

Objects of Perception: Some Issues

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Abstract

The supremacy of *pratyakṣha pramāna* is accepted by most of the schools of Indian Philosophy. Though all schools accept *pratyakṣha* as a *pramāna*, there is a difference in opinion in the question regarding what we get in perception. Here from the Indian perspective, we discuss the different views; namely the view of Nyāya, Bauddha, grammarian school etc. The focus here is on the nature of the object of the perceptual cognition. In Western epistemology also perception has a central role. We generally believe that the knowledge which we acquire in perception must be true. It is commonly believed that perception is the mirror of the world. Naive realists have also said that, in perception, we know objects as they truly are. But a problem arises here. The problem is: if we are directly aware of real objects in perception then how can an illusion or hallucination take place? Naive realists have no answer to this question. This is the major fault of this theory. So it can be said that it is wrong to say that perceptual cognition is always veridical. Some arguments are being presented here to prove this view. These arguments are – the argument from perspectival variation, the argument from illusion, the argument from hallucination etc. I also investigate the Sense Datum Theory, Indirect Realism, Phenomenalism, Adverbial Theory and finally Disjunctivism. I will also try to make a comparison between the Indian and Western traditions in this article.

Keywords: perception, object, cognition, Nyaya, Bauddha, realism, Idealism, illusion, hallucination, disjunctivism etc.

Perception has a significant and important position in epistemology. In Indian epistemology, four things are very important. These are *Pramā*, *Pramāṇa*, *Pramātā*, and *Prameya*. *Pramā* means valid knowledge, *Pramāṇa* means the way of valid knowledge, *Pramātā* means the knower of valid knowledge and finally

Prameya means the object of valid knowledge. In this article, I am trying to investigate some of the popular theories regarding the objects of perception, their problems and probable solutions.

Here a relevant question arises in our mind: how can our beliefs about the physical world or physical objects be justified by our perceptual experience? It is a problem regarding the relation between the world and the knowing mind. We may divide the problem into two issues. The first issue is concerned with the relation between our perceptual experience and the physical world. Another question comes from it: what are the objects of our perceptual experience? The second issue is concerned with the justification of our beliefs about the physical world based on our perceptual experience. In this context, we have to discuss different theories of perception, namely – naive realism, representative realism, phenomenalism or idealism, sense-datum theory, adverbial theory, and disjunctivist theory.

But now we discuss perception from the Indian context. In Indian Philosophy the word ‘pratyakṣa’ or ‘perception’ stands for three different meanings. Sometimes by pratyakṣa, we understand pratyakṣa pramā or perceptual knowledge, sometimes it indicates pratyakṣa pramāṇa or the method by which we acquire the perceptual knowledge and sometimes by pratyakṣa we mean the object of perceptual knowledge.

There is a difference of opinion about the number of pramāṇas among the different schools of Indian Philosophy. Although different schools differ in the number of pramāṇas, all of them accept pratyakṣa pramāṇa. The supremacy of pratyakṣa pramāṇa is accepted by all schools of Indian Philosophy. Other pramāṇas are subordinate to pratyakṣa pramāṇa. We have a direct awareness of the object in perception. Here the object is revealed so clearly that other pramāṇas are not needed for acquiring knowledge of that object. For this, philosophers have mentioned perception at first. In Tarkasaṁgraha Annambhatta defines pratyakṣa pramāṇa as “pratyakṣajñānakaraṇakam pratyakṣam”¹ that is to say the uncommon condition or asādhāraṇa kāraṇa of perceptual cognition is called pratyakṣa pramāṇa. The kāraṇa, which is different from common or sādharāṇa kāraṇa like God, space, time, adṛṣṭa etc. is called asādhāraṇa kāraṇa. Asādhāraṇa Kāraṇa is different in every effect.

