

The Dual Components of Perceptual Experience^{*}

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Abstract

In experience we perceive things in the world in an immediate manner. However, a dominant philosophical approach, the indirect theory of perception, denies this commonsense view and contends that we see things through something else—some sort of sensory qualities caused by physical objects. In this paper I present a direct theory originally advocated by Reid and Kant and developed in recent time by Sellars, McDowell, and others, according to which perceptual experience involves the interplay between sensory and conceptual capacities, and in light of this the approach merits the label dualism. There are three objections generally raised against dualism. First, if sensations merely cause perceptions, then empirical justification rests on dubious grounds. Second, dualism seems to identify perception with judgment; however, seeing and believing can be independent states. Third, dualism

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regards semantic reference (the intentionality of belief) as prior to perceptual directedness (the intentionality of perception). I argue that an enriched Sellarsian dualism can meet all three objections. First, I portray a dualist framework in which sensations not merely cause but constitute perceptions, and as a result empirical justification can be restored. Second, different senses of seeing are examined and in only one sense is perception identified with judgment. Third, dualism maintains that semantic reference and perceptual directedness are mutually dependent, and thus there is no priority relation between them.

Key Words: perception, experience, dualism, intentionality

We perceive things in the world. We see how things are and form relevant beliefs. An important philosophical approach, however, denies that we directly perceive things in the environment. According to this position, we see things through something else—as it is commonly construed, some sort of sensory qualities caused by physical objects. On this view, what we perceive is not the physical world, but a world whose existence somehow depends on human cognition. In other words, the *indirect* theory of perception characteristically involves an *idealistic* ontology. Nevertheless, our commonsense is more in line with the direct theory of perception and realist ontology, for we appear to be in immediate touch with the real world. Direct realism clearly has strong intuitive support, but, historically, indirect idealism has gained momentum by launching powerful arguments against direct realism; thus, we can return to the commonsense theory of perception only if we can show these counter-arguments to be groundless. In this paper, I will defend a direct realist position notably advocated by Thomas Reid and Immanuel Kant and lately developed by Wilfrid Sellars, John McDowell, and others, according to which perceptual experience involves an interplay between sensory and conceptual capacities. I shall examine three major objections most commonly raised against this approach and explain why these objections are unconvincing.

I. The Argument from Illusion

A major argument against direct realism is the well-known “argument from illusion.” The basic idea is that every case of perception can have a corresponding case of illusion: an agent in illusion can be in exactly the same phenomenal state as she is in perception. On this account, we are aware of the same kind of objects in both normal and illusory situations. It is obvious that in illusion what one is aware of are not typical physical objects, but some perceived objects. The latter are therefore considered the

immediate objects of sensory awareness, and are generally termed as “appearance” or, more technically, “sense data.” According to a dominant approach, the concept of appearance plays two roles: first, it mediates the relation between the inner mind and the external world; second, appearance constitutes the “highest common factor” of perceptual and illusory cases—a subject with a perceptual experience could have been in exactly the same apparent state even if the experience had been illusory.

Our cognition of the world includes not only physical objects and their sensible properties but also how they *appear* to us in certain ways. How a thing appears to be may differ from what it is in reality. Talk of appearance brings about a traditional contrast between objective properties—properties that mainly depend on the objects, and phenomenal properties—properties that involve what is presented in our sensory awareness. The first type of properties is commonly termed as “sensible qualities” and the second “sensory qualities.” This distinction is helpful in accounting for perceptual illusion, for we may say that in normal situation what we perceive is sensible qualities; and in illusory situation sensory qualities. We may further abbreviate this view as that we have *perception* in normal context and mere *sensation* in illusion. A central question is, what is the relation between perception and sensation?

A basic assumption underlying the argument from illusion is that sensation and perception have something in common; for example, the sense-data theory would hold that what sensation and perception have in common is the sense-data they include. If we wish to renounce the indirect theory of perception, we need to account for the difference between perception and sensation. A clear and distinctive discrepancy is that perception is *objective* while sensation is not. This difference, A. D. Smith suggests, can be expressed in four ways (2002: 66-67). (a) Perception must be directed at some external object, but sensation is not. (b) Sensible qualities are independent of our sensory awareness, but sensory qualities are not. (c) Sensible qualities are “public” in the sense that

they can be perceived by more than one perceiving subject. Sensory qualities are private to the subject. (d) The object of perception can be perceived by more than one sense. The objects of sensation (i.e., sensory qualities) are usually limited to one particular sense.

However, in Smith's view, many theories of perception fail to explain this difference based on objectivity. He has three targets: causalism, dualism, and conceptualism. The basic idea of causalism is that physical object is the cause of perception. This is obviously true because what we perceive are objects in the environment and we stand in causal relation to the objects. Nonetheless, Smith discusses a *strong* version of causalism, according to which, a subject perceives an object only if his sensation of the object is accompanied by his awareness of its causal origin; that is to say, the subject has not only the sensation of the object but also the understanding that his sensation is caused by the object; in short, what distinguishes perception from sensation is "the understanding's grasp of causality" (Smith, 2002: 68). It is right to insist that in perception the causal origin of sensory awareness is the object perceived; however, the requirement of awareness of causal interaction is too rigid according to Smith, for normally "when we perceive, we are not necessarily aware of a causal interaction between us and the world" (2002: 69). He points out that feeling and touching seem to require the understanding of causal interaction, but seeing, smelling, and hearing apparently do not. I will, in this paper, focus on dualism and conceptualism, as they seem to constitute the two sides of a coin—Smith addresses them in an alternative manner, and as the approach I adopt actually embraces both theories.

