

**THE MIND–WORLD RELATIONSHIP:
A STUDY OF THE NATURE OF PERCEPTUAL
CONTENT**

**Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the award of the degree of**

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I, Manoj Kumar Panda, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **The Mind–World Relationship: A Study of the Nature of Perceptual Content** submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University** is my original work and has not been submitted by me or by anyone else for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University.

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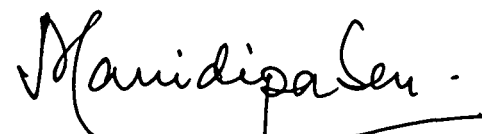
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For Mama, Papa

For Everything...

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Introduction

The study of the relationship between mind and world is one of the most contentious and yet compelling enterprises in philosophical discourse. Mind is very much a part of our life, rather we can say it is our life. The function of our mind, conscious and unconscious, free and unfree, in perception, in action, in thought, in sleep, in emotions, reflections and memory are all prominent features of our life. We, human beings, possess both a mind and a body and we are living in a physical world. One may say that human beings live in two worlds. One is the mental world and the other is the physical world. We have a mind, which thinks, perceives the external world through sense organs and is described as something internal, subjective, non-transparent and non-physical entity. On the other hand, we have a body, which exists in space and time, and is described as something material, physical, external, objective, and transparent entity. So, we are the amalgamation of two broad entities which seem to be anti-thetical to each other.

The problem that arises here is: what is the relation between these two contrasting worlds? What exactly are the relations between the mental and physical, between matter and consciousness? What is the place of mind in this natural world? How can there be causal relations between them? On the face of it, it seems quite impossible that there should be causal relations between two completely distinct metaphysical realms. If the causal relation between them is possible, then two-fold problem arises: How can anything physical are able to produce an effect inside our mind, which is non-physical and how can events in our mind affect the physical world? One of the central questions in philosophy of mind , in fact, in whole philosophy is that, how to give a fairly good enough account of ourselves as being conscious,

mindful, free, rational, speaking, social and political agents in a world that science tells us consists entirely of mindless, physical properties. How are we to relate our mind to rest of the nature? Modern philosophy finds it extremely difficult to give a satisfactory picture of the relationship between mind and world. These are some of the problems, which will be extensively addressed throughout this dissertation, by confining ourselves to a particular philosophical tradition, i.e., analytical philosophy of mind.

Let us now, very briefly, go into the roots of the foundation of the mind-body problem or mind-world problem. Let us now spend some time on the question of how the problem started for modern philosophy.

The philosophy of mind in modern era begins effectively with the work of Rene Descartes. Descartes' most famous doctrine, i.e., dualism, the idea that the world divides into two different kinds of substances that can exist independently of each other leads to the problem of bridging the gap between mind and physical world. His view of the mind was the most influential in modern philosophy for various reasons. He divides substances into two kinds, i.e., mind and body. The essence of the mind is thought or having consciousness and the essence of the body is extension or having spatial dimensions. Descartes says,

“I recognize only two ultimate classes of things: first, intellectual or thinking things, i.e., those which pertain to mind or thinking substances; and secondly, material things, i.e., those which pertain to extended substance or body.”¹(PWDi: 208)

His view of dualism between mental and physical has led to broader ontological gap between mind and physical world, between consciousness and matter. Descartes recognizes that the essence of the human beings existence is consciousness or thought. This is known as 'cogito', and according to him, this is the only certain element in

¹ Descartes, (1984), sect. 208.

human existence. He raises doubt above the existence of physical body. He further says,

“I saw that while I could pretend that I had no body and there was no world and no place for me to be in, I could not for all that pretend that I did not exist. From this I knew that I was a substance whose whole essence is to think, and which does not depend on any place or material thing in order to exist.”²(PwDi:127)

According to the above view, there is a vital epistemological asymmetry between knowledge experience and knowledge of the world. Our knowledge of the character of our experience is not dependent upon our knowledge of their supposed environmental causes; whereas our knowledge of the world does depend upon our knowing the characteristics of our experiences. The dualistic approach to mind and world relationship encompasses several quite different theories, but they are all agreed that the essential nature of consciousness resides in something non-physical, in something forever beyond the scope of science like physics, neuropsychology and computer science etc. Though dualism is not the most widely held view in the current philosophical community, but it is the most common theory of mind in the public at large. It is deeply entrenched in most of the world's popular religions, and it has been the dominant theory of mind for most of western history. Descartes' views about the relationship between mind and world have led the modern philosophy to endless debates and it would not be unfair to say that he left us with more problems than solutions. By dividing reality into mental and physical, he leaves us with bushel of problems which Descartes himself and his successors up to the recent times are most concerned. Much of the philosophy of mind after Descartes is perturbed with the problem of bridging the gap between mind and world and in spite of all the progress over the centuries in philosophical theory and other related areas such as cognitive science, psychology etc., it is still a leading problem in contemporary philosophy and especially in contemporary analytic philosophy of mind.

² Ibid., sect. 127.

There are some philosophers who following Descartes suggest that mind and world are independent categories. According to them, there are two worlds in which a man lives, physical and mental world. On the other hand, there are some philosophers who suggest that mind and world are dependent categories. According to them, physical world constitutes the very nature of mental world. What we believe is very much determined by what we see in the external world. The theories like dualism, materialism, behaviorism, functionalism, computationalism, eliminativism, intentionalism, phenomenism, conceptualism, non-conceptualism, externalism, internalism, epiphenomenalism and anomalous monism etc. have tried to solve the problem of the mind-world relationship from different perspectives. In order to give a satisfactory picture of the relationship between mind and world, various current analytic philosophers of mind have flourished above philosophical theories about the mind.

Although, there are various problems being considered in analytic philosophy of mind, the problem of the mind-world relation is certainly the central issue. It is because of the fact that if we can give a better solution to the problem of mind-world relation, then we will be able to solve all other problems, i.e., the nature and meaning of mental states, what is it to possess a mental state; what is to experience; what are mental properties; where our mental properties exist; what is it for a mental state to represent something etc. In another way; we can say that, the study of the relationship between mind and world is conducted through all these debates in philosophy of mind. Hence, all the debates that are going on in contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, aim at solving the problem of the relationship between mind and world. All those philosophers who are engaged in these debates tend to think that, their own theory can give a better account of the relationship between mind and world. In this dissertation, we shall deliberate on some of these theories, which are prevalent in contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, by taking views of some particular philosophers. These theories are externalism, internalism, functionalism, computationalism, intentionalism, phenomenism, non-Conceptualism and conceptualism.

All the debates in contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, one may say, directly or indirectly, center around the notion of mental content. The notion of mental content is not only fundamental to the philosophy of mind, but also to theory of knowledge and to metaphysics. The introduction of the notion of content is part of a wider movement in philosophy of mind. In twentieth century, philosophy of mind in the particular domain under consideration has undergone some substantial changes. The most significant change is the notion of mental representation and content. It seems that there are mainly two sources of changes. One source is the discourse centering around questions of meaning in philosophy of language. Philosophers, in order to understand how language represents, recommend that we have to understand how linguistic items gain their representational powers from the states of those who use them. The necessary connection between thought, language and reality is the main concern of philosophers which in way leads to the early development of contemporary analytic philosophy of mind. So, we can say, contemporary analytic philosophy of mind is a development of the philosophy of language. The second source for the change is the growth of cognitive science, which much emphasizes the notion of mental representation and content. Philosophers are of the opinion that, if we can properly understand the nature of mental content, then, in accordance with that, we can better understand the relationship between mind and world. There are various heterogeneous views present regarding the nature of 'mental content'. So, a correct philosophical understanding of the nature of mental content is inevitably required for the purpose.

One of species of mental content is perceptual content, which will be the direct concern of this dissertation. Before going into discussing different issues regarding the nature of 'perceptual content', we must first very briefly say something about what is meant by the phrase 'mental content' in general and "perceptual content" in particular. By 'mental content', we generally mean the content of a belief, a hope, an expectation, a fear, a wish etc., these are the particular situations or states of our mind. Commonly, these mental states are described as propositional attitudes. It was

Bertrand Russell who started calling mental states of this variety 'propositional attitudes'. He introduced the term 'propositional attitudes' in his book *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*. Propositional attitudes can be described by the indicative statements or sentences with a 'that' clause. For example, take the sentence 'John believes that crow is black'. Here, the subject John is said to have an attitude of believing a proposition or a situation that is referred to by the 'that' clause, 'crow is black'. In contemporary philosophy, the term 'content' is used where Russell used the word 'proposition'. The content of the propositional attitudes is the proposition towards which the attitudes are directed, i.e., what is believed, what is desired, what is felt, what is feared etc. It is commonly said that all propositional attitude states are 'intentional states.'³ That means all propositional attitude states are object directed states. Though there are some other forms of states which are not object directed which are called phenomenal states. In recent times, the problem of mental representation is often being expressed as, what is it for a mental state to have content? How does content of our mind pertain to things in the world? Are perceptual states directed towards objects in the same way as belief states are? Perceptual experience and mental states, like belief, may mutually determine each other. What we see may somehow be determined by the mental state we possess during that moment, about the object we see. It may be the reverse also. What kind of mental state we have may somehow be determined by how we see the external world and what we see in the external world. Whether world somehow determines our thought or thought somehow determines our world and how much one is influenced by the other are some of the important issues debated by philosophers of mind today and which will be taken up for discussion in this dissertation.

The complete understanding of the relationship between mind and world must give a central place to perception. Since it is through perception our minds meet the world. The shift in the philosophy of mind obviously has its effects on the philosophy

³ However, there is a controversy regarding whether all intentional states are propositional attitude states. There are some philosophers like Tim Crane who are of the opinion that intentional states are not necessarily propositional. We shall discuss this later on.

of perception. Perception gives us information about our environment. It enables us to form beliefs, make judgments, about how things are in our immediate surroundings. We have already seen that our beliefs have propositional, intentional or representational content. So, if we believe what we see, then it leads to the possibility that our perceptual content is also representational and it represents objects and states-of-affairs of the world to us. In this sense, 'perceptual content' can be regarded as an important species of mental content. 'Perceptual content' means the content of our perceptual experience or perceptual state or perception. Perceptual content means what is conveyed to the subject by his or her perceptual experience. There is not only just one perceptual experience but there are different perceptual experiences. We have five sense organs and in accordance with the different sense organs there are different perceptual experiences. Each perceptual experience involves some distinct phenomenal characters or their distinctive phenomenology. Phenomenal character is understood in terms of what it is like to have that particular perceptual experience. The analogous use of the phrase 'perceptual content' means what the mind encounters when one has a perceptual experience. We can compare perceptual content with content of a news paper. Contents of the perceptions are analogous to the contents of a news paper. The content of the perceptual experience is given to the subject by the conditions under which it is acquired. It can be said that contents are the accuracy conditions under which the subject gathers the information about the world, or we can say, when the subject experiences the world. This accuracy condition of perceptual experience is that by which minds knows the world. Peacocke calls it 'the correctness condition'; it is the condition under which the mind represents the world correctly. If the perceptual experience does not satisfy the accuracy conditions, then the experience is an illusion or hallucination, but not the real experience, a real connection between mind and world.

We, the subjects, experience the world in a certain way. There are different modes of experiencing the world available to us. Perceptual experience or perception seems to be one of the basic and direct modes of the subject's entering into the world.

Perceptual experience is one of the direct ways through which a proper relation between mind and world, between subject and object can be established or explained. There are also other modes of experience which can explain the relationship between mind and world. My present project is only to deal with perceptual experience.

One may ask how does perceptual experience determine the relationship between mind and world. It seems that other modes of experience are based on the perceptual experience. All other forms of experience have the ground in perceptual mode of experience. When a child, for instance, first opens his eyes, he experiences the world through perception (if he or she is not blind). His all other experiences of the world is somehow based on his perceptual experience. All the faculties of the experience, he gradually develops as his knowledge of the world develops. But there are some fundamental questions about such perceptual experience: what is the nature of his perceptual experience? What constitutes its content? Content of perceptual experience may be said to constitute the very nature of perceptual experience. The real problem with regard to such content is: is it the internal states of the subject or the external physical world which determine the meaning of the content of the perceptual experience? So, in a broad sense, the nature of perceptual content determines the relationship between mind and world. The whole problem of the relationship between mind and world centers around the proper explanation of the nature of perceptual content. A correct philosophical understanding of the nature of perceptual content is inevitably required for the purpose. Though the problem of bridging the gap between mind and world, inner and outer, subjective and objective has effectively started from the time of Descartes, and it's a very old problem, modern philosophy has found its immense difficulties to give a satisfactory picture of the place of mind in the world. In contemporary philosophy, we can find a great deal of discussion about the issue in the writings of Hillary Putnam, Donald Davidson, John McDowell, Gareth Evans, Christopher Peacocke, Jerry Fodor, Collin McGinn, Wilfred Sellars, John Searle, Tim Crane, Tyler Burge, etc. In fact, there are different models of the relationship between mind and world which have been proposed by

these philosophers. Of course, there are problems involved in each of these models and there are also certain advantages present in each of these models. They all have tried in their own way to give a better picture of the relation often criticizing other's proposed models. We can have a better understanding of the relationship between mind and world by trying to find a solution which is more problem free than the existing others. In this dissertation, I am in search for that model. It may be felt that all the solutions are equally problem oriented and we need a better solution to the real problem.

The nature and the meaning of mental content broadly can be discussed from the two perspectives, one is from ontological point of view and another is epistemological. These two perspectives, ontological and epistemological, may sometime overlap each other. They may be interrelated with each other in such a way that answers to one set of questions depend upon answers to others. We cannot know the particular content of our mind without knowing the real nature of its existence. The issue and the debates that I will be discussing in this dissertation are more ontological than epistemological. My main concern will not be on how we know the mental content, but rather what constitutes its real nature. I assume that obviously we know contents of our minds and that of others in certain sense. What I would like to explore is the nature of mental content in relation to the world.

My main aim in the dissertation is to study the relationship between mind and world by focusing on the nature of 'perceptual content'. In order to study the relationship between mind and world, I will be looking into the three debates about the nature of perceptual content which have been dominant in discussions on this issue. These three debates are:

1. Debate between narrow and broad content as discussed by philosophers like Hillary Putnam, Tyler Berge and Jerry Fodor, etc.

2. Debate between phenomenal and intentional content as discussed by philosophers like Franz Brentano, John Searle, Thomas Nagel, Frank Jackson, Michael Tye, Tim Crane, etc.

3. Debate between non-conceptual and conceptual content as discussed by philosophers like Gareth Evans, John McDowell, Christopher Peacocke, etc.

These debates will be discussed in three respective chapters.

Chapter 1 deals with the problem of how the meaning of our perceptual content is determined? Our main aim would be to study the nature and meaning of our perceptual state in relation to the debate between broad and narrow content. There are two groups of philosophers who have dealt with the above problem in a radically different ways. The debate between externalism and internalism in philosophy of mind has led to the debate and distinction between two kinds of mental content. One is broad and another is narrow. Some philosophers are of the opinion that the meaning of our perceptual content is determined by the external physical and social environment in which the subject live and hence, claim that our mental content is broad in nature. In contrast to this view, some philosophers are of the opinion that the meaning of our mental content is determined by the internal psychological states of the subject who possess that state and hence, our content is narrow in nature. We will contrast these above views with reference to Putnam and Burge on the one hand and Fodor on the other.

In chapter 2, we will deal with the issue of consciousness and intentionality by focusing on the contemporary debate between phenomenal and intentional content. The distinction between subjective and objective, inner and outer, narrow and broad have further led to a debate between phenomenal and intentional content. Phenomenal states are called 'what it is like- states' and intentional states are called object-directed states. Phenomenal and intentional are two different properties of our conscious states.

Here, the debate is focused on the question that which of these properties is exhausted by the other? Some philosophers like Nagel and Jackson hold that all perceptual states are not necessarily intentional states. According to them, there are phenomenal characteristics of perceptual states which go beyond the representational characters and these phenomenal characteristics have not been captured by any form of intentionalism thesis. While arguing against the above view, some philosophers like Tye and Crane claim that all mental states are necessarily intentional or object-directed. There are varieties of intentionalism which deal with the above problem differently.

Chapter 3 is focused on the debate between non-conceptual and conceptual content. Here the main questions will be dealt are that, do perceptual states require to possess the concepts in order to represent the objects and state of affairs? Some philosophers think that subjects do not have to possess concepts in order to represent something in the world. So, according to them, content of perceptual states is non-conceptual. On the contrary, some philosophers claim that subjects always need to possess concepts in order to represent the world. According to them, content of perceptual state is conceptual. According to them, our concepts mediate the relationship between mind and world. I will discuss philosophers like Evans and McDowell in this chapter.

Finally, we will critically analyze all the above views in order to get a better picture of the relationship between mind and world.

Chapter 1

Perceptual Content: Broad and Narrow

Introduction

Perceptual experience represents the world to the subject in a particular way. The way it represents the world constitutes its content, called 'perceptual content'. It consists of various objects and properties about the world. The content of the perceptual experience not only determines how the world would actually be presented to the subject in experience, but also how the object of the world would seem to the subject of experience. Perceptual experience is one of the basic ways of the subject's entering into the world, and perceptual representation is arguably the most basic way in which the mind represents the world. It underlies all other ways. Perceptual representation is the converse of the perceptual presentation. It represents the states of affairs in the world to the subject, which is apparently presented to him through perceptual experience. The content of the perceptual experience may be called objective in the sense that it represents to the subject how things are in the external world; how things are in the objective world. In this sense, it can be held that the content of perceptual experience is strongly determined by the character of the perceiver's environment. Subject's environment constitutes the content of his perceptual experience. It can be so only if the certain feature of the world which is presented to the subject's sense organ is actually represented to the subject's mind.

It is commonly held that perception is a causal concept which seems to require the presence of what is perceived in the physical world. There certainly seems to be a causal link between the perceiver's sense organs and the objects or states of affairs in the world such that the object in the world causes the perceptual representation. In this sense, the content of perception is said to be determined by the external environment of the perceiver. This is so because, if there are no objects or states of affairs present in the world, it seems that there will be no perceptual content at all. So far as causal connection is concerned, it is also inevitable that the sense organs of the perceiver must be present at the other side along with the subject in order to gather sense-data from the world. So, the sense organs and the external world equally play important roles to make perceptual experience possible.

There is a sense in which we can assert that the content of perceptual experience is subjective. There are different subjects in the world, who experience the particular aspects of the world differently. Certain aspects of the world which seem to me in a particular way need not necessarily seem to others in that same way. Different perceptions include different subjective properties. The internal facts of the subject include intrinsic states of the body and brain, behavioral dispositions non-environmentally specified and proximate sensory stimulations which is identified with reference to their sources, as well as the internal psychological states of the subject. As I have mentioned earlier, the way the objects and the properties are presented to the subject through sense-object contact, are surely determined by the external environment of the subject. But the problem lies regarding the question of how the world seems to the subject. The way the world seems to the subject constitutes the content of the perceptual experience in an important sense. The problem arises, is the content of experience necessarily determined by the function of actual environmental factors? Is the causal link between the world and the experience determines the content of experience? or is the content of experience determined by the internal psychological states of the subject? These are some of

the questions which have been answered by different philosophers differently in contemporary philosophical horizon.

Content of our perceptual experience about the world leads us to entertain certain beliefs about the world. Though perceptual content in a way constitutes the content of our beliefs, desires etc., there are some important differences between perceptual experiences and belief states¹. Perceptual experiences are phenomenal states, beliefs states are not phenomenal states, they are already termed as 'propositional attitudes'. McGinn writes about the distinction between perceptual content and perceptual experience in the following way:

“Perceptual content consists in the way things seem to the subject, in phenomenological features of experience. Strong externalism claims that such phenomenological distinctions consist in relational distinctions with respect to the environment. Now environmental distinctions themselves are detectable by means of perception, by the exercise of senses, whereas experiential distinctions are ordinarily supposed to be detectable, not by means of the senses, but by introspection. The way we tell the difference between objective states of affairs and the way we tell the difference between subjective experiential states of ourselves are not the same way. They require the exercise of different faculties. Perception tells us how the environment is; introspection tells us how the environment seems to us: such, at least, is the traditional view.”²

The very same question can be asked in the context of mental states like belief, desire, emotion, intention, etc. The question is that, is the content of our belief states are constituted by the external environmental factors? or is it determined by the nature of the internal psychological states of the subject who possesses the particular belief? The central concern of the debate is: how do mental states represent states of affairs in the world? What constitutes the content of the mental state? On the one hand, it seems that the causal determinant characteristics of the mental states depend explicitly on the internal characteristics of the subject who possesses the state. On the other hand, certain arguments and some imaginative thought experiments persuade many

¹ McGinn, (1989), p. 62.

² Ibid., p. 82.

philosophers to agree on the view that the content of the mental state and, in particular, the content of perceptual state solely depends on the external environment, including both physical and social. These are some of the problems which lie at the heart of the contemporary philosophy of mind, language and reality and are very fundamental issues regarding the relationship between mind and world. These problems have been addressed by different philosophers in order to understand the nature of mental content which leads to the important distinction between two kinds of mental content, one is *narrow content* and other is *broad content*.

1. 1 Articulating the Debate

Narrow mental content can be defined as the content which does not depend on the subject's environment. A narrow content of a mental state, say, a belief, is the kind of content that could not be different unless the subjects who possess the state were different in some intrinsic psychological respect, that is, if the intrinsic properties of the subject differ, then the content of his mental state also differs. In this interpretation of mental content, environmental factors do not enter into determining the content of the subject's mental states. So, even when the environment of the individual may change, this change does not necessarily affect subject's mental content. The thesis holds that the intrinsic properties of the individual include some properties which are not determined by the subject's physical properties. This is precisely what dualism proposes. Rene Descartes, in his book *Meditations on First Philosophy*, argues that our perceptual states and belief states could be exactly as they are even if the world is nothing like what we think it is. Whatever radical difference may occur in our environment, this does not make a difference to the content of our perception and belief.

The idea of narrow content can be contrasted with the idea of 'broad' or 'wide' content. Broad content can be defined as the content of the subject's mental state or perceptual state which is determined by the subject's environment as well as the

features pertaining to the individual subjects. It holds that our mental content changes as the features of the world change, because they are causally related to each other. According to philosophers who are in favour of broad/wide content, the environmental factors necessarily enter into determining the nature of mental content. The doctrine of broad content holds that the content of the belief states or perceptual states is constituted in virtue of the relations between the subject of belief, and perception and matters outside the subject. It holds that the content of all beliefs are partly outside the head. Before going into a discussion of the distinction between broad and narrow content, we need to formulate the debate properly so that we can clearly draw the demarcating line between the two sides in order to understand what exactly they claim.

In order to do that, let us start with the distinction between externalism and internalism in philosophy of mind. The term externalism and internalism or broad and narrow are often used in philosophy of mind most commonly in connection with the meaning and content of mental states. The word 'content' and the word 'meaning' are synonymous.³ The basic or fundamental question on which these two different philosophical theories are debating is whether the content or meaning of the mental state is in the head or outside the head? What constitutes its meaning? Is it the person's environment or his internal individualistic considerations? It is obvious that a person's having a certain belief is in part a matter of how that person is, otherwise it would not be that person who has the belief. But is it entirely a matter of how that person is? Or, does her environment or causal history determine her mental state? Suppose, I see a tiger near me. It is clearly the case that the truth and falsity of the above statement is determined on the basis of the existence of a real tiger near me in the world. But the question arises, is it the case that the truth and falsity of the existence of the real tiger determines what is believed? There is an important difference between determining the truth and falsity of a factual statement and of a belief state. When I believe that there is a tiger near me, then it becomes controversial

³ From now on, we will use the term content and meaning interchangeably.

that whether my belief is determined by what the belief is about, i.e., the real tiger or is determined by my internal constituent.

Externalism and internalism answer these questions in radically different way which leads to different views about the relationship between mind and world. According to externalism, our mental state is relational in character and thus it holds that the meaning of our mental content is determined in part by relations to the external physical world and thus is not wholly determined by what lies within the subject. It suggests that there is a deep connection between our mental states and conditions in the physical world. In a way, there is a deep connection between mind and world. By contrast, internalism argues that mental content is non-relational in character. The content of our thought absolutely has no connection with the external world, and thus essentially independent of the external world. Externalism often accuses that internalism makes the relationship between mind and world problematic by separating one from the other. Internalism does not literally locate the mind inside the head. Their main contention is that mental content cannot be reduced to factors in the physical environment, though, in recent times, there are some physicalists who claim to be internalists. An extreme version of the internalism is Descartes' picture of the mind. Descartes argues that we might have exactly the same mental state as we now have even if there is no external world at all with reference to my belief, desire etc. So, the fundamental question of the debate between internalism and externalism is whether mind is fundamentally autonomous with respect to the world or does the world enter into the very nature of mind.

Externalism and internalism are theses about the individuation of mental content.⁴ Individuation of any entity is done by specifying its identity condition. So, in order to individuate mental states, these philosophers provide identity-conditions of mental state in their own way. There are serious differences between their identity conditions. Externalism tries to identify mental states with reference to something

⁴ McGinn, (1989), p. 3.

other than the mental state itself. Internalism identifies mental states with reference to subject's internal properties. Though externalism individuates mental states with reference to something other than mental states, they do not identify mental states with those identity conditions of mental states. On the other hand, for internalism, the identity conditions of mental states and the mental states themselves seem to be one and same.⁵

We can formulate the theory of externalism and internalism in four different ways with the help of Strawson's theory of 'identification dependence'.⁶ The theory of 'identification dependence' is introduced by Strawson in his book *Individuals*.⁷ These four ways may be called linguistic, epistemological, metaphysical and conceptual. Suppose 'Fs' is the entity which is to be identified and 'Gs' is the conditions of identifications. The fundamental claim of the theory is that the existence and identity of 'Fs' is dependent upon the existence and identity of 'Gs' but 'Fs' are not identical with 'Gs'. It is an asymmetrical dependence of individuation conditions. By replacing 'Fs' with 'mental state' and 'Gs' with identity conditions, we can formulate externalism in four of the following ways:

- Linguistic – reference to the mental states, such as, believes embeds reference to worldly entities.
- Epistemological – knowledge about what an individual believes embeds having knowledge of the individual's environment.
- Metaphysical – the essence of a particular belief embeds as its very constituents worldly entities to which the particular belief is relation.
- Conceptual – mastering the concept of beliefs already involves master of the concepts of the worldly entities that the beliefs are about.⁸

⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷ See Strawson, (1959).

⁸ McGinn, (1989), p. 5.

But on the opposite side, internalism can be formulated with the help of 'identification dependence' theses as follows-

- Linguistic – reference to the mental state embeds reference to internal properties of the individual who is having mental states.
- Epistemological – knowledge about what a person believes embeds having knowledge of individual's internal characteristics.
- Metaphysical – the essence of a particular belief embeds as its very constituents its internal properties to which the particular belief is relation.
- Conceptual – mastering the concept of beliefs already involves master of the concepts about the person's internal psychological states.

In the case of internalism, the identification-dependence thesis does not necessarily seem to be asymmetrical, because subject's internal psychological characteristics and his mental state seems to determine each other. But in case of externalism, the dependence is necessarily asymmetrical. Because, mind does not enter into determining the nature of world. Mind cannot become an identification condition for world to be identified. So, Strawson's theory of 'identification dependence'⁹ is said to properly fit into the case of externalism.