From the above discussion, it is clear that, to understand pratyakṣa pramāṇa first we have to understand pratyakṣa pramā. Different schools of Indian philosophy define pratyakṣa pramā in different ways. Gautama, the founder of Nyāya school, defines pratyakṣa pramā in his Nyāya sūtra as: “indriyārthasannikarṣoṭpannam jñānam avyapadeśyam avyabhicāri vyavasāyātmakam pratyakṣam”². This definition mentions the different factors involved in the act of perception – i) The senses or *indriyas*, ii) their objects or *artha*, iii) the contact of the senses with their respective objects or *sannikarṣa* and iv) cognition or *jñānam* which is

produced by this contact. Here *indriya* means five external sense organs, i.e. visual sense organ, auditory sense organ, olfactory sense organ, gustatory sense organ, tactual sense organ and also one internal sense organ called *manas*. In this definition, the term *avyapadeśya* means non-linguistic, *avyabhicāri* means which is not erroneous and *vyavasāyātmaka* means well defined. So we can say that Gautama defines perception as that knowledge which arises from the contact of a sense-organ with its object, non-linguistic, unerring and well-defined. This view about perceptual knowledge is also accepted by *kaṇāda*, the author of *Vaiśeṣika sūtras*, by *Kumārila Bhatta* etc. *Kumārila Bhatta* has said in *śloka-vārtika* “*Satsaṁ prayoge puruṣasya indriyānām buddhijanma tat pratyakṣamanimittaṁ vidyamānopalambhanatvāt / varnyate sūtrabhedena yena pratyakṣalakṣaṇam*”³”

However, all the philosophers did not accept the above view about perceptual knowledge. They criticized that this definition of perception excludes divine and yogic perception, which is not produced from the sense-object contact. But the most important objection is raised by *Gangeśa*, the famous neo-naiyāyika, the *Prābhākara* school of *Mīmāṃsakas* and the *Advaitins*. In criticism of the above view, they said that the above definition is too wide because this definition would apply even to the cases of inference and memory. Because like perception we also have a sense-object contact in inference, i.e. contact between the internal sense organ *manas* and the subject of the inference which here acts as the object. Similarly, there is a contact between the *manas* and the object remembered in memory. Thus they pointed out the fault of the above view.

So, instead of the above definition, *Gangeśa* gives a new definition of *pratyakṣa pramā*. The definition is – “*jñānakaraṇakam jñānam pratyakṣam*”⁴. That is to say, *Gangeśa* defines perceptual knowledge as direct or immediate knowledge or cognition which is not derived through the medium or instrumentality of any other cognition. Besides this, *Gangeśa* defines perception in *Tattva-cintāmaṇi* as a direct apprehension⁵ (“*pratyakṣasya sakṣātkāritvaṁ lakṣaṇam*.”) So, he defines perception as immediate knowledge. *Prābhākara* school also defines perception in *Prakarāṇa-pāñcikā* as “*sākṣāt pratītiḥ pratyakṣam*,”⁶ that is to say according to them perception is an immediate knowledge. Here *Advaitins* differ in an essential point although they agree that perception is the immediate knowledge. *Advaitins* hold the view that there is no necessary connection between perception and the activity of sense. Because God has no senses, but he has immediate knowledge of all things of the world. Some *Advaitins* who do not admit *manas* as sense, express this view that we get an instance of immediate knowledge independent of sense-activity in internal perception. Because in internal perception external sense organs have no function, here perception is held only by *manas*, which is not admitted as a sense organ according to this group of *Advaitins*.

Now we may look at the two extreme theories of perception, the first one is the Buddhist theory of perception and the latter is the view of *Bhartṛhari*.

