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Searle on Perception*

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RESUMEN

En el curso de su discusión de la percepción, Searle critica las teorías representacionales. En este artículo argumento que, si bien sus críticas pueden ser adecuadas contra una forma de tales teorías, quizás la más frecuentemente defendida por los filósofos de la percepción, una versión que será esbozada aquí escapa a ellas. Una segunda cuestión que presento concierne a si la teoría de Searle es, como él sostiene, una forma de realismo directo. Presentaré objeciones a su intento de conciliar una teoría de la percepción "reflexiva del ejemplar" con la tesis del realismo directo.

ABSTRACT

In the course of his discussion of perception, Searle criticizes representative theories in general. In this paper I will argue that, even though his criticisms may be adequate regarding a certain form of these theories, perhaps the most frequently defended by philosophers of perception, a version I will outline here escapes to them. A second issue I raise concerns Searle's claim that his theory of perception is a form of direct realism. I will raise difficulties for Searle's attempt to maintain at the same time a "token-reflexive" theory of perception and the thesis of direct realism.

John Searle's book *Intentionality* [Searle (1983)] (all future page references to Searle's work are to this book, unless otherwise specified) defends views on perception which I find appealing. Searle's account can be seen as departing, as a source of inspiration, from a Reichenbachian "token-reflexive" account of the semantics of indexicals, which he takes to be adequate to provide a Fregean reply to arguments by proponents of the theory of Direct Reference, like Kaplan and Perry. To say that a token-reflexive account of indexicality is a source of inspiration for Searle's theory of perception cannot of course be interpreted as if according to Searle perception itself depended somehow on indexical utterances; in fact, his view is that it is rather the other way around. The point is only that the Reichenbachian proposal he advances for indexicals provides a good model to understand perception. Perceptual states, according to Searle, also involve a form of token-reflexivity, which is essential to understand their semantic properties. I think this is an important insight; and, although it has been subjected to a common and superficially forceful form of criticism, I think that Searle's text, together with his replies

(1991) to objections such as those by Burge (1991) and McDowell (1991), correctly disposes of that common objection.

There are points, however, on which I do not agree with what Searle says, and there are others at which I find his views too underdeveloped and therefore difficult to submit to critical scrutiny. This paper is an attempt to press these points. A brief summary of the points I intend to develop may be helpful at the outset. In the course of his discussion of perception, Searle criticizes representative theories in general. His criticisms are adequate regarding a certain form of these theories, perhaps the most frequently defended by philosophers of perception. However, I think that, once token-reflexivity is marshalled to account for perception, there is no way of avoiding a commitment to a version of the representative theory. My first goal in this paper is therefore to discuss Searle's arguments against representative theories in general, which I do not find at all convincing. The second issue I will raise concerns Searle's claim that his theory of perception is a form of direct realism. Of course, by defending a representative theory, I am somehow committed to the rejection of direct realism; but the difficulty I have with Searle's claim is independent of my own views. In agreement on this with Burge and McDowell, I cannot see how Searle can maintain at the same time the token-reflexive theory of perception and the thesis of direct realism. A main difficulty to develop this objection lies in that Searle's theory is not fully elaborated; by using as a foil an outline of the representative theory that I find acceptable, I will try to raise doubts that any adequate elaboration on Searle's part could really render his account compatible with direct realism.

My foremost disagreement with Searle's theory concerns internalism. Searle relies on his account of perception to make plausible a radical form of content internalism that sounds almost Cartesian, and has been taken so by other readers (like Burge and McDowell). Again, I have the impression that it is only because his account lacks detail at crucial points that Searle manages to make it appear as if he had really offered an acceptable internalistic account (in the sense of 'internalism' in which I find this doctrine objectionable). I will try to raise this concern once again by using a different, non-internalist token-reflexive account of perception by way of contrast. As is already clear, my discussion is strongly indebted to that in Burge (1991) and McDowell (1991); I hope nevertheless that it will advance new points, or at least put old points in a new light.

I will start with a brief summary of the main tenets of a Reichenbachian view of indexicals. Philosophical semantic theories assume that a crucial semantic property of a sentential expression (one by means of which a fully-fledged speech-act may be made) is a *truth-condition* they signify: a requirement imposed on the world, which typically may or may not be satisfied, and on whose satisfaction the "veridicality" or correctness of the linguistic act depends. At this point, it is important to recall (as Searle reminds us, see p.

13) the ambiguity between requirements as processes, *requiring* (the imposition of a norm or rule), and requirements as *things required*, the results of those processes. I will use the term 'state of affairs' to refer to truth-conditions in the sense of "things required" (constituent parts of the world, when the speech acts in which they are signified are satisfied), and 'proposition' to refer to truth-conditions as rules doing the requiring. States of affairs are pretty much the "Russellian propositions" of new theorists of reference: both a token, say, of 'that is a planet' uttered while pointing to Venus, and one of 'Hesperus is a planet' signify the same state of affairs. Propositions, in my sense of the term, are more fine-grainedly individuated. A second assumption commonly made in philosophical semantics is that propositions and state of affairs are compositionally signified, so that it makes sense to speak of the truth-conditional import (in both senses of 'truth-condition') of specific parts of sentential expressions. I will use 'sense' (and its cognates) for the contribution of an expression to the expressed proposition, and 'signification' for its contribution to the signified state of affairs.

Now, it is natural to think that fundamental semantic properties are assigned to abstract, repeatable expressions; first and foremost, expression-types. When combined with the foregoing assumption that truth-conditional import is a fundamental semantic property, we reach the conclusion that it is abstract expression, types mainly, that make a specific contribution to the propositions and state of affairs signified in speech-acts. Indexicals, however, constitute an obvious counterexample to this conclusion. The Reichenbachian proposal is that indexicals make inescapable the view that it is tokens and not types that have truth-conditional import. There is a linguistic rule associated with any type of indexical, which is drawn upon whenever the fundamental semantic properties are assigned to the expression-tokens properly bearing them. This general rule determines, for instance, the truth-conditional import or signification of an instance of 'I' relative to "existential" relations of that instance (as Peirce would put it); in this case, relative to the causal relation which any proper instance bears to the person who uttered it. It is in this way that indexicals are "token-reflexive": cases of the expression reflect themselves, in that the semantic rules that determine their truth-conditional contribution do so relative to a property of those very same cases. The token itself plays an essential role in the determination of its truth-conditional import, and appears thereby "reflected" in the semantic condition relative to which it has a signification. More specifically, the token itself appears as an element of the proposition expressed (although the contribution of the indexical to the state of affairs is the entity determined by the token-reflexive condition, if any)[1].