We may now distinguish between strong externalism and weak externalism on the one hand, and strong internalism and weak internalism on the other. It is important to keep in mind these distinctions. Strawson's theory of 'individuation- dependence' can be held as leading to strong externalism. Strong externalism is defined by Collin McGinn as,

“...it, is the thesis that a given mental state requires the existence in the environment of the subject of some item belonging to the nonmental world, and that its identity turns on that item.”¹⁰

⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

Weak externalism, on the other hand, is defined by McGinn as "... the thesis that a given mental state requires the existence of the some item belonging to the non-mental world, and that its identity turns on that item."¹¹

'Strong externalism' ties the mental state to a particular part of the world. It makes the mental content a function of the subject's path through the world. But 'weak' externalism ties the mental content only to the world through which the subject traces a path.¹² Strong internalism and weak internalism can be defined in a similar but contrary way. However, there is a third view called 'moderate' externalism/internalism which is a compromise of the two opposite or extreme views. The debate between externalism and internalism in philosophy of mind has led to the distinction between broad and narrow content. The ways in which externalism and internalism have defined the nature and function of mind and have identified the meaning of mental states have led to the distinction between broad content and narrow content respectively.

The adherents of narrow mental content are variously called as narrow minded, internalists, individualists, local, methodological solipsists, etc. They claim that what is believed is not logically dependent on what caused the belief, neither is it logically dependent on the believer's surroundings. The philosophers, who argue for the existence of the narrow content, are René Descartes, Kent Bach, Tim Crane, Jerry Fodor, Gabriel Segal, Ned Block, Brian Loar, etc. On the opposite side, the proponents of the broad content are variously known as broad minded, contextual or wide, anti- individualists and externalists etc. They argue that the content of the mental state is logically and necessarily dependent on what caused the belief and on believer's surroundings. The philosophers, who are arguing for it, are, Hillary Putnam, John McDowell, Tyler Burge, Saul Kripke, Robert Stalnaker, Robert A. Wilson etc.

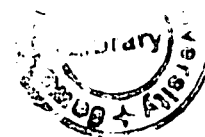
¹¹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹² Ibid., p. 8.

Different influential arguments have been set forth by philosophers in support of either broad or narrow content. Various scientific thought experiments have been conducted by these philosophers. Hillary Putnam's twin earth thought experiment is one of the classic thought experiments in support of the existence of the broad content. Putnam in his celebrated article "The Meaning of Meaning (1975)," has argued in support of externalism. He is the pioneer in the history of contemporary analytic philosophy of mind, who has argued against the narrow psychological state having representational capacity. Though Putnam is said to be the advocate of the physical externalism, but a form of social externalism can be easily found in his arguments for externalism. Another strong argument for externalism, we can find in John McDowell's article "Sense and Reference of a Proper Name (1977)." John McDowell has argued in favor of Putnam, but he is one of the philosophers who have extended Putnam's argument to the case of mental content. Taylor Burge, in his article "Individualism and the Mental (1997)," has argued for the externalism as well. He has made a thought experiment in the context of social environment of the people. Burge's idea of externalism is called social externalism. There are some important differences between Putnam's and Burge's externalism.

On the other hand, there are different arguments proposed by many philosophers in support of the narrow feature of the mental content. They have also formulated various thought experiments in support of the narrow content. One of the earliest arguments for the narrow content we find in Descartes' book *Meditations on First Philosophy*. In an important way, we can say that he is the one who has started the debate between internalism and externalism, though not in the same term as contemporary philosophers do. In contemporary philosophy, the argument for narrow content can be of three kinds, 1. Causal argument, 2. Argument from introspective access, and 3. Arguments concerning rationality. "Brain in a vat" argument is one of the direct arguments for the internalism. It is a science fiction story where it is supposed that we take a foetal brain, place it in a vat full of liquids, subject it to exactly the same inputs – neural stimuli, nutrients, and so on, as a normal brain

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housed in a body would be subjected to, and allow it to grow exactly as it would were if normally placed in a body. Then, it is argued that the brain or internal states of the person is not connected to the external world by the causal and social mechanisms of the subject. A similar version of the science fiction story, we can find in *Matrix* and Verhoeven's film *Total Recall*, where it is shown that the people and the world around us are complete delusion produced by a suitably programmed virtual reality machines. Precisely, these arguments suggest that, mind of the subject can itself represent the world intrinsically without the help of the environment, people and the world around us.

1. 2 Putnam on Broad Content

Hilary Putnam is one of the influential figures in analytic philosophy in twentieth century. His work consists of a broad spectrum of philosophical interest including his contributions to the area of science and mathematics. Our present concern is to discuss his philosophy of mind particularly in context of his arguments for broad and wide nature of mental content. Putnam in his early days¹³ was one of the major proponents of *functionalism*. It is the theory which asserts that mental states of the individuals are characterized by functions rather than material constitution. Putnam argued that, what matters for mind is the functional organization to represent the objects and states of affairs in the world. According to him, mental states are computational states characterized syntactically and functional organization is supposed to provide the *software* for their interaction. Functionalism, according to Putnam, secures the autonomy of mind without having a conception of either non-physical mind or physical mind as substance. He argued against the philosophers who think that mind is non-physical entity.

In the late 1980s, Putnam abandoned his adherence to different computational theories of mind and, in particular, to *functionalism*. He came to realize that there are

¹³ See Putnam, (1981).

various difficulties in computational theories of mind because these are unable to explain the external constraints on mental content. The main problem that he wanted to address; how a mental state can represent some object or states of affairs which exist outside the world? How thought of the objects refers to objects and states of affairs in the world? It may seem that the necessary feature of the representation is intentionality. But, then, the problem arises, how is it possible that thought forms 'themselves' can represent anything? or, is it possible at all? Can they represent the world by themselves? How can thought reach out and grasp what is external? According to Putnam, thoughts and mental pictures cannot intrinsically represent the world. To suppose that mind intrinsically represents the world is just to postulate the mysterious power of mind which is beyond explanation. The real problem lies very deep. Though thought is said to possess the power of *intentionality*, just because they can refer to something else, but it cannot solve the real problem of how *intentionality* is possible. Some philosophers think that mind is essentially like a non-physical entity on the basis of the fact that a physical entity does not have the characteristics of intentionality because no physical object by itself can refer to anything and mental state can refer to anything. Hence, these philosophers took for granted that mind is a non-physical entity, which represent the world in itself. According to Putnam, this view is absolutely wrong. It cannot solve the real problem of how *intentionality* is possible and what connection does intentionality have with meaning and reference.

Putnam criticized the traditional theories of meaning and reference which he named as 'the magical theories of reference'¹⁴. The theory precisely suggests that there seems to be a magical connection between a name and the bearer of that name. It holds that, at least, some representations have a necessary connection with their bearers. The 'magical theories of reference' are wrong, not only for physical presentations but also for mental representations. If one once realizes that a name in particular only has a contextual, contingent and conventional connection with its

¹⁴ Putnam, (1981), p. 3.

bearers, then the magical connection between representations and their referents will have no significance. So, Putnam writes,

“... we see that, on the one hand, those ‘mental objects’ we can introspectively detect – words, images, feelings, etc. – do not intrinsically refer any more than the ant’s picture does (and for the same reasons), while the attempts to postulate special mental objects, ‘concepts’, which do have a necessary connection with their referents, and which only trained phenomenologists can detect, commit a logical blunder; for concepts are (at least in part) abilities and not occurrences. The doctrine that there are mental presentations which necessarily refer to external things is not only bad natural science; it is also bad phenomenology and conceptual confusion.”¹⁵

He, along with other philosophers like Kripke, Donnellan, etc., developed the ‘causal theory of reference’. This theory holds that one cannot refer to certain things, e.g., trees, if one has no causal interaction at all with them. According to Putnam, mental state of a subject refers to the world through a causal connection with the object of the world, and, thus, the causal connection determines the meaning of a mental state.

Putnam argues,

“... I shall advance a view in which the mind does not simply ‘copy’ a world which admits of description by one True Theory. But my view is not a view in which the mind makes up the world, either (or makes it up subject to constraints imposed by ‘methodological cannons’ and mind-independent ‘sense data’). If one must use metaphorical language, then let the metaphor be this: the mind and the world jointly make up the mind and the world.”¹⁶

There is an important relation between the externalism and the causal theory of reference. The defining properties of a sentence or a ‘propositional attitude’ for both externalism and the causal theories of reference are the same, i.e., the objective facts of the external world. Putnam’s externalist account of mind is also known as ‘semantic externalism’. ‘Semantic externalism’ is described by Davidson as bringing the ‘anti-subjectivistic revolution’ in philosophy, in philosopher’s way of seeing the world. According to Davidson, right from the time of Descartes, philosophers have

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. xi.

been engaged in elucidating knowledge from the basis of subjective view of experience. Thanks to Putnam, Burge, and others, philosophy could now take the objective realm for granted and start questioning the alleged 'truth' of subjective experience.

Putnam vehemently criticized the traditional theory of meaning for being individualistic, subjectivistic, and narrow, that is other than social and collective, and for neglecting the contribution of external reality to meaning. Traditional theory of meaning is grounded in two seemingly infallible assumptions–

- For the subject to know the meaning of a mental state is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state in narrow sense. It is the psychological state in the same sense in which state of memory and psychological dispositions are psychological states.
- The meaning of a mental state determines its reference.¹⁷

Hence, it is argued that, the intension of the term determines both its reference and meaning. It is assumed that, speakers who are in the same mental state, when utter a word, share both its *intension* and its *extension*. The meaning of mental state is determined by the concepts the subject possesses during that moment as a narrow psychological state.

According to Putnam, we need to be very clear about the traditional notion of psychological state in order to proceed further to show that the two above mentioned assumptions about meaning cannot jointly satisfy any theory of meaning. Putnam thinks that there are many senses in which 'psychological state' can be understood. In one sense, a state can be a two predicate state. For example, a full form of an atomic sentence of these predicates like that of being in pain, can be expressed as 'x is in

¹⁷ Putnam, (1975), p. 225.

acute pain at the time t'. Time is already implicit in this form of statement. In another sense of the psychological state, it is simply a state which is studied or described by psychology. In this sense of the term, knowing the meaning of word 'water' is a 'psychological state' which is supposed to be studied in cognitive psychology. But according to Putnam, these are not same psychological state in the sense in which we talked about in assumption of the traditional theories of meaning.

The concept of psychological state as expressed in traditional philosophy is based on the assumption of 'methodological solipsism'¹⁸. In this sense of psychological state, it does not presuppose the existence of any individual or anything other than the subject to whom that state is ascribed. In this sense, it is logically possible to possess the state without even subject's body. Putnam argues that this sense of psychological state is not only implicitly dominant in philosophy of Descartes; it is also implicit in the whole of traditional philosophical psychology. The scope and nature of psychology has been limited to fit into some mentalistic preconception by this conception of narrow psychological state. To oppose this philosophical conservatism, Putnam draws a distinction between psychological state in broad sense and psychological state in narrow sense. According to him, wide/broad psychological states are those states which refer to other individuals as well as the subjects himself. Putnam writes,

"Only if we assume that psychological states in the narrow sense have a significant degree of causal closure (so that restricting ourselves to psychological states in the narrow sense will facilitate the statement of psychological laws) is there any point to engaging in this reconstruction, or in making the assumption of methodological solipsism. But the three centuries of failure of mentalistic psychology is tremendous evidence against this procedure, in my opinion."¹⁹

Putnam argued against narrow content of the mental state or narrow psychological state in a very interesting way. He does not say that psychological sense in the narrow

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 226.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 226.

sense simply does not exist. According to him, narrow psychological states which are bodily and mental dispositions of the individual surely exist. But, the point is that, they do not enter into determining the meaning of the word, when a speaker utters that word. He rather suggests that what determines the meaning of a term or mental state is a psychological state in broad or wide sense which includes person's social and physical environment. We have seen that almost all traditional theories of meaning rest on two seemingly unchallenging assumptions which cannot jointly be satisfied by any theory of meaning. In order to prove this further, Putnam follows a tricky way. We can modify the two assumptions mentioned above for our convenience as:

- Narrow psychological states of the subject about the term determine the meaning of a term.
- The term's *extension* is determined by the meaning of the term which is earlier fixed by the subject's narrow psychological state.²⁰

These two assumptions jointly claim that meaning of a term is a narrow psychological state of the subject which determines its *extension*. For example, there are two speakers who possess the same psychological state with regard to a particular term. Then, the assumption of the traditional theory of meaning is that the meaning and the *extension* of the term must be same for these two individuals. They think that if the two individuals are in same psychological state (in narrow sense) about a particular term, then they cannot understand the term differently. They claim that the narrow psychological state of the subject determines the *intension* as well as the *extension* of the term.

Putnam, on the other hand, argues that these claims cannot be jointly true of any theory of meaning. He suggests that two individuals can be in same narrow psychological state with regard to a particular term, yet they understand or mean the term differently, and hence, the meaning of the term differs. For Putnam, two terms A

²⁰ Ibid., p. 225.

and B cannot have the same meaning if the *extension* of these terms differ, and hence, narrow psychological state cannot determine the *extension* and meaning of the term. It is possible that two speakers are in the same (narrow) psychological state, but the *extension* and hence, meaning of the term differ from each other. So the meaning of a term is not determined by the narrow psychological state of the subject. In order to argue for this, Putnam developed a thought experiment which is famously known as 'twin earth science fiction' story.

Twin Earth Thought Experiment

In this science fiction story, we are told to imagine that there exists a planet which is just like our earth, which may be called twin earth. It is further supposed that twin earth is molecule for molecule identical with earth. We can suppose that, every human being has an identical copy existing in twin earth. All the languages spoken in earth are also spoken in twin earth. Let us now turn to a particular case. Let us suppose that, there is a man Oscar who lives in earth and so is there Oscar₂ or twin Oscar in twin earth. Oscar₂ is the doppelganger of Oscar in earth. They have the same psychological state about the natural world or states of affairs in earth and twin earth.

But interestingly, there is a little peculiar difference existing between earth and twin earth concerning the term 'water'. The water in earth is composed of H₂O. The same water in twin earth consists of a different chemical formula, i.e., XYZ. The chemical formula of H₂O and XYZ are radically different. Let us call the water in twin earth as twater. The water in twin earth looks like water, but it is not really water. It implies that the term 'water' in earth and twin earth has different *extension*. The term 'water' in earth refers to H₂O and the term 'twater' in twin earth refers to XYZ. In this sense, the term 'water' simply has two different meanings in earth and twin earth. What we call water in twin earth is simply not water. The word has a different meaning in earth in the sense in which it is used in earth. What the twin earthians call 'water' simply is not water. The *extension* of water in earth is consisting

of H₂O molecules and the *extension* of 'twater' in twin earth is the set of wholes consisting of XYZ molecules.

Now, let us consider what Oscar and twin Oscar have in their head about water. Oscar and twin Oscar are identical copies. They share the same psychological states about the word 'water'. However, as mentioned above the narrow psychological states of the Oscar and twin Oscar do not determine the extension of the term 'water' and hence meaning of the term 'water'. Hence, it is argued that the extension and meaning of the term 'water' is surely not a function of narrow psychological state of the person who uses that term. The psychological state of the Oscar and Oscar₂ differ in broad sense of the term 'psychological' which includes individual's social and causal history.

Putnam concludes his argument based on the thought experiment by saying that "cut the pie any way you like, 'meaning' just ain't in the head."²¹ Meaning, therefore, is determined by the broad psychological state of the individual. What a subject understands by the term 'water' is absolutely dependent on how water exists and used in external world. The way water exists in the external world should be the defining factor of the meaning of water.

There are certain sorts of words whose environment determines their *extension* and hence meaning. The meaning of a particular word has an appropriate connection to the sociological and physical environment where the word is used by the community. According to Putnam, *extension* of a word should be function of its meaning. Unless it is so we will loose some links between the subject and the world, between what speakers say and how things have to be for what they say to be true.

We need to understand Putnam's slogan that 'meaning ain't in the head' in a quite specific way because there is always a chance of misinterpretation of it.

²¹ Putnam, (1975), p. 232.

Meaning is surely a mental capacity and when we exercise our mental capacity, it is called mental act. Mental act is an act of intellect, and, hence, it is an act of the mind. So, when Putnam says that meaning is not in the head, the basic intention is to suggest that, mind is not in the head. He rejects the idea of mind as spatially located where its owner is. It is to suggest that the mind is not located somewhere in the literally, spatial and interior of its owner. The mind must not be equated with a materially constituted and space occupying organ, such as the brain. McDowell, in interpreting Putnam, writes,

“I can now sketch the interpretation I mean for the thesis that the mind is not in the head. On this interpretation, the point of the thesis is not just to reject a more specific spatial location for someone’s mind than that it is where its possessor is. It is to reject the whole idea that the mind can appropriately be conceived as an organ: if not a materially constituted organ, then an immaterially constituted organ.... We should discard, that mental life must be conceived as taking place in an organ, so that its states and occurrences are intrinsically independent of relations to what is outside the organism.”²²

McDowell suggests that though the functioning of brain as an organ is necessary for mental life, but it is wrong to think that the functioning of brain itself is the mental life. And to deny that mental life is not wholly the functioning of brain states is not to presuppose that mind is a mysterious immaterial organ.

“Mental life is an aspect of our lives, and the idea that it takes place in the mind can, and should, be detached from the idea that there is a part of us, whether material or (supposing this made sense) immaterial, in which it takes place. Where mental life takes place need not be pinpointed any more precisely than by saying that it takes place where our lives take place. And then its states and occurrences can be no less intrinsically related to our environment than our lives are.”²³

To argue further, Putnam suggests that there is a division of linguistic labour in our social and linguistic levels. According to the division of linguistic labour, terms have their references fixed by the ‘experts’ in the particular field of science to which the

²² McDowell, (1980), p. 281.

²³ Ibid., p. 281.

term belongs. For example, the reference of the term 'lion' is fixed by the community of zoologists, the reference of the term 'elm tree' is fixed by the community of botanists etc. Take for instance the particular word 'gold'. Gold is a precious metal and is important for people in many ways. There are different sections of people in the society who use the term 'gold'. There are some people who wear gold ornaments; there are some who sell gold. Putnam suggests that all those people in our community who use the term 'gold', by selling, by buying, wearing, discussing, do not necessarily have to possess the power of recognizing whether a metal is really gold or not. All these people have to rely on the group of 'experts', who can tell whether the metal is really gold or not. The extension of the term 'gold' is fixed by these experts and hence meaning of the term 'gold'. The capacity of recognizing gold is not available with every individual of the community; it is possessed by the collective linguistic body. The collective linguistic body divides the 'labour' of knowing and employing these various parts of the 'meaning' of 'gold'. Putnam argues that the psychological states that every individual of the community possess about the 'gold' do not fix its extension. The *extension* of the term 'gold' is fixed only by sociolinguistic states of the collective linguistic body to which the speaker belongs. Therefore, the meaning of the term is determined by the sociolinguistic community of the individual. It is not determined by the narrow psychological state of the individual. So, his famous words,

“... there are two sorts of tools in the world: There are tools like a hammer or a screw driver which can be used by one person; and there are tools like a steamship which require the cooperative activity of a number of persons to use. Words have been thought of too much on the model of the first sort of tool.”²⁴

In this section, we have discussed how the narrow psychological states of an individual do not determine the meaning of the mental state or perceptual state in isolation from the physical environment. Even though two identical individuals possess the same narrow psychological state, but their meanings of the mental state differ. Putnam's main intention is to say that the function of mind should not be

²⁴ Putnam, (1975), p. 234.

described or be taken as a phenomenon which is completely dissociated from the environment. It is rather the fact that the physical environment including other minds constitutes the real essence of our mind. Putnam draws a clear cut distinction between functions of brain and functions of mind. Our mental life should not be taken merely as a function of brain which functions internally, even though it is necessary for our mental life. Rather, we can say that, our mind is collectively constituted by both brain states and external physical states of the world. Thus, subject's social and physical environment determines the meaning of his or her mental states.

1.3 Burge on Broad Content

A similar kind of argument to the above one has been proposed by Burge in his series of influential articles. His main article which argues for the broad content is "Individualism and the Mental" (1979). Though Putnam and Burge both argue for broad content, their arguments have important differences. Burge himself claims that his arguments are in no way similar to the Putnam's arguments, though their arguments are same in their conclusion. Burge claims that Putnam's arguments for social and physical externalism are narrower in scope than his arguments. Putnam argues only in the context generally of natural kind terms. On the other hand, Burge's arguments are directly about the nature of propositional attitudes. Due to this important difference some part of Putnam's argument may be uncongenial to the conclusions of Burge's argument. In Putnam's arguments, the physical factor of environment is much emphasized, while in Burge's case the sociological and linguistic factor is deeply focused. That is the reason why the former is called physical externalism and the later is called social externalism. Yet, we can easily find some sort of sociological and linguistic consideration in Putnam's arguments, as some philosophers claim.²⁵

²⁵ See Bilgrami, (1992).

As in Putnam, Burge begins with attacking the traditional philosophers' view on mind and meaning. Burge says that two different forms of views have dominated the philosophical discussion on mind. On the one hand, there is Cartesian tradition, which is otherwise best known as *dualism*, and, on the other hand, there is *behaviorism* which is a critique of dualism or Cartesianism. According to Burge, both these traditions, while debating over the nature of mind and the relationship between mind and world, have overemphasized the importance of individual subject. There are very few instances that we can find in traditional philosophy which suppose to give importance to the environment of the human beings. In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, social institutions play important role in shaping the content of individual's thought. Secondly, we can find some social considerations in philosophy of Wittgenstein. However, in general the role of social environment has received less importance in shaping the content of individual's thought. Burge, in his influential articles, argues that in explicating individual's mental life, the social and linguistic factor of the individual play a key role.

There may be two forms of externalism: One is 'social externalism' and the other is 'perceptual externalism'. In his earlier articles, like, "Individualism and the Mental" (1979), "Other Bodies" (1982a), "Two Thought Experiments Reviewed" (1982b), he emphasized on the importance of individual's linguistic and social community in determining the content of individual's thought. In later articles, like, "Individualism and Psychology" (1986a), "Cartesian Error and Objectivity of Perception" (1986b), "Intellectual Norms and Foundation of Mind" (1986c), he deliberated on the individual's causal history in shaping the content of individual's thought, particularly in the context of perception. These two forms of externalism seem to be independent of each other, but, by close analysis, we can see that there is an invariable relation between these two modes of externalism. What seems to be a causal history of the individual is somehow determined by the social and environmental factors of the individual. Individual's environmental and social factors

play a crucial role in determining the content of individual's perceptual experience. However, we will give attention to both these forms of externalism.

The real concern before Burge was to refute Fodor's methodological solipsism. In fact, we can see that, the debate between broad and narrow content of mental states is the debate between methodological solipsism and representational theory of mind, between individualism and anti-individualism, between subjectivism and anti-subjectivism. Methodological solipsism seems to claim that the perceptual states or intentional states of a subject supervene on formal or intrinsic properties of the subject. If the intrinsic properties or internal psychological states of the subject vary then the intentional states of the subject must be different. If the internal brain states of the subject remain the same in a particular situation, then his intentional states must also remain the same in that particular situation. Hence, it is claimed that the intentional states of the individual are fixed by the internal properties or we can say, non-intentional properties of the individual. Burge, on the other hand, claims that intentional perceptual states of the individual do not supervene on the intrinsic properties of the subject and so he argued that there might be different intentional states, while the intrinsic properties of the subject remain the same.

Burge, by using some version of Putnam's twin earth thought experiment, has argued against 'individualism'. According to 'individualism', there is no necessary and deep individuating relation between the individual's intentional states and the individual's physical and social environment. On the contrary, Burge holds that there is a necessary connection between subject's thought and his social and environmental factors by means of causal powers. Perceptual experience must be individuated by causal powers. Individual's society, environment and his thought is related to each other by cause and effect relationship. So he says,

"To think of something as water, for example, one must be in some causal relation to water – or at least in some causal relation to other particular substances that enable one to theorize accurately about water. In the normal cases, one sees and touches water. Such

relations illustrate the sort of conditions that make possible thinking of something as water. To know that such conditions obtain, one must rely on empirical methods. To know that water exists, or that what one is touching is water, one cannot circumvent empirical procedures. But to think that water is liquid, one need not know the complex conditions that must obtain if one is to think that thought. Such conditions need only be presupposed."²⁶

Here, Burge wants to suggest that the sociological and environmental factors of the individual are already involved in individual's thought about anything. He does not have to check whether the empirical factors exist or not. When the subject thinks about anything, the environmental factors of the person or thing are already presupposed.

According to Burge, there are two forms of individualism. One is much stronger than the other. The stronger version of individualism claims that the nature of individual's intentional state is fixed by the internal states and events of the concerned individuals themselves. It seems to be explicated by the individual's non-intentional factors like sensory stimulations, behavioral dispositions and internal physical and functional states of the individual. The weaker version is implied by the former and is only the claim of supervenience. It claims that if person's physical, functional, chemical and neural histories are given to be the same, and, then, their intentional state must not differ. Burge has argued that both these two forms of individualism are mistaken. He is of the opinion that, mental states and events of the individual vary along with variations in the environment.

Burge does not specifically doubt any particular part of psychology as individualistic. Rather, he is arguing against the claim that all of psychology, as it is currently practiced, is or should be individualistic. He is of the opinion that individualism as applied in psychology must be revisionistic. It must be revisionistic at least about the language of psychology. Burge writes, "Finally, I shall assume that

²⁶ Burge, (1988), pp. 653-54.

individualism is prima facie wrong about psychology, including cognitive psychology.... the language actually used in psychology is not purely individualistic."²⁷

Individualistic philosophers have formulated a general argument against non-individualistic view of mind. The argument is as follows– The behavior of the two identical individuals in different situation is same (premise 1). They hold that psychology is the science of behavior (premise 2). Since the behavior of the individuals is the same, the psychology (science of behavior) should give the same explanation of the different cases. Hence, it is argued that there is no requirement of explaining their mental states and events differently.

Burge attacks the individualist's argument by saying that two premises of the argument are problematic. According to him, it is a mistake to suppose that two individuals are behaviorally identical. In psychology, the concept of 'behavior' does not only indicate 'bodily motion' which may appear to be the same. Burge holds that in the true sense, the concept of 'behavior' in psychology is intentional action and they have to be specified non-individualistically. Hence he says;

"The problem of providing reasonable specifications of behavior cannot be solved from an armchair. Sanitizing the notion of behavior to meet some antecedently held methodological principle is an old game, never won."²⁸

To hold that psychology can be correctly described only as a science of behavior is also a mistake. It can be true only if the concept of behavior is made restrictive. However, psychology seems partly to study about the relations between people, or animal and their environment. If this is true, then it is wrong to describe it as a science of behavior. Because, if it is taken so, it cannot properly study how people experience the environment. The relationship between person and his environment seems to

²⁷ Burge, (1986a), p. 9.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

motivate non-individualistic principle of individuations and should be taken to be a crucial part of all psychological theory.

1.3.1 Burge's Thought Experiment for Social Externalism

Burge has developed a thought experiment to argue for social externalism exclusively regarding the individual's propositional attitudes or intentional states. In this thought experiment, we are told to imagine that there are two counterfactual situations. In situation 1, there is an individual, suppose, John, who possesses many propositional attitude states about various things of his surroundings. He is competent in English, a rational and intelligent person. In this situation, 'arthritis' is considered to be a disease of joints. Every standard dictionary of English and every expert on the disease would say so. John has various propositional attitude states about the disease 'arthritis'. He thinks that 'arthritis' is less serious than having cancer, fears that there is possibility of arthritis in his fingers, hopes that his mother will have no arthritis in future etc. Gradually he has developed a false belief that he has arthritis in his thigh. It is false, because, when he reports it to the doctor; he will be rectified by the statement that arthritis cannot occur in thigh because it is only a disease of joints. The community in which John lives is also using the term 'arthritis' in this sense.