According to the Buddhist school, there are two types of objects of perception (prameyas) in the world – svalakṣaṇa and sāmānyalakṣaṇa. In Nyāya Bindu Dharmakīrti explains svalakṣaṇa as “svaṁ asādhāraṇaṁ lakṣaṇam tattvaṁ svalakṣaṇaṁ⁷”. That is to say, svalakṣaṇa is totally independent and self-explanatory reality (tattva). The object of sense-object contact is svalakṣaṇa. When we perceive then we impose universal, quality, action, name and substance in this unique particular or svalaksana. But among these objects of perception, only svalakṣaṇa is real, others are nothing but our imagination or kalpanā. So Diṇṇāga defines perception in Pramāṇa-samuchchaya as “pratyakṣaṁ Kalpanāpodhaṁ nāmajātyādyasaṁyutaṁ,⁸” that is to say perception is devoid of all thought-determinations, names, universal etc. Asanga defines perception as a non-illusive cognition of a unique particular. Diṇṇāga excluded the adjective ‘non-illusive’ for its superfluous meaning. But Dharmakīrti reintroduces the adjective ‘non-illusive’ because according to him this adjective exempts sense illusions. So, we can say, that according to Buddhism perception is a non-illusive cognition of the unique particular which is not associated with name, universal, substance, quality or action. This perception is an indeterminate perception. The certain knowledge of the unique particular which is associated with names etc. is called determinate perception. We have already seen that all the cognition except indeterminate perception are called ‘kalpanā’, because five imaginary categories, that is names etc. are objects of imagination or kalpanā. So, Buddhist philosophers hold the view that only indeterminate perception is non-illusive cognition, other perceptual cognition is not non-illusive.

So according to Buddhists sense-perception gives us only object that is svalaksana, names are not given from reality, we get it only by logical construction, this construction is not a simple reflex, it is not due entirely to the stimulus, coming from the object; but to a mental synthesis. Buddhists also said that objects are momentary. So, in a moment we actually get the object, not its name. This sense perception is indeterminate.

On the contrary, the grammarian philosopher Bhartrhari admits an absolutely opposite view. According to him “there is no cognition in the world which is not accompanied by words; all cognitions are, as it were, interpenetrated by words”⁹. That is to say, knowledge would be impossible without the mediation of linguistic forms (śabda). From Bhartrhari’s point of view, it is implied that like all other knowledge perception is linguistic. So according to Bhartrhari perception is always determinate. Indeterminate perception which Buddhists admit is only non-illusive cognition is not at all possible to Bhartrhari.

According to grammarian school names and objects are identical. Even the idea of a new-born child or a deaf and dumb person, is associated with a name. When we have a knowledge of an object we get the name of it at the same time.

The view of Nyāya School is quite different from the above two. According to the Naiyāyikas the perception is not only indeterminate, but also determinate. At the first moment of sense-perception we get a bare sensation, a mere existence, this is the state of indeterminate perception. On the other hand, determinate perception is a relational apprehension, which comes later. So, Naiyāyikas admit both determinate and indeterminate perception. It seems that Naiyāyikas build up a bridge between the two extreme theories, that is, between the Buddhists and the Grammarians.

In the above discussion, we have already seen what we understand by *pratyakṣa* or perception. Now we will discuss the various theories about the objects of perception. In the Western context, there are many theories of perception. We will discuss them one by one and compare them with Indian theories about objects of perception.

First, we will discuss Naive *Realism*. According to naive realism, objects have mind-independent existence and we know these objects as they truly are. This theory supports our common intuition. Our common intuition tells us that perceptual experience is openness to the world¹⁰. We believe that perception gives us a clear and distinct knowledge of an object. It is the mirror of the world. We usually have no more doubts about those objects which we perceive. For example, I might doubt if something exists or not. Now if I suddenly see that object then all my doubts will be removed. As naive realism is very similar to the concept of knowledge of ordinary people, it is also called popular realism. The main tenets of naive realism are discussed in the following –

1. The world is constituted by many mind-independent objects, that is to say that they believed in the mind-independent existence of objects.
2. Objects never depend upon the knower's mind or knowledge of their existence.
3. We are aware of the object in perception directly. For this, no third factor is needed except the knower and knowable object.
4. What we get in perception are objects or attributes of objects. That is to say, we know the object as it is.