The element of Fregean views of content that I take to be correct is a claim about understanding, about the epistemology of language and intentionality in general. When a competent user of English understands an utter-

ance of 'Hesperus is a planet', or one of 'that is a planet' (uttered pointing towards Venus), he thereby forms a representation that puts him in intentional relation with Venus, an objective, mind-independent entity. But he manages to access that objective state of affairs of which Venus is a constitutive part only by thinking of Venus in a specific way. or mode of presentation: an entity of a conceptual, predicative, mind-dependent nature to which he has a privileged, first-personal epistemic access. New theorists of reference have attacked Fregean views on the basis of several considerations. Some (those having to do with the modal rigidity of referential expressions, for instance) are to a certain extent correct, and require modifications of views that can be reasonably ascribed to Fregeans, including Frege himself. Others are simply misunderstandings, like those that depend on the assumption that expressions to which a sense is ascribed are to be everywhere substitutable *salva significatione* by descriptions making that sense explicit. The most damaging criticism, however, is the one based on alleged examples of referential expressions which clearly have a truth-conditional import, while it seems difficult for the Fregean to provide a mode of presentation with the required properties. Proper names are a case in point; I have given what I take to be a plausible response in another paper, having recourse to the idea of token-reflexivity (in my forthcoming paper "The Mill-Frege Theory of Proper Names"). Indexicals provide another; the Reichenbachian account gives a proper reply to criticisms based on them.

Consider John Perry's Heimson, the madman who thinks of himself as possessing any known property of Hume. Still, when he thinks what he might express uttering *sotto voce* an instance of 'I wrote the *Enquiries*', he represents a state of affairs involving Heimson, not Hume, one which does not obtain. Perry contends that the Fregean cannot account for this, because he assumes that the Fregean has only at his disposal purely qualitative modes of presentation to associate with the referential expression. (This assumption is not unfairly made: Frege's examples suggest it, and perhaps it is required by his internalistic pronouncements.) However, the Reichenbachian account suggests the obvious explanation. Let us use '*u*' to refer to the token of 'I' which is part of the token-thought. (For the sake of perspicuity, I am assuming that we can model concrete thoughts by means of the linguistic expressions with which we would express them *sotto voce*, but nothing important hinges on this.) According to the preceding claims, it is thought-instances that express propositions and signify state of affairs. In particular, the sense of *u* is token-reflexive, *the person who has produced u*, and it correctly determines Heimson and not Hume as its referent.

Frege suggests at some point that senses can be associated with expressions by explicit stipulative conventions. The Reichenbachian view requires us to abandon any such view, if we have ever played with it; a crucial element of senses can only *contextually* come to be a part of them. Once this is

accepted, it is also natural to acknowledge that other aspects of the sense of many expressions are only contextually associated with them. For instance, to properly understand 'I will leave the money in this jar', said in a context which includes several jars as potential referents for the demonstrative, something like a visual presentation of the intended one is needed. (The fact, by the way, that these other contextual features of senses are typically provided by perception makes clear that our resort to linguistic indexicality as an analogy to theoretically characterize perception should not be understood as involving any commitment regarding the proper order of explanation of the relevant phenomena. On the contrary, a full explanation of linguistic indexicality probably presupposes an independent account of perception.)

At some cost, therefore, the Reichenbachian line of thought provides a Fregean reply to the most damaging criticisms of Fregean views, as Searle correctly indicates; the cost is to envisage senses which include features contextually associated with expressions, specially particulars (the expressions themselves) as crucial individuating constituents. (The particulars we will be mostly concerned with in this paper are not objects or individuals, but events — including processes and states — and their parts.) The concern that this provokes, and I want to explore further in this paper, is that this may not be really compatible with the internalistic leanings which are an integral feature of traditional Fregeanism, and Searle explicitly supports.

Before proceeding, however, we still have to filter carefully what I have described before as a natural, but misguided, form of criticism of any account along the indicated lines. Focussing still on linguistic indexicality may be helpful to see more clearly the issues. The Fregean advances a view about the epistemology of representation, linguistic and mental. It is therefore theoretically essential that senses be known (and known in a distinguished manner) by the subjects entertaining the relevant representations, linguistic users and thinkers respectively. The Fregean claim is that subjects do access objective states of affairs, but only by accessing propositions individuated relative to "modes of presentation" or epistemic ways of accessing the objective entities constituting the states of affairs. Partisans of the new theory of reference defend their views by contending that senses like the ones we have described do not satisfy this requirement:

> Semantic theorists, not to speak of ordinary mortals, seem to have quite a time discerning the sorts of contextual features relevant to the determination of references of demonstratives like 'that'. Imagine confronting an ordinary, competent speaker with an array of candidate rules, for example, that the reference of a demonstrative is determined by a certain sort of causal chain, or rather by the referential intentions of the speaker, or rather by the cues available to the competent and attentive auditor. Such a speaker, I submit, would not know where to begin. It is implausible, then, to suppose […] that the semantic rules that govern our practices with indexicals are intellectually available to the competent

> speaker, and capture the speaker's cognitive perspective on the referent. [Wettstein (1989), pp. 325-6].
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> Many users of the so-called directly referential expressions lack a real understanding of the exact mechanism or rule of reference by which the referent is determined. Though we act *in conformity* with some such rule, we do not invariably know the rule in the sense of being able to articulate it […] If we don't know what the semantical rule is, how could it be part of what we say when we use the relevant expression? [Kaplan (1989a), pp. 577-8].

The initial reply to this on behalf of a defensible form of Fregeanism is as follows: although our account should indeed capture "the speaker's cognitive perspective on the referent" for the reasons we have given, and should therefore be "intellectually available" to him, it is not reasonable to interpret this as requiring that the speaker be able to come up himself with the account in the form we have presented it, to articulate it, or accept it as correct, without any theoretical reflection. It is not sensible to assume, in other words, that the speaker's cognitive perspective is captured in that we represent him as explicitly thinking, or being immediately able to think on reflection, of the referent of an indexical in the very terms we have produced. The speaker, for instance, need not have any verbalized way of tracing the difference between types and tokens. Our theoretical account gives *explicit* expression to a knowledge that ordinary speakers only *tacitly* have; or, as Searle repeatedly says to what I take to be a similar effect, our theoretical account *says* what is merely *shown* in the ordinary speaker's practice of producing and understanding indexicals: "This analysis does not imply that 'I' is *synonymous* with 'the person making this utterance' […] because the self-referentiality of the original is shown but not stated, and in the statement of the truth conditions we have stated it and not shown it" [p. 223].

