

WHITEHEAD'S RESISTANCE TO SCEPTICISM IN RELATION TO SANTAYANA

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Abstract: Without ever becoming central, the refutation of scepticism constitutes one of the pervading themes of Whitehead's philosophy of perception. His way of resisting scepticism about the external world was the doctrine of the two pure modes of perception, presentational immediacy and causal efficacy, and of the mixt mode of symbolic reference. In the present study, I try to evaluate Whitehead's theory of perception as a rampart against scepticism of the sort Santayana developed in *Sceoticism and Animal Faith*. I argue that the doctrine of causal efficacy does not effectively counter the solipsism of the present moment, but Whitehead's doctrine of subjective forms works as a patch for the theory, and allows it to counter some varieties of scepticism.

Keywords: Whitehead, Santayana, critical realism, solipsism of the present moment, causal efficacy.

The refutation of scepticism is not the specific topic of any of Whitehead's writings, but I don't think it would be an exaggeration to say it constitutes, nevertheless, one of the pervading themes of his philosophy of perception. The major historical expression of scepticism Whitehead constantly fought was Hume's philosophy. But there was also a contemporary expression of scepticism, Santayana's. Whitehead thought highly of the latter's *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, and considered it sufficiently important not only to refer to it in PR (and he was parsimonious with the references to contemporary works), but also to critically engage with it (which is not characteristic of Whitehead), even if with the utmost deference. The simple fact that Santayana's name occurs twice in the table of contents of PR can suggest the importance Whitehead attached to his doctrines.

Santayana characteristically argues that a radical form of scepticism, which he called 'solipsism of the present moment' (or of the passing moment) is a perfectly consistent and logically irrefutable philosophical position. Like Descartes, Santayana pushed scepticism to the extreme, but only to discover, unlike Descartes, that there is no rational way out. Our perceptual beliefs about the external world are not rationally justified, they rest on a dumb physical reaction to the efficacy of our environment, which Santayana calls 'animal faith'.

Undoubtedly, it seemed important to Whitehead to resist Santayana's scepticism, and to restore the possibility of the perceptual knowledge of the world without adhering to the thesis of the animal faith, which he considered a 'sturdy make-belief' (PR p. 54). His way of resisting the solipsism of the passing moment

is the replacement of Santayana's doctrine of 'animal faith'¹ with a doctrine of a second mode of perception, that of causal efficacy. He writes: 'we must – to avoid "solipsism of the present moment" – include in direct perception something more than presentational immediacy. For the organic theory, the most primitive perception is "feeling the body as functioning". This is a feeling of the world in the past' (PR p. 81). I believe this line of defense fails, but I also think that his mature theory has the resources to counter some classical sceptical arguments.

In what follows, I will start by recalling one of the classical sceptical arguments, the argument from hallucination. Second, I will expose the neorealist (Santayana's) doctrine. Third, I will contrast Whitehead's and Santayana's theories and, fourth, offer a sketch of his doctrine of causal efficacy. Finally, I will argue that there is another Whiteheadian objection to the argument from hallucination, which Whitehead didn't raise.

1. THE ARGUMENT FROM HALLUCINATION

The cornerstone of the argument from hallucination is what Robinson called 'the phenomenal principle', a principle Whitehead accepted²:

(PP) If a subject S has the visual experience of a thing x possessed of a quality F, then there exists a thing y, such as y has the quality F and y stands in a particular relation R (to be defined) to x.

The phenomenal principle entails that when a subject S has a hallucinatory sensible experience (for example the alcoholic 'seeing' pink rats in DT), he is actually aware of a sense-datum, not related in any way to any existent physical object (not expressing any relation between existing things in a common physical world, as Whitehead would say).

The next step is to argue that delusional perceptual experiences and genuine perceptions are qualitatively indistinguishable. When I see a straight stick looking bent when plunged into water, my visual experience is not intrinsically different from the experience I have when I look at a stick that is really bent. Similarly, the alcoholic's visual experience of pink rats is not intrinsically different from the experience he would

¹ The doctrine of animal faith is in line with Hume's remarks:

'It seems evident, that men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses; and that, without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason, we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would exist, though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated. Even the animal creations are governed by a like opinion, and preserve this belief of external objects, in all their thoughts, designs, and actions.'

