merely be causal. A simple causal relation between an experience and a belief is not enough for the experience to justify the belief: "a causal explanation of a belief does not show how or why the belief is justified" (1983, p. 311). This claim is crucial to Davidson's argument. Davidson is relying on what has now become a familiar claim, that one should not confuse justification with causal explanation. The

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[21]For an example see Peacocke 1986, p. 110-111.

idea can be found in Rorty, who attributes the confusion to Locke: "Why should [Locke] have thought that a causal account of how one comes to have a belief should be an indication of the justification one has for that belief?" (1979, p.141). This idea is also expressed by Sellars:

> "In characterizing an episode or state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says" (1956, p. 169)

Why is a description of the causal history of a belief thought by these philosophers to be insufficient to determine the epistemic status of a belief? Davidson seems to think that there has to be some kind of rational or logical relation between two states in order for one to be able to justify the other. This idea is expressed in the Sellars quote with the claim that if a state is to have a justifying role it must be placed in the "logical space of reasons". This idea can be found in Davidson, with his claim that sensation cannot justify belief because "The relation between sensation and belief cannot be logical" (1983, p. 311). Davidson also appears to assume that something can provide a justifying reason for a subject's beliefs only if that reason is one that the subject is (or can be) aware of. This idea can also be found in Sellars: "to be the expression of knowledge a report must not only have authority, this authority must in some sense be recognized by the person whose thought it is" (1956, p. 168). So when Davidson says that he "rejects as unintelligible the request for a ground or source of justification of another ilk [to that of belief]", (p. 310), his point seems to depend on the idea that what is important about belief as an "ilk", that is relevant to justification,

is the fact that a belief can in principle be rationally related to other beliefs, and that a belief is something that the subject can be aware of.

At this stage I do not want to discuss any possible objections to Davidson's conception of justification. Davidson does not explicitly argue for the claim that a belief can only be justified by something of which the subject can be aware and which can be logically / rationally related to the belief. There are arguments for this view and counter-arguments against it[22], but for now I want to determine whether Davidson's argument works against those who accept his concept of justification. I shall not argue that those who reject Davidson's conception of justification have an incorrect conception of justification. But those who reject a Davidsonian conception of justification and claim that successful perceptions contribute to the epistemic status of beliefs, will be left with a problem of explaining why the occasionalist's experience does not make the appropriate epistemic contribution. If we want to say that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment does not see because his experience cannot make the appropriate epistemic contribution to perceptual beliefs; and we also want to say that this epistemic contribution is not one that the occasionalist's experience can make, then we need to rely on something other than a purely non-Davidsonian conception of justification. So do Davidson's arguments work against those who accept his conception of justification?

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[22]Arguments against what have become known as externalist theories of justification can be found in Feldman 1985, Lehrer and Cohen 1983, and Bonjour 1980.

What is important to note at this stage is that the first problem that Davidson sets for the non-doxastic theorist - i.e. what is the relation between experience and belief that allows the first to justify the second? - is only a problem on Davidson's conception of justification if an experience is not something that can be logically related to other beliefs, and is not something that the subject can be aware of. If an experience is simply viewed as a causal intermediary between the world and the subject's beliefs, then the relation between the experience and the belief will not be one that allows the experience to justify the belief. Perhaps a causal relation between the experience and the belief is needed in order for the experience to justify the belief, but more than that is needed. In order to hold a non-doxastic theory of justification, if we accept Davidson's concept of justification, we need an account of perception that allows experience to be rationally / logically related to belief, and be something that the subject is aware of. Does the intentional theory of perception provide such an account?

Under the intentional theory of perception an experience, like a belief, has content. So the logical relation that can obtain between two beliefs is one that can obtain between an experience and a belief. The content of the belief is also something that the subject can be aware of, even if the casual relation between the experience and the belief is not. So there does seem to be an account of experience that is capable of solving the first problem that Davidson presents for a non-doxastic theory of justification, without violating Davidson's conception of justification.