II. Dualism

Dualism holds that what distinguishes perception from sensation is that perception has dual components: the sensory and the conceptual. Smith lists two dualists as his major targets:

Thomas Reid and Wilfrid Sellars. In his view, Reid is the earliest and clearest proponent of dualism.¹ Reid writes:

The external senses have a double province: to make us feel, and to makes us perceive. They furnish us with a variety of sensations . . . ; at the same time they give us a conception, and an invincible belief of the existence of external objects. (1969: 265)

This remark appears to propose the view of *perception as judgment*, the position that perceptual experience comprises the exercise of concepts and necessitates relevant belief or judgment. Moreover, Reid holds that sensation and perception are “commonly conjoined by nature” (1969: 284), but the conjoining relation is “contingent”:

For everything we know, we might perhaps have been so made as to perceive external objects, without any . . . of those sensations which invariably accompany perception in our present frame. (1969: 289)

Reid seems to say that we could imagine our sensations to be different from what they are and yet we would nonetheless remain in the midst of the perception of things. At first sight, the idea is that sensation is an *enabling condition* of perception, and we can maintain our empirical contact with the world while the present enabling condition is replaced by others. Thus, perceptions are always directed at things in a way sensations are not. On second thought, the idea of contingency goes deeper: we might need

¹ Kant’s view of experience as the co-play between receptivity and spontaneity can be subsumed under the dualist approach. Nevertheless, Smith bypasses Kant for two reasons: first, Reid proposes dualism earlier than Kant does; second, Smith complains that the relevant exegesis about Kant’s position is so “fraught with controversy” (2002: 70). I hasten to add the third reason, namely that Kant’s approach is generally construed as an indirect theory of perception, which is at least suggested by his famous distinction between phenomena and things-in-themselves. Nonetheless, his notion of “intuition” is open to debate about whether it means being directed at things; at least, that is the way Sellars and McDowell intend to understand Kant.

sensation to be the way it actually is in order to perceive things; nonetheless, some creatures (robots, perhaps) might need *no* sensation for perception at all. Given this idea, it follows, as Smith attributes to Reid, that perception is to be identified with judgment—sensations merely “accompany, or occasion” perception (2002: 71).

Sellars, the other dualist on Smith’s list, follows Kant in distinguishing sensibility from understanding and, also, sensation from concept. For Sellars, perceptions are not mere sensation but “perceptual takings”: seeing something to be the case is taking in *that* things are thus and so. On the other hand, perception includes a “non-propositional component,” i.e., *sensings*, which are not epistemic, since they alone cannot constitute an awareness of things. In this theory, perception has two elements: propositional content and non-propositional sensing. Sellars writes:

The *objects* of perceptual knowledge are the objects referred to in the propositional component of the perceptual experience, and these are physical objects, not private, subjective . . . items. (1975: 311)

This paragraph, in Smith’s eyes, exhibits the central mistake of dualism, namely the *backward* account of intentionality. He argues that our empirical beliefs have content at all only when they are responsive in a certain way to sensory experience and, paradoxically, dualism reverses the order of priority by explaining the intentionality of perception in terms of the intentionality of belief.

III. Three Objections to Dualism

As a strategy for this paper, I will rely on Smith’s work for its clear question setting and illuminating distinction between different theoretical approaches with rich historical resources. More importantly, I will explain his critical considerations against

Reid's and Sellars's view about the dual components of perceptual experience and try to develop these opposing points into three objections that are generally raised against dualism.

It should be noted that this paper does not question Smith's interpretation of Sellars: his interpretation of the latter as a dualist is sound. What I propose here is an enriched version of a Sellarsian approach (enriched, as we shall see, by McDowell's and Donald Davidson's theories). In this light, there is no authenticity problem with regard to the interpretation of Sellars. Moreover, this paper attempts to develop Smith's resourceful oppositions to Reid's and Sellars's positions into three general criticisms of dualism. These criticisms are general in the sense that they are frequently brought up by many (even including some dualists) as the main hurdles that every form of dualism has to leap over.² In other words, this paper will focus on the effect of the general objections to a refined Sellarsian dualism rather than on Smith's interpretation and criticism of Sellars's viewpoint. I will explain these objections by listing three propositions, each of which represents a potential weakness of dualism. First, sensation does not constitute but only accompanies perception. Second, perception is identical to judgment. Third, semantic reference is prior to perceptual directedness. In this section I will explore these problems in more details.

² Smith has proffered four criticisms and I will rephrase his first, second, and fourth points into the three objections, whose forms in my view are more general to different versions of dualism and not just limited to Reid's and Sellars's. For similar reasons, I will skip Smith's third objection, where he concentrates on the interpretation of Reid's remark that sensation are "signs" that "suggests" the conception of physical object (Smith, 2002: 76) and Sellars's distinction that the role of sensation is "casual" rather than "epistemic" (Smith, 2002: 78). Both interpretations are, to say the least, controversial.

A. Sensation Does Not Constitute but Only Accompanies Perception

A general problem with dualism (as with any theory of perception) is that if perception and sensation are radically separated as two kinds of mental processes, it is difficult to explain their *connection*. A problem particular to dualism of this stripe is: if sensations “accompany, or occasion perceptions, rather than helping to constitute it,” then it seems that the connection between them can only be *causal*. One form of dualism, for instance, holds that physical objects cause sensations, which, in turn, cause perceptions. More specifically, S perceives O when S’s thinking of O is caused by a sensation. We may call this position causalist dualism. Against this view, Smith provides the following example. Suppose Smith has a headache which causes him to think of his mother; in this case, Smith does not thereby perceive his mother (Smith, 2002: 74).

This objection, however, can be met if we revise the causalist position as follows: S perceives O when S’s thinking of O is caused by—not any sensation but—a sensation about O. Smith’s example does not constitute an objection to this new formulation, since his headache is not a sensation caused by the presence of his mother and is thus not a sensation about his mother; according to the new definition, his thinking of his mother caused by the headache is not a case of perception. The real problem of causal dualism, in my view, does not lie in the so-called deviant causal chains but in that, given that perception is conceptual and sensation is not, the connection between them cannot be justificatory but merely causal; in this regard, we seem to lose the ground to talk about the justification of empirical thought in general. This viewpoint will be further explicated in section 6, where I will discuss the “myth of the Given.”

B. Perception Is Judgment

Some forms of dualism claim that perception is judgment; or,

in plain words, seeing is believing. Smith argues that some illusory contexts may include true perceptions together with false beliefs, and hence seeing and believing can be independent states. For instance, he describes cases in which one's sense *records* a certain fact but the subject does not believe it: a referee of a snooker game sees that the white ball in fact hits the yellow ball, but somehow believes the white ball hits the green ball. Smith writes:

Other things being equal, what you see is determined by what unfolds in your visual field, in the flow of visual sensation. In such situations, your senses register the scene *accurately*; it is your "cognition" that is at fault. (2002: 75)

Smith argues that this example shows that dualism cannot give a tenable account of illusory and perceptive experience. In his view, dualism contends that judgment and sensation can go different ways and that "sensation is of no cognitive value whatever except in so far as it occasions a judgment" (Smith, 2002: 76); as a result, it equates perception with judgment, not with sensation. Thus, if Smith's characterization of the example is correct, dualism owes us an explanation of the identification of perception with judgment. This problem is more controversial than it looks, for, as I shall explain, even scholars in the dualist camp have divided stances toward the question whether perception is judgment.