From the above discussion, it is understood that naive realism has two claims, one is the metaphysical claim and the other is the epistemological claim. The claim that mind-independent reality exists is a metaphysical claim. On the other hand, the epistemological claim is that we can know this reality. Here one may ask how we know this reality. To answer this question naive realists said that the world is revealed in our perception. But naive realism cannot explain the cases of illusion, hallucination and also our dreams. If we are directly aware of real objects in perception then how can an illusion or hallucination take place? Naive

realists have no answer to this question. This is the major fault of this theory. We will discuss these arguments against naive realism later.

The philosophers who opposed naive realism said that naive realism cannot distinguish between the apparent nature and the real nature of an object. For example: when I have an illusory awareness of a snake then there is a difference between the apparent nature and the real nature of the object. The object appeared before me as a snake, but in the external world, there was a rope instead of a snake. So here a problem arises, this is the problem of appearance and reality. When I say that I know that object, then what I know is nothing but the appearance of it. Reality is always hidden from my sight. So we can't know what the object actually is. What is its real nature? The experience of an object varies from man to man from different perspectives. So we do not understand which one is the real nature of that object among all the appearances of it. For example: when I see a table in a dark room it looks black, when I see it in dim light it looks dark brown and when I see it in bright sunshine then it looks light brown. So, I don't say any one of them is the real colour of the table. So we must say that the claim of naive realism that "the world is revealed in our perception" is not justified. Rather we have to say that perception always gives us the knowledge of the external world is not true. Many times perception may be illusory.

In the Indian context, the Nyāya position is called naive or direct realism. Though Naiyāyikas admit to direct realism, they reject the stronger version of direct realism. According to this stronger version, we can smell, taste, touch, hear and see the material objects like tables, chairs etc. directly. But Naiyāyikas hold that we can know material objects only by touch and vision. We can perceive and also can touch a material object. We are not able to smell, taste or hear it.

Buddhist Vaibhāṣikas are also known as direct realists. According to them, perception is direct but it is not of material objects such as tables and chairs. Rather, what we perceive are qualities such as colour and taste.

We have already seen that naive realism cannot explain many cases of perception, such as illusion, hallucination etc. Now we will discuss some of these arguments.

1. The Argument from Perspectival variation

According to the argument from perspectival variation, there is variation in experience. If one's spatial position changes then the way in which the object is presented also changes. For example, if I see an object from the nearest distance then it looks big, but if I see the same object from a huge distance then it looks smaller. We may put the argument in the following way –

Stage I

- i. In perception we are directly aware of physical objects.

- ii. It is not possible for a physical object to possess contrary qualities.
- iii. There is something perceived in the case of direct perception.
- iv. What is perceived in direct perception has contrary properties. For example, a straight stick looks bent if I drown it in water.
- v. Real objects cannot change. Therefore what is perceived in direct perception is not the real physical object.

To explain the fifth point we may say –

- i. An experience can be regarded as awareness of x only if the properties of the experience covary with the properties of x, so that when x changes, the experience changes and when x does not change, the experience does not change.
- ii. In the cases of perspectival variation, our sensory experience changes, but the real, external object does not change.
- iii. Therefore, our sensory experience is not regarded as being about the real, external object.

State – II

- i. Let us assume that the physical object is presented in one of the various contrary appearances. This is the case of veridical perception.
- ii. The putative veridical perception is phenomenologically so similar to the other cases that it is unreasonable to suppose that the kind of object that is presented in the putative veridical perception is different.
- iii. Therefore, we do not perceive the physical object. We actually perceive appearances, that is sense data.

2. The Argument from Illusion

In the cases of illusion, one is aware of something's having a quality, which is actually not present in that object. For example, a person may have an experience of snakeness in rope. But rope has not the quality of snakeness, it has ropeness. But it is true that something exists which has the quality of snakeness, that is, apparent snake or we may say that the snake which appeared before me has the quality of snakeness.

From the argument from illusion, it is implied that naive realism or direct realism is false. According to naive realism, we know objects directly. So, naive realism cannot explain the different cases of illusion. From this argument, sense-datum theory also follows.