Now, imagine a counterfactual situation where John is having the same physiological history, the same disease. His internal physical occurrences are the same. He goes through the same motions, engages in same behavior and has same sensory intake (physiologically described). John's physical and non-intentional psychological states are the same. The same thing that occurs to him in first situation also occurs to him in this counterfactual situation and also at the same time. But, in counterfactual situation, the term 'arthritis' denotes many different types of rheumatoid ailment, including the disease which John has in his thigh. In counterfactual situation, the disease 'arthritis' refers to an ailment in his thigh and to all other rheumatoid ailments. The community of doctors in the counter-factual situation is

well acquainted with the various notions of 'arthritis'. In actual situation 1, the term 'arthritis', as used by the community, does not apply to ailments outside joints. But in counter-factual situation, it can occur both outside the joints as well as in joints.

In counter-factual situation John lacks all his propositional attitudes about 'arthritis' which he earlier had in the actual situation. Here, he truly thinks that he has 'arthritis' in his thigh. So, John, in different situation has different intentional states, while his internal non-intentional states remain constant in both situations.

According to Burge, the upshot of this thought experiment is that, intentional states of the individual can vary while their non-intentional mental histories remain constant. In the above thought experiment, John and John would have different thoughts, while their internal physical states remain the same. So, this shows that person's social environment individuates their mental states. If their social environments differ, then their thought would also differ. Individual's relation to environment is crucial in shaping the content of his thought.

Burge suggests that the arguments for social externalism bring out variations in obliquely (or intensionally) occurring expressions in literal mental states and events ascriptions. This is our primary means of identifying intentional mental states. Burge discusses his arguments only in the context of propositional attitude states with that clause. As he himself says,

"The sort of argument that we have illustrated does not depend on special features of the notion of arthritis or aluminum. Such arguments go through for observational and theoretical notions, for percepts as well as concepts, for natural kinds and non-natural kind notions, for notions that are the special preserve of experts, and for what are known in the psychological literature as "basic categories."²⁹

²⁹ Burge, (1986a), p. 6.

1.3.2 Burge's Thought Experiment for Perceptual Externalism

Burge, in his later articles, has argued extensively that the content of our perceptual experience is determined by the causal relation between subject and object rather than by subject's internal psychological states. The content of the perception is individuated by the subject's causal relation with the environment. Burge claims that when we have perceptual knowledge, for example, seeing a cow, the content of our thought is partly determined by the cause of the thought.

Burge's theory may be called the causal theory of perceptual content. Here, he argues that there are two cases where internal facts about the two subjects are identical but the perceptual content differ and thus establishes that the internal non-intentional states of the subjects do not enter into determining the meaning of perceptual content of the subject, rather it is fixed by the subject's external relations. The theory suggests that experiences come to acquire their content by virtue of regular causal interactions with environmentally instantiated properties. The internal properties of the subject do not affect the causal interaction between the subject and the object of perception. It is neither necessary nor sufficient for non-intentional properties of the subject to be an individuating condition for the content of perceptual experience. What matters is the causal relation between subject's sense-organs and the object. So, according to him,

“Most perceptual representations are formed and obtain their content through regular interaction with the environment. They represent what, in some complex sense of ‘normally’, they normally stem from and are applied to. It makes no sense to attribute systematic perceptual error to a being whose perceptual representations can be explained as the result of regular interaction with a physical environment...”³⁰

Burge has argued against ‘individualism’ about the individual's perceptual experience particularly in the context of visual presentations. He is of the opinion that a person's

³⁰ Burge, (1986b), p. 131.

non-intentional dispositions, his non-visual abilities and his bodily states cannot individuate the content of individual's intentional perceptual states. The thought experiment which is supposed to prove the above conclusion is primarily based on the three assumptions about the perceptual knowledge. Burge discusses three assumptions about perception which leads him to develop the thought experiment.

Burge's argument for perceptual externalism starts with the idea that perceptual knowledge is commonly regarded as objective. There are two important senses in which perceptual experience is objective. First one is about the relationship between our perceptions and physical objects. It is the idea that the object of perception is *prima facie* independent of any particular individual's perception. It is independent in the sense that there is no necessary relation between any particular person's abilities, actions, thoughts and perceptions up to and including the time of perception, on the one hand, and the nature of those entities with which that particular person perceptually interacts, on the other. The object of perception is fundamentally independent of any one's particular experience. As against the principle of subjective idealism, Burge holds that the nature of physical objects could have been different even while our perceptual experience remained constant. According to Burge, there is always a chance of misperceptions. He writes, "as long as the person's visual presentations are of public, objective objects, properties, or relations, it is possible for the person to have mistaken presentations."³¹ The erroneous perception occurs usually when a single sensory organ of the subject is involved in perception and it is rectified, when other sensory modalities that are associated with the dispositions are brought into play. Burge suggests,

"The nature of such states is determined partly by normal relations between the person... and the environment. Error is determined against a background of normal interactions."³²

³¹ Burge, (1986a), p. 39.

³² Burge, (1986b), p. 125.

Perceptual knowledge may be objective in another important sense. It bears on the relationship between different person's perceptual experiences of the same object. An object of perception is not necessarily connected to any particular person's visual perception. Different people can make the same observation about a particular object at a given time and in a particular situation. So, Burge further asserts that this is the first assumption about perceptual experience:

“... our concept of objectivity is such that no one objective entity that we visually represent is such that it must vary with, or be typed so as necessarily to match exactly, an individual's proximal stimuli and discriminative abilities. The point follows from a realistic, and even from a non-subjectivistic, view of the objects of sight.”³³

The second assumption about perceptual knowledge is that intentional perceptual states are not generally individuated purely on the basis of an attributive role-description of a causal relation or are individuated in terms of a relation of appearance-similarity. According to Burge,

“Some objective physical objects and properties are visually represented as such; they are specifically specified.”³⁴

Thirdly, Burge assumes that perceptual representations are empirically informative. Visual representations have representational characteristics partly because of the interaction of the instances with the objective entities. The information which the visual representation carries has its objective intentional content, consisting partly in its being the normal causal products of objective entities. However, Burge holds that all kind of perceptual representations which have their representational characteristics that specify objective entities are not determined always in this way. Therefore, representational characteristics of some visual representations depend on the subject's background theory or on the interaction among other representations. Even, in Marr's theory, the perceptual representation depends on the subject's conceptual background.

³³ Burge, (1986a), pp. 39–40.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

But, for the present purpose, Burge holds that those perceptual representations which acquire their representational characteristics through interaction with the objective entities are taken to be empirically informative.

These are the above three assumptions about perception which enable us to form a thought experiment which argues against 'individualism' regarding perceptual states. This thought experiment is quite like the one which we have already discussed in case of social externalism. In this thought experiment³⁵, there are two situations. In the actual situation, suppose that there is a person 'P' who perceives the objective visible property 'O' under normal conditions. P has the intentional perceptual representations, suppose 'O', which is the product of instances of 'O'. The intentional visual representations 'O' of the person 'P' is produced by the interaction with the objective property 'O'. But there are some occasions, where the perceptual representation 'O' of individual 'P' is erroneously produced by the interaction with the objective property 'C'. Sometimes, 'P' mistakenly sees or represents 'C' as an 'O'. Here, the person P's all non-intentional discriminating capacities are not able to discriminate the instances of 'C' from instances of 'O'. He is unable to distinguish between the actual perception and the mistaken perception. By our second assumption, 'O' represents any instances of 'O' not merely in terms of some attributive role description.

Now, imagine the counter-factual situation, where P's all non-intentional discriminating abilities, his internal physical states are same as the above. But, here, the visual representation 'O' is absent altogether. The optical laws in the counter-factual environment are such that the impressions on P's eyes and the normal causal processes that lead to P's visual representations are explained in terms of Cs other than O. So in counter-factual situation the visual representation is not type 'O'. In the actual situation, 'P' was mistakenly perceiving 'C' as an 'O', but in counter-factual situation, 'P' correctly perceives 'C' as 'C'. In the counter-factual situation, the

³⁵ Ibid., p. 41.

environment is altogether different where individual's visual physical stimulations remain unaffected. The same visual stimulation in actual case caused by the 'O', where in counter case, it is caused by 'C'. Hence, Burge argues that person's intentional perceptual states could vary while his or her physical states and non-intentional discriminative abilities remained constant.

1.4 Fodor on Narrow Content

All the above arguments in favor of wide/broad content, as we have mentioned before, are in reaction to arguments for narrow content, particularly arguments in favor of narrow content put forth by Jerry Fodor. So, in order to understand the importance of the debate and the distinction we need to look closely into the views of Fodor regarding the nature of content. Fodor is well known for his revolutionary view about the nature of thought, nature of mind and mental processes. According to him, the activity of thinking is a computational process within a system of 'Language of Thought'³⁶. He argues that there is an internal language which operates in the process of thought. This inner language is not like public language, for example, English, French, etc. It is symbolic and formal. Fodor is famous for his defence of 'Computational Theory of Mind'. According to this view, mind or mental representation or mental process is a like a computational operation. Just as a computer has a different language from ordinary language, mind also has a different language. There are different symbols which operate in the function of the mind. Fodor claims that the language of mind is purely syntactical. Computational theory of mind which adopts methodological solipsism is the only fruitful way to do cognitive psychology.

Along with this, Fodor has defended a different account of theory of meaning as opposed to the causal theory of meaning that upholds an 'asymmetric dependence'

³⁶ See Fodor, (1975).

theory of meaning. It consists of a variety of informational or indicator semantics, based on causal and law-like connections between thought and their objects. He is a critique of 'causal theory of reference', 'naturalistic psychology', 'reductionism', 'connectionism', etc.

In this section, our purpose is to discuss about Fodor's argument for narrow content of propositional attitude states. While arguing for narrow content, Fodor has argued extensively against Putnam's and Burge's naturalistic view about propositional attitude states. At the outset, it is important to point out that, Fodor's argument for narrow content must not be taken in isolation from his other significant views on mind. His arguments for 'Methodological Solipsism' are crucial and foundational for his defence of computational theory of mind and other views about philosophy of psychology. We shall look into the connections between these views throughout the course of our discussion. Fodor has argued for narrow content/methodological solipsism in various ways. We will focus our discussion on some of the major aspects of his argument. Before going into the details of the argument, we would first contrast two opposite views, i.e., the naturalistic/non-individualistic view of Putnam and Burge, on the one hand, and individualistic/solipsists view of Fodor and others on the other hand. It is important to show what are the main claims of their arguments because it would help in understanding the thrust of Fodor's argument.

Here are the two opposite views present in philosophical literature--

The naturalistic view of the individuation of mental state

- Propositional attitudes are specified relationally/transparently. So it assumes a non-individualistic/wide/broad notion of content.

- It assumes that causal powers of the Oscar's belief are different from the causal powers of the twin Oscar's belief. So it distinguishes Oscar's belief from twin Oscar's belief in terms of their causal power.
- It individuates brain states non-relationally, because, Oscar and twin Oscar are molecular duplicates including their neurological structure. All their non-intentional states are in this sense identical.
- But it discards the view that mental states supervene on brain states.
- Therefore, it holds that individualism/methodological solipsism about the propositional states must be false.

The individualistic view of the individuation of mental states

- Propositional attitudes of the individuals are specified non-relationally/opaquely. So, it assumes an individualistic/narrow/solipsistic account of content.
- It assumes that causal powers of Oscar's belief are identical with causal power of the twin Oscar's belief. So, it identifies Oscar's belief with twin Oscar's belief.
- It individuates brain states/non-intentional states non-relationally/non-transparently, because, Oscar and twin Oscar are molecular duplicates including their neurological structure.
- Therefore, it preserves the principle of supervenience, i.e., the view that mental states do supervene on brain states. If the brain states of the twin differ then their mental states must also differ. If their brain states remain the same, then their mental states also remain the same.
- Therefore, it holds that individualism/methodological solipsism about the propositional attitude states must be true.

We will discuss the above argument for narrow content with reference to Fodor, by contrasting it with the argument for broad content. Before going into discussing the issues of causal powers and supervenience, let's first discuss Fodor's view on the nature of propositional attitudes. Why does he go on to showing that an individualistic/solipsistic account of propositional attitudes must be an important aspect for the practice of modern cognitive psychology? According to Fodor, all important psychological theory must adopt some version of individualistic account of mind.

Fodor distinguishes between two prevalent theories of mind, i.e., 'The Representational Theory of Mind' and 'The computational Theory of Mind'. According to Fodor, these two different theories are engaged in theory construction in modern cognitive psychology from different perspectives. On the one hand, we have representational theory of mind which asserts that propositional attitude states are defined by the relations which organism bears to mental representations. According to the view, the content of the propositional attitudes are individuated by the external relations between subject and the environment. The content of the mental states are specified by the semantic properties of the environment. It suggests that mental states are distinguished by the content of the associated representations. On the other hand, we have computational theory of mind, which precisely claims that mental processes have only access to the formal or non-semantic properties of the mental representations. According to the view, the content of the propositional attitude states are individuated by the syntactical properties of the representations. Environmental factors of the individual do not leave any serious effect on his mental states. So, there is a well fought debate between representational theory of mind and functional theory of mind which seems to be closely connected with the debate between broad and narrow content. The representational theory of mind follows the path of 'naturalistic psychology' or 'common-sense psychology'. The computational theory of mind follows the path of 'rational psychology'.

According to Fodor, the computational theory of mind plays a significant role in defining the main features of the modern cognitive psychology as opposed to the representational theory of mind. Fodor claims that the computational theory of mind is stronger than the representational theory of mind because it involves a methodological solipsist view which is relevant for all psychological theory. We have earlier discussed that, according to the computational theory of mind, mental processes are like computational processes. Fodor holds that mental processes are computational processes because (a) mental representations are symbolic representations and (b) mental processes are formal in nature because these processes are applied to representations 'in virtue of the syntax of the representations'. Mental processes are syntactical in the sense that they are not semantical. According to Fodor, mental processes can have only access to the formal/syntactical properties of the representations. It has no access to the semantic properties of the representations and, therefore, mental states should be individuated by the syntactical properties of the representations. The content of the mental states cannot be specified with reference to semantic properties of the representations, i.e., truth, reference and meaning. The reason being that, the semantic properties of the mental representations are unable to distinguish one mental state from the other because of the fact that the semantic properties of the representations cannot be included in the mental process. So, we can have distinct mental states if and only if our formal/syntactical properties of the mental representation are different. So, in the case of twins in two different worlds, Fodor claims that their mental states must remain same because their formal properties of representations are not different. It may be the case that their semantic properties differ in two cases, but that does not enter into determining their mental content. Fodor holds that these formality conditions of the mental representations make the computational theory of mind much stronger than the representational theory of mind.

Fodor argues that there is an internal language of the mind, just like the language of computer, for example, c++, java, etc., which makes mental

representation or mental event possible. The language of mind is called 'the language of thought'. Suppose, there is a particular language of mind called 'LOM' which makes the mental representations possible. Fodor is of the opinion that, the 'LOM' is only capable of coding the formal properties of the environmental information to the mental representations. It does not matter for the mental processes, whether, whatever the language of mind writes, is true or false. According to Fodor, the bearing of environmental informations upon mental processes is exhausted by the formal character of whatever the internal language writes. Take the instance of a computing machine. Suppose, there are some questions and answers that are programmed in a computer. When someone asks the computer by instructions 'who own the highest goal in football?' The machine would answer 'Pele'. But when the machine would answer 'Pele', it does not mean that it refers to 'Pele'. Likewise is the case with 'LOM'. So, Fodor writes,

"I'm saying, in effect, that the formality condition, viewed in this context, is tantamount to a sort of methodological solipsism. If mental processes are formal, they have access only to the formal properties of the such representations of the environment as the senses provide. Hence they have no access to the semantic properties of such representations, including the property of being true, of having referents, or, indeed, the property of being representations of the environment."³⁷

Fodor suggests that mental processes entirely live in a 'notional world'³⁸. All its beliefs may be true or false, but it does not matter to the mental processes, because, truth and falsity are semantic property and a mental process does not have any access to semantic properties.

These formality conditions of the mental states and the Cartesian claim that 'mental states are individuated independent of the environmental causes and effects' are closely connected. They both accept the methodological solipsistic view of the mind. Descartes, in his book *Meditations on the First Philosophy* writes,

³⁷ Fodor, (1980), p. 314.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 315.

“At this moment it does indeed seem to me that it is with eyes awake that I am looking at this paper; that this head which I move is not asleep, that it is deliberately and of set purpose that I extend my hand and perceive it.... But in thinking over this I remind myself that on many occasions I have been deceived by similar illusions, and in dwelling on this reflection I see so manifestly that there are no certain indications by which we may clearly distinguish wakefulness from sleep that I am lost in astonishment. And my astonishment is such that it is almost capable of persuading me that I now dream.”³⁹

According to Fodor, the formality conditions of propositional attitudes are closely involved in the explanation of the attitudes as causal explanation of behavior. The view that ‘mental processes are formal’ is based on the view that propositional attitudes must be opaquely explained. Fodor writes, “It is typically under an opaque construal that attributions of the propositional attitudes to organisms enter into the explanations of their behavior.”⁴⁰ Opaque description of behavior is present only in the computational theories of mind because it the computational theory of mind which suggests that mental processes are formal processes. Mental processes are both opaquely ascribed and opaquely taxonomized to the organisms.

Fodor holds that propositional attitude states of the individual must be opaquely taxonomized for the purpose of the psychological theory (rather than transparently), because nontransparent features of mental states are relevant for practice of psychology. He states that opaque reading of the mental process is something stronger than transparent reading of the mental states from psychological point of view. Fodor says that

“Ontologically, transparent readings are stronger than opaque ones; for example, the former license existential inferences which the later do not. But psychologically, opaque readings are stronger than transparent ones; they tell us more about the character of the mental causes of behavior. The representational theory of mind offers an explanation of this anomaly. Opaque ascriptions are true in virtue of

³⁹ Descartes, (1957), p. 311.

⁴⁰ Fodor, (1980), p. 323.

the way that the agent represents the objects of his wants (intentions, beliefs, etc.)....”⁴¹

Opaque readings of propositional attitudes would clearly be able to tell us how people represent the objects of their propositional attitudes. If two people are identically related to the identical mental representations, then they possess the same identical opaquely construed mental states. For example, consider the case of Oscar and twin Oscar. If Oscar and twin Oscar are molecular identical individuals, then, they are identically related to the formal representations of the term ‘water’. So, both twins are in the same non-transparent/formal mental states. Non-transparency feature of mental states constitute the decisive part in cognitive psychology. So, according to Fodor,

“My claim has been that, in doing our psychology, we want to attribute mental states fully opaquely because it’s the fully opaque reading which tells us what the agent has in mind, and it’s what the agent has in mind that causes his behavior.”⁴²

Now, let us discuss the disputes between Fodor on the one hand and Putnam and Burge on the other regarding the relationship between causal powers and supervience. We have earlier discussed how Burge and Putnam’s argument for broad content violates the principle of supervience. Putnam and Burge have argued that the content of our mental states are individuated in relation to the environment, i.e., individuated with their representational properties or semantic properties. Putnam and Burge also claim that the propositional attitude states do not supervene on brain states. Their thought experiment shows that, propositional attitudes of the individuals are distinct, whereas their brain/physical states remain the same. So, it is implicated that mental states do not supervene on their brain states.

On the other hand, Fodor suggests that, if some theory violates the principle of supervience, then, it should perform two tasks. It does not only need to individuate mental states relationary, it also needs to individuate brain states / non-intentional

⁴¹ Fodor, (1980), p. 318.

⁴² Ibid., p. 323.

states non-relationally. The theory of Putnam does the former but not the latter task. Relational properties of the mental states or representations do not have any effect on the individuation of brain states. So, we can ask, “why should we assume that? And of course, if we do not assume it, then it’s just not true that my twin and I are in identical brain states; and it is therefore not true that they offer counter-factual examples to the supervenience of the attitudes.”⁴³ So, twin individuals have the same brain states, and it implies that they have the same mental states. According to Fodor, the content of the mental states of the individual is specified only by the brain states of the individual. In his opinion, the brain states play a key role in the subject’s mental representation. On the other hand, Putnam and Burge have laid importance on the semantic properties of the mental states to play a key role in mental representation, which is outside of the head. Naturalistic philosophers have, time and again, criticized or doubted whether the notion of narrow content can actually be constructed. They are of the opinion that, psychologists individuate the mental states non-transparently at the cost of requiring an individualistic or non-rational narrow notion of content, which is very problematic. They suggest that actually a successful psychological theory cannot work with such kind of notion at hand.

Fodor holds that the ‘Revisionistic’ account of Tyler Burge cannot be true for psychology. The Revisionistic account of mind suggests, precisely, that both the naturalistic or common-sense pattern and individualistic pattern of individuation must violate the principle of supervenience.

According to Fodor, the principle of ‘relational individuation’ is out of question or out of context for the purpose of psychology. It may be useful for any other purpose, but it cannot be successfully practiced in modern cognitive science. In his opinion, no difference persists between the considerations which individuate the brain states non-relationally and considerations which individuate mental states non-relationally. Fodor suggests that those who individuate brain states non-relationally

⁴³ Fodor, (1987), p. 31.

must also individuate mental states non-relationally. Hence, both, naturalistic pattern and individualistic pattern should follow the principle of supervenience and both twins should share the narrow content of mental states.

The reason behind a position like that of Fodor's is that any scientific notion of psychological states must respect mind/body supervenience. 'Mind/Brain supervenience' is the only idea which correctly explains how mental causation is possible. In science, the content of individuation is always taken as individualistic. According to him, it is the realistic account of Putnam and Burge which, by undermining the notion of content, creates problem for the propositional attitude based theories of mind. It raises problem for all kinds of mental states in general.

Since, the content of propositional attitudes, like, belief, for example, are individuated by their relation to internal representations, to believe something is to be in a certain relation to some internal state which represents objects and properties in the world about which the intentional state is directed. Fodor suggests that the system of such representations is configured by an internal language which is symbolic, formal and syntactical. He thinks that propositional attitudes states play an important role in agent's psychology. The internal properties of the mental representation causally explain the individual's behaviour. Causal power of behavior, according to Fodor, must be characterized without referring to anything which is lying outside the individual's head. According to this view, the relational/referential properties of the representation cannot perform the function of a causal power to explicate the behavior. Fodor claims that the cognitive psychology is exactly concerned with the causal-functional role of representations. Mental events and processes exclusively operate upon the intrinsic feature of the belief, and only formal properties of the mental representations can have causal power on the individual's mental state. That is why cognitive psychology is said to be committed to the principle of 'methodological solipsism'.

Fodor thinks that the relation between mental states and behavior are typically causal. There are some philosophers who have denied it. But they are wrong in doing so. According to Fodor, scientific psychology must give causal explanation of mental phenomena or mental states on the basis of causal properties of the mental states. They distinguish mental states in virtue of the internal properties of the mental representations. If individuals possess distinct causal properties, then, they have different mental states. If they have the same causal properties, then, they have the same mental states. So he writes,

“... if you’re interested in a causal explanation, it would be mad to distinguish between Oscar’s brain states and Oscar₂’s; their brain states have identical causal powers. That’s why we individuate brainstates individualistically. And if you are interested in causal explanation, it would be made to distinguish between Oscar’s mental states and oscar₂’s; their mental states have identical causal powers. But common sense deploys a taxonomy that does distinguish between the mental states of Oscar and oscar₂. So the commonsense taxonomy won’t do for the purposes of psychology.”⁴⁴

As we have already discussed, Putnam and Burge have argued that causal powers of the mental representations are the semantic properties of the mental representations. In case of twin earth, for example, the mental states of the Oscar and twin Oscar are not the same because they have different external semantic properties. When Oscar says ‘water is life’, he means H₂O is life and when Oscar₂ utters the same line, he means XYZ. This proves that causal powers of the mental states of the twins are distinct, and, hence, their mental states must also differ without disturbing their brain states.

Fodor rebelled against this line of thought, by claiming that this is not the correct explanations of the identification of the causal powers. He is of the opinion that, “... causal powers must be identified across context, not within context.”⁴⁵ Even

⁴⁴ Fodor, (1987), p. 34.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

though it is true that the term water refers to things different for Oscar and twin Oscar, but it is irrelevant for the identifications of causal powers, because it is imagined in the different location. If Oscar and twin Oscar would confront the water in the same situation, then their causal power will be same about water, and, hence, their mental states would also be same.

There is a different line of argument by Burge, which suggests that, mental states of the twins may remain the same when their behavioral effects are non-intentionally individuated and their mental states would be different when we will individuate it intentionally. Burge argues that behavior is supposed to be the outcome of mental causes. If the behavior of the twins differs, then, their mental causes are also bound to differ and their mental states are also bound to differ. Burge assumes that the behavioral dispositions of the Oscar and twin Oscar differ. So, the principle of the individuation of the propositional attitudes necessarily depends on the relational properties of the behavior.

On the other hand, Fodor argues that the behavioral dispositions of the twins are identical. There is no reason to suppose that their behavioral dispositions are different. Fodor thinks that when we are reflecting on causal powers of the mental states, we should take the matter seriously 'where does 'behavior' begin and end?'. Burge has not shown clearly how their behavior is different. He just accepts the claim on independent ground. Fodor thinks that we cannot identify the causal properties without the considerations of the physiology. According to Fodor,

“... you can't affect the causal power of a person's mental states without affecting his physiology. That's not a conceptual claim or a metaphysical claim, of course. It's a contingent fact about how god made the world. God made the world such that the mechanisms by which environmental variables affect organic behaviors run via their effects on the organism's nervous system. Or so, at least, all the psychologists I know assure me.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 39–40.

Conclusion

Hence, we see that the debate between externalism and internalism about the mind–world relationship has led to the debate and distinction between broad and narrow content. Philosophers, who are externalists, are of the opinion that the content of perceptual experience is determined by the social and physical environment of the subject and its nature is wide or broad. Semantic properties of the environment enter into determining the meaning of mental content, by virtue of the causal relation with the subject, and, thereby, making mental content transparent and relational. On the other hand, individualist philosophers tend to think that the content of individual’s perceptual experience by the internal psychological characteristics of the individual which is non-transparent and non-relational. So, according to these philosophers, the nature of the mental content is narrow. The supporters of narrow mental content are deeply influenced by Descartes’ dualism, though their position is physicalist version of the Descartes’ dualism. The debate between broad and narrow content can be seen as a debate between ‘representational theories of mind’ and ‘computational theories of mind and further leads to a fight between ‘common-sense psychology’ and ‘rational psychology’, regarding their importance in practice of cognitive science and psychology. The distinctions between internal and external, subjective and objective, narrow and broad have led to another debate and distinction between phenomenal and intentional, centering on the topic of ‘consciousness’. The concept of internal, subjective leads to a notion of phenomenal content and the concept of external, objective leads to a notion of intentional content. We shall discuss this debate in next chapter.

Chapter 2

Perceptual Content: Phenomenal and Intentional

Introduction

The study of the relationship between mind and world centers around the study of 'consciousness'. 'Consciousness' is one of the most integral parts of the living organisms and, in particular, human beings. Conscious experience may be the most important phenomena of human life. It is through conscious experience, our minds relate into the external world. Conscious experiences contribute the major part of the human mind, and, indirectly to human life. It is the most important factor in the life of the mind, and one may say that our mind starts life with 'Consciousness'.