It seems also evident, that when men follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion, that the one are nothing but representations of the other.' (EHU, XII, 1, pp. 151)

² 'When we see a coloured shape, it may be a real man, or a ghost, or an image behind a mirror, or a hallucination; but whatever it be, *there* it is – exhibiting to us a certain region of external space.' (PR, p. 324)

have if he actually saw pink rats. If there is no intrinsic difference between veridical experiences (actual cases of perception) and hallucinations, then both kinds of experience must have in common an underlying mental state. This thesis is sometimes called the Common Factor Principle (CFP). In both genuine perceptions and hallucinations, the subject experiences the same kind of mental states. Usually there is talk of immediate apprehension of sense-data. So for any subject S, having a hallucination is qualitatively exactly like having a veridical perceptual experience: in both cases he is immediately acquainted with sense-data.

Therefore, the conclusion goes, in every perceptual experience, be it veridical, illusory or hallucinatory, the subject is immediately acquainted *only with sense-data, and never with physical things*.

As soon as the doctrine of sense-data is accepted, the gate is wide open to scepticism. The only things we infallibly apprehend and know are the sense-data we are acquainted with. And we believe that, through them, we mediately apprehend physical objects, more generally, the physical world. But what justifies this belief? After all, it is logically possible that my perceptual experience is self-contained. Perhaps the reality beyond the veil of perception is very different from what I believe I know based on my perceptual experience: perhaps I am a brain in a vat. Perhaps there is nothing beyond the wall of sense-data arising every time I look around. Perhaps my entire experience consists of illusions or hallucinations, and never, or very rarely, of veridical experiences. If this is indeed possible, then I have no means of knowing whether there exists anything besides myself and my sense-data, nor, in case there is something, of knowing whether this something is anything like the panorama yielded to me by my sense-data.

2. SANTAYANA'S DOCTRINE OF THE GIVEN

Santayana's *Scepticism and Animal Faith* opens with a devastating critique of the 'dogmas' embedded in the plain man's view. Santayana claims that the dogmas of common sense cannot be completely abandoned, even by the most ferocious sceptic. Well aware of the impossibility of a dogma-free scepticism, Santayana emphasizes that the psychological compulsion to believe something, to adopt dogmas, does not justify any such dogma. That we find ourselves compelled to believe something, it's true; but just because we are inevitably prompted by experience to form beliefs about the external world, ourselves, or other persons, it doesn't mean that we are justified in forming these beliefs. So what are we justified to believe on the basis of our experience? Like Descartes or Husserl, Santayana decides 'to push scepticism as far as [he] logically can, in order to clear [his] mind of illusion, even at the price of intellectual suicide' (SAF p. 10).

By unflinchingly forcing common sense into retreat, Santayana is left only with the panorama of appearances yielded to him by present experience, excluding the self and the temporal world. 'The solipsist thus becomes an incredulous spectator of his own romance, thinks his own adventure fictions, and accepts a

solipsism of the present moment' (SAF p. 15). This radical form of scepticism is also logically consistent, *pace* some critics (e.g., Royce, as suggests Sprigge). What the sceptic does, is to contemplate the images succeeding before him without according them any credit. He refuses to assent to them, and there is nothing self-contradictory about that. The attitude is difficult and cannot be maintained indefinitely, but it can be honestly maintained for a while.

Santayana's sceptical reduction issues thus in the immediate awareness of a 'datum', free from any external relation, and not signifying the existence of anything: neither of an actual entity having its character, nor of a subject knowing it. But the present, momentary datum itself, isn't it existent? Isn't it all that can be safely asserted to exist? An affirmative answer seems to be accepted by many philosophers, in the guise of 'the phenomenal principle'.