C. Semantic Reference Is Prior to Perceptual Directedness

For Smith, the issue of intentionality boils down to the task of setting the priority between *perceptual directedness* (the intentionality of perception) and *semantic reference* (the intentionality of belief). He discusses and dismisses various philosophical approaches which hold that semantic reference is prior to perceptual directedness. In the end, he resorts to Bertrand Russell's distinction between acquaintance and description to

explain the priority of perceptual directedness over semantic reference.

Smith sees Sellars's theory as an attempt to spell out "what it is for a perceptual taking to be of a certain object in terms of belief *correctly representing* at least certain aspect of the object" (2002: 82). In my view, Smith ascribes the following *denotation theory* of intentionality to Sellars. The intentionality of perception depends on the belief it involves; the object of perception is determined by the denotation of the belief; that is, a perception is about a particular object because the included belief is true of the object. As Smith puts it, "the object of a perception is that object which . . . most closely fits the perceptual 'conception'" (2002: 82). This theory, in Smith's interpretation, entails that a perceiver must have some *correct information* about the perceived object. He offers some example to show that one can perceive something while "wholly misperceive" it in the sense that every perceived feature of the object is wrong: "visually I can misconceive not only to an object's color, but also, and at the same time, its shape, size, location, and direction" (Smith, 2002: 82).³ This possibility of total error, Smith contends, refutes Sellars's denotation theory of intentionality.

In sum, Smith holds that using belief to explain perception is getting the cart before the horse. He writes:

Perceptions are not *of* objects in virtue of perceptual judgments (more or less) accurately depicting or representing those objects. The *of*-relation holding between perceptual states and physical objects need to be accounted for in some other way. (2002: 84)

Here, he proposes that the notion of *acquaintance* can explain the

³ Smith holds that his objection to dualism is "closely analogous to" Saul Kripke's famous refutation of the "Descriptive Theory of Names." However, I will try to show, in section 11, that there is an essential discrepancy between Kripke's and Smith's objections.

intentionality of perception independently of any conceptual episodes such as belief and judgment. His theory draws heavily on Russell's distinction between "knowledge by acquaintance" and "knowledge by description" to explain the contrast between perception and judgment. On this theory, perceptual activity is *de re* not because of any belief involved, but because in perception we are *acquainted* with physical objects. In the picture he recommends, empirical cognition consists in a *temporal sequence*—which also represents a conceptual priority—as follows:

The presence of an object→one's being acquainted with
it→one's descriptions of it→one's forming a belief about it

In this picture, the concrete relation between particular object and acquainting sensation forms the basis of the intentionality of thought; and thus description can have application only when acquaintance is in place, and not the other way around. Hence, Smith states, "Perceptual judgment comes on the scene too late to be of any cognitive value. We need the senses themselves to acquaint us with objects" (Smith, 2002: 85).

IV. Sellars on Perception

I have formulated the three general objections to dualism based on Smith's opposition to Reid's and Sellars's approaches, and in the following I will try to explain why Sellars's theory of perception meets these objections. I will begin with a brief characterization of Sellars's theory.

What is Sellars's theory of perception? His theory of mind distinguishes different types of actualization of conceptual capacities involved in the rational characterizations of people's performances and states, the characterizations such as interpreting speech acts and attributing inner states. We can locate perceptual experience as a special mode of conceptual actualization in this general framework.

According to Sellars's non-traditional empiricism, experience must involve actualization of conceptual capacities; more specifically, experience "contains" propositional claims (1997: 35). Sellars begins with what he calls the vindication of "inner episodes"—the justification for the business of ascribing inner states (such as experience and thought) to people. He focuses on the contrast between language and thought. He maintains that both linguistic acts and mental states are actualizations of conceptual capacities, belonging to a more general rational characterization.

Sellars has famously argued for a particular mode of characterization, under which our performances and states can be classified as "knowing" or other epistemological notions; in so doing, these performances and states are placed into a "logical space of reason," that is, the space of "justifying and being able to justify what one say" (1997: 76). In this space, people's performances and states can be rationally described as *speech acts* and *mental states*: they are thought to have conceptual content and stand in reason-relation to each other. Sellars proposes further a special relation between speech acts and mental states: since speech acts are "overt" actualization of conceptual capacities and inner states are "non-overt," our understanding of the latter can be modeled on that of former. To see this, he offers the "Myth of Jones," one of our imagined ancestors who invent the notion of inner episodes.

Jones develops a *theory* according to which overt utterances are but the culmination of a process which begins with certain inner episodes. And let us suppose that his model for these episodes which initiate the events which culminate in overt verbal behavior is that of overt verbal behavior. (Sellars, 1997: 102-103)

The overt verbal behavior model "carries over to these inner episodes the applicability of *semantic categories*." That is to say, in modeling inner episodes on speech acts, we transfer semantic features from the latter to the former. For example, an inner

episode *means* something because its corresponding overt utterance *means* so.⁴ By the same token, an experience is an inner episode *about* something because its corresponding overt utterance (some observational report, e.g.) is *about* the thing. Experience, in this light, is an actualization of conceptual capacities, and in this sense contains a claim—the claim that *would* be expressed by a corresponding speech act.

Among inner episodes, experiencing and judging are different ways of containing claims, different actualizations of conceptual capacities. For Sellars, experience is “evoked or wrung from the perceiver by the object perceived,” whereas judgment generally requires some sort of *endorsement* (1997: 40). McDowell explains this difference as *passive* and *active* actualization of concepts: judging requires some sort of decision, i.e., “freely making up one’s own mind,” while experiencing is to some extent involuntary (1998: 440). An observer may advance from experience to judgment by default, as experience figure as an invitation or opportunity to judgment.

Different modes of actualization of conceptual capacities mark essential distinction between various sorts of performances and states in Sellars’s theory of language and thought. I will locate the different acts or states of claiming, judging, believing, experiencing, and remembering in Sellars’s general framework.

⁴ A more specific example about the semantic categories is provided by McDowell, which he calls “semantic togetherness” (1998: 440). According to him, judging that there is a red cube involves both conceptual capacities “__ is red” and “__ is a cube.” How are these two concepts put together to make up the judgment? This mode of togetherness, on Sellars’s theory, is understood on analogy with the linguistic act of *claiming* that “there is a red cube.” In making such a claim, there is “semantic togetherness” combining the words “red” and “cube”; and Sellars suggests that semantic togetherness affords a model to understand the togetherness in judgment (as an inner state).