However, this is only an initially plausible rejection of arguments like Wettstein's; it is correct as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. A deeper and more complete rejoinder requires us to make clear what relationship should obtain between the theoretical explicitation and the speaker's tacit knowledge guiding his practice of using and understanding indexicals, for the former to "say" what the latter "shows". For we have to make clear that this can be done in a manner sufficient to vindicate our claim that we are putting forward a form of Fregeanism; that is to say, in a manner that makes acceptable the crucial claim that we have captured, in explicit terms, the speaker's cognitive albeit tacit perspective on the referent. I will not pursue this important issue further at this point, but will come back to it when discussing perception. I move on now to this topic.

Searle's theory of perception has three main ingredients. First, perception involves *perceptual experiences*; these are conscious mental events,

which as such have *phenomenal properties* [p. 45]. The already famous cases of blindsight provides a good example of mental states that may well have the same intentional content as some perceptual states, while lacking the phenomenal properties consciously experienced in perceptual states. (It is not that the intentional states involved in blindsight are wholly unconscious. They can be understood as dispositions to form certain conscious judgments; the point is that these judgments, even though conscious, lack the rich phenomenology of the perceptual experiences on which ordinary perceptual judgments are dependent.) Secondly, perceptual experiences have propositional content [pp. 40-2]; Searle thereby rejects (without much argument, one should say) views like Dretske's, which contemplate an irreducible form of object-perception not involving any judgmental predicative element. Finally, the propositional content of perceptual experiences is essentially token-reflexive: the represented state of affairs is represented as causing the *particular* visual experience [pp. 47-50]. Like the corresponding move in the token-reflexive account of linguistic indexicality, the third element has the main virtue of entailing intuitively correct predictions about the veridicality-conditions of the perceptual states of different thinkers enjoying qualitatively identical experiences.

Consider, by way of illustration, the following example: I am perceiving a red middle-sized sphere one foot before me. According to Searle's analysis, I am thereby having a particular visual experience, which involves my consciously experiencing certain phenomenal properties; this visual experience represents a state of affair consisting of the presence of a red middle-sized sphere before me, and represents this state as causing (the visual experience) itself; and this is indeed the case, that is to say, this process constituted by the state consisting of the presence of a red middle-sized sphere causing the visual experience actually obtains. It is hence irrelevant to the satisfaction of the intentional content of my experience whether there is another thinker (maybe a molecule-by-molecule duplicate of mine) enjoying a qualitatively identical experience at some other location in physical (or logical) space. All of this is clearly presented in Searle's book, so that we do not need to go further into it here.

As already indicated, I think that this account is so far essentially correct, despite the superficial plausibility of objections analogous to the ones we have just contemplated concerning the Reichenbachian treatment of linguistic indexicality. Thus, consider Tyler Burge's criticism in Burge (1991). He does not think that Searle's "relatively complex satisfaction conditions, which analyze the mechanism of reference to physical objects, articulate the mental abilities exercised in visual experience" [Burge (1991), p. 210]. Searle's theory is objectionable in that "it does not match the theory of Intentional content with the theory of knowledge, and gives a misleading picture of mental ability" [*ibid*., p. 209]. The main argument that Burge offers for

this contention appears in the following text: "For the subject's judgments to make reference to visual experiences, the subject himself, not merely a subsystem of the subject, must be capable of making discriminations between experiences and physical objects, and of using these discriminations in a wide range of judgments, judgments which presumably would involve reasoning about the discriminations. I think that these are what are ordinarily called "conceptual discriminations." The subject must be capable of making and utilizing these discriminations in a variety of practical and cognitive endeavors. I see no reason to alter the view of common sense, developmental psychology, and cognitive ethology that these distinctions cannot be drawn by higher animals, children, and adults of low intelligence that nonetheless have visual experience of physical objects" [*ibid*., p. 205].

I think that our initial reaction to this form of superficially plausible criticism should be the same I indicated earlier, for the corresponding criticism of the Fregean token-reflexive account of indexicality. As Searle puts it, Burge (like Wettstein and Kaplan in the preceding texts) is assuming that "any *specification* of an Intentional content, where the Intentional content is a conscious state of the agent, should contain only features which are available to the possessor of the intentional state, he thinks that the description of a conscious intentional content should be given in terms which are part of the immediate consciousness of the agent" [Searle (1991), p. 231]. Searle correctly rejects this assumption: "the agent need not be conscious or aware, or even able to specify, that these are the contents […]. The *specification* may indeed be the result of a difficult philosophical analysis" [*ibid*., p. 232]. The theoretical specification, abductively achieved through the usual process of launching hypotheses and contrasting them with the empirical data (intuitions about how to describe clear circumstances) common to any scientific enterprise, *states* what ordinary usage *shows*, in Searle's suggestive characterization. "The self-referentiality of indexical expressions is […] *shown* but not *said*, just as the self-referentiality of visual experience is 'shown' but not 'seen'" [Searle (1983), p. 213].

Searle also puts this (correct, as far as it goes) rejection of Burge's assumption in different terms, which I do not find entirely perspicuous, but which I interpret in the following way. As we saw before, a defender of the token-reflexive account of linguistic indexicality is in a position to reject any criticism based on the assumption that, say, a token *u* of 'I' in an utterance of 'I am hungry' is synonymous with (i.e., substitutable *salva significatione* by) 'the producer of *u*'. I quoted earlier Searle's way of making the point: when an ordinary speaker utters assertively 'I am hungry', the content he asserts involves himself, i.e., the asserted content is the same state of affairs that could in principle be asserted by uttering different sentences in appropriate circumstances: 'he is hungry', 'Manuel is hungry', and so on. He does not *asserts* anything about his utterance, or its part *u*. He refers to himself, but he does not

refer to *u*; his assertion is about himself, not about *u*. Similarly, when someone sees a red sphere by enjoying a given visual experience *e*, he sees the sphere, and enjoys an intentional state which is about the sphere; he does not see *e*, nor is he enjoying an intentional state which is about *e*. "I do not think that we perform the speech act of referring to our visual experiences when we have them, it is simply that their conditions of satisfaction are token-reflexive or self-referential […]" [Searle (1991), p. 235]. "I am not claiming that the subject refers to his own visual experience. Rather the claim is that the visual experience itself functions self-referentially in fixing the conditions of satisfaction" [*ibid.*, p. 238]. "It is not part of my claim that *the subject refers* to his visual experiences" [*ibid.*, p. 234].