3. The Argument from Hallucination

In the case of hallucination, there is no mind-independent object or actual object. But it is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perception. For example, a person may have a false impression that someone is following him. So, it can be concluded that in the presence of an object and even in the absence of that object the same kind of perception can be held. So, the view that ‘without an object perception or experience of that object cannot take place’ is wrong.

As Naiyāyikas admit naive realism, they try to answer the argument from illusion which is cited by the skeptic. The Nyāya theory of perceptual illusion is called anyathākhyāti or misplacement. According to Naiyāyika when I have an illusory awareness of a snake as “this is a snake” then I have an ordinary contact (laukika sannikarṣa) with the portion of ‘this’ and because of the similarity of rope with the previously known snake, the memory of this snake arises. Then this knowledge of memory acts as a contact (sannikarṣa), by which the extraordinary perception of snakes becomes possible. So, according to Nyāya, when I have a misperception of a snake in rope then the snake is not false or unreal, rather this snake is real in another place, that is, in a forest.

Now we will discuss the *Sense-datum theory*. Many writers, namely H. H. Price, G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell introduced the term “sense-datum.” Sense-datum theory quite satisfactorily explains the cases of illusion, hallucination etc. According to this theory, when a person has a sensory experience, then there must be something, which is the object of his experience. The sense-datum theory is also called an act-object theory. Because in this theory a distinction is maintained between the mental act of sensing and the object which is sensed. The sense-datum theory is based on a phenomenal principle. According to this principle, phenomenal properties determine the phenomenal character of our experience. We will discuss the phenomenal principle later. The sense-datum theory has two types-Representative Realism or Indirect Realism and phenomenalism or Idealism. We’ll discuss representative realism first.

Realism which acknowledges the mind-independent existence of objects, yet believes that we do not know the object directly, we are indirectly aware of ordinary objects, that is, aware of them by being aware of sense-data is called *Representative Realism or Indirect Realism*. This theory is established by the empiricist philosopher John Locke and the rationalist philosopher Rene Descartes. The main tenets of this theory are discussed in the following –

1. The world is constituted by many mind-independent objects. That is to say that they believe in the mind-independent existence of objects.

2. We are aware of the object in perception indirectly. Though in representationalism it is said that we never get the object in a direct way in perception, as representationalism believes that objects never depend upon knowledge or knowers' minds for their existence, so it is called representative realism.
3. It is said in this theory that what we get in perception are the images or sense-data of the attributes of objects.

According to Locke what we directly get in perception is nothing but the qualities, that is, colour, shape etc. or mental representation. From these, we infer the material substance, because without substance qualities do not exist.

In Indian tradition, Sautrāntika Buddhists are called representative realists. According to them, we do not perceive the object directly. For example, we infer a blue object from the blue form, which is immediately given to us. That is, they make a causal inference from the representation of the object. Uddyotkara also accepts some sort of representationalism which differs from Sautrāntika's view. According to him the material objects such as chairs, tables etc. act upon the mind as a causal factor from which the mind assumes the form of that object. Therefore, perception is explained as a modification of the mind by which we understand the specific nature of the object. We infer the object from the mental form or mental representation.

Naiyāyikas do not accept representative realism. So they criticise this theory. According to Naiyāyika, it is true that colour is an essential condition for the perception of the material substance. But it never means that we first see the colour and then the coloured object, rather it may be said that we perceive them both at once. So it is very clear from Naiyāyikas' view that we directly perceive the material substance, not simply the colour.

Though other philosophers criticise representative realism, this theory has some advantages. By this theory, we can explain the illusory cognition. Representative realist says that when we have an illusion of a snake in rope then the snake is nothing but an idea or sense-data of our mind which does not correspond with the real object. So the illusion takes place.