What of the second problem that Davidson identifies for the non-doxastic theorist? - i.e. "Why should we believe that our sensations are reliable, that is, why should we trust our senses?".

Why does Davidson think that we should believe that our senses are reliable in order for our experiences to justify our beliefs? If we allow that the intentional theory can solve the first problem that Davidson sets out, then why should this second problem remain? Davidson writes,

> "The difficulty of transmuting a cause into a reason plagues the anti-coherentist again if he tries to answer our second question: What justifies the belief that our senses do not systematically deceive us? For even if sensations justify belief in sensation, we do not yet see how they justify belief in external events and objects." (p. 311)

Davidson seems to be supposing here that once we allow that the sensations can justify beliefs, we are left with a second problem because these sensations will be justifying beliefs in sensations and not in events in the external world. Why does Davidson suppose that these experiences will justify beliefs in experiences and not and not events in the external world? The obvious answer is that Davidson is not conceiving of experience as a state with objective content. Davidson's talk of "sensations" rather than "experience", is perhaps a clue to the fact that in this passage Davidson is conceiving of experience as an intermediary that the subject is aware of, i.e. it is something that gets in the way of the subject's direct access to the world. Under the intentional theory, the subject is not aware of the experience as an object. Rather, the subject is aware of the content of the experience, in virtue of which the subject is directly aware of the world. The Intentional theory does not view the

experience itself as an object of experience, getting in the way of the subject's direct access to the world. So does the intentional theory of perception, whose adoption solves the first problem that Davidson sets the non-doxastic theory, also solve the second problem? Does the intentional theory of perception allow that experiences contribute to the epistemic status of perceptual beliefs if we accept Davidson's conception of justification?

If we accept the intentional theory of perception, in what way are experiences supposed to contribute to the justification of perceptual beliefs? I want to investigate whether an intentional theorist, who accepts Davidson's conception of justification, can defend the view that experiences are capable of justifying beliefs.

Martin points out how providing an account in which experiences have content will make a difference to the rational explanation of beliefs (Martin 1993b). Providing an account in which experiences have content is not redundant as far as the rational explanation of belief is concerned. There can, for example, be a logical relation between how things appear and how we believe them to be, as is brought out by the case of disbelief in perception. How things appear to be can be logically inconsistent with how we believe them to be. This inconsistency is a logical relation. So the logical / rational relation between experiences and beliefs is not redundant because it is useful in explaining a phenomenon that we are all familiar with - i.e. we need not always accept that things really are the way they appear to be - there can be a logical

inconsistency between the way things appear to be and the way we believe them to be. But even if this argument does succeed in establishing that there is a logical / rational relation between experiences and beliefs, does it thereby establish that experiences contribute to the justification of beliefs?

In the argument which Martin provides, the usefulness of having an account in which experiences have content is due to the fact that the attitude that a subject takes to the content of the experience is not the same as the attitude that the subject takes to the content of his beliefs. When a subject has a belief he, by definition, accepts the content of the mental state. When a subject has an experience he need not accept the content of the experience. It is not part of the concept of experience that the subject must accept the content of the experience. This aspect of the concept of experience is made use of in arguments against the belief-theory of perception.[23] When we do not believe that things really are as they appear to be, there is a logical inconsistency between two contents, one we accept and one we do not accept. The usefulness of claiming that experiences have content is to account for the content that we do not accept in this case. But it does not follow from any of this that experiences are capable of contributing to the *justification* of beliefs. The Intentional theory of perception may be true, and one of the reasons for holding the Intentional theory may have to do with the fact that experiences stand in logical / rational relations to beliefs, but whether experiences are capable of contributing to the epistemic status of belief is

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[23]See chapter 3.

another matter.

Martin claims that "the intentional theory thinks that beliefs must have justificatory explanations provided by the experiences which cause them" (p.78, 1993b), but the claim that beliefs have "justificatory explanations" provided by the experiences which cause them is distinct from the claim that experiences are logically / rationally related to the experiences which cause them. Martin's argument, if successful, proves the second claim, not the first. Saying that a mental state is rationally / logically related to another is not the same thing as saying that a mental state justifies another. Given that the Intentional theory allows that an experience can be logically / rationally related to perceptual belief, can it also give an account of how experience *justifies* perceptual belief, under a Davidsonian conception of justification?