According to Santayana, such an argument would mistake 'pure being' for 'existence'. Not unlike Meinong, Santayana admitted that there are things that don't exist; that is, things that have being, but do not have existence. It is precisely the case of the perceptual datum, which is not 'in flux, determined by external relations, and jostled by irrelevant events' (SAF p. 42). Santayana holds that to say that the datum exists, is to make a sort of category mistake (SAF p. 45). He thus concludes that 'nothing given exists'.

Consequently, the only certitudes we have concern not things possessing existence, but entities having pure being (not exhibiting change, nor having any external relation to anything). They are neither a part of the mind, nor of the environment. They are a *tertium quid*, but unlike the classical empiricists' ideas, they are not mind-dependent and, unlike the recent realists' sensible qualities, they are not object-dependent. These entities Santayana calls 'essences' (SAF p. 74), welcoming the Platonic ringing of the term, while discarding all Platonic moral and metaphysical implications. By discovering the world of essences, the sceptic finds a resting point, without having to abandon scepticism. Santayana's characterization of the realm of essences bears substantial resemblance to what Whitehead has to say about eternal objects.

Santayana's characteristic thesis is that essences are irresistibly *taken by us as* symbols for existing things, while they are deprived of any intrinsic meaning. Santayana compares them to words: 'essences are ideal terms at the command of fancy and of the senses (whose data are fancies) as words are at the command of a ready tongue' (SAF p. 81)³. According to him, the objects in our environment are *posited* by faith and intent and become objects of thought and belief. By shocking our body, they suggest to the mind 'qualities of being', i.e., essences, in terms of which they are subsequently handled in thought. 'What is given [...] becomes a sign for what is sought' (SAF p. 81).

Acting upon us, that is, shocking our body, the environment causes us to intuit essences. It is important to notice that bodily functioning is an important part of the process whereby there is intuition of essences. Faith posits physical things as

³ In S Whitehead uses precisely the example of the words to illustrate the inversion of symbolic reference.

responsible for the shocks. And then, the essences are referred to things artistically (Santayana says that animal faith is an artist). Perception is, according to Drake, a sort of true imagination:

Perception is, in a sense, imagining character-complexes out there in the world, together with an implicit attribution of existence – which may conceivably be, and is occasionally, entirely mistaken. These imagined character-complexes are our data. Usually some of the traits of the character-complex are real, some are *merely* imaginary. But whether really there, or not there, they are not *found* there, by a sort of telepathic vision, but are *imagined* there by a mind. They become data only when the organism, affected by the outer object, imagines them as characters of the object, in those vivid ways we call 'seeing', 'feeling' (with our fingers), etc. The organism does not actually project the qualities there, so as to change or add to the character of the object, which is quite unaffected by the perceptual process; if the character-traits apprehended were not there before the organism was affected, they never get there. (ECR p. 23)

The critical realists held that the *intuited* or *given* datum is not *known*; we do not know essences, we know things, symbolized by the intuited essences. This is what Santayana means when he says that knowledge is faith mediated by symbols. We use essences to know things. In the same way, we do not speak of words (generally), we use words to speak of things. We take for granted that existing things have the qualities that appear to us by virtue of some reliable biological mechanisms (probably the product of evolution). The presence of 'faith' can suggest that reliable, although fallible, mechanisms have been triggered by the physical action of the environment on our body. Our perceptual beliefs have warrant, we could say, but they are not justified by immediate experience.

Santayana's brand of critical realism is inconsistent with the Phenomenal Principle, which, according to the critical realists, is a gross misinterpretation of the facts. The correct statement of the facts would be the following:

If a subject S has the visual experience of a thing x possessed of a quality F, then there is an essence Φ , such as F is a constituent of Φ , and Φ is referred to x by S.

Therefore, in the case of delusional experiences, just like in the case of veridical experiences, essences are intuited and referred to physical things as their characters. However, intuited essences are never objects of belief (in the natural attitude): all our perceptual beliefs bear on qualified physical things, and they may be false, although usually they are not.