Now we will discuss the second version of sense-datum theory, that is, **Phenamenalism** or **Idealism**. Phenomenalists hold the view that we never know the object directly or indirectly, we can know only the sense-data of it. So, according to phenomenalists, to believe that a material object exists is equivalent to the belief that sense-data of various sorts have been experienced, are being experienced, will be experienced or would be experienced under certain specifiable conditions. The main tenets of this theory are discussed in the following –

1. According to phenomenalism, knowable objects do not exist without the knower, that is to say, the existence of knowable objects is dependent upon the knower. Phenomenalists believe that the material world is the object of our knowledge and it is entirely dependent upon our mind.
2. Phenomenalists hold the view that there is an internal relationship between the object and knowledge. Because without the knower objects never exist.
3. According to this theory object is never presented in our knowledge directly or indirectly, we are aware only about the sense-data of it. The phenomenalist does not identify the physical thing with any appearance of it in experience.¹¹

Sábara of Mīmāṃsā school gave a brief account of the idealist's step and then he tried to refute it. It is discussed in the following –

1. A sensory awareness of an object can occur in the presence, also in the absence of that object. For example, in our dream, we perceive an object, though it is actually not presented.
2. So it is clear, that object does not give any causal support to the awareness.
3. This characteristic of grasping a non-existent object, is a necessary character of such awareness.
4. This is an inevitable character of all cases of awareness, including veridical perception.
5. So, we see that perception of external objects cannot prove the existence of such objects.
6. Therefore, objects do not exist.

Sábara refuted the above argument of idealism by saying the argument is entirely counter-intuitive. Whether we have the same experience in veridical perception or not, we have to distinguish between both of them.

So, we have already discussed the two different types of sense-datum theory. Now we will discuss the many objections which are raised against the sense-datum theory. Some of these objections are specifically against the indirect realist version of this theory. According to indirect realism, we never know the object directly, we get only the sense-date in our experience; from these sense-data, we infer about those objects. So the objection is that this theory has created a veil of perception between the perceiver and the mind-independent object.

Another objection is raised against the sense-datum theory. The objection is, if we never know the object directly then how do we know that our knowledge about those objects is valid or invalid?

Another objection is raised to attack the phenomenal principle which tells us that the phenomenal properties, which we get in perception are the properties of the immediate object of experience. This phenomenal principle forms the basis of the arguments from illusion and hallucination. The objection is, that the phenomenal principle is fallacious because perception is a kind of mental representation and it is not necessary that if a mental state represents that 'rose is red' then there must actually be something which is red.

The sense-datum theory contradicts the concepts of knowledge of ordinary people. In the time of perception, we all have the feeling that we perceive an object before us, not the sense-data. So, we can say that if we approve the sense-datum theory, then the law of parsimony will be violated. Here we are constrained to admit an unnecessary element like sense-data between the ideas or the subjective part of perception and the objects or the objective part of perception.

Now we will discuss the *Adverbial Theory*. The Adverbial theory is raised as an objection against the sense-datum theory. According to sense-datum theory, all of our experiences have an objective status. However adverbial theorists rejected this view. They told us that it is not necessary that all things which we perceive must exist in the physical world. They also told that the mode of appearances may differ. We qualify the object from many aspects. When I see a silver coin from the front side, it shows an elliptical shape, but if I see it from its one side then it shows a different shape. When the coin shows the elliptical shape then we can say that I sense or am appeared to silver-elliptical-ly. Similarly when I have a hallucination of a pink rat then I can say that I sense or am appeared to a-pink-rat-ly or a-pink-ratshape-ly. So the adverbial theorists hold the view that the qualities are nothing but the modifications of our experience.

The adverbial theory has solved some of the problems of the sense-datum theory. The sense-datum theory could not explain the difference between veridical perception and non-veridical perception, i.e., illusion, hallucination etc. But the adverbial theory explained it successfully. According to this theory, we always qualify the object when we perceive it, it includes all types of perception, i.e., veridical perception and non-veridical perception like illusion, hallucination etc.

But the adverbial theory also has some faults. Frank Jackson in 1975 objected to this theory. He said that we think about a man who senses a brown square and a green triangle simultaneously. The adverbial theory will characterize this state of mind as sensing brownly and squarely and greenly and triangularly. Adverbial theorists hold the view that we can perceive something though it may be non-existent in the physical world. So here is how we can distinguish between these two mental states, i.e., sensing a brown triangle and a green square. Here lies the problem.