Some doxastic theorists think that a subject's beliefs can give the subject a reason for holding other beliefs, and they think that this reason is one that the subject can be aware of. If an experience is a mental state with a content that the subject can be aware of, and this content is one that can be rationally related to beliefs, doesn't it follow that these doxastic theorists should allow that a subject's experiences can give him a reason for holding beliefs in the same way that other beliefs do?

It might be suggested that a subject's belief is a mental state that can be a reason for another belief because,

(i) it can be rationally related to that belief,

(ii) it can have a content that the subject can be aware of, and

(iii) it can cause the belief.

Under the Intentional theory of perception, conditions (i) to (iii) are conditions that an experience of the world can satisfy, so why can't a subject's experience give him a reason for holding a belief in the way that another belief can? The problem is that a mental state with a content that p can satisfy conditions (i) to (iii) without providing the subject with a reason for holding a belief that p, or one derivable from the content that p. This shows that although conditions (i) to (iii) may be necessary, they are not sufficient conditions for a mental state to be a reason, that the subject is aware of, for holding a belief. To show this we need to provide an example of a mental state with a content that p which satisfies (i) to (iii) and yet does not provide the subject with a reason for holding a belief that p, or one derivable from the content that p.

Wondering whether p or imagining that p does not provide the subject with a reason for believing that p, even though wondering or imagining that p can satisfy conditions (i) to (iii). So we have a counterexample to the claim that any mental state which satisfies conditions (i) to (iii) provides the subject with a reason for holding a logically / rationally related belief. What conditions in addition to (i) to (iii) must a mental state satisfy if it is to justify a rationally related belief? If we allow that other beliefs can give a subject a reason (which he can be aware of) for holding a belief but wonderings cannot, then what is the difference between beliefs and wonderings that allows beliefs

to do what wonderings cannot?

The obvious difference between beliefs and wonderings is in the attitude taken to the content. The content of a wondering might be the same as the content of a belief, but the attitude is different. Having a belief that p entails acceptance of p, whereas wondering that p does not entail accepting that p. But this does not help the Intentional theorist explain why experiences can and wonderings cannot give the subject a reason to hold a belief. Having an experience that p does not necessarily entail accepting that p. It is this fact about experience which Martin uses in his argument to show that experiences can be rationally related to beliefs.

So what is it about an experience that p which allows it, and not a wondering or imagining that p, to give the subject a reason for holding the belief that p? Is it the aetiology of the experience? It was argued in chapter two that the aetiology of experience is not part of the content of experience. So if it is the aetiology of the experience that p that gives the subject a reason to believe that p, then this reason is not one that the subject can be aware of in being aware of the content of his experience. Is it only if the subject holds the belief that his experience that p is caused by the state of affairs that p, that an awareness of the content of the experience gives the subject a reason, which he can be aware of, for holding the belief that p? If so, then the second problematic question that Davidson raises for the non-doxastic theorist remains for Intentional theory of perception. If in order for an experience that p to

justify the belief that p the subject must hold the belief that the experience that p is caused by the state of affairs that p, then "why would we believe that our sensations [experiences] are reliable, that is, why should we trust our senses?".

Perception and Imagination

Perhaps when a subject has an experience with a content that p, his awareness of the content does give him a reason, which he is aware of, for believing that p. Perhaps I have, so far, overlooked an obvious difference between seeing that p and imagining that p, which the subject is aware of, and which gives him a reason in the former case, but not in the latter, for believing that p. An obvious difference between imagination and perception is one that was mentioned in chapter one: What we imagine is up to us in a way that what we perceive is not. I cannot decide what I am going to perceive in the way in which I can decide what I am going to imagine. So the difference between perception and imagination is not a difference in the content of the states involved - an imaginative experience could, in principle, be as vivid as a perceptual experience - rather the difference between them concerns whether the content is subject to the will or not. But why should the fact that a subject has a mental state with a content that p that is not subject to the will give the subject a reason to believe that p?