The subject of 'consciousness' is central to many pursuits of knowledge. The philosophical notion of 'consciousness' is controversial. Various philosophers throughout the ages have tried to understand it in different ways. Discussions of the 'consciousness' in analytic philosophy is a later development than in any other philosophical tradition. Though it is extensively discussed in phenomenological tradition, still, analytic philosophers think that 'consciousness' poses a problem to the study of mind and world relationship. In this chapter, we will primarily study the relation between mind and world through consciousness in the content of the debate centering around the distinction between 'phenomenal' and 'intentional'. While discussing this debate, we will deliberate fundamentally on two questions: What is the problem of consciousness? And, what is the problem of intentionality? Our discussion will focus on the role of consciousness in perceptual experience.

So, we will be primarily asking questions, like, is content of perceptual experience intentional or is it phenomenal? Or Are perceptual experience both phenomenal as well intentional? etc.

Traditionally, Philosophical discussion on 'consciousness' has taken broadly two trajectories. Some philosophers discuss consciousness as consciousness of something or some states-of-affairs. Some other philosophers take consciousness as in itself. There is a major difference between 'consciousness of' and 'consciousness-in-itself'. Since the time of Brentano, it is widely held that consciousness is always 'consciousness of' something, to be aware of or being aware that something or some states of affairs is the case. In this sense of consciousness, it is always directed at states of affairs of the world. Thus, this 'directedness' feature of consciousness or mental states is called 'intentionality' and mental states that are said to be directed at or about something are called 'intentional states'. Brentano called 'intentionality' as 'the mark of the mental', and, hence distinguished between mental states and physical states. There are various features of an intentional state which will be discussed in this chapter.

There is, however, a different account of 'consciousness', according to which, consciousness is not always consciousness of something. 'Consciousness' is, rather, understood as an intrinsic property of experience, a property that is due to the subjective features of our experience as such. According to this view, there are some conscious states which cannot be said to be directed at or about something. These conscious states do not represent something outside of consciousness. This interpretation of 'consciousness' holds that the phenomenal or the subjective or the intrinsic quality of a conscious state is the most important feature of conscious state and a state which has this feature is called a 'phenomenal state'. Mental states, which are phenomenally conscious states, are said to be internally conscious states. There is a subjective inner perspective attached with each phenomenal consciousness or phenomenal conscious states. The subjective inner perspective attached with every phenomenal state is technically called 'qualia'. It can be expressed in everyday language by the phrase 'what it is like states'. It follows from this phrase that there is something it

is like to possess a phenomenal conscious states, like, to taste pickle, to smell rose, to feel nervousness, etc. What it is like to undergo these experiences is known as the phenomenal characters of experience. It is further said that different kinds of experiences may be phenomenally or subjectively similar. Take the example of colour experience. There are different shades of colour red. What it is like to experience deep red is similar to what it is like to experience light red than experiencing black or green. It is because the phenomenal properties involved in experience of different shades of red are subjectively similar than phenomenal properties involved in the experience of black or green. Philosophers have identified different kinds of 'phenomenal conscious states' or experiences, such as,

- Perceptual experiences, like, seeing green, hearing music, touching ice, etc.
- Bodily sensations, like, feeling cold, feeling an itch, feeling hungry, etc.
- Emotions, like, nervousness, jealousy, love, etc.
- Moods, like, depression, tension, etc.

2.1 Articulating the Debate

So, from the above discussion one can conclude that there are two different properties of consciousness, i.e., one is intentionality and the other is phenomenality. Intentionality is the property of being directed towards objects and states of affairs, while phenomenality is what it is like to subjectively possess a conscious experience. So, philosophical discussion on 'consciousness' has taken two different trajectories in terms of emphasizing one of the two properties of consciousness. Those who give importance to the intentionality of consciousness and try to define mental states or conscious states in terms of 'intentionality' and think that intentional or representational nature of mental states or conscious states establishes the relationship between mind and world accurately, are called representationalists or intentionalists. Theories of this kind have also been called 'one-level account of consciousness.'¹ On the other hand, those who give importance to phenomenal property or phenomenal character of consciousness, and try to define conscious mental states by this feature and think that phenomenal

¹ Thomasson, (2008), p. 191.

consciousness gives a better account of the relationship between mind and world are called anti-intentionalists or phenomenologists. Theories of this kind have been called 'a higher-order account of consciousness'². Thus, the study of 'consciousness' has developed in these two-fold ways, very frequently opposing each other. According to representationalism or intentionalism, consciousness is always consciousness of the world; it represents something in the world. On the other hand, higher-level accounts of consciousness or 'phenomenalism' states that, conscious states are not always directed outward or represent something in the world; it rather consists in the awareness of the mental states and its phenomenal character itself. The debate between 'representationalism' and 'phenomenalism' has been defined by Ned Block as the 'great chasm in the philosophy of mind'. He writes,

"The greatest chasm in the philosophy of mind – may be even all of philosophy–divides two perspectives on consciousness. The two perspectives differ on whether there is anything in the phenomenal character of conscious experience that goes beyond the intentional, the cognitive and functional. A convenient terminological handle on the dispute is whether there are "qualia". Those who think that the phenomenal character of conscious experience goes beyond the intentional, the cognitive and functional are said to believe in qualitative properties of conscious experience, or qualia for short."³

The debate between 'intentionalism' and 'phenomenalism' or 'intentionalists' and 'anti-intentionalists' is not always straight-forward. There are different ways of formulating the debate between 'intentionalists' and 'anti-intentionalists'. The main focus of the debate is whether one of the two properties is exhausted by the other one. The representationalists would answer this question by saying that the phenomenal content of experience is exhausted by its representational content and thus phenomenal content of conscious states is nothing but identical with and also supervene on representational character of experience. They are of the opinion that what we call the phenomenal content of experience is nothing but just the representational content of experience. According to this view, if representational content of any two possible conscious states differ, then their phenomenal content

² Ibid., p. 192.

³ Block, (1996), p. 19.

must also differ and if their representational content remain the same, their phenomenal content would also remain the same. The philosophers who argue for the above view are Michael Tye, Tim Crane, William Lycan, Fred Dretske, Gilbert Harman, Alex Byrne, Amie. L. Thomason, D. M. Armstrong, John McDowell, etc. There are different versions of this kind of 'intentionalism' which we will discuss in due course.

On the other hand, the 'anti-intentionalists' or 'phenomenists' would suggest that the phenomenal contents of conscious states are not exhausted by the representational content of experience. They are of the opinion that it is rather intentional content of experience which is exhausted by the phenomenal character of experience and to that extent, phenomenal character of experience do not supervene on and are not identical with the representational content. According to them, the phenomenal content of any possible experiences may vary, while their representational content remain constant and their phenomenal content may held constant while their representational content vary.

It is important to note that all intentionalists and anti-intentionalists would agree that there are both phenomenal and intentional content of experience. But their disagreement follows from the fact that whether any one of these two properties outrun or dominate on other. The recent debate between the phenomenal and the intentional centers around the issue whether bodily sensations, like, feeling hungry, itches, pain, tickle, etc., and various moods and emotions are intentional or phenomenal. The issue became more intense by the arguments of some anti-intentionalists that there are some bodily sensations like pain, and some emotions and moods which are purely phenomenal. According to these philosophers, these form of conscious states are not directed at anything, and, hence lack the feature of 'intentionality' altogether. For example, according to Searle, there are forms of nervousness, elation and undirected anxiety that are not intentional. Searle Writes,

“Many conscious states are not intentional, e.g., a sudden sense of elation.”⁴

Searle is of the opinion that, consciousness and intentionality are not to be taken as the same phenomena because of the fact that there are some conscious states which are not intentional, and on the other hand, there are some intentional states which are not conscious states. According to him, the class of conscious states and the class of intentional states seem to overlap each other, but, they should not be taken as identical, nor can one be reduced to the other. The ‘intentional’ feature of mental state is not present in every mental state. It is only present in mental states like, beliefs, hopes, love, desire, etc. He is of the opinion that mental states, like, nervousness, elation, and undirected anxiety, etc., do not possess the characteristics of ‘intentionality’. These mental states do not have the feature of ‘aboutness’ or ‘directedness’ which is said to be the necessary feature of ‘intentionality’. Someone’s nervousness or anxiety is not to be necessarily directed at or about anything in the world. If we ask someone, ‘what are you anxious of?’ (What are you elated about?), he does not necessarily require to answer the question, while in cases, like, desires, beliefs, etc., he has a definite answer to a question of the above kind, (like, ‘what is your belief about’). Even if Searle is of the opinion that all states are not intentional states, it is quite controversial to call him as an anti-intentionalists because he has himself developed an important theory of ‘intentionality’ abandoning some of the traditional and misleading concepts about it. He has, however, clearly distinguished between phenomenal states and intentional states. According to him, there are clear cases of phenomenal states which are not intentional and there are clear cases of intentional states which are not phenomenal states. He is not thereby claiming that all mental states are intentional or all mental states entirely phenomenal.

So, we can take Searle’s position, in one sense, as advocating of some form of ‘weak intentionalism’ as well as ‘weak phenomenalist’. We can call him a restricted intentionalists as well as a restricted phenomenists.

⁴ Searle, (1983), p. 2.

There are many other philosophers who are of the opinion that bodily sensations, like, pain, emotions, and moods do not have any intentional object. For example, Collin McGinn says,

“By sensations, we shall mean bodily feelings...as well as perceptual experiences. These differ in an important respect; will call for a subdivision within the class of what we are calling sensations. Bodily sensations do not have an intentional object in the way that perceptual experiences do....”⁵

In a similar way, Ned Block states that

“Note... that phenomenal content need not be representational all (my favorite example is the phenomenal content of orgasm).”⁶

In recent times, Ned Block is one of the major proponents of ‘phenomenalism’. He is of the opinion that it is metaphysically possible for phenomenal character to vary even if all the internal physical facts are the same. Phenomenal character of perceptual experience is neither same as, nor does it supervene upon representational content of experience. So, philosophers who argue for the phenomenal character of experience are Tomas Nagel, Frank Jackson, Christopher Peacocke, Ned Block, David Chalmers, etc. There are different versions of arguments for ‘phenomenalism’. Primarily, there are two versions of ‘phenomenalism’ or ‘anti-intentionalism’ i.e. ‘strong phenomenalism’ and ‘weak phenomenalism.’

On the other hand, intentionalist philosophers, like, M. Tye and Tim Crane, have gone a long way to establish that the content of conscious states, like, bodily sensations, emotions, moods possess a representational character. They argue for the representational content of experience of pain by appealing to the ‘felt location’ of pain. Tim Crane has introduced the notion of ‘felt location’⁷ and claims that ‘felt location’ can be regarded as that towards which our bodily sensations are directed and thus bodily sensations are a form of perception. When one feels a bodily sensation, for example, toothache, it is typically located in the

⁵ McGinn, (1982), p. 8.

⁶ Block, (1995), p. 234.

⁷ Crane, (2007), p. 7.

tooth. This is called as the 'felt location' of the sensations. Even though at times one can feel a general fatigue which is not specifically felt in any part of the body, but this does not follow from this that it is not felt in the body at all. According to Crane, it must be felt somewhere in the body. We cannot comprehend the fact that we have a bodily sensation but that is ten feet away from our body. The example of phantom limb does not really create any problem precisely because in such a situation the subject feels the body to be extended to the point where it had been before. It is not that the subject feels the pain to be away from the body, hanging in the air.

In another sense, the so called 'undirected anxiety' also possesses the feature of intentionality. When someone is angry, the world appears to him unjust or insulting and when someone is in a pleasant mood, the world appears to him or her to be pleasant. As Thomasson says,

"What it is like to have a mood or emotion is, at least in part, a matter of the world showing up to us in a value – charged way."⁸

However, our main aim in this chapter is to study the debate between phenomenologists and intentionalists by focusing on the view of M. Tye and Tim Crane on the one hand and Thomas Nagel and Frank Jackson on the other.

Before going into discussing these philosophers, let us now discuss the different versions of intentionalism. Different versions of intentionalism have been held by different philosophers. These different versions of intentionalism may overlap each other but they are different in some important respects. Some versions of strong intentionalism may cohere with some versions of reductive intentionalism, some versions of 'restricted intentionalism' may be included in some version of 'weak intentionalism', but no two versions of these intentionalism are identical. Further, some versions may be subset of some other versions.

For our purpose, we will concentrate on the main distinctions.

⁸ Thomasson (2008), p. 7.

Strong intentionalism – Strong intentionalism is the thesis that the content of mental states is wholly intentional. According to this view, the phenomenal character of a mental state is nothing but the representational content. Phenomenal content of conscious states is exhausted by its intentional content. Tye, Dretske and Crane are the advocate of strong intentionalism. ‘Strong intentionalism’ thesis about mental content rejects the bipartism⁹ about the mental states. Tye defines strong Representationalism as “... phenomenal character is one and the same as representational content that meets certain further conditions.”¹⁰ Strong representationalism is also like pure representationalism, According to Chalmers, they analyze consciousness in terms of ‘intentionality without reminder.’¹¹

Weak intentionalism – Weak form of intentionalism claims that all mental states are intentional states irrespective of the fact as to whether they have phenomenal character or not. It is also like the impure version of intentionalism. According to this view, phenomenal character of an experience is determined by its entire intentional nature. The phenomenal character of an experience, therefore, supervenes on its nature. There cannot be two experiences; the intentional nature of it remains identical while their phenomenal characters differ. Tim crane explicitly holds this view. Tye defines weak intentionalism as,

“Phenomenal character supervenes on representational content that meets certain further conditions (so that necessarily any two states that are alike with respect to the relevant representational content are alike phenomenally.”¹²

Strong reductive representationalism – Strong reductive intentionalism thesis has been defined by Tye as,

“... the view that both the representational content with which phenomenal character is identical can be spelled out in physical or functional terms and that the further conditions on that content can be spelled out similarly.”¹³

⁹ Bipartism is the view that there are two distinct properties of mental states, one is intentional and the other is phenomenal.

¹⁰ Tye, (2008), p. 4.

¹¹ Chalmers, (2004), p. 1.

¹² Tye, (2008), p. 4.

¹³ Ibid., p. 4.

Tye is one of the major proponents of 'reductive intentionalism'. According to him, the reductive version of intentionalism holds that the condition by which the representational content represents the objects and states of affairs in the world are functional. 'Poisedness' is a functional role condition of representational content. According to Tye, one well known "Reductive Representationalist proposal is that the phenomenal character of experience is one and the same as its poised abstract nonconceptual intentional (or representational) content or it's PANIC, for short." Reductive Representationalists identify 'qualia' or phenomenal character of experience with the qualities or features of the object which is experienced. They do not identify it with the feature of perceiving states themselves. According to these philosophers, knowing what it is like to see red is just a matter of knowing what visual quality of redness is like. Fred Dretske is another proponent of this kind of view. He states that

"There is no more to the quality of one's experiences in experiencing blue than there is to the color blue since the color blue is the color of one's experiences."¹⁴

Hence, it follows from this that qualia or phenomenal character of experiencing blue is nothing subjectively qualitative than just the property of blueness in the world. Phenomenal qualities of experience are just the external qualities of the physical world which are represented in consciousness. But we have yet to see how reductive intentionalists can be able to explain the phenomenal character in terms of objective and physical properties of the world independently of the subjective experience.

Dretske is of the opinion that mental representations can be explained in terms of informational functions. Phenomenal character of experience or 'qualia' is identified with those properties systematically represented in experience and the properties systematically represented in experience are just those 'the senses have the natural function of providing information about'. Reductive 'Representationalism' has a tendency to explain mental phenomena and conscious states in terms of physical and functional terms. They have firm inclination

¹⁴ Dretske, (1995), p. 85.

towards the physicalist and functionalist theories of mind. On the other hand, the anti-intentionalist philosophers who argue for the phenomenal or subjective qualities of experience often criticize the intentionalism thesis which is being influenced by the physicalist and functionalist account of mind. We will discuss different arguments for 'phenomenal property' in next section with reference to Thomas Nagel and Frank Jackson.

Strong Non-reductive intentionalism – The major proponents of non-reductive intentionalism are Tim Crane, Thomasson, McGinn, etc. It is just the opposite of what we have explained about the reductive intentionalism. It has been defined by Tye as “non-reductive strong intentionanism (representationalism) is the view that either aspects of the content itself or aspects of the further conditions on the content are neither physical nor functional. On this view, phenomenal character is identified with representational content, but the content itself or conditions in it, are irreducibly subjective.”¹⁵ In this chapter we will discuss the strong non-reductive intentionalism and also weak-non-reductive intentionalism with reference to Tim Crane. There is a hope to response to some of the problems committed by anti-intentionalist thesis by the strong and weak non-reductionists intentionalism.

2.2 Nagel on the Phenomenal Character

In the following sections, we will discuss two classic arguments for the introduction of the phenomenal character of conscious states over the intentional content that are present in Thomas Nagel's “What is it like to be a bat?”¹⁶ and Frank Jackson's articles “Epiphenomenal qualia”¹⁷ and “What Mary did not know.”¹⁸

While they argue for phenomenal character of perceptual experience, they are actually arguing against the physicalists or reductionistic account of mind. They are of the opinion that the most important feature of consciousness, i.e., the

¹⁵ Tye, (2008), p. 4.

¹⁶ Nagel, (1974), pp. 435–450.

¹⁷ Jackson, (1982a), pp. 127–136.

¹⁸ Jackson, (1982b), pp. 291–295.

phenomenology of consciousness has not been given much importance by physicalist, functionalist and reductionist theories of mind. We have discussed in the last section that 'the intentionalist theory of mind' has special inclination towards physicalist, functionalist and reductionist theories of mind. Though these theories are all different theories of mind in many other respects, they have some common elements with respect to 'intentionalism'. In fact, we can say that the basic assumption of the 'intentionalism thesis' is taken for granted in all these theories. What they all have in common is to identify mental states in terms of objective physical properties of the world. It follows from this that if physicalism or functionalism about the mind is proved to be false, then some of the basic or fundamental assumption of 'intentionalism' can be further doubted because of the fact that these theories try to explain mental phenomena in terms of physical, functional and intentional states.

According to Thomas Nagel, phenomenological features of conscious perceptual experience are the features of purely subjective experience. This is the domain of experience which we cannot share with anyone else. Each and every conscious being has a different phenomenological domain which can only be known from his or her own point of view. It is constituted by the purely subjective and phenomenal character of the subject's experience. To elaborate this point, McCulloch says,

“... the phenomenological is all to do with the subjective, how it is in people's minds from their own point of view, whereas talks of intentional objects brings in, however indirectly, objective things....”¹⁹

We can say that the distinctions between subjective and objective, inner and outer, internal and external, first person perspective and third person perspective, intrinsic and extrinsic, have lead to the debate between the phenomenal and intentional. Nagel is of the opinion that, traditionally, in the philosophical discussion of consciousness, in the discussion of the relationship between mind and world, the objective and the external properties or physical properties of experience have attracted the most attention. The physicalist or reductionist

¹⁹ McCulloch, (2003), pp. 23–24.

accounts of mind have given less importance to the most important feature of consciousness, i.e., the phenomenal or subjective character of consciousness. Physicalism about mind has always discussed 'consciousness as consciousness of something'. It has always emphasized on the physical or objective properties of conscious experience and thereby excluded the phenomenological and subjective domain of conscious experience from its discussion. On the contrary, while we are discussing the problem of the relationship between mind and world, the phenomenological feature of consciousness should be properly taken into account to understand the relationship between mind and world appropriately.

Nagel further holds that the phenomenal character of experience cannot be given a functional or intentional characterization. It cannot be analyzable into any system of functional states or intentional states. These characters of consciousness do not consist in the truth of propositions expressible in human language neither are they the cognitive states of our mind. These characters remain intrinsic to the experience itself, nothing other than the experience is required to comprehend it. According to Nagel, so far, reductionism has made no attempt to give an account of the subjective character of experience.

Nagel goes on to show that we cannot simply deny the existence of the phenomenal character of experience. This feature of conscious experience is available with every conscious organism. It is available with all forms of animal life including human life. Thus, that an animal organism has conscious experience in certain respect is a matter beyond doubt. The fundamental feature of conscious experience of an organism is 'what it is like to be that organism.' This is what is called the subjective or phenomenal character of experience. An organism has conscious experience means that there is something like for the organism to undergo that experience. There is some phenomenal character involved with the particular experience of living organism. In Nagel's terms

“... an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like to be that organism – something it is like for the organism.”²⁰

This is the essence of believing that a living animal organism has conscious experience. Each and every animal organism has a different phenomenological domain, i.e., they have distinct phenomenal character involved in their conscious experience which is related to his or her own subjective point of view or first person point of view and it cannot be shared with other conscious organism.

Take the particular instance of bat. Bat is an animal organism, having conscious experience. Having conscious experience in this case, according to Nagel, implies that there is something it is like to be a bat and what it is like to be a bat is related to or tied with its subjective point of view which cannot be understood or grasped from an objective point of view. It seems that their subjective point of view which endorses the subjective or phenomenal character of experience cannot be explained by an objective physical theory and cannot be understood from a third person perspective.

Let us take another instance of conscious experience of human beings. We, human beings, experience the world in a particular way. We have conscious experience following from the fact that there is something to experience like a human being. Each of our experiences is related to the single point of view and it cannot be known from other perspectives.

Let us now contrast the conscious experiences of two different animal species. The systems of perceptual experience of bat and human beings are radically different. The way we experience the world is different from the way the bat experiences the world. Bats have a very complex form of experiencing system.

“... most bats... perceive the external world primarily by sonar, or echolocation, detecting the reflections, from objects within range, of their own rapid, subtly modulated, high – frequency shrieks. Their brains are designed to correlate the outgoing impulses with the subsequent echoes, and the information thus acquired enables bats to make precise discriminations of

²⁰ Nagel, (1974), p. 435.

distance, size, shape, motion, and texture comparable to those we make by vision.”²¹

What it is like to experience as a bat and what it is like to experience as a human being is so radically different that it is impossible for us to know what it is like to be a bat and it is impossible for bat to know what it is like to be a human being. We cannot extrapolate the inner life or subjective life of the bat from our own case however hard we may try. It is impossible for us to enter into the phenomenological domain of conscious experience of bat as well as for a bat to ours. Nagel further says that although we may imagine what it would be like for one to behave as a bat behaves, it does not follow that we are able to know what it is like to be a bat. The mechanism of imagination is not sufficient to answer the question, what is it like to be a bat. We only imagine from our own point of view and the power of imagination is limited to our own experience. The resource of the human mind certainly seems to be inadequate for this task. That is why when we try to extrapolate what it is like to be a bat from our own case, it remains incomplete. Furthermore, though we are not capable of imagining the subjective character of the conscious experience of bat from our own point of view, it does not imply that the subjective character or phenomenal character of a bat does not exist. It would certainly be wrong for our part to conclude that there is nothing like to experience as a bat. It would also be applicable for the bat. It would certainly be wrong for a bat to assume that there is nothing specific to experience as a human being because bat cannot succeed in knowing what it is like to be us. Nagel says

“We know they would be wrong to draw such a skeptical conclusion because we know what it is like to be us.”²²

We saw in the above discussion that the phenomenal or subjective character of experience cannot be known from an objective, physical point of view. A physicalist or reductionist account of mind is simply unable to explain the subjective or phenomenal qualities of experience. So, we may conclude the discussion by quoting Nagel:

²¹ Ibid., p. 438.

²² Ibid., p. 439.

“It would be fine if someone were to develop concepts and a theory that enabled us to think about these things: but such an understanding may be permanently denied to us by the limits of our nature. And to deny the reality or logical significance of what we can never describe or understand is the crudest form of cognitive dissonance.”²³

2. 3 Jackson on the Phenomenal Character

Another classic argument for the phenomenal character of conscious experience we find in Frank Jackson’s article “What Mary did not know” and “Epiphenomenal qualia.” Jackson’s argument for subjective qualities of experience is in many respects similar to the argument by Thomas Nagel. While Nagel’s argument is about the phenomenal character of conscious experience in general, Jackson focuses on perceptual experience of the human being and in particular on the perceptual experience of color. According to Jackson, a distinct phenomenal character or subjective quality of experience is involved in the experience of different colors. What it is like to experience red is different from what it is like to experience blue and so the phenomenal quality of experiencing red is different from the phenomenal quality of experiencing blue. This phenomenal quality of color experience or ‘qualia’ of colour experience cannot be given a physical or functional or, we can say, intentionalist account. Physical knowledge or physical information about the color experience does not include the subjective properties of color experience. It only consists of the objective properties of color. Physicalists about color experience would claim that all the knowledge that we have about any particular color is physical knowledge and this knowledge exhausts our knowledge about the color. We will see that this conclusion of physicalism is not correct and hence there is something beyond the physical knowledge that is the phenomenal qualities of color experience. So, there is something beyond the objective properties of color and that is the subjective properties of experience and this factor has not been taken into account in

²³ Ibid., p. 432.

physicalism or functionalism. Jackson's argument is also called the 'knowledge argument'²⁴ for qualia.

Jackson starts his discussion by attacking the basic assumption of physicalism. According to him,

"Physicalism is not the noncontroversial thesis that the actual world is largely physical, but the challenging thesis that it is entirely physical. This is why physicalists must hold that complete physical knowledge is complete knowledge simpliciter. For suppose it is not complete. Then our world must differ from a world, W (p), for which it is complete, and the difference must be in nonphysical facts; for our world and W (P) agree in all matters physical. Hence, physicalism would be false at our world."²⁵

Jackson holds that physical information is the kind of information which is given to us by physical, chemical and biological sciences, i.e., physics, chemistry and neurophysiology. Physicalism claims that all knowledge of the world can be reduced to knowledge in these domains.

But Jackson is of the opinion that there are certain important features of bodily sensations and of perceptual conscious experiences, which are left out of these physical informations. Though it is true that physicalism is able to give us all the physical information and functional information about our brain, it cannot succeed in telling us about the hurtfulness of pains, the itchiness of itches, pangs of jealousy, and of perceptual experiences like tasting a lemon, smelling a rose, hearing a loud noise or seeing the blue sky. Thus, Jackson says,

"Nothing you could tell of a physical sort captures the smell of a rose, for instance. Therefore, physicalism is false. By our lights this is a perfectly good argument. It is obviously not to the point to question its validity, and the premise is intuitively obviously true both to them and to me."²⁶

Let us take the instance of Mary. Mary is the name of a girl who is a physicist and neurologist in broad sense of the physics. She has theoretical knowledge about all

²⁴ See Jackson, (1986).

²⁵ Jackson, (1986), p. 291.

²⁶ Jackson, (1982), p. 127.

the physical factors of our world. However, throughout her life, she has always been restricted to a black and white room. She has seen black and white television, read black and white books and news papers. All her equipments in her laboratory are also black and white. She has experienced only these two colors in her life. She has never encountered any other colour like the color red. As a physicist, she knows that there are different colors available in the color spectrum. She has all the physical and theoretical knowledge about the color red, even while living in black and white room. But she does not have the knowledge of what it would be like to experience something red. Mary does have the knowledge of what it is like to see black and white. As I have stated earlier, what it is to experience something black is different from what it is like to see red. The instinctive feelings attached with the experience of black and experience of red are different and unique.