These reactions are, as I said before regarding the corresponding issue concerning linguistic indexicality, correct as far as they go, but the problem is that they do not go far enough. For there is indeed a correct point in what the critics say, even if they make unacceptable assumptions in attempting to capture it. Consider again the linguistic case. The token-reflexive account has been put forward as part of a Fregean account. The essential aspect of Fregean accounts is that they are "internalist", that they reject the "externalist" claims that characterize the theory of direct reference, using here 'internalism' and 'externalism' in one of the two different senses in which Searle uses these terms, one regarding which I (together with McDowell) find his claims entirely correct[2]. A semantic theory is externalist, in this sense, if it contends that fundamental semantic properties, like signification of truth-conditions and truth-conditional import, are ascribed to expressions (and mental states) relative to facts that transcend the knowledge of ordinary speakers and thinkers. "Both the Fregean and the present account of meaning are internalist in the sense that it is in virtue of some mental state in the head of the speaker or hearer […] that speaker or hearer can understand linguistic references" [p. 198]. The opponent of the Fregean typically contends that, on the contrary, "reference is achieved in virtue of some *external* causal relations" [p. 199].

Searle emphatically qualifies 'causal relations' with 'external' here, because, as we have seen, his own account also resorts to causal relations to determine reference. According to Searle, therefore, the fact that a semantic account of reference adverts to causality does not suffice to count it as externalist. Searle takes his account to be compatible with internalism in the sense we have so far introduced because it is only what he calls *intentional causation* that his account adverts to. Intentional causation is defined by two properties: it is a relation between events at least one of which has intentional properties that are relevant or explanatory of the causal transaction at stake; and the intentional properties in question involve the representation of the other event, and usually also the self-referential representation of the representing event and its causal link to the represented [pp. 122-3]. Any case of perception, as any case of the production of an indexical, provides examples

of intentional causation, if Searle's account is correct. Thus, Searle rejects the externalist's despair of finding inside the mind something sufficient to determine a given particular, as opposed to any other particular qualitatively indistinguishable from it, as the referent of our words or the object of our perceptual states, which leads the externalist to find the determinant "from the third-person or external point of view" [p. 65]. He attributes this despair in part to the wrong assumption "that causation is always a non-Intentional relation, that is, that is always a natural relation among objects and events in the world" [p. 65].

This is all very well, but it makes glaringly salient Searle's commitment to the subject of a perceptual state or the user of an indexical expression having some *cognitive access* to the entities that do the crucial trick in his account: token-expressions and token-experiences, and the relations by means of which they determine their referents. Subjects indeed do not need to have the sort of *explicit* representation provided by the theoretical account; they do not need to be taken as making a claim about the token-indexical (in the linguistic case) or as seeing the token-experience (in the perceptual case). But they do need to have some sort of *tacit* or *implicit* representation of the relevant tokens, for Searle's account to fulfil its philosophical commitments, i.e., for it to be *internalist* in the sense that it provides an account of intentionality which is Fregean and given "from a first-personal" point of view. These representations through which ordinary speakers and thinkers have a first-personal cognitive access to the state of affairs they represent, and for which Searle's theory provides an explicit, theoretical characterization, cannot be tacit or implicit in the sense that cognitive psychologists give to these terms. This is because tacit knowledge, in this sense, is knowledge only accessible to the subjects to which it is attributed by empirical investigation of the sort pursued by cognitive psychology, and this is not "first-personal" enough.

It is a this point that I find Searle's account of perception fundamentally underdeveloped. It is not that I do not see how the commitments that he has incurred, if the preceding discussion is correct, could be satisfied. I do think they can be carried out; but the way I envisage is not open to Searle, for it contradicts some of his claims. Relatedly, because the account is thus underdeveloped, I do not have any clue as to how Searle could vindicate his philosophically most arguable and at the same time most interesting claim, his contention that the theory of intentionality is "internalist" in an altogether different sense from the one so far contemplated. According to this alternative sense, an account of intentionality is "internalist" if it makes a thinker's possession of intentional states logically or conceptually compatible with the non-existence of every "external" particular, every particular other than entities like visual experiences and other states of consciousness. Such an account should make at least conceptually possible skeptical scenarios of the

radical sort envisaged in thought-experiments like Putnam's "brain in a vat" or Descartes' "Evil Demon" fantasies.

Thus, it is in this vein that Searle contends that only *de dicto* beliefs exist, in the understanding that "purely *de dicto* beliefs could be held by a brain in a vat; they are independent of how the world is in fact" [p. 209; see also p. 230]. "It is a consequence of my account of Intentionality that one could have all of the mental contents one has, and still the objects that in fact correspond to those contents in the world, the objects which "fit" the contents and thus are "referred to" by the representations in question, might not even exist" [Searle (1991), p. 237]. Notice that the claim that is being made in these quotations is not the weaker contention, surely acceptable to anybody, that the objects that *any given* concrete allegedly perceptual representation is about may not exist; for this is still compatible with the conceptual impossibility of the scenarios contemplated in radical skeptical hypotheses. It is the stronger one, truly vindicating them, that the objects that *all* our allegedly perceptual representations are about may not exist: "The thesis of existence-independence is that we could have exactly the *representations* we do and yet the *objects* represented in the world might not exist" [Searle (1991), p. 240]. (Remember that I use 'object' both for material events and material individuals.)

To avoid confusions with the previous sense of *internalism*, that relative to which I accept this doctrine (intentional content of mental states and linguistic utterances have to be presented in a "first-personal" form in the way adumbrated by Fregean views) and reject its opposite, I will use henceforth 'internalism' only in this second, alternative sense, to refer to the thesis that the individuation of mental and linguistic content is "existence-independent", and I will use 'externalism' accordingly; this usage corresponds I think to the more usual understanding of 'internalism' and 'externalism' in discussions such as this. I will reserve 'first-personal' and 'third-personal' for the sense of the contrast between "internal" and "external" and their cognates we had been considering earlier.