- (A) Overt conceptual episodes: Linguistic acts (e.g., *asserting*) are free exercises of conceptual capacities.
- (B) Non-overt conceptual episodes: inner (or mental) states
 1. Free exercise of conceptual capacities: *judging* and *believing*
 2. Involuntary actualization of conceptual capacities:
 - (1) Impression by objects: *experiencing*
 - (2) Involuntary actualization without impression by objects: *remembering, realizing*

The relation between (A) and (B) is that of modeling; the former provides a model to understand the latter. Experience, in this picture, involves an involuntary actualization of conceptual capacities due to the impression on the sense by objects in the environment.

Thus, Sellars's approach is also a form of *conceptualism*, in Smith's classification, the position that perception comprises the exercise of concepts. Smith regards conceptualism as the origin of dualism and launches arguments against it as well. In the following, I will deal with Smith's general criticism of conceptualism and then return to the three specific objections to dualism.

V. Conceptualism

According to conceptualism, a subject perceives things with, or under, some conceptual representation. It seems that perception involves concepts in an obvious way. For example, when a long tubular object is presented, "While Tycho sees a pipe, Kepler will see a telescope" (Smith, 2002: 96). Do they see the same thing? Generally speaking, *perceptual verbs*, of which "seeing" is an instance, can have both intensional and extensional uses. In intensional use, Tycho and Kepler see different objects; in extensional use, they see the same object. Intuition seems to be divided in this case.

According to Smith, conceptualism resorts to concept to explain the intentionality of perception for two main reasons. (a)

All perceiving is “perceiving-as”: perception requires a form of *recognition*, which involves concept. (b) Thought has “features of objectivity and transcendence” that are essential to perception.⁵ Smith raises questions against both claims, which I will discuss in the following as the recognition objection and the priority objection to conceptualism.

Conceptualization requires both discrimination and recognition. For instance, to grasp the concept of green requires the ability to recognize something as green and distinguish it from other colors. Smith claims that discrimination is necessary but not sufficient for the exercise of conceptual capacity and, in regard of recognition, that “[t]here are determinate aspects to perception that escape the conceptual (or recognitional) net” (2002: 111). He maintains that we can perceive something without being able to recognize or classify it. This is an important claim which merits close scrutiny; however, Smith does not address this controversy. Following McDowell, he admits that “we always have at our disposal concepts of wholly determinate shade of color” (2002: 111). We can, for instance, use “*that shade*” to refer to a shade of color in certain context, even when that shade of color can barely be distinguished from its adjacent shade. Smith’s strategy is to acknowledge this use of concept but deny its *usefulness*. He considers a case in which he sees a particular kind of tomato and uses “that shade of red” to talk about the tomato’s color with the shopkeeper. He argues that such a concept is useless, for “take away the tomato, and I cannot exercise it, since I shall have lost the absolutely determinate grip on the shade in question” (Smith, 2002: 111-112).

This objection seems unpersuasive because this kind of

⁵ Smith mentions the third reason for conceptualism, citing Kant’s view on the unity of experience. Kant maintains that cognition of an object requires the *unity* of intuition and only concepts can unite a succession of representations—conceptualization “gives unity to the manifolds of a given intuition” (Smith, 2002: 108). This is, however, too big an issue to be considered in this paper.

concept can clearly be useful in communication and action. To see this, let us develop Smith's example further. Suppose he phones the shopkeeper the next day and asks for the tomato they talked about previously by using the phrase "that shade of red," and the shopkeeper would understand what it means and could make a delivery accordingly. In this case, the expression "that shade of color" is useful. The moral to be drawn here is, although the semantic content of "that shade" is fixed by its perceptual context, its usefulness is not limited to that context—even when the relevant context no longer exists, the expression is useful in subsequent communication and action.

The priority objection to conceptualism is similar to the Third Objection to dualism (discussed in section III), according to which perceptual directedness cannot rest on semantic reference. Here, Smith (2002: 116) seems to attribute the following inference to conceptualism:

1. Thought is immediately directed at normal objects in the environment.
2. Perception involves thought.
3. Therefore, perception is immediately directed at its objects.

In order to refute this argument Smith recites his linear picture of empirical cognition (displayed in section V). His refutation, as I stated, is a version of the Third Objection to dualism and I will discuss them together in section IX.

VI. The First Objection to Dualism: Causalism

So far I have presented the three objections to dualism and have also characterized Sellars's theory of perception in a general outlook; and now we are in a position to see whether (or how) the latter meets the challenge of the former.

The First Objection to dualism is that if sensations "accompany, or occasion perceptions, rather than helping to

constitute it,” then their connection could not be justificatory but causal. We may begin with a discussion of Sellars’s notion of “the myth of the Given,” according to which one major mistake of modern philosophy is its attempt to secure human knowledge by locating a foundation constituted by what is *given* in experience, which is generally characterized as causal impressions on our senses. According to traditional empiricism, all knowledge begins with experience and the main task of epistemology is therefore to ground knowledge on what is given in experience. To use an analogy, human knowledge is like a pyramid, a hierarchy in which the upper level knowledge rests on lower level knowledge, which in turn is rooted in experience. Experience, as causal product, is not propositional or conceptual and is in this sense infallible (at least neither true nor false); nevertheless, it plays the supporting role at the bottom of the pyramid of knowledge. In sum, experience is not part of our thought but is simply *given* to us and serves as the foundation of our knowledge system. This notion of experience is the so-called “the idea of the Given,” and this approach is commonly associated with “foundationalism.”

Why does Sellars call the idea of the Given a *myth*? McDowell provides the following explanation:

We cannot really understand the relations in virtue of which a judgment is warranted except as relations within the space of concepts: relations such as implication or probabilification, which hold between potential exercises of conceptual capacities. (1994: 8)

He claims, hence, that the idea of the Given does not offer justification but “exculpation.” The idea is that what makes a belief or an action intelligible or reasonable must be something that has the same conceptual structure as belief or action: only conceptual episodes can stand in reason-relation with each other. When one tried to justify his statement, say, “the book is red,” by pointing to some bare presence such as the surface of the book or the sensation one is having, he does not thereby make his claim more intelligible

or reasonable. I will address this issue in section XI, where I discuss simple perceptual sentences.