According to physicalism, the knowledge that Mary has about colors while living in black and white room is complete knowledge about the world. But in case of Mary, it seems obvious that she does not know all there is to know about the facts about world, our environment and other minds. When she is released from the black and white room and experiences a color television, she will come to know what it is like to experience other colors. She would be able to distinguish between the phenomenal character of the color experience and the physical and objective properties of color. She would come to realize that her knowledge of the world and of other minds has developed and enriched after her release and that her physical knowledge of the world and of other minds before her release was incomplete, inadequate and ineffective.

This leads to the idea that physicalism must be false. The knowledge which Mary lacked until her release is not the physical facts about our experiences. But it is knowledge of the phenomenality of experience. Thus, the phenomenology of experience is not captured by physicalism.

According to Jackson, based on this thought experiment, we can formulate the knowledge argument against physicalism–

- Mary knows everything physical there is to know about other people.

- Mary does not know everything there is to know about other people and herself (because she learns after her release).
- Therefore, there are truths about other people (and herself) which escape the physicalist story.²⁷

Jackson has given three clarifications regarding the claims made in the knowledge argument. Firstly, it is not grounded on the assumption that we cannot imagine logically what it is like to see red, because we have not sensed red before. In case of Mary, it is not this fact which matters. Despite Mary's being a physicist and neurophysiologists and knowing all physical facts, she could not even imagine what it is like to sense red because she would not know what it is like to sense red.

The second one is that the knowledge of the phenomenal character of experience cannot be achieved by following logical inference from her physical knowledge of red. Jackson says,

“But it is very hard to believe that her lack of knowledge could be remedied merely by her explicitly following through enough logical consequences of her vast physical knowledge. Endowing her with great logical acumen and persistence is not in itself enough to fill in the gaps in her knowledge. On being let out, she will not say “I could have worked all this out before by making some more purely logical inferences”.²⁸

And, thirdly, the knowledge argument is not based on the fact that before she was released she could not have known facts about her experience of red for there were no facts to know. So, when she is released, she experiences new facts. This is not a threat to physicalism because physicalism may admit that after her release she experiences new things because some of the physical things have changed during that moment, e.g., her brain states and its functional roles. The real problem for physicalism, according to Jackson, is,

“... after Mary sees her first ripe tomato, she will realize how impoverished her conception of the mental life of others has been all along. She will realize that there was, all the time she was carrying out her laborious investigations into the neuro-

²⁷ Jackson, (1986), p. 293.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 292.

physiologies of others and into the functional roles of their internal states, something about these people she was quite unaware of. All along their experiences (or many of them, those got from tomatoes, the sky....) had a feature conspicuous to them but until now hidden from her (in fact, not in logic). But she knew all the physical facts about them all along; hence, what she did not know until her release is not a physical fact about their experiences. But it is a fact about them. That is the trouble for physicalism.”²⁹

In the previous two sections, we see that the phenomenal properties of our conscious perceptual experience have a privilege over the intentional properties in articulating the relationship between mind and world. Intentionalism, and while trying to objectify the mental states or mental phenomena in terms of the objective physical properties, there is something which seems to remain untouched and hence unexplained. And this phenomenological domain seems to be the place where a true relationship between mind and world can be incorporated. In the next sections, we shall see how intentionalists would meet these challenges.

2.4 Tye on Representational Content

Michael Tye is one of the major proponents of ‘representationalism’ in contemporary philosophy. As mentioned earlier, his view of ‘representationalism’ is called ‘strong and reductionist representationalism’. In the last two sections, we have discussed that there are some phenomenal characteristics of our conscious experience which no amount of physicalism and functionalism can capture. These features of conscious experience go beyond the intentional content of mental states and characterize at least some of our important experiences, like, pains, sensations of color, our feelings of love, hate, and desire, etc. These subjective qualities of experience are neither identical with intentional content of experience nor does it supervene on intentional content of experience. So, According to them, all conscious experiences are not representational.

²⁹ Jackson, (1986), pp. 292–293.

As opposed to this view, Tye claims that, any mental state which is phenomenally conscious must have intentional content. Phenomenal or subjective qualities of experience do not pose any special problem for physicalism. According to him, the so called 'knowledge argument' against physicalism is unsound and lots of philosophers have been wrongly influenced by these arguments. A careful attention to this argument will be able to reveal that the argument does not do the task which it intends to. He says that once the concept of 'subjective experience' or 'phenomenal character' is properly understood, the physicalist would have nothing to fear from the argument. According to him, phenomenal character of experience is not only identical with representational content of experience, but also they can be reduced to or explained by physical or functional terms. He suggests that the phenomenal character of experience itself is the intentional content of experience. If we want to understand the relation between mind and world and the nature of mental phenomena, we must give physical or functional account of our so called phenomenal consciousness. So, he writes,

"The traditional view that what it is like is a matter of intrinsic, head-bound (or soul bound) qualities has been in peaceful slumber for too long. What follows is an attempt to rouse it and shake it apart. Sleeping dogmas should not be left to lie undisturbed. The thesis that phenomenal character is representational is an idea whose time has come."³⁰

Tye is of the opinion that the phenomenal qualities of experience are not only intentional, but also these characters are not even in the head at all. Phenomenal consciousness cannot be revealed by the neuropsychology. What it is like to see red, what it is like to taste mango is not something that exist in the head of the subject. Then the problem that arises is: If these characteristics do not exist in the head, where is its place of survival? It seems that there is no specific answer to this question from the philosophers who argue for its existence. According to Tye, there is no one sort of subjectivity associated with experience. "Unfortunately, the different kinds of subjectivity are frequently conflated, even by prominent philosophers. The result is that many people are perplexed, but not all of them are

³⁰ Tye, (1995), p. xi.

perplexed for the right reasons.”³¹ There is a paradox involved in the heart of the philosophical reflection on phenomenal consciousness. If we are able to properly understand the nature of phenomenal mind, then the paradox involved in it will be solved. So, according to him, the phenomenal mind must be given a physical, functional and representational account.

Tye has given different arguments for the ‘Representationalism’. He has extensively argued for the representational content of bodily sensations like pain, perceptual experiences like seeing red, touching ice, etc. and different moods and emotions. According to him, all these experiences have a representational content and it represents something. These experiences are not in themselves, they are, on the contrary, objects-directed or intentional states. Before going into discussing the various arguments put forth by Tye, let us first discuss his basic understandings of ‘intentionality’ and, in particular, how perceptual experience represents something. This will make convenient further to understand his arguments clearly.

As we all know, the concept of ‘intentionality’ is first developed by Austrian philosopher Franz Brentano which he borrowed from the scholastics of the middle ages. According to Brentano, ‘intentionality’ is a feature exclusively of mental phenomena and it is the ‘mark of the mental.’ This is known as the ‘Brentano’s thesis’. He points out that there could be some mental states which represent objects which may not really exist in the world. He names these mental representations ‘intentional inexistence’ and calls them as the basis of intentionality. It follows from this that the objects of mental states have different existence altogether in mental states themselves than the real existence in the external world. Alex Meinong interprets Brentano to be saying that the objects of mental states have a special sort of existence, or subsistence, quite apart from their being in the real world. However, Tye is of the opinion that, Brentano’s thesis of ‘intentional inexistence’ is deeply obscure.

Apart from this, Tye holds that, there are other two features of mental representations which seem to be closely related to ‘intentionality’. One of the

³¹ Ibid., p. xiii.

features is that mind's capacity to represent the objects and states of affairs which do not exist. Only mind is capable of representing the non-existent objects. For example, we can desire for love, hope about something, even though the specific objects of our desire do not exist.

Another feature of mental representation is its 'fine-grainedness'. Mind has the capacity to represent the objects and states of affair in the world in minute detail more than any other forms of representations, for example, linguistic representations, pictorial representations, etc. The clear example of mental states which accommodate these above two features are hope, belief, desire, intention, etc.

Furthermore, the intentional states are plausibly taken to have a symbolic structure, and their intentional contents are plausibly viewed as the joint product of their symbolic features and what it is that the symbol represents. Tye wants to make a difference between the symbolic structures of mental states like belief and symbolic structure of bodily sensations. According to him, the symbolic structure of belief states is in the form of sentence whereas the symbolic structures of bodily sensations are not in the form of sentence.

Tye is of the opinion that though there are various theories of about the nature of mental representation, it is the 'causal covariation'³² view of the representation which seems to suitably fit into sensory representations, but not into belief representations. The representations of perceptual sensations are a matter of causal covariation or correlation under optimal conditions. According to this theory, a mental state correctly represents the objects and states of affairs if the optimal conditions are obtained. A mental state misrepresents or wrongly represents the objects and states of affairs, if the state is not casually correlating with the objects of states under optimal conditions. The 'optimal conditions'³³ is one of the most important components of mental representation which make representation possible and this is the feature which helps in making the distinction between representations and misrepresentations. If in the cases where

³² Ibid., p. 107.

³³ Ibid., p. 109.

the conditions which help in making representations possible are not optimal conditions, then it is misrepresentation.

Tye states that there are some difficulties in applying the above format in case of mental representations in general, specifically in case of cognitive states like, belief, desire, etc. In the case of belief, there seems to be no relevant optimal conditions present. For example, beliefs like 'God has ten heads' and ' $2+2 = 4$ ' do not have any causal power to satisfy the optimal conditions. So, the theory of 'casual covariation' under optimal conditions does not apply in all kinds of mental representations.

According to Tye, perceptual sensations are 'mechanically produced by external Stimuli'. Representations of perceptual sensations operate on computational procedures. These kinds of representations functionally represent the objects and states of affairs and generate further symbolic representations. The visual system of perceptual experience functions mechanically and it is like a calculator which has been hardwired to perform the arithmetical operations. According to him, any storage representations in memory cannot affect the operations of visual system by its retrieval and manipulation. Tye says,

"So representations are built up of distal features of the surfaces of external objects in mechanical fashion by computational processes. The initial, or input, representations for the visual module track light intensity and wavelength, assuming nothing is malfunctioning. The output representations track features of distal stimuli under optional or ideal perceptual conditions. Thereby, it seems plausible to suppose, they represent those features, they become sensations of edges, ridges, colors, shapes, and so on. Like wise for other senses."³⁴

Tye makes a clear cut distinction between perceptual states and cognitive states. According to him, the content of perceptual states are nondoxastic or non-conceptual while the content of cognitive states, like belief, desire, etc. are conceptual. The output of perceptual representations and specialized sensory modules are input to the higher cognitive system, i.e., belief system. They produce conceptual responses via any higher level of cognitive processing system but these

³⁴ Ibid., p. 103.

perceptual sensations are themselves not part of the conceptual system. They, however, feed into the system. These perceptual sensations work as an input to the higher cognitive system. But not being as a part of the conceptual system, this does not follow from it that they are not symbolic states. Perceptual states are symbolic states which are very different from belief states. Tye is of the opinion that the 'casual covariation' approach to the perceptual states can be extended to other objects and experiences that seem initially to have no representations content at all.

Tye gave an intentional explanation of phenomenal character. According to him, phenomenal character of experience is identical with intentional content experience. There is nothing like a phenomenal character of experience which goes beyond the intentional content of experience. Phenomenal character of experience is not only fully explained by the intentional content, but also it is exhausted by the intentional content. The differences in the intentional content of experience go hand in hand with the differences in their phenomenal character. To quote Tye,

“Phenomenal character (or what it is like) is one and the same as a certain sort of intentional content. This is the most straightforward explanation of the fact that “what it is like” linguistic contexts are intensional, of the fact that all experiences and feelings have intentional content, of the pairing of felt differences and intentional differences, and of the phenomenon of transparency.”³⁵

Another important point Tye emphasizes is that phenomenal character of experience is not a part of the mental representation itself which occurs within the sensory modules. Phenomenal content is found in experiences and feeling arising at the level of the output from the sensory modules and inputs to a cognitive system. Phenomenal content is found when the output of the sensory modules like of perceptual experiences, bodily sensations, primary emotions and moods are served as an input to the higher cognitive states, like belief, hope, etc. It lies at the interface of the non-conceptual and conceptual domains. The functional role, intentional contents and internal structure of phenomenally conscious states is

³⁵ Ibid., p. 137.

different from the functional role, intentional contents and internal structure of belief systems because of the fact that cognitive states, like, belief, desire cannot have the phenomenal character. Phenomenal content of conscious experience is non-conceptual and it cannot have the power of possessing concepts.

According to Tye, phenomenal content of conscious experience is one and the same as poised abstract non-conceptual intentional content (PANIC). This is called 'the PANIC theory' of phenomenal character. Tye holds that, 'Abstractness', 'Poisedness', 'non-conceptuality' and 'intentionality' are the basic and fundamental and defining features of the phenomenal character or content of conscious experience. He suggests that the representations that differ in their PANICS differ in their phenomenal character, and representations that are alike with respect to their PANICS are alike in the phenomenal character. There can be no difference in phenomenal character without affecting the PANIC of phenomenal character.

It is important to understand the features which define PANIC status. The 'Poisedness' feature of phenomenal character is that the content which are available with the outer representations of the relevant sensory modules must stand ready for the use by belief/desire system and these contents should be situated in a position to make a direct impact on the system in producing beliefs, desires etc. This non-conceptual phenomenal content of experience should be sufficiently available for the higher cognitive system to produce the conceptual beliefs and desires.

The phenomenal content of experience is abstract in the sense that no particular concrete object is necessary in its content except for the subjects of experiences in some cases. Different concrete objects can phenomenally appear to be alike or same. So, one object can be substituted for the other object without any phenomenological change. According to Tye,

"So the existence of that particular leg is not required for the given phenomenal character. What is crucial to phenomenal character is the representation of general features or properties. Experiences non-conceptually represent that there is a surface or

on an internal region having so-and-so features at such-and-such locations, and thereby they acquire their phenomenal character.”³⁶

Tye goes on to argue that various conscious experiences like after images, bodily sensations like pain, itches, etc., different moods and emotions have intentional content. These experiences represent something and are directed at something in the world.

After images are visual sensations that occur even after its external cause has ceased. These are produced in various ways. For example, when one turns the light on and off, after staying a long in the dark, he experiences an after-image with the color of light. There is a controversy regarding whether after images are the brain processes or not. J.J.C. Smart was the first philosopher to deny that after images are brain states. He is of the opinion that, ‘... after images are sometimes yellowy-orange; brain processes cannot be yellowy-orange. So, after-images are not brain processes.’³⁷ However, Tye takes after-images to be visual experiences. Even if they can be characterized as yellowy-orange, they are nonetheless experiences. The problem arises regarding the attribution of color to ‘after-images’. How is it that color vocabulary is applied at all to after images, given that they do not really have the appropriate colors? Tye’s response to this problem is that after- images represent colors and these are brain states or processes. According to him, brain processes can certainly represent colors.

One of the main features of ‘intentionality’ is its capacity to represent non-existent objects. For example, someone can hope for eternal life and hallucinate about a pink elephant even though there are no such things really existing in the world. However, these states can be said to have intentional content. Tye holds that the same special features of intentionality are also present in the case of after-images representing something, even though these images do not persist in reality. So he says,

³⁶ Tye, (1995), pp. 138–139.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 105.

“My suggestion, then, is that there is nothing elliptical or peculiar about the meanings of the terms ‘F’ and ‘G’ in the context “an F, G image.” Rather, the context itself is an intensional one, having a logical structure that reflects the intentional character of images generally.”³⁸(Here, the letters F and G denote to shades of colors.)

When we say that after-images are intentional, it does not follow from this that we require concepts to possess any after-images. They are non-doxastic or non-conceptual representations. These are not thoughts or beliefs, because they certainly do not demand a public language to be expressed. While claiming that after-images are nonconceptual representations, Tye, thereby, is not suggesting that they do not have intentional content. ‘Intentionality’, according to him, does not require ‘concepts’ in order to represent. The feature of ‘fine-grainedness’ of ‘intentionality’ is available with every case of afterimages. Here, Tye seems to suggest that the ‘fine-grainedness’ of ‘intentionality’ is available with every case of afterimages. Here, Tye seems to suggests that the ‘fine-grainedness’ feature is closely related with the notion of ‘non-conceptual’ and appropriately poised for the use of cognitive system. Tye holds that since no such image exists, so after-image is a misrepresentation and the subject of such representation is undergoing a sort of illusion. Tye holds that

“Afterimages, I suggest, are mental objects that people have when they undergo certain sorts of sensory experiences. But they are not themselves the object of those experiences. They are objects that people have by being things that people undergo, namely, events....But there is no substantive sense in which afterimages are objects of experience.”³⁹

2.4.1 Representational Character of Pain

The fundamental assumptions of Tye about ‘intentionality’ are also applicable in the case of pain and other bodily sensations. Tye is of the opinion that our bodily sensations like pain have intentional content, it represents something to us. Our

³⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 109.

experience of pain represents some disturbances to us. Just as in the case of after-image, when we see that an image is blue, it represents that something is blue. It represents the objective properties of blueness which are in the world. So also is the case with pain. When we experience pain in our fingure tip, it represents something in our fingure tip.

The controversy regarding pain is about whether a person can feel pain in phantom limbs. Tye suggests that, here, the context is intensional. Someone can have a pain in her left leg even though he has no left leg just as one can search for the fountain of youth. When one has a pain, that pain represents that something in his left leg. In the case of phantom leg, no concrete left leg is required to represent pain in it. The intentional object of the pain is an abstract left leg and its concrete existence and non-existence does not really matter to the intentional state of pain. Tye writes,

“That there is a hidden intensionality in statements of pain location is confirmed by our talk of pains in phantom limbs. People are subject to pains in limbs that no longer exist. For example, a patient who has had his leg amputated may report feeling pains in the leg in places where he had experienced pain previously. Pains are also sometimes felt in phantoms of other body parts.”⁴⁰

Even though some philosophers claim that if someone does not have a left leg, then it is really impossible to have a pain in it, it is not really a threat to Tye’s proposal. According to Tye, someone’s pain in the leg represents more than just that something in the leg. When we have a pain, we feel it and while feeling it, we experience it. So, his proposal is that

“... pains are sensory representations of bodily damage or disorder. More fully, they are mechanical responses to the relevant bodily changes in the same way that basic visual sensations are mechanical responses to proximate visual stimuli. In the case of pain, the receptors (known as nociceptors) are distributed throughout the body. These receptors function analogously to the receptors on the retina....These representations, to repeat, are sensory. They involve no concepts.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 112.

One does not need to be able to conceptualize a given bodily disturbance in order to feel pain.”⁴¹

So, we see that the experience of pain represents something to us non-conceptually and the object of this intentional experience is abstract object. Hence, the phenomenal character of pain which is said to go beyond intentional or representational character of pain is false. Phenomenal character can be fully captured by the physicalist or representationalist account of mind. There is nothing in the phenomenal character of the experience of pain which seems to pose any problem for physicalism.

2.4.2 Representational Character of Emotions and Moods

According to Tye, there are some emotions and moods which obviously possess intentional character. They represent something in the mind about the objects and states of affairs outside of the mind. For example, feeling elated that finally the book is written, feeling bored that it is raining yet again. These states are called compound states consisting of a mood or emotion and the belief about it. The belief about various happening leads to the different moods or emotions.

Traditionally, it is supposed that the beliefs about emotions and moods are certainly intentional. But the feeling or emotion or moods itself are not intentional at all. Tye is of the opinion that the above kind of view is too hasty. According to him, moods and emotions are also sensory representations like bodily sensations. These states have intentional character. They also represent some physical changes in the body. For example, someone’s feeling of anger leads to some physical changes in his body. His blood pressure will rise, his nostrils will flare, his face will flush, his voice will become louder, and he will clench his teeth and hands and so on. Hence,

“These physical changes are registered in the sensory receptors distributed throughout your body. In response to the activity in your receptors, you will mechanically build up a complex sensory representation of how your body has changed, of the new body state you are in. In this way, you will feel the physical

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 113–114.

changes. The feeling you undergo consists in the complex sensory representation of these changes."⁴²

The above format of scheme of the sensory representations of pain suitably fits with the intentionalist view about the bodily sensations and other perceptual experiences. Another point is that, if we do not feel any changes in the body, then we cannot form the clear conception of what it is like to be angry. If we take away all the sensations that are produced out of all the bodily changes, then there seems to be nothing left to claim that someone is feeling pain. What it is like to experience a pain is just the bodily, physical changes occurring due to that pain.

The arguments for the representational content of pain and emotions can also be applied to in the cases of moods. Tye holds that moods are like emotions are sensory representations. Moods, like other cases are absolutely physical states. Moods also bring some bodily changes by their sensory output. While experiencing moods, we are sensing some physical changes in our body landscapes.

Hence, Tye argues that, in experiencing the world, there is nothing phenomenal or internal qualities which go beyond the intentional content of mental states. According to him, the qualities of our experience, which we regard as phenomenal are nothing but identical with the objective physical properties of the world. The physical or intentional properties of the world exhausts the phenomenal properties of the experience and all intentional states are propositional states. However, there are some problems involved in the reductive representationalism of Tye which we shall discuss in next section.

2.5 Crane on Intentionalism

In the previous section, we have discussed M Tye's argument for strong reductive representationalism of perceptual states. In this section, we shall discuss a different account of intentionalism by Tim Crane which may be called impure or non-reductive intentionalism. We have already discussed that there are different

⁴² Ibid., p. 126.

versions of intentionalism and out of them two versions of intentionalism are prominent which are called 1. Pure intentionalism, 2. impure intentionalism or non-reductive Intentionalism. 'pure intentionalism' holds the view that the conscious character of a state of mind is determined by its intentional content alone and all intentional content is propositional. Crane rejects both these assumptions of 'pure intentionalism'. According to him, the conscious character of a mental state must be determined by its entire intentional nature and intentional nature of a mental state must consists of three factors.⁴³ These are

- Intentional object
- Intentional content
- Intentional mode

Crane holds that any intentionalist should explain the phenomenal character of experience on the basis of these three factors which constitute the intentional nature of mental states.

We can get to know the intentional object of the mental states by asking the question to the person who is the possessor of mental state: 'what is his mental state about?' An intentional state may be about or of one object or various objects. There is another way of saying that some intentional states have intentional object by suggesting that these states have concern for something. For example, take the mental state of desire. A desire is a desire for something, not a desire about something. Crane is of the opinion that it is the 'concerning feature' of intentionality which should be the focus of the study of intentionality. While we are discussing the concept of 'intentionality' we should not be too much attached to the words like 'about' or 'aboutness'. There are some cases of mental states in which the terms like 'about' or 'aboutness' are not suitably fitted into, though they are intentional mental states.

Further, according to Crane, there are two feature of an intentional object:

⁴³ Crane, (2007), p. 27.

- Non-existence
- Self- transcendence

The non-existence feature of intentional object is that there may be some intentional objects which do not literally exist. These intentional objects are called 'mere intentional objects'. But this feature of intentional object is not applicable to all intentional objects. The second feature of intentional object is its 'self-transcendence'. This is the view that if an intentional object exists at all, its existence transcends any intentional state which has it as its object.

The intentional content of a mental state is the way in which the intentional object is represented to the mind.

The intentional mode of a mental state, on the other hand, is the relation the subject of a mental state bears to the object of the mental state. The same object can be an object of different mental states. For example, rain. Someone can be bored by the continuous rain; some one can desire for rain, someone can hope for rain, someone can feel cold after rain, etc., hence, there is a distinction in intentional mode.

So, these above three features taken together constitute the intentional nature of a mental state and Crane holds that the character of a conscious mental state should be explained by the entire intentional nature of the mental state rather by any one or two feature of intentional nature. We will see later on how these features are applicable in the context of pain.

Crane also criticizes the second assumption of 'pure intentionalism' that the content of mental state is always propositional. The content of all intentional states cannot necessarily be assessable as true or false, and to that extent it is not propositional. He states that there are many intentional states which cannot be described as true or false. So, Crane says,

“... the thesis that all intentional mental states are propositional attitudes lacks phenomenological plausibility. To take a nice example of Victor Caston's:

when asked to think of a number between one and ten, what comes to mind is a number, not a proposition. And it is a familiar fact that certain emotions, notably love and hate, can be directed on objects rather than always on state of affairs. While the notion of a propositional attitude must play an important role in any theory of intentionality, it does not exhaust the application of the concept of intentionality.”⁴⁴

Crane, rather, advocates an impure version of intentionalism along with David Chalmers, according to which, the phenomenal character of an experience must be determined by its entire intentional nature. According to him, the phenomenal character of a conscious experience must supervene on its intentional nature rather than on intentional content alone. There cannot be two experiences which are identical in their intentional nature but differ in their phenomenal character. Crane is of the opinion that this account of intentionalism coheres with Brentano’s original view, i.e., ‘intentionality is the mark of the mental’. But it was not obviously in its spirit. So, in Crane’s opinion, while giving an intentional account of mental state, the phenomenological feature of mental state must be given due importance and the task in which we are engaged is a phenomenological one.

Tim Crane has argued for the intentional nature of all mental states including bodily sensations, emotions and moods. There are some non-intentionalist philosophers who have rejected the ‘intentionalism thesis’ by arguing that there are some mental states like pain, certain emotions and moods that are not about or of something. These states do not have any intentional object and these states represent nothing. These kinds of states do not say anything about the external world other than their having a subjective feel. These non-intentionalist philosophers are of the opinion that, in case of mental states like visual experiences, we can make distinction between the experience and what it is an experience of, but in case of pain, we cannot distinguish between the experience of pain and what it is an experience of.

Tim Crane denies the above view. According to him, even in the case of mental state like pain, a distinction can be made between pain and feeling of pain.

⁴⁴ Crane, (1998), p. 13.

For example, someone being woken up from a dreamless sleep by feeling some pain. In this case, we can say that the existence of pain is prior to consciousness of or awareness of pain and this prior existence of pain causes the person to wake up. So, a pain can exist without anyone being conscious of it. In this line of thought, we can hold that pain is some kind of entity on which awareness of pain is directed at in our pain state. So, feeling of pain can be held to be an intentional state.

In order to address the issue regarding the intentional character of pain, Crane made a distinction between two different theories about the representational character of pain. One is called the mental-object theory and the other is called perceptual theory of bodily sensation. According to the earlier view, the state of mind like pain are internally directed at the objective properties of the world.

Perceptual theory of pain has been defended by D. M. Armstrong and Michael Martin, according to which, bodily sensations of pain are like a form of perceptual awareness of one's body. It is one form of perceptual experience. When we experience pain, we become aware of some part of our body that is in pain. We become perceptually aware of the felt location of pain in our body.

The perceptual theory of bodily sensation is more stronger than the mental object theory of bodily sensation because of its perceptual identification of 'felt location'. That is why, he writes,

“... what tells in favor of the perceptual theory is the fact that to concentrate on the ache, I must necessarily concentrate on the part of my body which aches; the mental object theory cannot explain this necessity. Attending to bodily sensations is achieved by attending to a part of the body where these sensations feel to be. This is because bodily sensation is form of awareness, the awareness of things going on in one's body.”⁴⁵

When we feel a particular bodily sensation, we feel it in a particular location or part of the body. Suppose, one has a toothache, it is typically felt in the tooth. There may be cases where we can feel pain but are not able to say where the pain is exactly located. However, this does not mean that these kinds of pain or

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

sensations are not felt in the body at all. It must be felt somewhere in the body. We cannot comprehend the fact that we have a bodily sensation but that is ten feet away from our body. According to him, the example of phantom limb does not really create any problem at all, precisely because in such a situation the subject feels the body to be extended to the point where it has been before. So, in so far as pain has a felt location, pain exhibits some form of intentionality.