It may be helpful to compare the following remarks made by Williams concerning the concept of belief:

> "It is not a contingent fact that I cannot decide to bring it about, just like that, that I

> believe something? Why is this? One reason is connected with the characteristic of beliefs that they aim at truth. If I could acquire a belief at will, I could acquire it whether it was true or not; moreover I would know that I could acquire it whether it was true or not. If in full consciousness I could 'will' to acquire a 'belief' irrespective of its truth, it i s unclear that before the event I could seriously think of it as a belief, i.e. as something purporting to represent reality." (p. 148, Williams 1970)

If a subject knows that he acquired a mental state with content at will, then he knows that the mental state is not purporting to give him information about the world. Perhaps if a subject knows that his mental state with content is not subject to his will, then he has a reason to suppose that the state is purporting to give him information about the world. So perhaps when a subject is aware of the content that *p* of a perceptual experience, he is aware that the content is not subject to his will, and this gives him a reason, which he is aware of, for believing that p. A perceptual experience is like a belief, and unlike a wondering or an imagining, in this respect. So a mental state with a content that p can give a subject a reason, which he is aware of, for believing that p, only if the subject is aware that the content that p is not subject to his will.

Compare the following remarks made by Wittgenstein,

> "It is just because imaging is subject to the will that it does not instruct us about the external world" (1980: 80)

Wittgenstein seems to share Williams' general idea of a conceptual link between a mental state's being subject to the will and its being a state which purports to inform

us about the external world. But what is it for mental state to be subject to the will, and how is the subject made aware of whether his mental state is subject to the will?

A subject is aware of whether he is imagining or not. When a subject is not aware that the content of his mental state is subject to his will, and he does not accept that content, he is hallucinating.[24] But there seem to be a number of problems involved in spelling out just what is meant by "subject to the will" in this context. What makes imaginative experience "subject to the will" in a way that perceptual experience is not?

Is it that we choose what we imagine but we cannot choose what we see? The problem with this formulation is that there are cases of choosing what we see - i.e. when we arrange the scene before us in the way that we want - and there are cases of not being able to choose what we imagine - i.e. when we just can't help our selves visualizing something. Wittgenstein presents the following thought-experiment:

> "we get someone to look into a kind of peep show, and inside we now move various objects and figures about either by chance or intentionally so that their movement is exactly what our viewer wanted. so that he fancies that what he sees is obeying his will. - Now could he be deluded and believe that his visual impressions are images? That sounds totally absurd" (1980: 96)

Wittgenstein brings out something very important in this thought-experiment. The subject would surely not think that he was imagining something instead of perceiving

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[24]Cf. Wittgenstein, 1981: 634.

what was happening simply because he thought he was changing the content of his experience at will. The subject may think that he has strange telekinetic powers and that he is observing the effects of his powers. Why does the subject take himself to be perceiving rather than imagining given that he takes himself to be changing the content of his experience at will? If the subject thinks that the content of his experience is subject to his will, why does he not take himself to be imagining? For now I want to leave this puzzle unresolved, and briefly recap on the discussion in this chapter so far.

Summary

The Grice thought-experiment brings out certain of our intuitions concerning our concept of perception. It was suggested that some of those intuitions concern the epistemological role of successful perception. If the CTP and the Disjunctive theory are in competition as the best account of those intuitions, then we want to determine which theory offers the best account of those epistemological intuitions. If we accept a non-Davidsonian conception of justification and allow that a certain kind of causal relation between object and experience can play the epistemological role that we think that successful perceptions play, then we must accept that the occasionalist subject's experience makes the kind of epistemological contribution that we "naively" think that successful perception makes to perceptual belief. If we want to deny that the occasionalist's experience can make the kind of epistemological contribution that we naively think that successful perception makes to perceptual belief, then we need to

deny that the reason that successful perception gives the subject for holding perceptual belief is one that the subject is not aware of. But if we accept that the reason that successful perception gives the subject to hold perceptual belief is one that the subject is aware of, then under the Intentional theory we are left with the problem of explaining why an experience that *p* does give the subject a reason (which he is aware of) for believing that *p*, and imagining or wondering that *p* does not.