Sellars undertakes to reject the idea of the Given from a Kantian perspective that “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (Kant, 1997: B75). Kant proposes that thoughts have empirical content only if there is an interaction between intuitions and concepts, a co-play between sensibility and understanding. Following Kant, Sellars contends that perception is not merely causal transaction but a standing in the logical space of reasons—as he puts it, perceptual experience contains claims about the objective world. In his interpretation, McDowell tries to bring Sellars even closer to Kant by understanding the *space of reasons* as the *space of concepts*, or, more precisely, as Kant’s “realm of freedom” in which making perceptual judgment is a free application of conceptual capacities. He interprets:

When Kant describes the understanding as a faculty of spontaneity, that reflects his view of the relation between reason and freedom: rational necessitation is not just compatible with freedom but constitutive of it. (1998: 434)⁶

By “freedom” McDowell refers to the way we make up our mind about how to think, and by “rational necessitation” he means the constraint on our thinking imposed by the external world. Perception, in this picture, involves the co-operation between *freedom* of judgment and *constraint* from the world through sensory awareness. This dualist consideration, on McDowell’s view, is an attempt to avoid an oscillation between two extremes, which has troubled philosophers for centuries. (a) When there is no

⁶ The space of reason, in McDowell’s eyes, is an elaboration of the Kantian notion of human conceptual competence as “a capacity to exercise, paradigmatically in judgment, a freedom that is essentially a matter of responsiveness to reasons” (1998: 434).

constraint from the world through sensory input, empirical thinking would become a self-contained game, with no “frictions” with reality. (b) If the freedom of judgment is not involved, justification becomes a myth, for non-conceptual items somehow figure in conceptual relations. The Kantian dualist position is designed to reduce this dilemma (McDowell, 1994: 23).

The First Objection to dualism holds that the connection between the dual components of perception is causal and therefore cannot provide the ground for justification. This claim rests on the incorrect attribution to dualism the assumption that sensation does not constitute but merely occasions perception. We have seen, in Sellars’s Kantian approach, how perceptual experience is constituted by sensation and conception, as interplay between freedom of judgment and constraint of sensation. Perceptual experience, so understood, has no problem standing in reason-relation to other conceptual episodes.

VII. The Second Objection to Dualism: Perception as Judgment

The Second Objection to dualism is that at least some form of dualism conflates perception with judgment. Smith asserts that seeing and believing are independent states, and thus there can be situations in which one’s senses successfully register a certain fact but one fails to believe accordingly. As I shall argue, none in the camp which Smith identifies as dualists and conceptualists really equates perception with judgment; what is at issue is a holistic consideration concerning to what extent (or in what way) perception is connected with belief.

Let us begin with Sellars’s famous example: in a necktie shop John sees that a tie is green but, being aware of the peculiar condition of illumination, he makes the less committed claim that the tie *looks* green (Sellars, 1997: 37). This example has triggered numerous discussions on the relation between “is”-statement and

“looks”-statement, and also, more relevant to our present purposes, the debate about the relation between seeing and believing. For in the example, John sees the tie is green but does not believe it to be so. As we shall see, McDowell elaborates on this example, whereas Davidson questions its implication.

McDowell holds that seeing something to be the case is a mode of forming a belief of the same content but “seeing that P is not the same thing as acquiring the belief that P in a visual way” (2003: 680). To see the difference, McDowell notes the fact that “one can realize later that one was seeing that P, though one did not know it at the time and so did not at the time acquire the belief that P” (2003: 680). As in Sellars’s example, John sees that a tie is green, but noticing the illumination condition, he states that the tie merely looks green. This person, in McDowell’s characterization, can later realize that he was seeing that the tie was green. He can say, for instance, that “I thought it merely looked green, but now I realize that I was actually seeing that it was green.” McDowell contends that this case of “past entitlement” illustrates the discrepancy between seeing that P and believing that P. He claims:

One was in a position to acquire a bit of knowledge about the world, but because of a misapprehension about the circumstances, one did not avail oneself of the opportunity. One did not form the relevant belief, let alone get to know that that was how things were. (2003: 681)

Past entitlement also casts doubt on Davidson’s famous view about epistemic justification that “nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief” (2001a: 141). For John’s past entitlement was clearly not a belief (since he withdrew it) but it had the power to serve as a reason for holding the belief that the tie was green.

Davidson claims that there is no clear distinction between seeing that P and believing that P; more specifically, he holds that *experience* is ambiguous: either it is a sensation (a causal impingement) or it is a belief (a conceptual activity), and there

should not be any medium between the two—in his words, experience cannot be an “epistemological intermediary” between sensation and belief.

Seeing or otherwise sensing things often causes us to have true belief about them. In such standard cases of perception there are no epistemic intermediaries: I look and I believe. When what I am caused to believe is true, I have perceived that something is the case which is the case. It is because the meanings of many of the sentences I use to report such occasions were ostensibly learned that I am normally justified in forming the beliefs; it is this externalist feature of perceptual beliefs that tends to make them self-certifying. (Davidson, 2003: 695)

In his idiolect, “if x sees that P, then x believes that P and P is true.” In reply to McDowell’s elaboration on Sellars’s tie example, Davidson raises the distinction between *seeing an object* and *seeing that P*, and claims that the former cannot be a reason for beliefs and the latter is inseparable from a belief—“the ‘that’ which I think in this context implies belief” (2003: 696). The idea is that John’s seeing the green tie (as a mere sensation) is a causal impingement and cannot serve as a reason; on the other hand, John’s seeing that the tie is green can be a reason but must involve a belief of *that* content. Thus, there cannot be a reason for belief, which is not itself a belief. What McDowell wants, according to Davidson, is that there is “something given in perception that is propositional, and can serve as a reason for a belief, but which has no belief component” (2003: 696). He thinks that this something is of course not the Given but nevertheless an epistemological intermediary.

Davidson and McDowell have more agreement than disagreement; in fact, their minor disagreement depends on their major agreement. Among other things, they share the common foe, namely the myth of the Given, which is similar in spirit to both what Davidson terms the “myth of the subjective” and McDowell’s “internalization of the space of reason.” What Davidson tries to

avoid is an intermediary state between sensation and belief, which qualifies the Given. Clearly, this epistemological state has no role in Sellars's or McDowell's theories. In Sellars's account, as we have seen, experience and belief are regarded as different actualizations of the same conceptual capacities—they involve the passive and active exercises of the same concepts, and in this way they are *identical* in content. As for McDowell, seeing is adopting a posture in which a fact can come into view, and believing is an attitude of accepting that fact; their content is nothing but the fact received.⁷ If so, Sellars's and McDowell's notion of experience does not introduce any epistemological intermediary between sensing and believing and therefore does not constitute the "veil of perception" that Davidson renounces. In this light, there is little room for disagreement between their approach and Davidson's. Moreover, in the following section, I would like to consider a more general background which can accommodate both Davidson's and McDowell's insights about perceptual experience.⁸

⁷ McDowell proposes, "We need an idea of perception as something in which there is no attitude of acceptance or endorsement at all, but only, as I put it, an invitation to adopt such an attitude, which, in the best cases, consists in a fact's making itself manifest to one" (2002: 279).