In the context of the question as what could be the object of perceptual knowledge Ayer pointed out to another problem. He said that our normal perceptual judgments usually go beyond what is strictly given in perceptual experience. As for example, we have mere experience of a shade of a colour or a shape etc., but we describe this visual perception as seeing an apple. Strawson did not support Ayer's view. Strawson said in contrary that we take a step back from our perceptual judgments in framing accounts of our sensible experience. Strawson said that experience not only supplies data, but also concepts are drawn on in experience. Experience is actually conceptualized. Thus Strawson tried to overcome the gap between sensible experiences and perceptual judgments.

Now we will discuss the *Disjunctivist Theory*. Disjunctivist Theory is a very popular theory of perception. The disjunctivist theory of perception holds that the objects of genuine perceptual experience exist independently of the mind. It also accepts that the phenomenal character of genuine perceptual experience is determined by its object. Disjunctivists reject sense-datum theories and they claim to have an adequate solution to the problem of perception.¹² According to this theory illusion and hallucination are possible. This theory holds that an instance of a genuine perception is different from a hallucinatory experience, which is subjectively indistinguishable from a genuine perception. But they are distinct mental states and belong to fundamentally different psychological kinds. This view amounts to the rejection of the "common kind assumption" according to which the same fundamental kind of mental event occurs in one's veridical perception or not.

Disjunctive theory holds that a true description can fit with both a genuine case of perception and also a case of hallucination. Here these two experiences are subjectively indistinguishable, although mental states which occur in the two are different. So we have to explain our experiences as either a genuine perception of an object or a mere hallucination of one. For this, the theory is called disjunctive theory.

In 1973 Hinton first proposed this theory, and it was later developed by P. F. Snowdon, John McDowell and M. G. F. Martin. Putnam also approved this theory. He claims that the distinctive feature of disjunctivism is "that there is nothing literally in common" in perception and hallucination, "that is, no identical quality". But disjunctivism does not have to say this. Disjunctivists may allow that there is something literally in common between a perception of an X and a hallucination of an X – both are subjectively indistinguishable from a perception of an X and thus they show off a common quality. Disjunctivists accept that there is a common physical state, for example, a brain state, shared by the perceiver and the hallucinator. However, they deny that the state of perceiving an object is identical with this physical state. Because perception is constitutively dependent on the object perceived. Here disjunctivism looks like

the sense-datum theory, but disjunctivism does not accept that this object is nothing but the sense-datum.

Objections of Disjunctivism

We have already seen that disjunctivists say that there is something common between genuine perception and hallucination, both are subjectively indistinguishable from a perception, although the mental states are different in the two. The question is how does disjunctivism prove it? Here the background assumption is that people's intentional actions are explained by their psychological states. For example veridical perception of a rabbit, the illusion of a rabbit and also the hallucination of a rabbit generate the same beliefs, same actions. So why do we accept that the mental state is different in each case? That is to say, how does disjunctivism establish that there are different mental states in veridical perception, illusion and hallucination? For this objection, we believe again in a common kind of assumption which disjunctivism has rejected early.

The second objection against disjunctive theory is about the second disjunct. Jonathan Dancy tells it clearly. In disjunctive theory, the second disjunct is characterized solely by saying that it is like what it is not. That is to say that, the second disjunct is nothing but the negation of the first one. So we do not understand the nature of the second disjunct properly. The third objection is concerned with the nature of the object of hallucination. In this criticism, it is said that the disjunctivist theory is incomplete. Because here we do not get an adequate account of the nature of the object of hallucination. Actually, disjunctivists fail to give any account of the object of a hallucinatory experience. Therefore, they have to say that in hallucination one is literally not aware of anything.

So, we have already seen that many philosophers try to solve the problem regarding the object of perception in their respective theories from different standpoints. But we have to conclude that no theory can successfully solve this problem till now.

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