We claimed earlier that the Fregean, first-personal character of our token-reflexive account of indexicality does not impose on us, against what critics assume, the view that a speaker who utters 'I am hungry' refers thereby to, or has some form of explicit representation of, the token of 'I' he has produced or its relation to himself. Analogously, adopting an account of perception like Searle's does not impose on us the view that an ordinary perceiver of a red middle-sized sphere before him sees his visual experience, or has any other form of similarly explicit representation of the visual experience or his relation to it, analogous to the explicit perceptual representation of the sphere which the perceptual experience provides for him. However, we have also seen that the first-personal nature of our account does commit us to attribute to our subjects some cognitive access to tokens and the subject's relation to them, in the linguistic case, and concerning experiences and the sub-

ject's relation to them in perception. The Fregean nature of the account obliges us to admit, and to make sense of the fact, that tokens, and those of their relational properties by means of which the referents are determined, are — as they say — "within the subjects' ken".

This can be further justified on the basis of the following considerations. Reverting again to the linguistic case, I think that when we give a philosophical, theoretical characterization of the sort we are considering here, we are doing something of the following nature: we have a pretty good idea of the sort of psychological explanation *at the personal* (as opposed to "sub-personal", only accessible through the empirical means of cognitive science) *level*, of the sort of *fully rational* explanation, that could be given of particular uses of indexicals by a speaker who knew the explicit characterization provided by our account, and who guided his use by explicitly attending to it. We believe, and think we have good reasons to believe, that particular uses of indexicals by ordinary speakers also have *rational* explanations, psychological explanations not solely at the "sub-personal" level given by the explanations of cognitive scientists. Finally, although we do not have a clear idea of the nature of these rational explanations, we assume that the more readily understandable rational explanations suggested by our account for the different case of the speaker explicitly abiding by it can be used to model (the way in which the Solar System can be used to "model" the atom) the former: it is "as if" ordinary speakers proceeded rationally as the user guided by our explicit account[3].

This contention, that in offering an explicit characterization we are purporting to model in the most straightforward way we can envisage a process which we do not understand very well but which we take in any case to be *rational* and not merely operating at a "sub-personal" level, has I believe the following consequence: that it must be possible to construe a purely *a priori* justification of the theoretical claim embodied in the explicit characterization. Once we have at our disposal explicit representations of the needed concepts (in the linguistic case, of the distinction between types and tokens, and of the relevant properties of tokens), we have to be able to validate the account only on the basis of the confirmation of predictions derived from the account regarding the truth-conditions of different sentences involving indexicals given by our intuitions about clear cases, and data of a similar aprioristic nature.

It does not matter for present concerns whether the details of such an explication of the "first-personal" nature of an account of intentionality are correct. Whatever the details, it seems clear to me that the commitment to such an account forces the defender of a token-reflexive theory of indexicality to admit that, although speakers do not refer to token-indexicals when they use them, their ability to refer to ordinary entities by using tokens of indexicals involves some form of (tacit) cognitive access to those tokens and to those of their properties in virtue of which they have a certain signification.

Something analogous applies to an account of perception like Searle's. If the account is correct, it manages to provide a truly "first-personal" explanation of the intentionality of perception only to the extent that the ability of ordinary perceivers to see things like a red, middle-sized sphere involves some form of cognitive access to concrete visual experiences, and those of their properties in virtue of which the thinker enjoying them perceives thereby the sphere; a form of (tacit) cognitive access sufficient to sustain an *a priori* validation of the sort of explicit account that a theory like Searle's provides[4].

Searle does not say anything of a positive nature about this issue. He limits himself to rejecting a traditional theory which at least satisfies the requirement, the representative theory of perception. In spite of its lack of favour with contemporary philosophers, I myself believe some form of this theory to be correct, and in fact the only one in harmony with what I have so far granted to Searle[5]. This is not the place in which to defend my own views on the matter, however, and in any case I lack the space for it. By touching briefly upon some aspects of representative theories, I purport to defend in closing the modest claims this paper strives to make: namely, that Searle's account needs elaboration at some crucial points, specially if we are to accept that it vindicates internalism; and that it is not immediately clear (to say the least) how the elaboration could go, in a manner compatible with the main contentions we find in the book.

On the basis of his correct insistence on token-reflexivity, as we have seen and endorsed so far, Searle manages to give an accurate explanation of how a certain particular (scene or event) is determined as a perceptual object. Following in this the lead of Reichenbachian accounts of linguistic indexicality, he thereby countervails the misguided tendency of philosophers to concentrate in their accounts of intentionality on the semantic properties of repeatable, property-like entities. However, one has the impression that, in so focussing on particulars and token-reflexivity, Searle has fallen into the opposite trap. Whatever the importance of token-reflexivity, no correct account of linguistic indexicality can forget about the *general* relationship between the *type* 'I' and the general property of being the utterer of a token of it (notice that tokens are here existentially quantified over, so that this is indeed a *general* property), between the type 'he' and being the most salient male in a context where a token of it is produced, between the type 'now' and being the time at which a token of it is produced, and so on. Correspondingly, no correct theory of perception can evade offering an account of the meaningful general, repeatable properties of perceptual experiences, and the corresponding properties of the perceived scene which the former help determine. It is all very well to insist that focussing on the semantic relations between universals might make us forgetful about that in virtue of which we perceive *concrete* scenes; but philosophers who forget to include in their accounts the general relations are not less subject to blame.

In the linguistic case, the relationship between the repeatable properties of the token that are essential to the determination of the signification, and their corresponding meanings, is conventional: the same property (*being the utterer*) which is semantically associated with the type 'I' in English, is associated with the type 'yo' by the conventions constituting Spanish. Aside from the regularities in rational behavior constituting those conventions, there is of course no other relation between those types and their identical meaning. Now, the crucial question to ask Searle and ourselves here is: *What are the meaningful general properties of perceptual experiences, and what is the nature of their semantic relationship with corresponding properties of the perceived scenes?* This question should receive an answer compatible with the first-personal character we have attributed to any correct theory in this field. That is to say, the meaningful properties of experiences which our account eventually postulates, together with their content-determining relations with other properties, should be non-empirically accessible to ordinary perceivers with theoretical aspirations and the proper conceptual endowment for the task. As far as I can tell, Searle's text remains silent about these questions. As I have insisted, however, no adequate treatment of this topic can evade answering them, and least of all one trying to make good of the controversial philosophical claims (internalism) which are an essential part of Searle's proposals.