⁸ It may be argued that the fact-in-view theory cannot adequately explain the difference between illusory and perceptual experiences. As a referee of this Journal points out, "if the content of perceiving that P and the fact that P are identical and if in a veridical case the content of perceptual experience is a fact, then, for McDowell, what is the content of perceptual experience in an illusory case? It cannot be a fact because by hypothesis the case is illusory." This line of thought is exactly like a reversal of the Argument from Illusion, which goes like this: (a) The content of a perceptual case and the content of an illusory case can be identical; (b) The content of illusion is appearance; (c) Therefore, the content of perceptual experience is appearance as well. The problem with this argument is its premise (a), because even if a person cannot distinguish whether he or she is in perception or illusion, it does not mean the two cases have identical content. That is, subjective indistinguishability does not guarantee sameness in content. The quoted objection appears to involve an assumption similar to premise (a).

VIII. Two Senses of “Seeing”

Timothy Williamson’s discussion about *factive states* raises a distinction between different senses of seeing. He strives to show that the state of knowing occupies the central place among factive states; more precisely, every factive state is accompanied by a state of knowing. For example, that S remembers that P implies that S knows that P. Here, Sellars’s tie example seems to constitute a possible objection to Williamson’s theory. For in the example John sees that a tie is green but fails to believe so (or abandons the belief for some reason), and thus does not know that the tie is green. In short, S sees that P without knowing that P. Williamson foresees this kind of objection and claims, “If you really do see *that* it is raining, which is not simply seeing the rain, then you know it is raining; seeing that P is a way of knowing that P” (2000: 38). To explain, he proposes a distinction between “seeing that P” and “seeing a situation in which P.”

1. S sees that Olga is playing chess.
2. S sees a situation in which Olga is playing chess.

The first statement apparently carries more information than the second: statement 1 implies that S knows that Olga is playing chess, but statement 2 does not. The idea is this. Suppose S has no concept of chess; he just observes that Olga sits with another person at the table on which there is a board and they are moving pieces in turn; so S doesn’t know what he sees to be a case of playing chess. In this case, statement 1 is false and statement 2 true because the former implies that S *grasps the proposition* that Olga is playing chess but the latter does not. Thus there are two senses of “seeing”: one implies knowing and the other does not. Let us relate this conclusion to our present issue about believing. Given that S has no concept of chess, he doesn’t believe what he sees to be a case of playing chess; that is, even if S sees a state of affairs in which Olga is playing chess, S does not believe so. This sense of

seeing does not imply believing. On the other hand, statement 1 implies S knows that Olga is playing chess and, as generally construed, knowing implies believing; it follows that S believes that Olga is playing chess. Likewise, there are two senses of “seeing”: one implies believing and the other does not.

Davidson’s notion of “seeing that,” in my view, is close to Williamson’s first sense of seeing, for both require explicit grasp of the proposition; as quoted earlier, Davidson says of *seeing that P*: “the ‘that’ which I think in this context implies belief.” McDowell’s notion clearly includes both senses of seeing. According to McDowell, perceptual experience contains propositional claim, and thus he should have no problem accommodating the first sense of seeing; on the other hand, his idea of past entitlement is congenial to Williamson’s characterization of second sense of seeing. Past entitlement is exactly the perceptual situation in which one is a position to acquire knowledge about the world but the opportunity is hindered by misleading evidence.

I will elaborate on the relation between the two senses of seeing as two types of perception: perfect and imperfect. My suggestion is that we can retain the first sense of seeing as the *bona fide* perception, in which the perceiver is said to be seeing that something is the case—he grasps the proposition explicitly, and in that sense he has a belief of that content. Of course not all perceptual cases are in perfect order: an agent can enjoy perception even when some *unfavorable factors* are involved. These unfavorable factors do not prevent the person from having a perception; for example, John sees the green tie even if he is worried by the illumination condition. As in Williamson’s example, the person perceives the states of affair in which Olga plays chess with someone else, even he does not have the concept of chess.

I take it that McDowell and Williamson point out different ways in which someone may have the second type of seeing without the first: it is the lack of confidence in McDowell’s example and the lack of relevant concept in Williamson’s. These

are two cases in which unfavorable factors are present.⁹ In these cases the subjects do not, strictly speaking, see that things are thus and so, but they do see something, and it is right to describe them as seeing the *situation* in which things are thus and so. Another example of the unfavorable factors is perceiver's *attention*. A person observes from a window that some swallows are flying in a particular manner because of the rain. He pays great attention to the birds and does not fully realize that it is raining. The person does not, strictly speaking, see that it is raining, but it is right to describe him as seeing the situation in which it is raining.

To sum up, normally we have bona fide perception in which we explicitly grasp the relevant proposition; and occasionally there can be unfavorable factors that can have influence over either our grasping the proposition in an explicit way or our forming a belief of that content, but they do not thereby block us from perceiving the situation.

The discrepancy between the two types of perception can explain why there are cases of seeing without believing: imperfect perception does not necessarily involve belief with explicit propositional content. In general, seeing and believing may not always come hand in hand because one can see a fact when one is appeared or exposed to the fact, but to believe in a certain fact is usually conditioned by or related to the agent's other beliefs, memories, attentions, or even intentions. This is indeed a complex and controversial debate, but this much is clear: that none of the philosophers we have discussed *conflates* perception with judgment; they strive to explore the way experience unites the environment and our thinking, the way experience conjoins mind and world. In this regard, the Second Objection to dualism seems misleading.

⁹ Williamson describes his example as involving "unfavorable evidence." He writes, "By looking in the right direction, you can see a situation in which it is raining. In the imagined case, moreover, you have enough concepts to grasp the proposition that it is raining. Nevertheless, you cannot see *that* it is raining, precisely because you do not know what you see to be a situation in which it is raining (given the unfavorable evidence)" (2000: 38).

IX. The Third Objection to Dualism: Intentionality

The Third Objection to dualism is that semantic reference cannot seem to take priority over perceptual directedness. This objection converges with Smith's priority objection to conceptualism. The basic idea underlying both objections is that we cannot understand the intentionality of perception in terms of the intentionality of belief (or any other conceptual activity). Smith emphasizes, "Conceptualization is not required for perception since it is perception that *vouchsafes* to us the original cognitive access to the entities in the world *on* which we can exercise such classificatory ability" (2002: 113).