In spite of adhering to the above position concerning pain, Tim Crane criticizes the pure intentionalist account of pain. Pure intentionalists like Tye, being influenced by D. M. Armstrong claims that the representational content of our pain experience is the part of our body which is experienced as damaged, distorted or disordered. According to Crane, though it is true that, in some cases, experience of a pain is an experience of the damage in the particular part of body, but there is nothing in an experience of pain which connotes damage to the subject. Crane says that the argument put forth by pure intentionalists cannot be sustained because of its 'phenomenological implausibility'. The pure intentionalist's view is that the phenomenal character is wholly determined by the content of an experience. As opposed to that, Crane holds that the phenomenal character of pain experience should be explained on the basis of three factors of

- Intentional object
- Intentional content
- Intentional mode

Here, the intentional object of the pain is its felt location where the pain is felt. It is the part of the body which hurts. The intentional object of pain transcends the experience of pain itself.

The intentional content of pain is the representation of its felt location. Felt location of pain is represented to the subject of the experience in a certain way or under a certain aspect which constitutes its content.

The intentional mode of a pain is the relation or apparent relation, a form of representation in which the body part or the region stands to the subject of experience.

It is these three features taken together which constitutes the intentionality of pain. Hence, according to Crane, all bodily sensations can be explained by their intentional nature. The above principles of impure intentionalism can be applied to all bodily sensations although much more need to be said about the phenomenological character of these sensations to give a full defence of impure intentionalism.

In a similar way, one can argue for the intentional nature of emotion and moods. The above assumptions of impure intentionalism can also be applied to the case of various emotions and moods. Apparently, it seems that feelings and emotions have no intentional object at all, they are not about or of anything. Searle very clearly says that emotions like nervousness, elation and undirected anxiety have no intentional object. One might feel elated, but there is nothing in particular to be elated of or about. If we ask someone, 'what is his emotion about?', it seems that there is no answer to this question.

As a response to this, Crane says that to possess an intentional state, it is not always necessary for the subject to know the intentional object and intentional content of that intentional state. Subject may sometimes be ignorant of the intentional object and intentional content of his intentional state. The cause of his intentional state might lie in future or in remote past which he could not comprehend at that moment. However, two features of intentionality are always present with every case of bodily sensations, emotions and moods. One is the relational structure of intentionality and the other is the perspectival or fine-grained nature of intentionality. The relational structure of intentionality is the fact that there is a relation between subject and object of the intentional state. Thought is the relation between subject and object. The fine-grained nature of the intentional state is that the intentional states like bodily sensations, emotions and moods can represent the objects and states-of-affairs in its detail.

Hence, Crane concludes his discussion by saying that Brentano's thesis that 'the intentionality is the mark of the mental' can be developed in various ways. He argues that impure intentionalism has the privilege of being phenomenological superior over the pure intentionalism. He suggests that Dretske's slogan 'all facts about mind are representational fact' can be better developed by the impure intentionalists than by the pure intentionalists. While we are saying that a mental state is intentional, we should focus on the intentional nature of that state. A mental state should be defined by its intentional nature, rather than by its intentional object or intentional content. Only if we explain mental states in terms of its intentional nature, then we can incorporate their phenomenology in our intentional account. Crane is of the opinion that, the phenomenological domain of a subject's experience should be given due importance, while we are giving an objective and intentional account of the experience. Another important point of Crane is that, it is not necessary that all intentional states must be propositional.

Conclusion

Hence, two different approaches to the study of the nature of the conscious mental states have led to the formulation of two different mental contents. One is phenomenal content and other is intentional content. There are various forms of phenomenalism as well as intentionalism. Phenomenalism precisely claims that all mental states are not necessarily object-directed states. What it is like to experience something is not exhausted by the representational properties of experience. On the other hand, intentionalism claims that all mental states are necessarily intentional or representational. A reductive form of intentionalism suggests that the intentional properties of the mental states outrun the so called phenomenal character. Non-reductive intentionalism states that in intentional explanation of the perceptual states, the phenomenological feature is already explained. According to the later view, intentionalism does not necessarily have to be physicalism. According to these philosophers, mental states are necessarily representational, which include the phenomenological feature. However, there is

another debate which is going on regarding the nature of mental representation by focusing on the problem that, do we require to possess concepts in order to represent objects and states of affairs of the world or is it non-conceptual? We will discuss this issue in next chapter.

Chapter 3

Perceptual Content: Non-Conceptual and Conceptual

Introduction

There are two different kinds of mental states that have been encompassed by philosophers: one is known as an intentional state and the other as a phenomenal state. Briefly put, intentional states are object directed states. These are, in other words, called representational states. On the other hand, phenomenal states are experiential states. Phenomenal states are those states that are characterized by what it is like for a subject to be in that states. Some philosophers have argued for the significance phenomenal character of mental states, and are of the opinion that these phenomenal characters of mental states are not representational or intentional. Here, I will only focus my discussion on perceptual state and its representational significance vis-à-vis the distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual content. Supporters of the non-conceptual mental content argue that there are some mental states which can represent the world even though the bearer of those mental states need not possess the concepts required to specify their content. The opposite view is that a perceptual state which can represent the world is fully determined by the conceptual capacities which the bearer of that mental state possesses. Philosophers who have argued for the non-conceptual content of perceptual experience are Gareth Evans, Jose Bermudez, Fred Dretske, Tim Crane, Richard Heck, Susan Hurly, Sean Kelly, M.G.F. Martin,

Christopher Peacocke, Robert Stalnaker, Michael Tye and others. On the opposite side, philosophers who have argued for the conceptual content of perceptual experience are John McDowell, Bill Brewer and Sonia Sedivy.

Among the three debates, the debate between conceptualists and non-conceptualists is one of the most important and current discussions about the nature of perceptual content. My aim in this chapter is to deal with this debate. First we will articulate the basic claims made by non-conceptualists and conceptualists regarding perceptual content and perceptual experience. Then we will look into the historical background of the debate (in this section the role that Kant plays in the development of the debate in modern times will be discussed). Then we will exclusively elaborate on the views of Gareth Evans and John McDowell with reference to the distinction. First we will start with non-conceptualists position of Evans. Then look at the advantages and pitfalls of Evans position shown by McDowell and other philosophers. Then we will deliberate on McDowell's conceptualists position. Throughout the chapter we will examine each of these philosophers position in order to give a better picture of the relationship between the mind and the world.

3.1 Articulating the Debate

The notion of non-conceptual content of perceptual states can be illustrated by two propositions forming a theory which can be named as 'nonconceptualism'. These are the following propositions.

- There are cognitive capacities or representational capacities of perceptual states or perceptual experience which are not determined by conceptual capacities.

- The cognitive capacity or representational capacity of perceptual content which outstrips conceptual capacity can be possessed by both rational and non-rational animals.¹

Here the advocates of 'nonconceptualism' make a distinction between representational or cognitive capacity and conceptual capacity. According to them conceptual capacity is something which comes later and is a higher capacity than what may be called 'cognitive capacity'. The representational capacity of a perceptual state does not involve any conceptual capacity in order to represent something in world or we can say that, conceptual capacities by no means come into play at the representational level of perceptual states.

On the other hand, the advocates of the conceptual content form a theory which can also be stated with the help of the following two propositions.

- All cognitive capacities or representational capacities of perceptual content are fully determined by conceptual capacities.
- No cognitive capacities of a rational animal can also be possessed by non-rational animals, whether human or non-human.²

In this formulation of 'conceptualism', conceptualists do not make any difference between cognitive capacities or representational capacities on the one hand and conceptual capacities on the other. According to them the representational character of perceptual experience is fully conceptual. There are no different levels of contents. The only content which characterizes the content of a perceptual state is a conceptual content. They suggest that conceptual capacity is not a higher level capacity which arises at a later stage. It is the capacity that exists with the capacity of perceptual experience from the very beginning of such experience. Again they suggest that conceptual content can only be possessed by rational beings. This gives

¹ Hanna, (2005), p. 247.

² Ibid., p. 248.

rise to some important questions before conceptualists, like, (1) what is the nature of perceptual experience of non rational animals? (2) If it is nonconceptual, then is there is no connection between the perceptual experiences of rational animal and that of non-rational animal? We will see later how conceptualists may be able to give answers to some of these queries.

In contemporary philosophy of mind, it is generally said that mental states are in the form of propositional attitudes. Mental states or propositional attitudes can be characterized by concepts. Take for example, a belief state. The belief that bird flies is characterized by the concepts referred to by the words 'bird' and 'fly'. We have to understand clearly that conceptualists argue for the representational characters of not only belief states but also of perceptual states. They are of the opinion that the representational characters of perceptual states are closely bound up with having concepts. On the other side, non-conceptualists argue for the representational character of mental states without possession of any concepts. Here the question that arises is: Does the content of a perceptual state need no concepts whatsoever or does it need some concepts in order to represent the world in our mind? Mental states with non-conceptual contents mean that the states represent the world without possessing concepts which characterize their contents. But we have to see which concept a subject does not require to possess. Because some philosophers say that it would be too strong to claim that a subject's being in non-conceptual state does not require having any concepts at all. For the present we can start by saying that, being in a non-conceptual state means the involvement of no concepts whereas being in a conceptual state means involvement of concepts.

Before going on to a discussion about the debate between non-conceptual and conceptual content and how they solve the problem of the relationship between mind and world, we have to focus on the idea of possessing concepts. Before we can understand how an experience does not involve concepts or does involve concepts, we need to know more about concepts, contents, and the notion of mental states

involving concepts. What is it for a subject to possess a concept? Why should subject's thought require the possession of concepts? One may note here that to possess a concept or have an intentional state requires the subject to be in other intentional states. Intentional states come not as a single state but as group of states. So possession of concepts needs the subject to be in multiple intentional states. This is called 'holism of the intentional'³. The content of subject's one intentional state depends upon the content of the subject's other inter-related intentional states. Different intentional states are related to each other by three significant relations.

These relations are the followings-

- Logical relation
- Semantic relation
- Evidential relation⁴

All these three kind of relations help to fix the content of a given intentional state. For example, possessing the concept of cheese. Take the sentence 'cheese is nutritious' as 'p'. Then 'not (p& not p)' is the logical consequence of p. if we possess 'cheese is nutritious' as a true proposition, then there are some logical consequences of p that we have to believe. 'Not (p & not p)' p is the logical consequences of p. We have to believe that it is false that cheese is nutritious and cheese is not nutritious. In that way, we cannot have any one belief unless we have certain other beliefs that are logical consequences of the particular belief.

Again if we believe that cheese is nutritious (p), and then we must believe that cheese is edible (q) and cheese is made of milk (r). Here the propositions p, q and r are related to each other by the semantic properties of their content. The semantic properties of the cheese being nutritious include cheese being edible and made of milk and different other properties. So having one belief entails having other semantically related beliefs.

³ Crane, (1992), p. 10.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

The evidential relation is one of the most important relations that exist among intentional or representational states. A thinker's beliefs about the world are partly defined by the perceptual evidence of the perceiver. A thinker cannot believe that it's raining unless there is perceptual evidence of water falling from the sky. One can say that in order to believe something to be true, we must first perceive it. We require perceptual evidence in order to believe something to be true. We may believe something without having any perceptual evidence for it. But at some time, it has to be examined by our perceptual evidence to convert the statements into a definite knowledge. These three relations fix the content of a given intentional states. The content of one intentional state depends upon the contents of others. But all these relations do not answer to the real question why thought requires the possession of concepts? Why a theory of mind needs the notion of a concept at all? I will discuss this particular issue while discussing McDowell.

When we say propositional attitudes involve concepts it means that concepts are literally the constituents of the belief. So conceptual content is the content of which concepts are constituents. In that case a non-conceptual content does not have concepts as its constituents. Conceptual content is composed of concepts and non-conceptual content is not composed of concepts. We can say conceptual content is 'structured' content and non-conceptual content is 'unstructured' content. The question that is of importance for us is how can a belief involve concepts whereas perceptual experience from which it arises does not? We can define both conceptual and non-conceptual content in this way. For some x , to believe that a is f , x must possess the concept a and f . But for x to merely represent that a is f , x does not have to possess the concepts. Here the perceiver or the subject, in order to perceive or experience something, does not have to possess the concepts of the object which he perceives. But the subject, in order to believe something, has to possess some concepts (here experience means to represent something in our mind). Again here the problem arises with the idea of representation. To represent something in our mind is to

represent or to identify some distinct properties of the object in our mind. It is in this way that we have each experience distinct from others. In this case, to experience or to represent something is to have some discriminating knowledge of the object that we perceive. But the question arises, can we sensibly or perceptually discriminate each and every object without involving the concepts of the objects?

Another way to articulate the distinction is that non-conceptual content is the content which consists of nonconceptual properties as its representational character and conceptual content is the content consisting of conceptual properties as its representational character. We have to see what is the distinction between a conceptual property and non-conceptual property of an object. To quote Adrian Cussins

“A property is a conceptual property if and only if, it is canonically characterised, relative to a theory, only by means of concepts which are such that an organism must have those concepts in order to [instantiate] the property. A property is a non-conceptual property if, and only if, it is canonically characterised, relative to a theory, by means of concepts which are such that an organism need not have those concepts in order to [instantiate] the property.”⁵

There may be a straightforward route from conceptual properties and nonconceptual properties to conceptual content and non-conceptual content. So it is clear that every object has some conceptual and nonconceptual properties. But here our main question is to ask whether the subject, in order to represent some object in our mind, needs conceptual properties of the object or non-conceptual properties of the object. So in more strict sense, we can define the idea of nonconceptual content and conceptual content in the following way:

Non-conceptual content: - For any state S with content, S has a nonconceptual content, p, iff a subject x's being in s does not entail that x possesses the concepts that canonically characterize p.⁶

⁵ Cussins, Adrian, (1990), “Content, Conceptual Content and Nonconceptual Content” In *Essays on Non-Conceptual Content*, Gunther, York H. (ed.), pp. 382–383.

⁶ Crane, (1992), p. 8.

Conceptual content: - For any state S with content, S has a conceptual content, p, iff a subject x's being in s does entail that x possesses the concepts that canonically characterize p.

Philosophers have argued for the existence and representational significance of non-conceptual content in three different kinds of mental states. These three kinds of mental states are the following.

- Perceptual experience that is perceptual states.
- Visual states, sub personal computational systems, sub personal content.
- States whose content carries information, i.e., 'communication theory'.

In contemporary philosophy, the issue of conceptualism/non-conceptualism is much discussed in the philosophy of perception, and the debate between non-conceptual and conceptual content vis-à-vis contents of perceptual experience will be considered in this chapter. The debate about the representational significance of non-conceptual content has been focused on the different modes of sense perception such as direct or non-epistemic perception, perceptual belief or judgment, perceptual memory, perceptual intentional agency, perceptual phenomenal consciousness and perceptual self-consciousness etc. There is one kind of states, where the debate is most intense is conscious perceptual states. Contemporary discussion about non-conceptual content focuses on the content of conscious perceptual states.

The thrust of the debate is whether there is any justification for the rational role of perceptual states in belief formation. Some philosophers think that the relation between perceptual states and belief states should be described properly. The major part of the debate between non-conceptual and conceptual content is based on the explanation of this relation. Both nonconceptualists and conceptualists have given different accounts of the relation between the perceptual states and belief states.

McDowell holds that there must be a rational relation between perceptual states and belief states or propositional attitudes states. He is of the opinion that rational relation can hold only between two states if those states have conceptual content. So both perception and belief have only conceptual content. This can be said to be a powerful challenge to the defenders of the non-conceptual content. Before going to take these issues with reference to Evans and McDowell in detail, let us first discuss what the role of Kant is in developing the contemporary debate between nonconceptualists and conceptualists.

3.2 Kant on the Non-Conceptual and Conceptual Debate

The philosophical interest in the debate between non-conceptual versus conceptual content can be directly traced back to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. All the non-conceptualists and conceptualists philosophers have acknowledged that Kant has a central place in the discussions regarding the way thought bears on reality. But they have acknowledged Kant's role in quite different and opposing ways, even though Evans is said to have not given much importance to Kant. Kant's distinction between concepts and intuitions, his distinction between understanding and sensibility is essentially the same as the contemporary distinction between conceptual content and nonconceptual content and the distinction between nonconceptual capacities and conceptual capacities. Sensibility is the affective, perceptual, and imaginational capacity of the mind, which produces intuitions as output, and understanding is the logical, discursive, and proposition-forming capacity of the mind, which produces concepts as output. So concepts are the product of the faculty of understanding while intuitions are the product of the faculty of the sensibility. Concepts and intuitions are taken together to give rise to cognition. These are the fundamental sources of our mind.

Kant holds that the capacity to represent is the central feature of mind and this is known as 'mental representation'.

"The genus is representation in general (repraesentatio). Subordinate to it stands representation with consciousness (perceptio). A perception which relates solely to the subject as the modification of its state is sensation (sensatio), an objective perception is knowledge (cognitio). This is either intuition or concept (intuitus vel conceptus). The former relates immediately to the object and is single, the latter refers to it mediately by means of a feature which several things may have in common. The concept is either an empirical or a pure concept."⁷

As we notice, according to Kant, representation can be either conscious or unconscious. Every conscious representation has both a form and a matter or content. For Kant the form of a conscious representation is its phenomenal character. Conscious representation can be either subjective or objective. But in both the cases representation is necessarily accompanied by sensations. In modern sense we call sensations 'qualia'. Qualia are the intrinsic non-relational phenomenal features of all conscious representations. Sensations or qualia are always the cognitively transparent features of the mental states in which conscious representations occur. As sensations are cognitively transparent, they must be distinguished from subjective conscious representations and objective conscious representations. Subjective conscious representations are conscious awareness of 'mere appearances' and is a loosely organized and relatively unstructured conscious states. This is like 'Hume's association of ideas.'⁸ By contrast, an objective conscious representation, or cognition is always either outwardly directed to some object or the other, i.e., it is either intentional or is self-directed or reflexive. So conscious mental states with intentionality or reflexivity are of two distinct kinds. One is intuition and the other is concept.

⁷ Kant, (1964), p. 314.

⁸ Hanna, (2005), p. 250.

The contemporary debate between non-conceptual and conceptual content, we can say, center around the following quotation from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

“Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts. These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the sense can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise. But that is no reason for confounding the contribution of either with that of other; rather is it a strong reason for carefully separating and distinguishing the one from the other.”⁹

The above famous lines from Kant's *First Critique* are not as simple as they seem to be. The basic problem arises regarding the distinction between intuitions and concepts. Difficulties in understanding Kant is due to, whether he is suggesting that intuitions without concepts simply do not exist or are meaningless or is he suggesting that intuitions without concepts do exist and are meaningful but is, in a way, sharply different from that of concepts. What is the role of intuitions and concepts in mental representations? Is there any possibility of blind intuition which has also representational content without involving concepts? The problem arises regarding the role of intuitions and concepts in mental representations. Which of these two play a significant role in mental representation? Non-conceptualists and conceptualists have both responded to these problems in very different ways and that has given rise to the contemporary debate at hand.

Non-conceptualist philosophers like Robert Hanna suggest that the very idea of non-conceptual content was originally formulated and elaborately developed by Kant. He holds that Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* has argued for the non-conceptual content of perceptual experience. He argues that Kant not only defends the existence and meaningfulness of non-conceptual content, but also offers a fundamental explanation of non-conceptual content. According to Hanna, Kant gives

⁹ Kant, (1964), p. 93.

his argument for the existence and representational significance of non-conceptual content in inner sense and outer sense, feeling or affect, imagination, sense perception and judgment. He suggests that Kant has also given his arguments for the possibility of nonconceptual content in the representation of the form of intuitions which is necessary and empirical or apriori conditions of every mental representations generated by sensibility. The forms of intuitions give a fundamental explanation of non-conceptual content.

Kant holds that intuitions and concepts are cognitively complementary and semantically independent of each other for the specific propose of constituting objectively or empirically meaningful judgments. But from this it does not imply that there cannot be 'empty' concepts or 'blind intuitions'. By empty concepts, Kant does not mean meaningless concepts. He simply means those concepts that are not empirically meaningful. Robert Hanna holds that there can also be concepts that are not empirically meaningful yet fully intelligible. For example, concept of *Things-In-Themselves* or *Noumena*. Intuitions without concepts do not mean that it is meaningless intuitions. Rather it means non-conceptual intuitions. He shows that there are different ways in which intuitions can be non-conceptual. It is not necessary to go into the details of those arguments. Briefly speaking, intuitions, for Kant, are objective cognitions. There are five properties of an intuition. These are immediacy, sense relatedness, singularity, object dependence and a prioricity to thought. These five features of the intuitions imply that intuitions can represent the world and remain meaningful independently of involving concepts. They have nonconceptual mental content to the extent that intuitions are logically independent of concepts. I am not clear about Robert Hanna's idea of meaningfulness and about his distinction between intelligibility and meaningfulness. Another problem for me is that if any of these faculties (intuitions) can separately give rise to intelligible experience (though not empirically meaningful experience) then what is the role of this empirically meaningless intelligible experience? What is the role of this 'intelligible experience' in our epistemological sphere? Non-conceptualist account of Kant has created a

dualism of concept and intuition or concept or content. We will discuss this dualism later on. Robert Hanna has charged McDowell with the objection that his account of Kant denies the cognitive and semantic independence of intuitions and concepts. According to him McDowell's account of Kant does not conform to what Kant actually says and it pays insufficient attention to the fine-grained details of Kant's cognitive semantics.

On the other hand, McDowell takes credit for himself to be developing Kant's own theory and to do what Kant actually wants to do. His account of Kant is deeply influenced by Strawson's account of Kant. In the preface of his book *Mind and World* he writes,

“I am not sure that Strawson's Kant is really Kant, but I am convinced that Strawson's Kant comes close to achieving what Kant wanted to achieve.”¹⁰

McDowell is of the opinion that when Kant says that “thought without content is empty”, he is not affirming a tautology. The phrase ‘without content’ for Kant is not just another phrase for ‘empty’. Thought without content lacks representational content. Thought without content would not be a thought at all. McDowell suggests that Kant is not drawing our attention to a special kind of thought which is an empty one. The representational content of thought arises out of interplay of concepts and intuitions. Similarly by the remark, “intuitions without concepts are blind”; Kant surely does not mean that there is a possibility of blind intuitions. The term ‘blind’ refers to the fact that intuitions without concepts do not exist and are simply meaningless. According to McDowell there must be some role for both receptivity and spontaneity for empirical thought to have a bearing on reality. Here McDowell used the word ‘receptivity’¹¹ where Kant used the word ‘sensibility’, i.e., the faculty used to capture the sensations of the object from the world. McDowell's main aim is to deal with the problem of how empirical thoughts have a bearing on external reality. How to understand the relationship between mind and world? He thinks that the

¹⁰ McDowell, (1996), p. viii.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 4.

relation between mind and world should be understood in a very particular way. He suggests that receptivity or intuition does not make any theoretically separate contribution to the cooperation between sensibility and understanding in acquiring the empirical knowledge. According to McDowell, the nonconceptualists account of Kant gives rise to the dualism of concept or content or conceptual scheme or given. This is a version of what may be called 'the myth of the given.'¹² However, Kant himself is a rigorous critique of the idea of the myth of the given. McDowell is impressed by the Kantian attack on 'the myth of the given'. To support dualism, what the myth of the given purports is to hold that intuitions make a separate contribution to the cooperation between receptivity and spontaneity. McDowell holds that the faculty of spontaneity or conceptual capacity can be operative in intuition or sensibility itself. Mind's power of receiving representations from sensibility is performed by the receptivity or sensibility which is bits of experiential intake. But mind's power of producing representations from within is the task of understanding or spontaneity. The faculty of spontaneity enables us to think the objects which are given by sensible intuition. So thought is not possible without the operation of spontaneity. Therefore, all representations of the objects in our thought fully come under the purview of spontaneity. We will discuss McDowell's position in detail later on. In the next section, we will discuss Evans' nonconceptualists view in detail.

3.3 Evans on Nonconceptualism

Different non-conceptualists philosophers have argued for the non-conceptual content of perceptual experience in various ways. Early development of the notion of non-conceptual content was done by philosophers who were connected with Oxford working under a broadly Fregean tradition. The notion of non-conceptual content of perceptual states was first explicitly introduced into analytic philosophy by Gareth Evans in his posthumously published book, *The Varieties of Reference*. He argues that the information gathered by perceptual systems or perceptual experience is non-

¹² Ibid., p. 8.

conceptual. The following quotation from the same book shows Evans' idea of nonconceptual content.

“The informational states which a subject acquires through perception are nonconceptual, or non- conceptualized. Judgements based upon such states necessarily involve conceptualization. In moving from a perceptual experience to a judgment about the world (usually expressible in some verbal form), one will be exercising basic conceptual skills. But this formulation (in terms of moving from an experience to a judgment) must not be allowed to obscure the general picture. Although the subject's judgments are based upon his experience (i.e. upon the nonconceptualized information available to him), his judgments are not about the informational state. The process of conceptualization of judgment takes the subject from his being in one kind of informational state (with a content of certain kind, namely, non-conceptual content) to his being in another kind of cognitive state(with a content of different kind, namely , conceptual content).”¹³

Though Evans is said to have introduced the notion of nonconceptual content, but it is generally held that he is not clear whether non-conceptual content is to be taken to be operating at a personal level or at a subpersonnal level. He is not in favor that all contents of experience are non-conceptual. According to him, experience both involves nonconceptual and conceptual content. Contents are non-conceptual at the level of informational states. When we experience the object, at the first sight, whatever we get as data are non-conceptual or unconceptualized. So at the level of experiencing the world, the content of our experience is wholly non-conceptual. But at the level of making judgments or any cognitive statement, we do require some concepts. So we move from an informational state, from the raw data, to a systematic knowledge. Informational state involves non-conceptual content and cognitive state involves a different kind of content which is conceptual.

Before going into the details of the Evans' account of non-conceptual content of perceptual experience, let us first discuss his notion of perception, information,

¹³ Evans, (1982), p. 122.

belief, thought and his account of Russell's principle. These notions will help us in understanding his notion of non-conceptual content of perceptual experience.

Evans argues that to think of an object or to make a judgement about it one must be in an intimate relation to the object. According to Evans, our thought about particular object must satisfy what he calls 'Russell's principle'.¹⁴ And he describes Russell's principle as follows:

"A subject cannot make a judgement about something unless he knows which object his judgement is about."¹⁵

The subject must have a capacity to distinguish the object of his judgement from all other things. Evans holds that a substantial version of Russell's principle will help the subject to discriminate each object of our judgement from others. The question arises what it is to have such knowledge which will distinguish the objects of one judgement from all others? To distinguish one object from others, Russell's principle requires a particular form of knowledge, which might be called 'discriminating knowledge'.¹⁶

According to Evans, there are some notions of discriminating capacity which seems to be sufficient in distinguishing an object from others.

These are- :

- When the subject is capable of perceiving the object at the present time.
- When the subject at a later stage is able to recognize the object if it is presented to him or her.
- When the subject knows distinguishing facts about the object.

(Though Evans does hold that there may be some cases in which the subject lacks the capacity to discriminate an object from all other objects.)

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁵ Russell, (1912), p. 58.

¹⁶ Evans, (1982), p. 89.

The concept of discriminating knowledge is linked to the concept of thought and judgement by way of Russell's principle. Russell's principle is the medium through which the concept of identification is connected with the ascription of thought to the subject. We need a theoretical defense of Russell's principle which will bridge a gap between the concept of discriminating knowledge and the concept of thought and judgment.