Perceptual experiences are, we have said, essentially *conscious* states, states with phenomenal properties: there is something it is like to experience them. We may as well call these phenomenal properties by their usual philosophical name: *qualia*. Presumably, the meaningful general properties of perceptual experiences are their *qualia*. Can we say more about them, and about the relations by virtue of which a given token-experience instantiating them secures a given particular scene as the perceived object? Representative theories provide a well-known reply to these questions. There are of course many different theories belonging to the family of representative accounts. I will just sketch the answers which are characteristic of representative theories, having specifically in mind the specific version that I myself consider correct.

Firstly, representative theories claim that the act-object structure characteristic of intentional events applies to conscious experiences too: experiences are experiencings of complex particulars instantiating *qualia*. Not to confuse experienc*ings* with their experienc*ed* structured phenomenal objects, I will refer to the latter, for lack of a better word, as *Erlebnis (-se)* – thus connecting with the tradition of Carnap's *Aufbau* and Goodman's *The Structure of Appearance*, to which I feel close. The reasons for this first claim are well-known. There are hallucinatory experiences, like the experience of after-images. In them, we seem to be related to a richly structured spatiotemporal field, of the sort that we are related to in successful perception: the field may include, say, a red cubic shape to the left and a green spherical shape to the

right, both at a certain distance in front of us, and both moving in different directions at different velocities. This is a given fact; representative theories add to it the claim, established by argument, that philosophical theories which attempt to get rid of these complex particulars (not the experiencings, mind you, which everybody grants, but their alleged objects, the *Erlebnisse*) by reductively analyzing the hallucinatory experience of them in terms of similar experiences of real scenes in cases of successful perception simply do not work[6].

Secondly, according to representative theories experiences possess their intentional objects not just in virtue of the causal relations between particular experiences (whose objects are given *Erlebnisse*) and scenes to which Searle appeals, but also in virtue of general relations of resemblance between the *qualia* of the experienced *Erlebnisse* and the properties intentionally attributed to the scene. That is to say, the *Erlebnisse* which are the objects of perceptual experiences themselves are experienced as instantiating properties (phenomenal properties) *similar* to the ones characterizing the perceived scenes in cases of successful perception. It is not part of the account the claim that the two sets of properties are literally the same, that is to say, that an *Erlebnis* is green, or spherical, literally in the sense in which the intentional sphere is green and spherical. In fact, this is not to be expected. For it is part of the account that, when everything goes well, the scene having the intentional properties it has causes the experience to be the kind of *Erlebnis* it is. Underlying these causal transactions there will be, in all probability, nomic relations linking physical properties of the scene on which its intentional properties supervene, with physical properties of the experience on which its corresponding phenomenal properties in their turn supervene; this may well be even required by a correct theory of the causal efficacy of entities like ordinary perceptible scenes. However, it is only to be expected that the relevant physical bases for the two sets of properties (manifest properties of experienced scenes and phenomenal properties of *Erlebnisse*) will differ. They can therefore hardly be the same properties. This is why an acceptable representative theory should only require them to be similar in interestingly specific respects. We lack the space to elaborate here on the nature of this similarity. Suffice it to say that *qualia* are experienced as occupying a place in a qualitative space, defined by relations among them (determinate-determinable; hue, saturation and brightness among colour-qualia; intensity and pitch among sound-qualia, and so on and so forth). The similitude we need has to do with the existence of an isomorphism relating these space and a corresponding one in which the manifest properties occupy places in their turn.

Finally, there is an epistemological claim constituting representative theories: in any case of successful perception, the perceived objective scene is known *in virtue of* the epistemically more basic knowledge of the corresponding *Erlebnis*. This mediation is rather like the one obtaining when we

say that we ordinarily perceive Venus *in virtue of* perceiving a bright, luminous light at a given position on the sky[7]. Even if that particular luminous light is constituted by Venus, and there is on account of this no metaphysically possible world in which it exists without thereby Venus existing, it is at least epistemically possible for the luminous body to exist without a planet existing. The important consequence for our purposes is hence this: in the same way that we can coherently contemplate an at least conceptually possible (although perhaps not *metaphysically* possible) counterfactual circumstance such that that very bright luminous light is not constituted by a planet (let alone Venus), but perhaps by a chariot of fire, in that very same way we can coherently contemplate, in any case of successful perception, a conceptually possible situation such that we are suffering an hallucination and the scene in front of us is radically at odds with what we seem to see. This priority is merely epistemological, and it concerns only particular cases. I do not take to be essential aspects of representative theories doubtful claims like that we have a temporally prior access to experiences, or that it is metaphysically possible for the specific experience involved in a case of successful perception to exist without the perceptual object, nor even that we have a conception of experiences, tacit or explicit, which is *in general* independent of our conception of material objects.

This is all we need to say about representative theories here. Following contemporary trends, Searle distances himself from such accounts, even though they are consistent with some of his claims (the relevance of token-reflexivity, and of phenomenal consciousness, to an account of perception, and the mild form of internalism described in the previous paragraph). His objections do not seem at all convincing to me. Let me consider first the most worrying one: "The main difficulty with a representative theory of perception is that the notion of resemblance between the things we perceive, the sense data, and the thing that the sense data represent, the material object, must be unintelligible since the object term is by definition inaccessible to the senses" [p. 59]. Now, without further argument, this claim is certainly unfair to the representationalist. The latter's claim is not that we do not see material objects, but only our sense data. His claim is rather that we do see material objects, but *in virtue of* being aware of our sense data. There is according to him a general relation, *seeing something in virtue of seeing* (or being otherwise aware of) *something else*, making for instance true that I see that the tank is empty (in virtue of my seeing that the needle is in a certain position), that I see that Venus is in Leo (in virtue of my seeing that a luminous body occupies such and such position relative to others in the nightly sky) and also that I see that the red sphere is in front of me (in virtue of seeing, or as — I prefer to say for reasons presently to be explained — being aware of, such and such *Erlebniss*).