It was suggested that a subject can be aware that the content of his imagining that *p* is subject to his will, and that the content of his perception that *p* is not subject to his will, and this gives him a reason (which he is aware of) for believing that *p* in the latter case, but not the former. But as Wittgenstein's thought-experiment shows, it is conceivable that a subject could be aware that the content of his perceptual experience is subject to his will, and yet he may still take himself to be perceiving. Having left this puzzle unresolved in the last section I do not mean to suggest that the Intentional theorist who adopts a Davidsonian conception of justification cannot provide an account of why perceiving that *p* can and imagining that *p* cannot give the subject a reason for believing that *p*. But I want to compare how the disjunctive theory fares in explaining our epistemological intuitions concerning our ordinary concept of perception, and to see whether the disjunctive theory can avoid these difficulties that the Intentional theory faces.

The Disjunctive Theory and the Epistemological Role of Perception

In the last chapter I said that under the "naive" disjunctive theory of perception, the phenomenology of the subject's successful perception is partly constituted by the objects in the world the experience is of. It seems to the subject as though his experience depends on the objects in the world his experience is of. But this is not because it seems to him as though the objects in the world are causing his experience. Rather, it is because it seems to him as though the objects in the world are *constituting* his experience. The disjunctive theory can allow that it is part of the phenomenology of a subject's experience that the nature of his experience is dependent on the nature of the objects the experience is of. So if when a subject sees the world it seems to him as though his experience is dependent on the objects of experience, his experience gives him a reason for believing that the objects are there. So under the disjunctive theory, a successful perception can give the subject a reason (which he is aware of) for holding perceptual beliefs.

I am representing the disjunctive theorist as claiming:

(a) A successful perception gives the subject a reason to hold perceptual belief which a hallucination does not, and

(b) This reason is one that the subject is aware of.

It might be objected that (a) and (b) are incompatible with,

(c) A successful perception may be subjectively indistinguishable from a hallucination.

If (c) is true, and the reason that a successful perception gives the subject to hold

perceptual belief is one that the subject is aware of, then why isn't the subject aware of the reason during a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination, making (a) false?

Claims (a) and (b) will only be incompatible with (c) if we assume that

(d) In order for a subject to be aware of a reason for forming a perceptual belief, he must be able to distinguish those occasions when he does not have reason to form perceptual belief.

But why should we accept (d)? Consider the following analogy: Under the Intentional theory of perception a subject can be directly aware of the world. The subject can have subjectively indistinguishable experiences in which he is not aware of the world. We do not think that the Intentional theory should accept some principle equivalent to (d), like

(e) In order for a subject to be aware of the world he must be able to distinguish those cases when he is not aware of the world.

Claims (a), (b) and (c) can be consistently held if we deny (d), which is a claim that is not obviously true.[25]

In the case of the Grice thought-experiment, the disjunctivist can say that it seems to the subject as though he has a reason to hold perceptual belief whereas in fact he does not. This is because it seems to the subject as though his experience is constituted by the objects of experience, whereas it is not. The disjunctivist may also say that the

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[25]Cf. McDowell 1982.

occasionalist subject's experience does not give him a reason to hold perceptual belief because it is not constituted by the objects of experience. On the disjunctive account the phenomenology of experience gives the subject a reason to hold perceptual belief in the case of successful perception. During a successful perception the phenomenology of experience is partly constituted by the objects of experience. A hallucination does not give the subject a reason to hold perceptual belief, even though it is subjectively indistinguishable from a successful perception, because the phenomenology of a hallucination is not constituted by the objects of experience.

If we think of a successful perception as being constituted by the objects of experience, this may help in explaining the distinction between perception and imagination, and the different ways in which perceptual experience and imagination may be subject to the will. We think of imaginative experience as being subject to the will in a way that perceptual experience is not. The Wittgenstein thought-experiment presented a puzzle: A subject may think that he is changing the content of his experience at will, and yet still take himself to be perceiving.