3. WHITEHEAD AND CRITICAL REALISM

Certainly, several points of disagreement with Santayana and the critical realism in general have been already noticed by now. In what follows I will emphasize the contrast between Whitehead and Santayana.

When Whitehead writes that the doctrine spelled out in *PR* is ‘a transformation of some main doctrines of absolute idealism onto a realist basis’ (*PR* p. xiii), I think the realist basis is *epistemological*, in a broad sense⁴. There is one passage in *S* that confirms that Whitehead used the term ‘realism’ as a synonym for ‘direct realism’, understood as an epistemological doctrine. Here is how Whitehead characterises his ‘thorough-going realism’: ‘there are no components of experience which are only symbols or only meanings’ (*S* p. 10). The symbol and the meaning are terms of the triadic relation of ‘symbolic reference’, whose third term is the percipient. The percipient *P* refers a thing experienced *S* to another thing experienced *M*, where *S* is called ‘symbol’ and *M* ‘meaning’. Whitehead claims that there are no things capable of entering a perceiver’s experience only as meanings, that is, only as symbolized by other things, that is, only indirectly or through the mediation of other things directly experienced. ‘Being a symbol’ and ‘being a meaning’ are not intrinsic properties, but relational properties of experienced things. Whitehead’s realism involves a denial of the *epistemological dualism* Santayana endorses.

Whitehead himself affirms that the philosophy of organism is an ‘approximation [...] to Santayana’s doctrine of animal faith’ (*PR* p. 142). Indeed, critical realism is closer to Whitehead’s mature theory of perception than any other doctrine. ‘If, says Whitehead, we allow the term “animal faith” to describe a kind of perception that has been neglected by the philosophic tradition, then practically the whole of Santayana’s discussion is in accord with the organic philosophy’ (*PR* p. 142).

What stops Santayana from fully agreeing with the philosophy of organism, is a series of presuppositions, which he shares with the main figures of the prevalent philosophic tradition:

- That particulars, either physical or mental, are not given;
- That everything given is a universal;
- That particulars are mediately known by means of inferences from the given data;
- That what is logically simple is genetically prior.

The endorsement of these presuppositions leads to the impossibility of recognizing the existence of another mode of perception besides sense-perception. Perceptions in this second mode have actual particulars as their data, and they are genetically more fundamental than sense-perception as usually understood. Not being able to conceive such a mode of perception, Santayana patched the theory of representative perception with a doctrine of animal faith, making our belief in the reality of the perceived world utterly irrational.

⁴ Compare to what Santayana said about realism: ‘Realism in regard to knowledge has various degrees. The minimum of realism is the presumption that there is such a thing as knowledge; in other words, that perception and thought refer to some object not the mere experience of perceiving and thinking. The maximum of realism would be the assurance that [...] perception and conception are always direct and literal revelations, and that there is no such thing as error.’ (*ECR* p. 163)

4. WHITEHEAD'S ANTI-SCEPTICAL REMEDY

The previous discussion suggests that Whitehead perceived critical realism, in the form of Santayana's theory of knowledge, as a close cognate and strong rival of his own theory of knowledge. Whitehead's doctrine of perception of causal efficacy is meant (also, or mainly?) as an alternative to Santayana's doctrine of animal faith, an alternative that could fix what is wrong with Santayana's epistemology. The doctrine of causal efficacy, by discarding epistemological dualism, subjectivism and sensualism, allows the reconciliation of the doctrine of essences (which is highly compatible with Whitehead's doctrine of eternal objects), and of the doctrine of the symbolical functioning of sense-perception, with a form of direct realism, thus pretending to prevent the emergence of the epistemological problem.