If a philosophical argument could be provided for the objection Searle wants to make, it is only one against a certain form of the representative the-

ory, a form that I believe incorrect precisely on the basis that it succumbs to such an objection. It is, by the way, a form of the representative theory objectionable on such count precisely to the extent that, and because, it shares with Searle's view that which I find most disputable in it, namely, internalism[8]. In the objectionable version of the representative theory, as Gareth Evans aptly puts it, "the subject would have been regarded as receiving data, intrinsically without objective content, into which he was supposed to read the appropriate objective significance by means of an (extremely shaky) inference" [Evans (1982), pp. 122-3]. But there is no reason why any theory which is representative in that it accepts the three distinctive claims enumerated before should accept this. In particular, the version I would accept subscribes this alternative claim by Evans: "The only events that can conceivably be regarded as data for a conscious, reasoning subject are *seemings* – events, that is, already imbued with (apparent) objective significance, and with a necessary, though resistible, propensity to influence our actions" [*ibid*., p. 123][9].

More specifically, the form of the representative theory I accept subscribes this contention by endorsing the externalism defended by Evans himself (and by McDowell in papers like McDowell (1986)). Evans and McDowell have notoriously contended that the content of a claim involving demonstratives and other indexicals is individuated in part relative to the significations of the indexicals in it. A claim made with a sentence featuring the same "purely qualitative" meaning might nonetheless be a different claim; and if a demonstrative in an indexical utterance fails to signify, the utterance fails thereby to make any claim. Of course, this is not to say that in the latter case the utterance would be entirely devoid of "meaning". By its being articulated in a generally significant way out of generally significant expressions (i.e., by its parasitic dependence on certain utterances duly possessing an indexical content), it cannot be equalled to the sheer utterance of gibberish.

Analogously, an account of perception which subscribes to the characteristic tenets of representative theories is nonetheless free to claim that the perceived object is an essential element in the individuation of the content of perceptual experiences, and that hallucinations and other cases of perceptual failure have only a derivative meaning, parasitic on the fully-fledged *de re* contents of perceptual experiences constituting successful, real perceptions. How this externalist claim is developed and justified will depend on the details of the account; representative theories will undoubtedly provide developments germane to the three tenets distinguishing them. The consequences of adopting the Evans-McDowell line, and the general reasons for accepting it, can be understood independently of such details.

Whatever the details, it is my view that a correct form of the representative theory would validate the remarks that Grice included at the end of his classic defence of the causal theory of perception, in reply precisely to criticism like Searle's that representative theories make the perceptual object "by

definition inaccessible to the senses". It would validate, in particular, the following remark by Grice: "The allegedly 'fundamental' case (which is supposed to underlie other kinds of case), in which a perceptual claim is to be establishable purely on the basis of some set of sense-datum statements, is a myth; any justification of a particular perceptual claim will rely on the truth of one or more further propositions about the material world (for example, about the percipient's body). To insist that the 'fundamental' case be selected for consideration is, in effect, to assume at the start that it is conceptually legitimate for me to treat as open to question all my beliefs about the material world at once; and the skeptic is not entitled to start with this assumption" [Grice (1961), p. 246]. Against Searle's most ambitious philosophical claim, this externalist form of the representative account would therefore not accept as a genuine conceptual possibility "that we could have exactly the *representations* we do and yet the *objects* represented in the world might not exist" [Searle (1991), p. 240]. Any particular perceptual experience may fail to constitute a genuine perception, to be sure, but not all of them can[10].

Searle offers two other criticism of the representative theory. The first is that he cannot make any sense of the attribution of the manifest properties (or proper analogues of them) to experiences. As far as I can see, no argument is given for this other than an appeal to intuition, or to the infamous Wittgensteinian manoeuvre of attributing to rival accounts "category mistakes" [p. 43]. Given the representative theory, "we are placed in the absurd situation of identifying two yellow station wagon shaped things in the perceptual situation, the yellow station wagon and the visual experience" [p. 38]. But, firstly, we sketched above an account of how the application of the same terms to external objects and perceptual experiences could be vindicated relative to the existence of similitudes in certain respects among them. And aside from that, as far as intuition goes, there does not seem to be anything counterintuitive here. The long list of philosophers (since the days of the very early stages of the discipline) prepared to attribute to images and "ideas" properties like *being red* and *spherical* without further ado surely speaks against Searle's intuitions. It is not natural to say, when the finger is near our nose and we "double-see", that simultaneously with our experiencing there are in front of us for us to see, or at least to be aware of, two cases of a fleshy-coloured finger-shape? No appeal to intuition can discredit a positive answer. On the contrary, it is philosophical theories that purport to explain away this by reductively analysing our well-entrenched ordinary description of the situation by appealing only to *being fleshy-coloured* and *being finger-shaped* as properties of real flesh and blood fingers, and causal and counterfactual relations relating them to experiences and perceptual judgments, which intuition discredits. Because according to intuition there are two finger shapes *actually* there; intuitively, the two fleshy-coloured finger-shapes do not enjoy — as

according to those reductive philosophical accounts they do — a merely iffy (putative, or intentional) existence.

But, as Sydney Shoemaker points out, once we have accepted non-reducible purely mental instances of a fleshy-coloured finger-shape in double vision, after-images and other hallucinatory circumstances, to go all the way down with the sense-datum theory seems inescapable: "What happens when I move my finger away, or focus my eyes, so that, as one might say, the two images coalesce into one? Surely it is intolerable to say that in this case two *mental images* coalesced into one *flesh and blood finger*. *If* we say that when seeing double I saw two finger-shaped mental images, then we had better say that what these coalesced into is one finger-shaped mental image, and that, as the sense-datum theory says, veridically perceiving a physical thing always involves 'immediately' perceiving a mental image." [Shoemaker (1994), p. 262]. Which is to say that in the case of veridical perception, when one seems to see just one finger-shape, there are two fleshy-coloured finger-shapes: the flesh and blood finger, and the purely mental.

I should perhaps say that my point is not that examples like this suffice to make a case for representative theories; that would indeed constitute an instance of the "sense-datum fallacy" (which, by the way, when properly supported with further argument and critical examination of alternative accounts, proves to be no fallacy at all). Much more work should be done; in particular, the outlined similitude relating *qualia* and the external properties they represent should be made perspicuous, and it should be justified that it accounts reasonably well from a first-personal perspective for our willingness to apply terms like 'red' and 'spherical' both to experiences and to the scenes they present. My point is just that attributing to the *Erlebnisse* involved in perceptual experiences properties analogous to the manifest properties instantiated in perceived scenes is not intuitively implausible, against what Searle contends[11].