Smith appears to use the distinction between discrimination and recognition to shed light on the priority relation between sense-perception and conceptual activity. To be more specific, he seems to have in mind the following line of thought:

1. Perception is discrimination.
2. Conceptualization is recognition or classification.
3. We cannot recognize or classify an object without first discriminating it.
4. Hence, we cannot apply a concept on an object without first perceiving it.

This argument rests on the distinction between discrimination and classification. It is unclear what the merit would be in assuming two separated process in human perception, for, as mentioned, if discrimination is detached from classification, it generates a new difficulty to explain their connection. Smith's view of the linear process of empirical cognition leaves something unexplained. Can he explain the notion of acquaintance without falling back to the idea of the given or sense-data? Russell's notion of acquaintance is rooted on his theory of sense data, and it is difficult to figure out how Smith can accept the former while renouncing the latter. Furthermore, are the two processes of acquaintance and

description not influenced by each other? Does acquaintance involve no tint of descriptive content? How do we impose description onto something barely acquainted? All these are controversial questions, but in this paper I will raise three further critical considerations: (a) the preposterous charge, (b) basic perceptual sentences, and (c) the denotation objection.

The first consideration concerns the priority relation between two modes of perception: *perceiving an object* and *perceiving that things are thus and so*. Which of the two notions is more fundamental? As we have mentioned, the intensional approach holds that the latter is prior to the former, and the extensional approach reverses the order. Sellars's stance appears to be more congenial to the intensional approach, as he holds that visual perception embraces conceptual representation. In his characterization, *perceiving something to be the case* is an act of judging or classifying, and *perceiving an object* requires an act of selecting or fixing on an object. His main insight is that "Indeed, even the selection of the object *presupposes* the ability to classify and relate" (Sellars, 1967: 199); that is to say, perceiving an object presupposes perceiving something to be the case. This contention, according to Smith's interpretation, is amount to saying that intentionality of belief is *prior* to the intentionality of perception. It does seem preposterous to claim the priority of intentionality of belief over that of perception, for it implies that believing precedes seeing. To say that perceiving an object presupposes perceiving that things are thus and so, however, is *not* to say that the latter is prior to the former. To see this, we should consult Sellars's holistic account of the mental.

One central theme in Sellars's philosophy of mind is that observational reports and other beliefs mutually depend on each other. He is in opposition to the traditional empiricist view that we first acquire knowledge of particular fact and then by some sort of abstraction we arrive at knowledge of general kind. He states,

If I rejected the framework of traditional empiricism, it is

not because I want to say that empirical knowledge has no foundation [but because] if there is a logical dimension in which other empirical propositions rest on observational report, there is another logical dimension in which the latter rest on the former. (1997: 78)

In Sellars's two-dimension view, empirical propositions depend, for their *justification*, on observational reports; on the other hand, observational reports depend, for their *intelligibility*, on other empirical propositions. As he sees it, traditional empiricism overlooks the second dimension of dependence, and this flaw is remedied by Kant's important insight that human cognition is possible only if some general categories or concepts are involved. In Sellars's words, observational knowledge does not stand alone: "one couldn't have observational knowledge of *any* fact unless one knew many *other* things as well" (1997: 75).¹⁰

Thus, Sellars's previous remark about presupposition should not be understood as hinting at priority. What Sellars aims to show in the case of perception is, rather, that neither the ability to select an object nor the ability to classify and relate can stand alone. In other words, *perceiving an object* and *perceiving that things are thus and so* depend on each other, and thus the presupposing relation between the two sorts of perception is *mutual*. In this two-dimension picture, the problem about priority ceases to be.¹¹

¹⁰ The Kantian theme has been developed by McDowell in terms of *intentionality*: "the intentionality, the objective purport, of perceptual experience in general . . . depends . . . on having the world in view, in a sense that goes beyond glimpses of the here and now"; without the wider world view, the "glimpses of the here and now" are unintelligible (1998: 435).

¹¹ The relation between the two forms of mutual dependence—the mutual dependence between empirical propositions and observational reports and that between two types of perception—is not inferential but merely analogous. Both forms of dependence share the same goal in revolting against the atomistic (or foundationalist) account of empirical knowledge. In other words, they should be seen as different aspects of a holistic approach. Therefore, it is not assumed that the distinction between the two

X. Basic Perceptual Sentences

Smith insists that the temporal order of empirical cognition exhibits the conceptual priority of perception over conceptualization; that is to say, our acquaintance with an object precedes our descriptions of it. His argument resorts to examples such as when one sees some thing for the first time or when one learns a new concept of colors.¹² These cases, he asserts, are obvious cases in which perception goes before conceptualization. Let us consider the following example.

I saw a sculpture and later recognized it as a unicorn. According to Smith's theory, I had a perception of the object in the first place and I had no idea what it was, and only moments later I recognized or classified it as a unicorn. The concept of unicorn was, indeed, applied *on* the preceding perception that vouchsafed to me the original cognitive access to the object. In this case, the perception of the object is temporarily prior to the application of the concept of unicorn. The question is, is the previous perception itself infused with concepts? To the extent that the previous perception constitutes a "cognitive access"—not blank staring—to the object, it should involve basic information such as the object's *shape, color, texture, size, location in place and time*, or its *similarity* to other things. These features are *basic* (in a sense that will be specified below) to our learning to make observational reports about normal physical objects; our observation is framed by these features. Only with these basic frames can we talk about public objects in the environment. More important, these features are clearly laden with concepts, since they involve different kinds of classification and relation. Thus, unless Smith can offer an account of perception independently of these basic observational

types of perception is an instance (or subclass) of the distinction between empirical propositions and observational reports.

¹² Smith raises the examples about using the concept of "vermilions" for the first time (2002: 113).

concepts, his explanation of seeing something for the first time does not pose a genuine threat to conceptualism.

Let me explain in what sense I describe these observational concepts as basic. What does “basic” mean when philosophers talk about basic beliefs or propositions? There are, in general, two sorts of *basic epistemological units* that are thought to constitute the bottom of human knowledge: the Given and phenomenal beliefs. The Given, as discussed, is what is given in experience, which by nature is a causal impression on the senses but has the power to justify beliefs; phenomenal beliefs, on the other hand, are supposed to report phenomenal entities and thus do not admit of the so-called distinction between appearance and reality, and they are therefore not subject to the ordinary criterion of veridicality and qualify the incorrigible foundation of knowledge.

