

## DIRECT REALISM    Argument from illusion and hallucination: Criticisms and responses

### Illusions

- Senses can be subject to illusions, our senses become distorted and so the true nature of physical reality is not the same as what is actually out there in the world. When looking at a straw at a certain angle in water, it appears broken, or bent. We are therefore, directly aware of the bent-looking straw and cannot doubt that this is the way it appears to us, yet, we can also know that the real straw is not broken or bent. If the world appears to us like it can in illusions, then we must conclude that the immediate objects of perception cannot be material objects

P1: We perceive something having property e.g. the straw appears to be bent.

P2: Perceiver is directly aware of the property.

P3: But, the object does not have this property in reality.

C1; So what the perceiver is directly aware of (the bent straw) and what is real (the straight straw) are distinct.

C2: So direct realism is false, we do not perceive physical objects directly.

### Response

1. Direct realists may claim that I am not directly aware of anything distinct from the physical object, as I am still perceiving a physical object.
2. I am not immediately aware of the straws appearance, as we are directly aware of the real straw and it not being bent. It only appears bent due to the light and angle of which a person perceives it. There is no mediation between the straw and my perception of it.
3. So objects can appear differently because of the way they relate to the perceiver, therefore there is no need for sense data.
4. Indirect realists are wrong when they talk about appearance and sense data, as these things are directly observed.



### Argument from hallucination

- Hallucinations occur when a person perceives something which isn't actually there, and they cannot distinguish between their hallucination from a truthful perception (veridical one).
- If a hallucination and veridical perception are indistinguishable, this must mean they are both in the mind.
- So during veridical perception, we are directly perceiving sense data in the mind, we perceive the material world indirectly.

P1: Hallucinations occur when someone perceives something which does not exist outside of the mind.

C: So what they perceive, the hallucination, exists only in their mind.

P2: Hallucinations can be subjectively indistinguishable from veridical perceptions.

P3: But if hallucinations and veridical perceptions are indistinguishable then the person must be aware of something in both cases.

C2: So, from C1, P2 and P3, what they are directly aware of during veridical perceptions must also be in the mind.

C3: Hence we perceive the world indirectly and direct realism is false.

### Response

- Just because they may be indistinguishable from veridical perceptions, does not show that they are the same phenomenon in reality.
- Hallucinations, rather being caused by a physical object impacting on our sense organs, hallucinations are produced by some sort of malfunction in the brain.
- Hallucinations and veridical perceptions are not identical phenomena, even if they are indistinguishable to the person subject to them, it does not follow from the fact that hallucinations occur in the mind that veridical perceptions involve a purely mental element.