Let me sum up the lesson which I want to extract from the foregoing discussion for my present concerns. Searle defends a causal account of perception. This means that, according to him, when I see the yellow station wagon, there are at least two relevant objects involved: the yellow station wagon (or the relevant event concerning it), and the perceptual experience. The perceptual experience itself has some properties, essentially involved in the perceptual process. Consider any analysis of the phenomenal properties of perceptual experiences reducing them to causal-functional properties, like the ones propounded, say, in Tye (1995) or Dretske (1995). This kind of analysis would certainly allow their defenders to say that, in the yellow station-wagon-shaped thing line of business, there is in the perceptual situation only one entity. Reductive analyses like these are not correct, however; and they are not in any case an option open to Searle, whose views on consciousness suggest that he cares least than any other philosopher for them. So, what is Searle's theory? What are, according to him, the general properties essential

to perceptual experiences which we so naturally describe with expressions like 'red' or 'spherical', and what are the relations by means of which they contribute to determine the intentional contents of the experiences which instantiate them? Can he justify that the relevant properties are accessible in a privileged way from the first-person perspective to those entertaining instances of them?

The final criticism Searle makes of representative theories concerns the claim, traditionally made by these accounts, that we see external entities by *seeing* our experiences. Searle claims that we only see external objects; we do not see the perceptual experiences involved in perception. Once again, I cannot see any argument for this, other than an appeal to intuition [pp. 37-8, 44, 49 and 58]. However, on the basis of the forceful criticism of the perceptual model of introspection and "inner sense" in Shoemaker (1994), I agree with Searle on this point. The cognitive access we have to our experiences (tacit, in the case of ordinary perceivers: the mere phenomenal consciousness of them; only explicit when we master the concepts proper of a theoretical account of perception) is not properly characterized as a form of perception. The main reason for this is that perception is an epistemic achievement; in any particular case, no matter what the appearances are, we may fail to perceive what we take ourselves to do (see the paper by Shoemaker for further considerations). Our cognitive access to experiences and their properties is on the other hand much more secure, much less of an achievement. This is, however, almost as a mere terminological point. Although we do not see the scenes we perceive by *seeing* our perceptual experiences, we see the former by *being aware of* the latter. Or so I claim, on the basis of the reasons outlined before.

I conclude with a summary of my worries regarding Searle's theory of perception. (1) Assuming the token-reflexive character of perception, (a) what are the general properties of perceptual experiences also involved in the determination of their intentional contents, and (b) how do they relate to the specific intentional contents with specific properties they help determine? (2) Given that Searle's theory is Fregean, and thus first-personal, does not his account entail that the subject of a perceptual state has some form of cognitive access, albeit tacit, to the particular experience and its causal relation with the perceived scene? If this is so, what does he mean when he describes his account as a form of "direct realism"? Does not his view entail that we see material scenes in virtue of our awareness of our experiences and the causal relations in which they are involved? How can otherwise an even mild form of internalism be secured? (3) Finally, and granted this mild form of internalism, what justification can Searle provide for his robust internalism, involving his claim of "existence-independence"? Nothing in his account seems to require it, for everything he explicitly says is compatible with the externalism

about perception I have outlined. I hope I have said enough to make clear that these questions need answers.

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NOTES

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[1] This proposal has been criticized by Kaplan an others, mainly on the basis that it makes impossible to develop a logic of indexicals. These writers take the expression bearing the fundamental semantic properties to be abstract, repeatable and not concrete "types-in-a-context". I think that their misgivings lack any reasonable basis, and also that their own proposals are incorrect and would fall prey to the same objections if adequately modified. I defend these claims in García-Carpintero (1998).

[2] McDowell (1991) elaborates further on the distinction between the two senses.

[3] These remarks are inspired by Mark Crimmins account of tacit belief in Crimmins (1992). On models, see sec. XIII of Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind".

[4] I take it that Searle's phenomenological justification of his appeal to causation [Searle (1991), p. 236, and Searle (1983), p. 124n.], together with his claim that the concept of reality involves causal elements [Searle (1983), pp. 75 and 131] manifests an acknowledgement of this commitment, and constitutes an attempt at satisfying it.

[5] Jackson (1977) and Perkins (1983) contain forceful arguments for representative theories. I have defended a somewhat different version in García-Carpintero (forthcoming).

[6] These analyses appeal typically to causal-functional relations between real scenes and experiences, perhaps also between experiences and perceptual judgments, and counterfactual dependences supported by those causal relations. For a justification of the claim in the text, see Jackson (1977) and García-Carpintero forthcoming.

[7] At this point, my approach differs from Jackson's, who shares with contemporary philosophers the fear that, somehow (nobody I have asked seems to know exactly how) Wittgenstein's private language argument is powerful enough to refute any traditional form of the representative theory. Because of that, Jackson avoids an epistemological explanation of the relation 'in virtue of'. I have criticized Jackson's view, and defended an elaborated version of what I say here, in García-Carpintero forthcoming.

[8] It is therefore mildly paradoxical that Searle finds it objectionable on this basis, a paradox that highlights the main question that Searle's views on perception raise: How does he manage to combine internalism with "direct realism"? He does not; he only seems to, by relying at crucial junctures on unelaborated suggestions.

[9] I would not characterize them as "seemings", for the well-known Wittgensteinian reason that seemings as such are conceptually derivative, or secondary, relative to concepts of external, manifest scenes. I hold instead (in the terms of Peacocke (1983)) a "no-priority" view of the conceptual liaisons between concepts of the latter and concepts of phenomenal properties.

[10] I am here hinting at a form of what are nowadays called "disjunctive accounts" of perception, as opposed to "conjunctive" accounts (see McDowell (1982)). Contrary to Snowdon 1980-1, I do not think these accounts constitute an alternative to the causal theory of perception.

[11] On the basis of the same fears common to most contemporary philosophers, Shoemaker (the philosopher to whom I feel otherwise closest in these matters) rejects to take himself the path leading to the sense-datum theory, from the very first step (the hallucinatory case). The only serious argument he appears to have appeals to the intuition of which reductivists make the most, that the phenomenal properties of experience "are diaphanous; if one tries to attend to them, all one finds is the representative content of experience" [Shoemaker (1990), p. 113; see also Shoeamaker (1994), p. 301]. He proposes on this basis an alternative account, which features mysteriously fleeting phenomenal properties, defined in terms of no less mysterious *qualia*. The sense-datum theory I envisage can explain the "diaphanous character" of phenomenal properties without these implausibilities.

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