

1. Recall two of the arguments that pose a problem for direct realism:

Argument from illusion. A white bottle may look white to Rob in some conditions (the ‘veridical’ case), but red in other conditions (the ‘illusory’ case). In the illusory case, the redness of which Rob is directly aware is not in the bottle (the bottle is not red). So in the veridical case as well, the whiteness of which Rob is directly aware is not in the bottle. The colours of which Rob is directly aware are *never* in the bottle.

Argument from hallucination. It may look to Macbeth as if there is a dagger before him, when in fact there *is* a dagger before him (the ‘veridical’ case), or it may look to Macbeth as if there is a dagger before him, when in fact there is *not* a dagger before him (the ‘hallucinatory’ case). In the hallucinatory case, he is not directly aware of a dagger. So in the veridical case as well, he is not directly aware of a dagger. We are *never* directly aware of objects in the world.

2. Disjunctivists think that these arguments are *invalid*.² Just because the colour of which Rob is directly aware in the illusory case is not in the bottle, *it does not follow* that the colour of which he is directly aware in the veridical case is not in the bottle. And just because Macbeth is not directly aware of a dagger in the hallucinatory case, *it does not follow* that he is not directly aware of a dagger in the veridical case.
3. What they claim is that *different kinds* of perception are involved in the veridical, illusory, and hallucinatory cases.

So, we cannot draw conclusions about the nature of perception in the veridical case, from the nature of perception in the other two cases.

Just because the colours of which we are directly aware in illusory cases are not in the objects that we perceive, it does not follow that they are not in the objects that we perceive in veridical cases.

And just because we are not directly aware of objects in hallucinatory cases, it does not follow that we are not directly aware of objects in veridical cases.

4. This allows disjunctivists to be *direct realists* about veridical perception, while avoiding the problems for direct realism posed by illusions and hallucinations. They can say that in veridical perception we are *directly aware* of objects and their properties, even though in cases of illusion and hallucination we are not.

Veridical perception is *essentially* a relation between an observer and an object and its properties. Illusory and hallucinatory perception are *not*. This is possible because they are all *different kinds* of perception.

¹ See the section about disjunctivism in the SEP article, ‘The Problem of Perception’.

² Disjunctivism was first proposed in Hinton, J. M. (1973), *Experiences* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), and later developed in Snowdon, P. F. (1979), ‘Perception, Vision and Causation’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*; McDowell, J. (1982), ‘Criteria, Defeasibility and Knowledge’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*; and Martin, M. G. F. (2002), ‘The Transparency of Experience’, *Mind and Language* **17**, 376-425.

5. Why 'disjunctivism'? Because we can think of the claim as this: to perceive is to have *either* a veridical perception, *or* an illusion, *or* an hallucination.
6. The main question to ask of disjunctivism is this: is it plausible to deny that veridical perception, illusion, and hallucination are distinct kinds – to deny that perception is whatever it is that they have in common?