One major contention of Whitehead is that the tradition ignored the role of the body, more precisely of its functioning, in perception. Sensible qualities are perceived with certain parts of our body, namely the sense organs. We perceive the colours with the eyes, the aromas with the nasal mucosa, the tastes with the taste buds, the sounds with the inner ear, etc. We have, in addition, all sorts of visceral sensations (organic, proprioceptive, interoceptive), which the epistemological tradition has generally ignored, due to their very low value for knowledge. Or this was a major error, which Whitehead never tires of pointing out: 'Philosophers disdained the information about the universe obtained through their visceral feelings and have concentrated on visual feelings' (PR p. 121). This privilege of exteroceptive sensations led to the identification without rest of perception with presentational immediacy (classical sense-perception).

But even sensory data from exteroception carry an implicit reference to various modes of functioning of the perceiver's organic body: if I now perceive a red shape, it is because I have eyes that have just functioned, more or less well. When this 'witness of the body' was observed (e.g., in Hume), the adequate theorizing was lacking. If the perceived red colour is a sign of the functioning of the eye, then the eye, on this occasion of its specific activity, is as much an ingredient of perception as is the colour itself. Perception includes not only the awareness of certain sensory data, but also the experience, much paler and vague, of my body as the cause of my perceptual experience. The present experience is determined by the past functioning of my body; as Whitehead says, the present experience conforms to the body, it is obligated to conform to it. The current experience retains in itself the trace of the corporal activity, the present contains in itself the trace of the past from which it arose. This conformation with the environment (first with one's own body, then with the more distant environment) is itself *perceived* – this is Whitehead's most important thesis, in clear opposition to the critical realist claim that the givenness of the datum is not itself a datum. The perception of the conformity of the present experience to the environment, i.e., the perception of a relationship both causal and temporal, is what Whitehead calls perception in the mode of causal efficacy. It is a primitive reaction of an organism

to how the environment affects it, causing the body to expand or contract, move forward or retract, open or close. It is animal faith turned into perception. The visceral signals we usually associate with the ‘conservation instinct’ are primitive emotions triggered by perception in the mode of causal efficacy. In short, any organism feels the causal efficacy of the past on the present and extending on the future, of its own body on the present and future experience.

The most important idea is this: experience is not only an immediate, clear awareness of subjective changes, that is, of simple *effects* on us of factors external to experience, but *also* an immediate (non-inferential), albeit much more indistinct and vague, awareness of their *causes*. The fundamental relationship that underlies experience is the converse of the causal relationship, a relationship that Whitehead calls ‘positive prehension’ or ‘feeling’. In Whitehead’s metaphysical terminology, any actual entity *prehends positively* or *feels* factors from the past immediately *qua* effective causes of the present. Thus, the immediate actual world is immanent in the experience emerging from it.

5. DOES THE REMEDY WORK?

What is the worth of Whitehead’s doctrine of causal efficacy as a remedy against scepticism? First, what could be answered to Whitehead’s doctrine of causal efficacy on behalf of critical realism?⁵

5.1. An Objection on Behalf of Santayana

Santayana argued that ‘belief in the existence of anything, including myself, is something radically incapable of proof, and resting, like all belief, on some irrational persuasion or prompting of life’ (SAF p. 35). That I must have a body and that an environment must shock the body in order for the experience to spark, this is a biological truth, which is in no way entailed by the datum. From such a perspective, when Whitehead speaks of the witness of the body, just like, one may say, Descartes spoke of the witness of the soul⁶, he is not describing the internal structure of experience, but its external conditions. He confuses condition and element of experience. That I need eyes to see is a trivial truth, but the visual data I intuit do not stand in any internal relation to the eyes. After all, what if I were a brain in a vat? If my brain were correctly stimulated, then I might have concurrent visual sensations, and ‘eye-ly’⁷ internal sensations (eye strains, in Whitehead’s terminology), without having

⁵ For general critique evaluations of Whitehead from a critical realist standpoint see Lovejoy and Sellars. For a harsh critique of his doctrine of perception from a Santayana-inspired standpoint, see Cory.

⁶ When he says that every idea I have, although it may not increase the knowledge I have of the external world, increases the knowledge I have of my soul and the certainty of its existence.