According to Evans, there are three modes of identification or we can say there are three kinds of 'knowing which'. These are descriptive, demonstrative, and recognition based identification. Our identity of thought is necessarily determined by these different modes of identification. Evans suggests that a defense of Russell's principle will give an account of what these three modes of identification enables a subject to do. These three modes of identification determining the identification of our thought are necessarily based on the Russell's principle. Particularly, in the context of demonstrative identification, a defense of Russell's principle will enable us to answer some of these questions.

- What are the boundaries of demonstrative identification?
- Does perception of an object always provide one with discriminating knowledge of it?
- Can one demonstratively identify an object seen in a photograph or heard on the radio? ¹⁷

Evans holds that Russell's principle is the medium through which the concept of identification is connected with the ascription of thought to the subject. According to Evans, a theoretically motivated Russell's principle will help the subject to give answers to the above questions about demonstrative identification.

While discussing the nature of our experience, Evans suggests that there is a fundamental constraint which must be observed in all our reflections on the idea of

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

experience. It is called as 'the generality constraint'.¹⁸ Our thoughts about the world are structured in the sense that they are governed by 'the generality constraint'. A thought is a complex exercise of several distinct conceptual abilities or it is composed of several distinct elements. For example, when one thinks that Ram is happy and Hari is happy, he exercises the conceptual abilities of 'possessing the concept of happiness' on two occasions. Similarly when one thinks that Sam is happy and Sam is sad, he exercises the single ability on two occasions, i.e., the ability to think of, or think about Sam. Evans holds that a singular thought, that is, a thought which can be interpreted as having the content A is F, involves the exercise of two separate capacities- one being the capacity to think of A and the other being the capacity to think of F. Once a subject is credited with the exercising of these conceptual abilities, there is no conceptual barrier to his being able to entertain the thought that A is G or the thought that B is F. So, Evans defines the notion of 'the generality constraint' as,

"Thus, if a subject can be credited with the thought that a is F, then he must have the conceptual resources for entertaining the thought that a is G, for every property of being G of which he has a conception. This is the condition that I call 'The Generality Constraint'."¹⁹

This idea of 'the generality constraint' immediately leads to the idea of a language of thought. Evans is not suggesting that the subject's having thoughts would involve subject's using, manipulating or apprehending symbols which would involve both semantic as well as non-semantic properties. According to Evans, the generality constraint is an ideal, to which our actual system of thoughts only approximately conforms.

Evans names thought about particular objects which are governed by Russell's principle, as 'information based thought'²⁰. He holds that subject's thought about particular object are very often based on the information which we gather about the world. So he writes,

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 104.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 121.

“Our particular thoughts are very often based upon information which we have about the world. We take ourselves to be informed, in whatever way, of the existence of such and such an object, and we think or speculate about it. A thought of the kind with which I am concerned is governed by a conception of its object which is the result neither of fancy nor of linguistic stipulation, but rather is the result of a belief about how the world is which the subject has because he has received information (or misinformation) from the object.”²¹

A subject’s thought being governed by the conception of the object means the way he entertains the thought and the significance he attaches to them. Our particular thoughts are based on the information which we gather at the time of perceiving the object. Evans holds that the information constitutes our thought about the object. The content of the perception is the controlling conception of our thought. Thought of the object is determined by the content of the perception of the subject. Therefore,

“Slightly more precisely, we can say that a bit of information (with the content) is in the controlling conception of a thought involving a subject’s idea of a particular object if and only if the subject’s disposition to appreciate and evaluate thoughts involving this idea as being about an F thing is a causal consequence of the subject’s acquisition and retention of this information.”²²

The way by which we gather information about the world is called ‘the informational system’²³ by Evans. It is a system of capacities which we exercise when we gather information about the world by using three channels, i.e., senses (perception), testimony and memory. It provides the informational link between the subject and the object. This informational link between a subject and an object is a necessary condition of the mode of identification. About this informational system Evans writes,

“When a person perceives something, he receives (or, better, gathers) information about the world. By communicating, he may transmit this information to others. And any pieces of information in his possession at a given time may be retained by him until some later time. People are, in short and among other things, gatherers, transmitters and storers of information. These platitudes locate

²¹ Ibid., p. 121.

²² Ibid., p. 122.

²³ Ibid., p. 122.

perception, communication and memory in a system- the informational system- which constitutes the substratum of our cognitive lives.”²⁴

The informational content which we get through our informational system can be compared with a content of a photograph. The content of a photograph as well as content of the informational state can be represented by an open sentence. Suppose there is a photograph of a red ball on top of a yellow square. It can be represented by the open sentence as

“Red (x) & ball(x) & yellow(y) & square(y) & on top of (x, y)”²⁵

Evans holds that the informational system is constituted by several inter communicating agents. According to him, the informational states which we acquire through the medium of ‘the informational system’ are non-conceptual informational states. It seems preferable to him that the subject’s being in informational state with non-conceptual content is the ‘primitive notion’²⁶ of philosophy. He suggests that we cannot characterize the content of any informational state in term of belief because he thinks that the defining property of the informational state is ‘belief independence’²⁷. The subject’s being in an informational state is independent of whether he believes that the state is true or false. It is also applicable in the case of testimony. Suppose someone is telling us a story. Our being in a state of listening to a story does not depend upon our believing the story to be true or false. Even our testimony, Evans holds is more primitive than understanding.

According to Evans, the notion of ‘belief state’ is the idea of a far more sophisticated cognitive state. It comes at a later stage of human intellectual development. The notion of ‘belief state’ is connected with the notion of judgement

²⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 125.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 123.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 123.

and it is also connected with the notion of reason. As opposed to belief states, Evans argues that the operations of 'informational system' are more primitive of which two of them, i.e., perception and memory, we share with animals/ non-rational being. Evans also argued for the same in the case of testimony. The animals lack the conceptual capacity which comes under the faculty of understanding and reason. Evans writes,

"The mechanism whereby we gain information from others... is already operative at a stage of human intellectual development that predates the applicability of the more sophisticated notion."²⁸

Since the operation of informational system are more primitive than rationally connected conceptual skills which we exercise in making room for the notion of judgement and a strict notion of belief and content. The informational link between subject and object provides the subject with non-conceptual information about the states and objects. The informational system is capable of producing perceptual informational states or content bearing states independently of the faculty of understanding and the faculty of reason. Here a similarity can be drawn between Evans' picture of the relation between 'the informational system' and 'thinking, concept applying and reasoning system' and Kant's way of how intuitions are related to concepts in the making of empirical knowledge possible. Evans holds that the informational system makes a separate contribution to the co-operation between sensibility and understanding, and hence, conceives experiences as intuitions without concepts. But the problem arises, that Evans' position can be vulnerable to the Kantian attack on the myth of the given. As Kant, himself, suggests that intuitions without concepts, sensibility without understanding, would be blind. Evans cunningly, credits experience with representational content independently of the spontaneity. But it is interesting to see whether it saves him from the 'myth of the given'.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 124.

Non-conceptual content of our perceptual experience or informational states are not ipso facto perceptual experience. They are not conscious perceptual experience of a conscious subject. According to Evans, there is a link between perceptual input and behavioral output. The link between perceptual input and behavioral output is established long before it produces conscious subject of experience. Evans suggests that when the link is established the unconscious experience is produced. For example, a brain damage patient is able to point to a source of light despite claiming that he could not see anything at all. So, according to Evans, the informational system which produces informational perceptual states with non-conceptual content is not conscious experience of a subject. Evans, then suggests that the perceptual informational states, in order to become a conscious perceptual experience, it must be available to a 'thinking, concept applying and reasoning system'. We have to understand this idea very clearly. There are two links which convert perceptual informational state into a conscious experience.

- Link between perceptual input and behavioral dispositions.
- Link between thinking and concept applying system.

At first, there must be a link between sensory or perceptual input and our behavioral-dispositions and consequently it must serve as an input to a thinking, concept-applying and reasoning system. Evans suggests that in this process, subject's thought plans and deliberations are systematically dependent on the informational properties of the input. Evans, then, suggests that what a subject does critically depends on his thought. Further, there must be a link between thinking and concept-applying system, on the one hand and thinking and behavioral dispositions, on the other hand. According to him, these two links are the only links which make possible ascription of conceptual content to thought. When these are established, conceptual contents come into operation. There must be a harmony between our thought and our behavior. Evans, then interestingly, suggests that the content of the conscious experience itself is not conceptual content. The conceptual content of the conscious experience is not independent of the faculty of sensibility or sensory input. It must

systematically depend upon the informational properties of the input which the informational system gives rise to. So in a way we can say that the conceptual content of perceptual experience should systematically depend upon the non-conceptual content of the perceptual informational state, in order to become conceptual.

Evans, in the section on 'Mental Self-ascription'²⁹ suggests that a subject can gain self-knowledge or knowledge of his internal states by reusing the conceptual skills which he uses to make judgments about the world. He holds that whenever a subject is in a position to assert that *p*, he is ipso facto in a position to assert 'I believe that *p*'. But this procedure cannot help the subject in a fuller understanding of the content of the judgement 'I believe that *p*'. According to Evans, to fully understand the content of the judgement, the subject must possess the psychological concept expressed by 'E believes that *p*'. The subject, in order to acquire his self-knowledge, must go through the conceptual skills which he acquired while making judgments about his present perceptual experience. But in this later kind of judgments on self-knowledge, the subject must have to exclude the extraneous kinds of knowledge. Still this sort of cognitive state must systematically depend on the content of the informational states. Evans argues that the notion of 'the systematic dependence'³⁰ is the basis for the subject to claim knowledge of his 'belief states'. According to Evans, subject's internal states cannot be an object to his 'thinking, concept applying and reasoning system' in any sense. Only the states of the world can be an object to him. Evans writes,

"We have taken account, then, of the following two facts. First, in a state of information on the basis of which a subject may ascribe to himself an experience as of seeing, say, a tree, what he observes (if anything) is only the tree, not his own informational state. (But let me remind you that the procedure, I have described, of reusing the conceptual skills which one uses in order to make judgments about the world, is not by itself enough for the capacity to ascribe experiences to oneself.) Second, any informational state in which the subject has information about the world is ipso facto state in which

²⁹ Evans, (1982), p. 225.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 228.

he has information about himself, of the kind we are discussing, available to him. It is of the utmost importance to appreciate that in order to understand the self- ascription of experience we need to postulate no special faculty of inner sense or internal self-scanning.”³¹

Evans, while discussing about the ‘retention of the belief’³², suggests that the subject forms belief on the basis of perceptual informational states which he is receiving from the world. For example, ‘I believe that a tree is now burning’. This is a present tense self knowledge claim. When I recall this knowledge in future, I may express it as ‘I believe that I was facing a tree that was burning’. In this type of case, the operation of memory comes into play. Evans suggests that the operation of memory takes place purely at the level of the informational system. Memory ensures the subject’s possession of a non-conceptual informational state. The content of this informational state corresponds to some earlier content of the informational states. Although there are some differences between contents of these two types of informational state, but they are heavily based on the non-conceptual informational state. Evans writes,

“... the non-conceptual informational states involved in perception put a subject in a position to acquire present-tense self-knowledge by the exercise of his conceptual capacities, so these non-conceptual informational states put a subject in a position to acquire past tense self-knowledge by the exercise of his conceptual capacities. A subject can form beliefs which he would express by ‘I was facing a tree that was burning last night’, etc., in this way, on the basis of a non-conceptual memory state, without needing to have had the disposition to make the corresponding present-tense judgements (without having had the beliefs) at the time of the original perception.”³³

Thus, Evans is of the opinion that the information given by non-conceptual content is initially unconscious but becomes conscious when the same information serves as input to thinking, concept-applying and reasoning system. It seems that perceptual states with non-conceptual content are unconscious until subject’s conceptual abilities are brought to bear on them. So we can say that, Evans is suggesting that the

³¹ Ibid., p. 230.

³² Ibid., p. 238.

³³ Ibid., p. 239.

information given to us by nonconceptual content is unconsciously representing the world in our mind. How is it possible to represent something unconsciously in our mind? And this is one of the reasons that Evans' conception is deeply antithetical to some important debates on the issue because contemporary discussion about the subject focused on the content of conscious perceptual experience.

The debate between non-conceptual and conceptual content has been discussed in the context of 'fine-grainedness of perception' or 'phenomenological richness' of the perceptual experience. Different non-conceptualists argue that the content of perception is more fine grained than the content of propositional attitudes involving concepts. In our perceptual experience, many aspects of the world are represented to the subject. But the subject does not need to have distinct concepts for each aspect of the world which is presented to him or her. For example, the experience of many shades of colors. It is not possible for us to have a distinct word for each shade of colour that we perceive. Evans argues that we may experience the different shades of the color 'red' such as red1, red2, red3, red4... Red7 etc. even when we do not have the concepts corresponding to each shade.

To quote Evans

“Do we really understand the proposal that we have as many color concepts as there are shades of color that we can sensibly discriminate?”³⁴

Evans is of the opinion that, there are some philosophers who think that the existence of informational state is constituted by the subject's disposition to make certain judgments. These philosophers think that to experience something in terms of some very elementary concepts such as concepts like 'red'. But according to Evans, this type of view is extremely implausible and quite unnecessary. He argues that this picture falsifies the phenomenology of perception, and so he writes,

“The proposal is implausible, because it is not the case that we simply find ourselves with a yen to apply some concept—a conviction that it has application in the immediate vicinity.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 229.

Nothing could more falsify the facts of the situation. Further, no account of what it is to be in a non-conceptual informational state can be given in terms of dispositions to exercise concepts unless those concepts are assumed to be endlessly fine-grained;.... ”³⁵

So, Evans suggests that concepts cannot be endlessly fine grained. According to him, one can perceptually discriminate many colors and shades in detail than discriminating them conceptually. Therefore, according to the non-conceptualist philosophers, the ability to perceive and discriminate shades and shapes outstrips the conceptual capacities of the subject. The content of perceptual experience to represent the world does not seem to depend on subject’s conceptual repertoire. In characterizing the content of experience, its accuracy conditions, we do not limit ourselves to the concepts available to the subjects.

Apart from Evans, one of the most detailed accounts of how perceptual experience involves non-conceptual content has been given by Christopher Peacocke in his book *A Study of Concepts*.³⁶

Peacocke has formulated his theory of ‘scenario content’³⁷ which is theoretical frame work for understanding non-conceptual content. This may be called ‘autonomy thesis’³⁸. Autonomy thesis holds that mind can represent some aspects of the world nonconceptually in perception without being bounded by the concepts which the perceiver has. Peacocke calls the content of a perceptual experience as a scenario. He argues that the representational content of the perceptual experience is given by the ‘scenario’ and this is the most fundamental type of representational content. It is most fundamental because other sorts of representational properties depend on the

³⁵ Ibid., p. 229.

³⁶ Peacocke in his early writings was a supporter of ‘conceptual content’ of perceptual experience or we can say his view is called perceptual relativism. Peacocke says that “ the representational content is the way the experience presents the world as being, and it can hardly present the world as being that way if the subject is incapable of appreciating what that way is.” However, he has changed his views over the years.

³⁷ Peacocke, (1999), p. 61.

³⁸ See Peacocke, (1999).

existence of the 'scenarios' in various ways. 'Scenarios' is a set of properties and relations. Peacocke argues that in order to characterize the properties and relations involved in the 'scenarios', there is no requirement of concepts. According to Peacocke the fine-grainedness of perceptual content or phenomenological richness of the perceptual content is fully captured in the realm of 'scenario'. We may need to employ concepts in describing the 'scenarios', but this does not entail that concepts are themselves somehow an essential component of the representational content of the experience, nor does it imply that it must be possessed by the perceiver at the time of perception. To quote Peacocke,

"In describing the scenario, we do, of course, have to employ concepts. To fix on the scenario uniquely, we will have to use very fine-grained concepts too, to capture the fine-grained content. But it is crucial to observe the fact that a concept is used in fixing the scenario does not entail that the concept itself is somehow a component of the representational content of the experience, nor that the concepts must be possessed by the experiencer. The fine-grained concepts have done their work when they have fixed a unique spatial type. We should not confuse the scenario, the spatial type itself, with the infinitely various ways of picking it out. It is the type that is involved in the content of the experience, not descriptions of the type."³⁹

Tim Crane, in a range of articles, has also argued that the content of perception cannot be conceptual through various articles. In his well known article "The Waterfall Illusion,"⁴⁰ he suggests that water fall illusion is a perceptual state having contradictory content. Thereby he proves that perception is capable of representing impossible or contradictory state of affairs. So it is not always a consistent perception. On the other hand, he suggests that the propositional attitudes or conceptual content must be consistent. That's why perception must involve non-conceptual content.

Apart from the fine-grainedness argument, another argument for the existence of non-conceptual content is from infant/animal cognition. Some philosophers now consider it to be one of the most important motivations for arguing that perceptual

³⁹ Peacocke, (1999), p. 68.

⁴⁰ Crane, (1988), p. 142.

experience has non-conceptual content. The notion of non-conceptual content also applies to non-linguistic creatures that do not possess conceptual capacities. For non-linguistic creatures, the only available content is non-conceptual content. Nonconceptualists are of the opinion that animals and infants can have experiences very similar to adult human beings. They can perceptually represent the color 'green' as we can. Since they lack the concept of color 'green' to characterize the contents of their perception, so it is reasonable to hold that their content of experience is non-conceptual at least in part.

Evans' account of non-conceptual content is a development of Russell's principle. The information we get by our experience through 'informational system' is non-conceptual and constitutes the substratum of our cognitive lives. Subject's being in informational state with such and such non-conceptual content is one of the primitive notions of philosophy and is regarded as the controlling conception of our thought. The function of informational system is more primitive than our conceptual capacities and out of the three components of informational system, two of them, i.e., perception and memory, we share with animals and non-rational beings. Evans made clear cut distinction between perceptual states and belief states having different content. In his opinion, though belief states have conceptual content, it is controlled by the non-conceptual content of its informational state. Another important point Evans makes is that our perceptual experience with non-conceptual content at the level of informational state are not conscious perceptual experience. But Evans does not clearly say anything about how an unconscious content of informational state can be a control conception of whole content of our thought? What will bridge the gap between unconscious informational state and conscious thought? How a relation can be made between them? According to Evans, the content of our perceptual experience has the capacity of representing the objects and states of affairs in the world to our mind non-conceptually and it is more-finegrained than our conceptual capacities. Evans seems to suggest say that, we can sensibly discriminate something in more detail than conceptually. But here the problem is that, how can our perceptual

informational states represent something unconsciously? How are we able to unconsciously and sensibly discriminate something in more detail than our conscious perceptual capacities? These are some of the problems which we can easily find in Evans' account of non-conceptual content. We shall discuss these problems in the next section, in the context of McDowell.

3.4 McDowell on Conceptualism

As opposed to the non-conceptualists philosophers like, McDowell gives a different account of the phenomenological richness of the perceptual experience. He argues that where we have discrimination between colors, we may not have a distinct word for each of the colors. But we do have a recognitional capacity for each of the different shades of the colors which sets in with the experience. McDowell argues that the capacity, for employing demonstrative concepts in perception is a recognitional capacity, which, he holds, is fully conceptual. The phenomenological richness of the perceptual experience can be accommodated at the conceptual level. According to him the transition from perceptual states to belief states is a transition from a more determinate type of conceptual content to less determinate type of conceptual content. There is no reason to suppose that the content of perceptual experience is to be limited in some extra-conceptual way. Our conceptual capacities are capable of representing with the same fineness of grain with which they are perceptually represented. In that way, the content of perceptual experience is wholly conceptual. According to him, to consider the content of experience as nonconceptual is to commit oneself to the idea which Wilfred Sellars criticized as 'myth of the given'. 'Myth of the given' is the idea that experience involves being presented with a non-conceptualized given which the mind goes on to conceptualize it. According to McDowell, the non-conceptualist position encourages a version of the given, which, in turn, renders the relationship between mind and world deeply problematic. This section will devote exclusively to elaborating McDowell position. Briefly put, his position is a way out from a 'pair of opposing pitfalls'. On the one hand there is

Davidson's *coherentism* and on the other hand, a version of the myth of the given. There is an intolerable oscillation between these two opposing pitfalls. McDowell suggests that the only way out of the intolerable oscillation is to employ the concepts from the very beginning of experience.

Let us try to understand the intolerable oscillation between two opposing pair of pitfalls that McDowell is talking about. One pole of this oscillation is a version of the myth of the given, which offers 'exculpation at best where we need justifications'⁴¹ for our empirical experience. On the other hand, the second pole is Davidsonian coherentism which does not acknowledge any external constraint on our thinking. It threatens us to disconnect thought from reality which is a dangerous possibility for it cannot make any room for empirical content at all. McDowell suggests that in order to find a way to dismount from this seesaw, we have to understand the cooperation between receptivity and spontaneity in a particular way. So, he writes,

"I have suggested that in order to escape the oscillation, we need to recognize that experiences themselves are states or occurrences that inextricably combine receptivity and spontaneity. We must not suppose that spontaneity first figures only in judgments in which we put a construction on experiences, with experiences conceived as deliverances of receptivity to whose constitution spontaneity makes no contribution. Experiences are indeed receptivity in operation; so they can satisfy the need for an external control on our freedom in empirical thinking. But conceptual capacities, capacities that belong to spontaneity, are already at work in experiences themselves, not just in judgments based on them; so experiences can intelligibly stand in rational relations to our exercises of the freedom that is implicit in the idea of spontaneity."⁴²

In the above remark, McDowell holds that sensibility provides an external control to our thinking, and makes room for empirical content. To this extent it is fine. But this does not imply that external control is something other than spontaneity (which is constituted by conceptual capacities). The faculty of spontaneity is already at work in

⁴¹ McDowell, (1996), p. 46.

⁴² Ibid., p. 24.

receptivity which gathers sensation from the object in the world. McDowell thinks that there must be a rational control on our thought from out-side of our thought and this provides rational justification to our thinking about the world. This rational justification must be only the faculty of spontaneity which involves subject's conceptual abilities. If the external constraint on our thought is something other than the faculty of spontaneity then it cannot give rational justification to our thought. External justification cannot cross the 'space of reasons'. It must be confined within the space of reason and the space of reason is nothing but conceptually structured items. So if it crosses the 'space of reason' there is a chance of recoil into the myth of the given. Before discussing McDowell's position in detail, we need to discuss about the two pole of interminable oscillation i.e. Davidson's coherentism on the one hand and a version of the myth of the given on the other. First we need to discuss the idea of the myth of the given, why is it a tempting idea and how it creates problems for the proper relationship between mind and world. McDowell's understanding of the myth of the given is that it acknowledges a dualism of concept and content. We can reformulate the dualism as 'the dualism of conceptual scheme and the given'⁴³ because the word 'content' is confused with the word representational content. In contemporary philosophy, the word content is used in the sense that it involves representational character. However, dualism of the concept and the given supports that there is an external constraint on our freedom to deploy our empirical concepts. But to give justifications to thought from outside of our thought, we have to extend the 'space of reason' beyond the 'space of concepts'. It is here that the problem arises. McDowell holds that these kind of rational justifications of our thought are not actual justifications. They are pseudo justifications. The extended version of 'space of reason' cannot at all do the task of giving justifications. It merely seems to be giving justifications. Thus McDowell says,

"The idea of the given is the idea that the space of reasons, the space of justifications or warrants, extends more widely than the conceptual sphere. The extra extent of the space of reasons is supposed to allow it to incorporate non-conceptual impacts from

⁴³ Davidson, (1984), pp. 183–198.

outside the realm of thought. But we cannot really understand the relations in virtue of which a judgement is warranted except as relations within space of concepts: relations such as implication or probablification, which hold between potential exercises of conceptual capacities. The attempt to extend the scope of justificatory relations outside the conceptual sphere cannot do what it is supposed to do.’⁴⁴

‘Myth of the given’ holds that empirical justifications can be given by constraining the use of concepts from outside the conceptual realm. This outer version of ‘space of reason’ invites conceptual impingements from the world to play a part in controlling our conceptual abilities. McDowell holds that this expanded space of reason is ‘brute impact from the exterior’⁴⁵ and we cannot be blamed for the inward influence of what happens there. The expanded version of the space of reason, according to McDowell, is an alien force which remains outside the control of our faculty of spontaneity. The idea of the given creates the confusion between exculpations and justifications. Where we want justification for our empirical thought it gives us exculpations so that we cannot blame it to be wrong. The idea of the myth of the given wants to ensure that relation between bits of the given i.e. given by the experience, relation across the envisaged boundary of space of concepts, can be reason constituting and are the most basic form of judgments of experience. But it forgets to consider how things look at the expanded boundary of the space of reason, when it makes contact with independent reality. McDowell holds that actually we want to be able to credit ourselves with being responsible in empirical thinking in total. We want to see that our exercise of spontaneity should be constrained by the world itself. So that we are within the scope of possible rational justifications, all the way to the ultimate contact between our mental life and the world. But the idea of the given is hopeless in this connection. It is not able to give rational justification to our thought. The best they can yield is that we cannot be blamed for believing whatever they lead us to believe, not that we are justified in believing it. We have to see that our thought is rationally constrained from outside all the way by the world and spontaneity.

⁴⁴ McDowell, (1996), p. 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

It is spontaneity itself which controls our thought. Spontaneity is operative in our experience of the world. One pole of the oscillation i.e. 'myth of the given' renames the role of spontaneity and the second pole i.e. Davidson's coherentism renounces the world itself. McDowell's idea of the myth of the given is deeply influenced by Wilfred Sellars attack on the myth of the given in his classic essay 'Empiricism and Philosophy of the Mind'. To quote Wilfred Sellars

"Many things have been said to be 'given': sense contents, material objects, universals, propositions, real connections, first principles, even givenness itself. And there is, indeed a certain way of construing the situations which philosophers analyze in these terms which can be said to be the framework of givenness. This framework has been a common feature of most of the major systems of philosophy, including to use a Kantian turn of phrase, both 'dogmatic rationalism' and 'skeptical empiricism'. It has indeed, been so pervasive that few, if any, philosophers have been altogether free of it: certainly not Kant and, I would argue not even Hegel, that great foe of 'immediacy'. Often what is attacked under its name are only specific varieties of 'given'. Intuited first principle and synthetic necessary connections were the first to come under attack. And many who today attack 'the whole idea of givenness'- and they are increasing number- are only attacking sense data".⁴⁶

As Sellars points out there are different notions of the myth of the given and there are different things which is said to be given. So that we can say, there is not any one form of the 'myth of the given'. In the same line of thought, we can say following McDowell, that non-conceptualist account of the relation between mind and world, relation between conception and intuition, relation between spontaneity and receptivity is a special version of the 'myth of the given'. Another point that Sellars emphasizes is that traditionally there are very few philosophers who are free from this idea of the 'myth of the given'. We can say Davidson is one of them. Davidson in order to escape from the myth of the given, dualism of conceptual scheme and content, falls under the trap of myth of the given again.

⁴⁶ Sellars, (1956), p. 127.