The subject may take himself to be changing the content of his experience at will and yet still be perceiving, if he thinks that the changes in the content of his experience are due to changes that he is making to the *objects* of experience. If we characterize perceptual experience as seeming to the subject to be constituted by the objects of experience, then it makes sense to think of the subject as having to will changes to the

objects of experience in order to change the content of the experience. The difference between imagination and perception is not simply that imagination is subject to the will and perception is not. It is rather that they are subject to the will in different ways.[26]

The disjunctive theory can offer an explanation of this. Changes to the content of a perceptual experience are subject to the will only in so far as changes to the objects of experience are subject to the will. And this is apparent to the subject because it seems to him as though his perceptual experience is constituted by the objects of experience. The fact that the content of a successful perception is not subject to the will in the same way as an imaginative experience does give the subject a reason to hold perceptual belief; but this is explained in terms of the fact that the experience seems to the subject to be constituted by the objects of experience.

It might be objected that if it is the fact that perception is constituted by the objects of experience which distinguishes imagination from perception, then what distinguishes imagination from hallucination, which is not constituted by the objects of experience? The disjunctivist will have to answer that hallucinations are subjectively like perceptions, and this is what distinguishes them from imagination. Recall the remark in chapter 5 that for the disjunctivist the concept of hallucination is explained *derivativeley* in terms of the more fundamental concept of successful perception.

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[26]Cf. Wittgenstein 1980: 141.

Conclusion

In this chapter and the previous one I have been attempting to argue that the disjunctive theory can offer an account of our intuitions about the ordinary concept of perception, which explains why we do not think that the subject of the Grice thought-experiment sees the objects before him. The Grice thought-experiment brings out the intuitions we have that when think of a subject as seeing what is before him, we think of that subject's experience as being in some way dependent on the objects of experience. We also think of the experience as giving the subject a reason to hold perceptual beliefs. The disjunctive theory can account for these intuitions.

For the Intentional theory of perception the disjunctive theory is unacceptable because it violates the Common Element Thesis[27]. So if the Intentional theorist wants to claim that his theory does not clash with any of our intuitions concerning the ordinary concept of perception, he must offer an alternative account of our intuitions concerning the failure of the subject to see in the Grice thought-experiment. The CTP is just such an explanation. However, if the disjunctive theory offers a *better* explanation of our intuitions about the Grice thought-experiment, then the CTP will be left unmotivated. I have been suggesting that the disjunctive theory does offer a better account of our intuitions about perception. It is part of our ordinary concept of perception that a successful perception is dependent on the objects of experience. It is also part of our ordinary concept of perception that a successful perception gives the subject a reason

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[27]There may of course be other reasons.

to hold perceptual belief. The disjunctive theory can account for both of these features by making them both part of the phenomenology of experience. The fact that this is how perceptual experience seems to us accounts for why we think of perception in this way at an intuitive level. So does it follow from this that the Intentional theory of perception is false?

The disjunctive theory may turn out to be untenable, and the Intentional theory may offer the best account of perception. But it may still be true that the disjunctive theory offers the best account of the way that we intuitively think of perception[28]. In clashing with the disjunctive theory, the Intentional theorist may have to accept that his theory clashes with some of our intuitions concerning perception. Our intuitions concerning our ordinary concept of perception may turn out to be untenable on closer consideration, and so there may be cases where there is some tension between the Intentional theory of perception and our ordinary concept of perception. We can think of the Grice thought-experiment as an example. We may, under the Intentional theory, be able to come up with a formula for distinguishing just those cases where we ordinarily want to say that the subject does see the objects before him (eg. the objects of experience must cause the experience "in the appropriate way"), but this does not make that formula part of our ordinary concept of perception.

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[28]Martin (1994) makes the following comment: "even if naive realism is wrong about the actual nature of experience, its claim about common sense might still be correct. It would then be the best account not of the nature of experience but what that nature appears to us to be." (p. 466)

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