⁷ I coin this term on the model of ‘bodily’, but I don’t want it confused with the adverb ‘eyely’, meaning ‘obviously’.

eyes. Nay, the feeling of the eye-as-seeing is not a part of the visual datum; the eye-ly feeling can be enjoyed concurrently, but it doesn't suppose the existence of any eye, just like the feeling of the arm hurting or itching, in the phantom limb syndrome, does not suppose the existence of any arm. Thus, Santayana would be entitled to say, in his turn, that 'perception of causal efficacy' is a sturdy make-belief.

5.2. More Objections

Even if we did have perceptions of the efficacy of our immediately anterior body, that is, intuitions of the withness of the body, how would they prove the present existence of the body? Santayana has an argument to the effect that such intuitions could not prove the existence of the past body:

Why, indeed, do men believe in [change]? Because they see and feel it: but this fact is not denied. They may see and feel all the changes they like: what reason is that for believing that over and above this actual intuition, with the specious change it regards, one state of the universe has given place to another, or different intuitions have existed? You feel you have changed; you feel things changing? Granted. Does this fact help you to feel an earlier state which you do not feel, which is not an integral part of what is now before you, but a state from which you are supposed to have passed into the state in which you now are? If you feel that earlier state now, there is no change involved. That datum, which you now designate as the past, and which exists only in this perspective, is merely a term in your present feeling. It was never anything else. It was never given otherwise than as it is given now, when it is given as past. [...] Thus the feeling of movement, on which you so trustfully rely, cannot vouch for the reality of movement, I mean, for the existence of an actual past, once present, and not identical with the specious past now falling within the compass of intuition. (SAF p. 28-29)

Santayana argues, then, that the *present* feeling of the causally efficacious past, the *present* conformation to the immediate past, is no evidence for the reality of the past. Certainly, there is *belief* in the reality of the past, but it is never justified by any present feeling. We do not believe in the reality of the past because we experience the past (which means, according to Whitehead, that, in a broad sense, we *immediately know* the past), for the present experience is always of a *specious* past. Our belief is animal, instinctive, irrational, practical.

I believe, then, that the doctrine of the two modes of perception cannot avoid the scepticism of the present moment, even if there were substantial reasons to accept the existence of the perception in the mode of causal efficacy.

But even if the feeling of causal efficacy did justify the belief in the existence of an immediate relevant actual world, i.e., of my causally efficacious body, and thus allow the avoiding of the scepticism of the present moment, I submit that it couldn't counter scepticism in another version, Putnam's. As I already noticed, it would be logically possible to feel the causal efficacy of the body, without having any body. As far as we know, the brain is all that is required in order to have sensations and any kind of feelings. It suffices to correctly stimulate the disembodied brain, in order to generate the same kind of experience an embodied brain would have. Whitehead gladly accepts

that the percipient is 'in the brain' (PR p. 120). So what the percipient experiences is not the eye functioning, but the visual cortex functioning. If the relevant actual world of the percipient is, as it seems, the brain, then, for what we know, we could all be brains in vats. Being a brain in a vat is consistent with having feelings of causal efficacy: what would be felt, would be the efficacy of the computer-brain system, which would be mistaken for the efficacy of the body, by reason of a deceptive immediate presentation. If the brain in the vat did not *know* that he was a brain in the vat (and it couldn't possibly *know* it), then his delusion would be absolute.

Thus, it is logically possible that our experience is nothing but a coherent hallucination. And if the enjoyment of this hallucination proves that there exists at least one brain (or at least the relevant parts of a brain), then it proves way too little. I think, then, that this Whiteheadian line of defence against scepticism fails.

5.3. Subjective Forms to the Rescue

I also believe that there is another line of defence, available to the Whiteheadian. And the perception of causal efficacy does not play a major part in it. Let us restate the argument from hallucination:

- (1) When a percipient has a perceptual experience, there exists a datum of this experience.
- (2) In the case of a hallucination, the datum is a complex of *sensa*, and not an actual thing.
- (3) A veridical perceptual experience and a hallucination are qualitatively identical.
- (4) Therefore, the datum of all perceptual experience is a complex of *sensa*, and not an actual thing.