Davidson, while criticizing dualism of the conceptual scheme and unpremeditated content, wants to escape from the problems of the 'myth of the given'. By conceptual scheme, Davidson understands,

"The conceptual scheme may be thought of as an ideology, a set of concepts suited to the task of organizing experience into objects, events, states and complexes of such; or the scheme may be a language, perhaps with predicates and associated apparatus, interpreted to serve an ideology. The content of the scheme may be objects of a special sort, such as sense data, percepts, and impressions. Sensations, or appearances; or the objects may dissolve into adverbial modifications of experiences."⁴⁷

He holds that the dualism of the conceptual scheme and uninterrupted experience is a deep mistake. The dualism is produced out of an incoherent picture of the mind, that is, to take mind as a passive but critical spectator of the inner show. Davidson suggests that there are no such objects of thought. In fact Davidson gives a separate name to the 'myth of the given', he calls it 'myth of the subjective'⁴⁸. Inner objects of thought are said to be ghostly entities which the mind is said to contemplate. Davidson holds that the dualism of scheme and content promotes the view that thought, necessarily have to insulate the ultimate sources of evidence from the outside world in order to guarantee the authority of the evidence for the subject. But according to Davidson this is not the actual case. Thought does not necessarily have to wrap up the ultimate sources of evidence from the outside world in order to give justifications to our empirical thought. The elements which are not touched by conceptual interpretation and is said to be controlling our thought from outside are some versions of Kant's intuitions, Hume's impressions and ideas, sense data, uninterrupted sensations, the sensuous given. According to Davidson, there are no such objects before the mind when we have sensations or thought. The dichotomy of uninterpreted experience and conceptual scheme is closely related to the dichotomy of subjective and objective which needs to be attacked. Davidson is of the opinion that this dualism has dominated modern philosophy and has created problems for it. The

⁴⁷ Davidson, (2001), p. 41.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 39.

problems are not only in the area of the philosophy of mind, but also in the philosophy of language and epistemology. That is why he says that the dualism is the third dogma of empiricism and it is the last dogma. Davidson writes,

“Thus in place of the dualism of the analytic-synthetic we get the dualism of conceptual scheme and empirical content. The new dualism is the foundation of an empiricism shorn of the untenable dogmas of the analytic-synthetic distinction and reductionism—shorn, i.e., of the unworkable idea that we can uniquely allocate empirical content sentence by sentence. I want to urge that this second dualism of scheme and content, of organizing system and something waiting to be organized, cannot be made intelligible and defensible. It is itself a dogma of empiricism, the third dogma. The third and perhaps the last, for if we give it up. It is not cleared that there is anything distinctive left to call empiricism.”⁴⁹

Davidson suggests that, if we appeal to experience to justify our judgment or beliefs because sensibility occurs outside the space of concepts, then we will fall into the myth of the given. The space of reasons does not extend more than the space of concepts, to acquire bare reception of the given. To this extent McDowell holds that Davidson is right. But Davidson makes the mistake when he identifies experience only with extra conceptual impart on sensibility. In the process Davidson renounces the role of spontaneity, the role of space of reason in giving rational constraint to our thought. The coherentist version of Davidson makes the role of spontaneity as “frictionless spinning into the void”⁵⁰ and it is this very idea that makes the idea of the given attractive. The worry that Davidson picture poses that whether the picture can accommodate the sort of bearing on reality that empirical content produced makes a necessary appeal to the myth of the given. McDowell holds that Davidson does nothing to diminish the fear. Davidson is inadequately motivated by the implications of the myth of the given. Myth of the given is a well response to Davidsonian kind of thinking which underlies the familiar philosophical anxiety about empirical knowledge. Davidson renounces empiricism. He explicitly links the fate of

⁴⁹ Davidson, (1980), p. 189.

⁵⁰ McDowell, (1996), p. 14.

empiricism with the fate of scheme content dichotomy. This position is quite unsatisfying.

In this way, both pole of the oscillation recoils into one another by trying to solve each other's problems. In order to escape from the intolerable oscillation, we have to understand the relation between mind and world in a very particular way and that way must be conceptual. According to McDowell, only concepts mediate the proper relationship between mind and world without creating any form of dualism. We have to understand the fact that the impressions of the sensibility already have a conceptual content. The faculties of the spontaneity or the conceptual abilities go all the way with the experience to give rational control to our thought from outside our thought. Spontaneity is drawn into operation in sensibility itself. McDowell holds that conceptual abilities are can be exploited in active thinking, thinking that is open to reflection about its own credentials. He is not merely affixing the label 'conceptual' to the content of experience. To understand this relation in a particular way is to suggest that the faculty of spontaneity is already operative in the operation of receptivity which gathers 'perceptual intake from the world'. According to him, there is an external rational constraint on our thinking, but that constraint cannot come from an outer boundary of conceptual realm. The external rational constraint on our thinking is the conceptual realm itself. It is not any extra-conceptual impingements from the world or bare sensations.

McDowell realizes that this position may be difficult to defend because we are often supposed to be placed with a choice between the pairs of 'the intolerable oscillation'. When we think that we need a rational constraint on our thinking and judging faculty, there is a chance to suppose that these external constraints are grounded outside the conceptual realm. This is surely the intention of the 'myth of the given'. The position which McDowell is acknowledging makes no concession to it.

McDowell holds that experiences are receptivity in operation and this is the fact which ascertains that there must be an external constraint on our thinking. But the notion of receptivity does not have the power to disqualify experiences from playing a role in justification as the myth of the given does. The faculty of the receptivity itself plays a justificatory role in our thinking of the world. But it must be credited with conceptual content. The joint operation of the receptivity and spontaneity, of sensibility and understanding make it possible for us to understand how things are in the world, how things are independent of one's thinking. According to McDowell, facts about the world are independent of our thinking. But we have to understand this independence in a special way. Though they are independent, they can share the same content. The content of the perceptual experience and the content of the judgement are the same i.e. conceptual content. The content of the perceptual experience may be expressed as 'that thing is thus and so'. The content of the judgment can also be expressed as 'that thing is thus and so'. They both share the same content i.e., conceptual content. That is why McDowell writes,

"Although reality is independent of our thinking, it is not to be pictured as outside an outer boundary that encloses the conceptual sphere. That things are thus and so is the conceptual content of an experience, but if the subject of the experience is not misled, that very same thing, that things are thus and so, is also a perceptible fact, an aspect of the perceptible world."⁵¹

By putting the fact of world under the realm of the conceptual McDowell suggests there is no ontological gap between the sort of thing one can think and the sort of thing that can be the case. There is no distance between our thought and the world, between our thinking and the fact of the world or what we think. Mind and world are not ontologically distinct entities. He also suggests that there are aspects of reality which are independent of the thinking or our thought process. According to him, when we say that the world is made up of the sort of thing one can think that we are renouncing the independence of reality as if our picture of reality is merely a shadow of our thinking or something like mental stuff. McDowell however says that this sort

⁵¹ McDowell, (1996), p. 26.

of interpretation is unwarranted. He holds that the rational control on our thought ensures the independence of reality, rather than making it dependent on us.

To quote McDowell,

““Thought” can mean the act of thinking; but it can also mean the content of a piece of thinking; what some one thinks. Now if we are to give due acknowledgement to the independence of reality, what we need is a constraint from outside thinking and judging, our exercise of spontaneity. The constraint does not need to be from outside thinkable contents.”⁵²

According to McDowell, experience is passivity and receptivity in operation. This assures us of the fact that we can have all the external constraint as we can reasonably want. The constraint must be imposed from outside of thinking, but not from outside of what is thinkable. It must not come from outside of the conceptual realm. Whereas, the external constraint which the myth of the given is supposed to give on our thought is some sort of unthinkable content.

McDowell takes an absolute idealistic position in support of his arguments. He suggest that it is central to absolute idealistic position that conceptual realm has no outer boundary. There is nothing outside of it. He cites Wittgenstein and Hegel in support of his view. Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* writes,

“When we say, and mean, that such-and-such is the case, we and our meaning-do not stop anywhere short of the fact; but we mean; this-is-so.”⁵³

Hegel, in his book *Phenomenology of Spirit*, suggests,

“In thinking, I am free, because I am not in an other.”⁵⁴

According to McDowell, both these views express the fact that the conceptual realm has no outer boundary; there is nothing outside of it. This is the position what McDowell has been arguing throughout.

⁵² Ibid., p. 28.

⁵³ Wittgenstein, (1953), sect. 95.

⁵⁴ Hegel, (1997), p. 120.

McDowell's conceptualist position can be clearly understood by discussing some of the objections which he raised against Evans' account of the empirical experience (i.e. nonconceptualists position). McDowell holds that Evans position is a special version of the myth of the given. It is hard to take Evans' account as a version of the myth of the given because of its deeply innocent look. McDowell holds that Evans wrongly identified experience with representational content independently of the faculty of the spontaneity. So if Evans conceives experiences as intuitions without concept, then his position is vulnerable to the original Kantian attack on the myth of the given. McDowell holds that to introduce receptivity without fear of being falling into the myth of the given is to support the view that receptivity does not make any notionally separable contribution to the cooperation with spontaneity. But Evans does not respect this rule. He suggests that receptivity make separable contribution to the co-operation with spontaneity. This makes him vulnerable to the Kantian attack on the myth of the given. Because Kant himself suggests that to understand the idea of experience as intuitions without concepts must be to understand it as blind. It must be devoid of representational content. Evans interestingly, credits experience with representational content and it is also nonconceptual. But that does not save him from Kantian attack of 'the myth of the given'. It is certainly wrong for Evans to suggest that they cannot be blind because he equips them with content. An experience cannot be blind, when the subject of experience is aware of an objective feature of reality through his experience. Evans himself suggests that this can be possible only when we understand how perception and reality are related. According to Evans, it depends on the subject's movement through the world. As he writes,

"Any subject at all capable of thought about an objective spatial world must conceive of his normal experiences as simultaneously due to the way the world is and his changing position in it..."⁵⁵

McDowell thinks that this can happen for a subject when the subject is a self-conscious being and we cannot make sense of a self conscious subject without

⁵⁵ Evans, (1980), p. 176.

involving the conceptual capacities in strong sense of the term. Evans' idea of experience as intuitions without concept is, therefore, according to McDowell, hopeless.

The conceptual abilities of the subject are not first introduced only in the faculty of spontaneity (as Evans holds). It is already in its operation in receptivity itself. That is why McDowell says,

“Evans, then, identifies perceptual experiences as states of the informational system, possessing content that is non-conceptual. According to Evans, conceptual capacities are first brought into operation only when one makes a judgement of experience, and at that point a different species of content comes into play. Contrast the account that I have been urging. According to the picture I have been recommending, the content of a perceptual experience is already conceptual. A judgement of experience does not introduce a new kind of content, but simply endorses the conceptual content, or some of it, that is already possessed by the experience on which it is grounded.”⁵⁶

The above quotation shows the contrast between Evans' account and McDowell's account. According to McDowell we need to carefully understand this sort of conceptual capacities which are dragged into operation in receptivity. This kind of conceptual capacities are a kind of recognitional capacity. For example, with color expressions like 'red', 'blue', 'green' etc. It is possible to acquire the concept of color by our conceptual capacities as color red, blue, green etc. But it is not possible to acquire all the different shades of the color red by our conceptual abilities. On the other hand McDowell holds that it is possible to acquire the concept of different shades of color with the same determinateness by our conceptual thinking which is presented in our visual experiences. One can capture sharply different shades of colors by our conceptual abilities themselves. McDowell holds that the phenomenological richness of our conceptual abilities is sharper than what non-conceptualists take it to be.

⁵⁶ McDowell, (1996), p. 48.

“What is in play here is a recognitional capacity, possibly quite short-lived, that sets in with the experience. It is the conceptual content of such a recognitional capacity that can be made explicit with the help of a sample, something that is guaranteed to be available at the time of the experience with which the capacity sets in. Later in life of the capacity it can be given linguistic expression again, if the course of experience is favorable; that is, if experience again, or still, presents one with a suitable sample. But even in the absence of a sample, the capacity goes on being exploitable as long as it lasts, in thoughts based on memory: thoughts that are not necessarily capable of receiving an overt expression that fully determines their content.”⁵⁷

According to McDowell, this sort of conceptual capacity which is already operative in the function of receptivity itself can be expressed in language as ‘that shade’⁵⁸. For example, my visual experience of color red represents something as being of ‘that shade’. McDowell holds that this is a recognitional capacity which must include conceptual elements. When Evans suggest that, color concepts are less fine-grained than our abilities to discriminate shades of color, he has the idea that the conceptual capacities are associated only with the color expressions like ‘blue’, ‘red’, ‘green’ etc. He fails to realize that to discriminate the experience of different shades of color, as expressed by ‘that shade’, is also a conceptual ability. McDowell holds that there is no reason to suppose that our conceptual abilities of color experience is only restricted to word like ‘red’, ‘green’, yellow etc. it is possible to experience different shades of color by the help of our conceptual abilities. This can be described by taking the example of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein writes,

“Imagine someone saying: “but I know how tall I am” and laying his hand on top of his head to prove it.”⁵⁹

The person considered in this example supposed to be telling ‘I am this tall’. According to McDowell, ‘I am this tall’ is something very much like ‘that shade’. The expression of the experience of the shades of color as ‘that shade’ or in the case of the person as ‘this tall’ is a concept. Though we do not possess as many color concepts in

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 57–58.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 57.

⁵⁹ Wittgenstein, (1953), sect. 297.

advance, as these are different shades of color. But if we are able to possess a concept of shade, that conceptual ability itself is sufficiently and fully able to capture our experience of color in detail. The finegrainedness capacity to experience color in terms of conceptual abilities have a special character. According to McDowell, we cannot discriminate the different shades of color without involving conceptual abilities in the form of 'that shade'.

Conclusion

McDowell's main intention is to give a satisfactory picture of the relation between mind and world. The intolerable oscillation between 'myth of the given' and Davidsonian coherentism leads to a serious threat to the relation between mind and world. Both sides of the oscillation have undermined the role of conceptual ability in articulating the relation between mind and world, thought and reality. On the one hand, Evans' version of the myth of the given, by extending the 'space of reasons' beyond the 'space of concepts', incorporates some extra-conceptual elements which cannot be rationally justified. On the other hand, Davidsonian coherentism, by not employing any external constraint on our thought, threatens to disconnect thought from the reality. According to McDowell, the only way out of this problem is to understand the relationship between mind and world in a particular way and that way is to acknowledge the role of spontaneity in every spear of experience ranging from the very beginning of experience to the most sophisticated thought. Concepts play an important role in bridging the gap between thought and reality. Conceptual capacities are already present in our perceptual experience and discriminate the things in the world in more detail than the informational state with non-conceptual content. A rational relation can be held between perceptual states and belief states only if both of them involve concepts in their content. If there is no rational relation between them, then our perceptual content cannot give rational justification to our cognitive states. What we believe cannot be rationally justified by what we see.

Conclusion

One of the philosophical anxieties in modern philosophy, in fact, in the whole philosophy, is the relationship between mind and world. Much of the modern philosophy is contaminated by the problem of dualism which Cartesianism creates. The ontological gap between mind and world, thought and experience, thought and object, consciousness and matter, which is an outcome of dualism has been the concern of modern philosophy. In trying to bridge the gap between mind and world, in situating the mind in the natural world, different theories have been formulated by philosophers and also various distinctions, such as, broad and narrow, subjective and objective, phenomenal and intentional, non-conceptual and conceptual etc. have been made. In accordance with these distinctions, different theories, such as, physicalism, externalism, internalism, methodological solipsism, phenomenism, epiphenomenalism, intentionalism, pure intentionalism, impure intentionalism, non-conceptualism, conceptualism, etc. have been constituted. With the development of cognitive science, brain science, neurophysiology and new scientific discoveries about the function of mind and its connection to visual experience, the old problem of dualism, the problem of mind and world relationship, have been addressed in modern philosophy from different perspectives by using different terminologies. However, our main aim would be to bridge the gap between mind and world. The problem with dualism is that it threatens us to disconnect the world from our mind, to cut the link between thought and reality. But in order to give a better picture of the relationship between mind and world, we must not invite any form of dualism to come into play. We have to hold on to the link between mind and world at any cost. We should construct the relationship between mind and world in such a way that there would be

no gulf open up between thought and its objects for dualism to exploit. In modern philosophy, many theories, while trying themselves to get rid of the problem of dualism, fall again into the trap of dualism. Most of the theories of modern philosophy have been deeply influenced by dualism but not for the same reason. Their different ways of looking into the relationship between mind and world lead dualism to return again to its business. In this sense, one can say, non-conceptualism of Evans, Davidson's coherentism, physical externalism, physical internalism, pure phenomenism, Fodor's methodological solipsism, etc. are all new forms of dualism. To use a medical metaphor, the germs which cause the disease in case of original dualism are very much present in these above theories.

Descartes made the mistake by suggesting that mind is an immaterial organ which is distinct from the world. Physicalism made the same mistake by suggesting that mind is a material organ. Yet, again, internalist version of physicalism made the mistake by assuming that though mind is a physical organ identical with the brain, its function is entirely independent of external environment. It has been a tendency of many theories in modern philosophy to take mind as material and to give a physicalistic or at least naturalistic account of it. Though it is true that they have tried their best to give a naturalistic account of mind, their focus on naturalism is misplaced by their adoption of an extreme form of physicalism or scientism. On the one hand, we should abandon the idea that there is an ontological real distinction between mind and world, between thought and reality. At the same time, we should encourage the epistemological distinction between knowing the mind and knowing the external world to be real, that is, the method of knowing our mind has to be distinguished from the method of knowing the external world. We have to recognize the fact that a purely scientific understanding of the mind cannot be the right kind of understanding of subjects and their thoughts. Physical knowledge of the brain cannot be a complete knowledge of our mind. Moreover, we should jettison the idea that our broader conception of the world (in which minds are also included) is necessarily physical.

To get rid of these debates between materialism and immaterialism, physicalism and non-physicalism, narrow and broad, etc., we should reject the idea that mind can be conceived as an organ, either material or immaterial. We should reject the idea of mind as spatially located, like that of brain. It is certainly wrong to hold that our mental life is taking place in an organ. Though it is true that the functioning of brain as an organ is necessary for mental life, but that cannot constitute the whole of our mental life. We should encourage the idea that our mind together with the world constitutes the mental life. Our mental life takes place where our life takes place. It does not necessarily have spatial location which is exploited by dualism.

Physical externalist or pure intentionalist way of looking into the relationship between mind and world cannot be sustainable because of its phenomenological implausibility. They cannot include the phenomenological features of our experience in their explanation. There are also problems involved in physical internalism because they advocate the material version of Descartes' dualism which is problematic. An objective, intentional and external account of mind–world relationship does not have to be necessarily physical or reductionistic. The distinctions between internal and external, subjective and objective have given rise to the distinction between the phenomenal and the intentional. The phenomenological feature of our experience is all to do with the subjective and the intentional object is all to do with the objective things in the world. It is held to be axiomatic in most of the theories in modern philosophy that the subjective excludes the objective, phenomenological excludes the intentional. But it is wrong to hold such an account. It is obviously wrong to exclude the subjective from the objective, phenomenal from the intentional. There is a hope in linking the two opposites or different characteristics of our experience in theories like non-physical externalism, impure intentionalism, conceptualism, etc. In order for the worlds to have bearing on our thought, our minds must have the feature of intentionality. Thought must be necessarily representational, but it should represent the world in such a way that its phenomenology should be taken care of. Thought must have an object, because our mental state cannot represent something in the null

environment. If we assume the ontological real distinction between mind and world, then we cannot make sense of intentionality, the idea that our mental states have content or representational character. Holding on to the ontological distinction between mind and world, the problem will rise regarding where to situate intentionality whether on the mind side or on the world side. Hence, we want a theory of intentionalism where the distinction between mind–world, subject–object, phenomenal–intentional would disappear. A complete repudiation of the mind-world distinction is required for a coherent explanation of the relationship between mind and world.

We should be able to give an intentional explanation of the mind–world relationship, which should be externally directed towards the objects and states-of-affairs in the world and must include the phenomenological feature of experience. Our explanation of the relation between mind and world should constitute a phenomenological domain. All the interactions that take place between subject and object must be under the purview of the phenomenological domain. Mental states and occurrences or intentional states are necessarily the constituting parts of the phenomenological domain and should be answerable to phenomenological domain. It is certainly not right to suggest, on the one hand, that an intentional object cannot be a part of the phenomenological domain, and, on the other hand, to claim that what it is like to experience is not intentional at all. McDowell rightly says that

“The most conspicuous phenomenological fact there is... that experience, conceived of from its own point of view, is not blank or blind, but purports to be revelatory of the world we live in.”¹

That is why, the idea of purely qualitative states or epiphenomenalism is highly problematic and obscure and it is the idea which creates problem for the mind–world relationship by attracting dualism. We should encourage the idea that the phenomenological domain itself is external, objective and intentional. The

¹ McDowell, (1986), p. 152

phenomenological domain of our experience is not something isolated from the objective and social world.

“... the phenomenological embraces some of the public aspects of thinking, speaking and understanding: at least, when we are communicating with others, the shared contents are much a part of the scene of which we are conscious as are the colors of nearby objects.”²

The supporters of the purely qualitative states or epiphenomenalism are deeply influenced by Nagel’s original argument, but not in the right sense. Nagel’s main intention was to show that there is a requirement for an ‘objective phenomenology’ which would include subjective as well as objective, phenomenal as well as intentional. His claim was quite independent of the fact of crude phenomenalism.

On the other hand, any reductive intentionalist or externalist account of the relationship between mind and world cannot be sustainable because of its phenomenological implausibility. While giving an external explanation of the mind–world relationship, phenomenological feature of it should not be left out altogether. As McDowell has rightly said,

“One of the chief objections to the psychologistic postulation of implicit knowledge stems from a concern that the notion of inner life, the life of mind, not to be made unrecognizable.”³

We should encourage the idea that the life of mind itself is in the phenomenological domain which is not isolated from the world unlike Descartes’ concept of mind as an inner theatre, or, to put in a Ryleian way, the concept of ghost in the machine. The concept of the life of mind should be phenomenologically rich. Physicalist account of the relation between mind and world is not phenomenologically rich, and, hence, can not explain the essence of the life of mind. A reductive naturalistic account is the working ideology of most of the philosophical contemporaries who, McDowell labels as “bald naturalism.” He gives his own naturalistic view in contrast to “bald

² McCulloch, (2003), p. 30

³ McDowell, (1998), p. 181

naturalism”⁴ and says that the distinctive capacities of mind are cultural achievement of our “second nature,” being influenced by Gadamer. Gregory McCulloch, in the same vein, says that physicalist or reductive accounts would not be interpretational, and, according to him, a complete phenomenologically adequate account of individual’s conscious life must be interpretational.

“Intentional content can figure in the phenomenological domain in a far from trivial way, linked to interpretation, and access to this phenomenology is not given by physicalist accounts, or indeed by any other account which fails to be interpretational.”⁵

Hence, both extreme forms create problem for the relationship between mind and world. Both pure phenomenalism and pure subjectivism on the one side and both pure intentionalism and pure objectivism on the other side are new forms of dualism, and, hence, cannot be sustainable. In order to get rid of this dualism, we should encourage the theories like impure intentionalism, conceptualism, and externalism. We should: (a) develop a radical non-solipsistic account of mind, (b) acknowledge a phenomenological externalist account of the relationship between mind and world (c) where all the distinctions would merge and will constitute a coherent relation. Mental states are object-directed or intentional not in the null environment. When subjective is directed towards the objective world, then both subjective and objective have to be available there. The content of mental state cannot be intentional in an empty environment. To quote McCulloch,

“No account of intentionality or content can do that. There can be no subjectivity when the entire objective is missing. To try to have world directed thinking in the null environment is to fall to the demonic dilemma and hence to lose all grip on what thinking, world directedness is, thereby falling into incoherence.”⁶

To understand the relation between mind–world, we should understand the idea of subjective as an embodied being. We should understand the idea of subject along with its existence in the world. The subjective and the objective should interpenetrate

⁴ McDowell, (1996), p. 67.

⁵ McCulloch, (2003), p. 35.

⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

instead of excluding each other. Neither subjective nor objective can be taken into account in isolation. Hence, we cannot really distinguish between phenomenal-intentional, broad–narrow, subjective–objective, external–internal, nonconceptual–conceptual, etc., for dualism to exploit. These distinctions can be made for the sake of their different ways of looking into the mind–world relationship. But in order to get a coherent picture of this relationship, we should find a way so that all these distinctions are merged, all debates are resolved. We cannot really compartmentalize and say that this is narrow, subjective or phenomenological domain and that is broad, objective, physical or external domain.

Positively speaking, the coherent way of looking into mind–world relationships most include subjective as well as objective, phenomenal as well as intentional. Particular ways of determining mind–world relationship must be conceptual, external, objective, representational, phenomenologically plausible, and interpretational, rationally constraint, coherent, inclusive, etc. All these positive qualities we can very successfully obtain in McDowell’s conceptualist position. Concepts should mediate the relationship between mind–world in such a way that it creates no further dualism. McDowell’s position by incorporating all these above qualities is adequate enough in exposing the latent Cartesianism in contemporary philosophy. Conceptual way of determining the relationship between mind and world certainly seems to be intentional, external, non-individualistic or non-solipsistic, phenomenologically complete and interpretational.

Non-conceptualists are of the opinion that our perceptual states or mental states represent objects and states-of-affairs in the world nonconceptually. We can ask the question, how can something nonconceptual be representational? The idea of nonconceptual and the idea of representational seem contradictories of each other. If a mental state is nonconceptual, it cannot really be representational. The idea of pure subjectivity, inner, purely phenomenal give rise to the idea of nonconceptual. We can

say, these are all special versions of the 'myth of the given' which cannot give a rational justification to our thought.

There must be a rational connection between thought and reality, between what we see and what we believe. All those dualistic positions which we have been discussing so far have not been able to give a rational explanation between our perception and belief. The rational continuity between our perception and belief can only be explained by the conceptual way of understanding the relationship between mind and world. 'Space of concepts' should mediate the relationship between mind and world in such a way that, we can be rationally warranted as to what we are thinking about our external world. Our thought must be accountable to the world whether it is correctly executed or not. In order to get this picture, we should acknowledge that there is a rational connection between our faculty of sensibility and faculty of understanding. We should explain this rational connection in a particular way so that the whole picture of mind–world relationship is not incoherent. That particular way should be the idea that faculties of understanding are already operative in sensibility. To hold that our faculty of understanding is already operative in sensibility helps in rejecting dualism. We should encourage the idea that our mind is operative in the world. We should not get rid of the idea that, in the sensibility, we are getting some extra-conceptual elements from the world, and, then, at the level of cognitive state we go on to conceptualize it. Our 'space of reasons' should not go beyond the boundary of 'space of concepts'. Our faculty of sensibility and faculty of understanding both are included in 'the space of concepts' which is identical with 'space of reasons.' To include the faculty of sensibility under the purview of 'space of concepts' does not make it phenomenologically incomplete and to hold that our thinking must be answerable to the empirical is to acknowledge the idea that our mind is intentional. Both sensibility and understanding should be given due importance in making of our knowledge about the world. But while assuring that we must not forget that they should cooperate each other in a way, so that, our knowledge about the world would not get disjointed from the world. 'The logical space of reasons' or 'the

space of concepts' itself constitute the phenomenological domain where our mind and world interact. The relationship between mind and world is normative. Our idea of experience must constitute a tribunal, which would direct or mediate the way our thinking is answerable to how things are in the world. The members of the tribunal must not come from the outer boundary of 'space of concepts' or 'the logical space of reason'. Our phenomenological domain along with the 'space of concepts' should constitute the tribunal which would mediate our mind and world. The idea of tribunal is necessarily interpretational, so that we can interpret our phenomenological domain from first person as well as third person perspectives. The life of our mind take place where our lives take place and our lives are social, cultural and collective.

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