There are probably other theories of basic epistemological units, but according to the approach I address in this paper, “basic” means “simple.” What is basic in epistemology are those *simple perceptual sentences* that can be taught most efficiently in ostensive learning situations, the paradigmatic case of which is that a teacher or a parent teaches a young child to talk about, say, different colors of things. Here I follow Davidson’s approach that treats “ostensive learning” as the key to “the existence of objective language and thought.”¹³ As Barry Stroud comments on Davidson’s stance:

Our earliest-learned and most basic perceptual sentences like “Mama,” “Red,” and “Gavagai,” and so on are indispensable to our learning the use of all other sentences, they are what connect empirical thought and talk to the world. (2003: 669)

¹³ Davidson’s later philosophy centers on the idea of triangulation, which is an attempt to highlight the role of ostensive learning in language and in thought. He proposes this inference: “Ostensive learning is crucial to the existence of objective language and thought” and “Ostensive learning depends on triangulation”; and therefore, “triangulation is a necessary condition of language and thought” (2003: 693).

According to this approach, simple perceptual sentences are basic in two senses. First, other sentences are learned on the basis of these sentences. Sellars's contention that "is"-sentence is prior to "look"-sentence is a case in point. "It is green" is a simple perceptual sentence that can be learned most efficiently in ostensive contexts, and Sellars's point is that if a person does not master the use of this sentence, "It is green," he is in no position to master the use of sentences like "It looks green" or "I believe it is green." In this regard, the former is more basic than the latter.

Second, the learning of simple perceptual sentences offers the basis for the connection between thought and world. Davidson's theory of triangulation is an attempt to explain "how particular contents can be assigned to our perceptual beliefs, and so explains in part how thought and language are anchored to the world" (2001b: 2). Davidson focuses on basic perceptual sentences.¹⁴ He writes, "What determines the content of such basic thought (and what we mean by the words we use to express them) is that has typically caused similar thought" (2001a: 201), for systematically speaking, "the stimuli that cause our most basic verbal responses also determine what those responses mean, and the contents of the beliefs that accompany them" (2001a: 196). In other words, the content of thought and the meaning of expressions are determined, in ostensive learning, by the systematic causes of thought and expression. The history of ostensive learning and subsequent training secures the relation between linguistic expressions and what is the case. Thus, simple perceptual sentences are basic in the sense that they "anchor" words into world.

In sum, simple perceptual sentences are basic because ostensive learning is central to both the acquisition of a particular language and to the determination of the content of linguistic expressions. The utterances of simple perceptual sentences, unlike

¹⁴ Davidson discusses Tyler Burge's perceptual externalism which emphasizes the necessary connection between the contents of thoughts and the relevant features of the world.

the Given, are conceptually structured activity—not merely causal products—and thus can stand in reason-relation; hence the justification of empirical thought is not mythical. The simple perceptual sentences, unlike infallible phenomenal beliefs, are subject to public standard of correct application and in this sense they are not restricted to subjective states but are *about* external things. We should therefore not contrive to concoct other more basic epistemological units that are supposed to support human knowledge from the bottom.

XI. Denotation Objection

We may reconsider Smith’s criticism of Sellars’s position as a *denotation theory* of intentionality, which Smith defines as follows, “the object of a perception is that object which . . . most closely fits the perceptual ‘conception’” (2002: 82). This characterization is misleading, but let us concentrate on his refutation of the theory. Smith argues that the denotation theory is false because one can perceive an object while every perceived feature is incorrect. If what he means by “every feature” includes the basic ones such as shape, color, texture, size, location in place and time, and similarity (and other relations) to other objects, then it seems inappropriate to say that the subject involved is, indeed, enjoying a perception. Let us ponder at this difficulty.

It is important to note that Smith’s attack is developed from Kripke’s famous objection to the “Description Theory of Name,” a crude formulation of which is that “the reference of a name is given by a description or a cluster of descriptions” (Kripke, 1972: 57). Kripke holds that one can use the name “Aristotle” to refer to the bearer of the name even if all his beliefs and descriptions about Aristotle are incorrect, given that the user is linked up to the designation-chains that can trace back to the authorized naming ceremony (i.e., “baptism,” in Kripke’s terminology) of the name “Aristotle.” Likewise, Smith argues that a person can perceive an

object, while none of the perceived features (even the most basic ones) is correct; he claims that his attack is “closely analogous” to Kripke’s objection to the Description Theory of Name. I want to point out that there is an essential discrepancy between these two objections. Kripke’s theory of naming indicates the importance of *social linguistic practices* as the foundation of fixing the reference of linguistic expressions, so even when a speaker has wholly false descriptive content of a name, his utterance of the name may somehow secure its reference, given that he intends to use the name in agreement with other speakers in the community. In Smith’s example, however, the person who gets nothing right about any basic properties cannot rely on the social linguistic practices to resume his perceptual contact with the presumed object.

Our discussions about mutual presupposition, basic perceptual sentences, and the denotation objection have, in my view, diminished the ground for the Third Objection to dualism.

XII. Concluding Remarks

In this paper I have defended a Sellarsian theory of perception against three major objections to dualism. According to this approach, perception involves the interplay between sensation and conception but is not identical to judgment, and perceptual directedness and semantic reference are mutually dependent.

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知覺經驗之二元內涵

何志青

摘要

在經驗中我們直接知覺到世界萬物，然而主流哲學進路中的「間接知覺理論」否定了這樣的常識論點，主張我們透過某些元目——外在對象所引發的感官性質——來觀看萬物。本文說明一特定之直接理論，最初由里德 (Thomas Reid) 與康德 (Immanuel Kant) 所創倡，近代則有賽勒斯 (Wilfrid Sellars) 與麥克道歐 (John McDowell) 以及其他學者相繼發展。根據此理論，知覺經驗涉及感覺與概念能力之相互作用，此進路因此可被歸類於二元論。一般反對知覺之二元論的理由有三：第一，若感覺僅僅因果地促成知覺，則經驗證成並無可依賴之基礎；第二，二元論似乎將知覺等同於判斷，然而「看見」和「相信」可以是相互獨立的狀態；第三，二元論主張語意指稱 (信念意向性) 優先於知覺指向 (知覺意向性)。本文指出修正的賽勒斯式二元論能夠解決以上三點反對意見。首先，在此二元主義架構下，感覺並非因果造成知覺，反而是組構成知覺，如此一來，經驗證成並不受到威脅。其次，二元論事實上包含兩種「看見」的意涵，其中只有一種意涵會將知覺等同判斷。最後，二元論申明語意指稱和知覺指向是相互依存，因此排除兩者之間具有優先性關係。

關鍵詞：知覺、經驗、二元論、意向性