As we have seen, the critical realists deny the first premiss (PP). Whitehead does not reject PP, he limits its applicability to presentative perceptual experiences. And he accepts the argument from hallucination in the following form:

- (5) When a percipient has a presentative experience, there exists a datum of this experience.
- (2) In the case of a hallucination, the datum is a complex of *sensa*, and not an actual thing.
- (6) A veridical presentative experience and a hallucination are qualitatively identical.
- (7) Therefore, the datum of all presentative experience is a complex of *sense-data*, and not a an thing.

But Whitehead proposes a complement to this argument:

- (8) Whenever a percipient has a presentative experience, he also has an experience of causal efficacy.
- (9) When a percipient has an experience of causal efficacy, there is a datum of this experience.

- (10) The datum of an experience of causal efficacy is an actual thing.
 (11) Therefore, whenever a percipient has the presentative experience of a complex of sensa, he has also the experience of an actual thing.

And we have seen that premiss (8) is controversial, which casts doubt on the conclusion (11). Therefore, the conclusion of the argument from hallucination is undisturbed, and scepticism is not rejected.

Luckily, as I said, there is a more promising strategy: deny (3), respectively (6), that is, deny CFP. Whitehead's theory of feelings makes it possible to distinguish intrinsically (qualitatively, perhaps even phenomenologically) a veridical presentative perception from a hallucination. Whitehead's mature theory of perception, as presented in *S*, does not have the resources to defend such a distinction. What is needed, is the doctrine of subjective forms from *PR*. According to Whitehead, any positive prehension is a vector whereby there is objectification of a datum in a definite subjective form. The fact that there is subjective reaction to the datum appropriated is central to Whitehead's doctrine of experience. It is the precise negation of the sensationalist principle: 'that the primary activity in the act of experience is the bare subjective entertainment of the datum, devoid of any subjective form of reception' (*PR* p. 157).

Suppose now that the brain in someone's skull could be disconnected from the body and connected to a network of supercomputers, that stimulate it in the same way it was stimulated when connected to the body. Suppose the switch is instantaneous. The crazy scientist could thus turn his subject instantly from an ordinary person into a sort of brain in a vat. The presentative feelings the subject would have should be indistinguishable in respect to their data and, on the sensationalist principle, indistinguishable *tout court*. The subject would contemplate the same complex of eternal objects, which would ingress at the place where they are perceived, now normally, now abnormally, without the subject realising it. But, if Whitehead is right, the subject could realise that something fishy is going on, because the alternative feelings with the same datum could not have the same subjective forms. They would be intrinsically different, they would be qualitatively different. The switch's flipping by the mad scientist would then cause the production of what Chalmers called 'dancing qualia' (Chalmers p. 266 sq.).

But would the difference be noticeable by the percipient? I can only speculate. It seems plausible that a percipient, suddenly reduced to a brain in a vat, would have, as we say, an eerie feeling, would experience unexplained anxiety or some objectless aversion. He would receive data via abnormal routes and this massive and systematic anomaly would, on Whitehead's principles, impose some definite character on his present experience. Perhaps he would feel like daydreaming, while not daydreaming. I suppose that if he is disconnected from his body for a short while, this eerie element in the subjective form would not acquire enough intensity to be noticeable. But, given a certain time, I suppose the spooky sentiment would become present. I also assume that, in time, the sentiment would disappear, as the subject gets accustomed to the situation. And, presumably, he would interpret his past disturbance as an existential or psychological crisis.

Be that as it may, the doctrine of subjective forms allows a Whiteheadian to deny that a veridical presentative experience and a hallucination are qualitatively identical. (Remember that critical realism does not deny CFP.) And if CFP is rejected, then the conclusion of the argument from hallucination does not follow anymore. My conclusion is that Whitehead's theory of perception is preferable to Santayana's not by reason of its recognition of a second perceptive mode, which Santayana doesn't recognize, but by reason of its emphasis on the affective phenomenology of the perceptual experience.

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