

REPRESENTATIONALISM, SCEPTICISM AND PHENOMENAL REALISM

AN APPRAISAL OF THE NON-REDUCIBILITY OF PHENOMENALITY

REPRESENTACIONALISMO, CETICISMO E REALISMO FENOMENAL

Uma avaliação da não redutibilidade da fenomenalidade

REPRESENTACIONALISMO, ESCEPTICISMO Y REALISMO FENOMENAL

Una valoración de la no reducibilidad de la fenomenalidad

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ABSTRACT

The irreducibility thesis of phenomenal consciousness can only succeed against the sceptical attack and avoid solipsism *iff* it can coherently establish the transition from subjective certainty to the objectivity of knowledge. The sceptical attack on the relationship between the phenomenal qualitative character of experience about the subjects own mental fact and the awareness of the qualitative properties of the phenomenal object can be avoided through establishing the immediacy of experience. The phenomenal realist become successful in establishing the subjective certainty about the knowledge of phenomenal consciousness, however, has been failed in establishing objective certainty of knowledge, which leads to several epistemological problems (i.e., scepticism about the independent existence of external world, knowledge about the external reality and the existence of other mind; popularly known as the harder problem of consciousness) in philosophy of mind. In this paper, my objective is to reveal the undesirable consequences of representationalism. Representationalism is not an ideal option for responding to the sceptical attack against the other minds and the reality of the external world. It always leaves an open question for us about the relation between the representation of the object of experience and consciousness. Representationalistic theories of experience violates the principles of phenomenality by rejecting the immediacy of experience and has been committing the pragmatic contradiction by reducing the phenomenal properties to representational properties. The categorization of knowledge about phenomenality as inferential knowledge by representationalist leave no room for foundational knowledge about phenomenality.

Keywords: phenomenal realism, transparency of experience, direct realism, phenomenality, strong representationalism, weak representationalism, naturalistic representationalism

RESUMO

A tese da irredutibilidade da consciência fenomenal só pode ter sucesso contra o ataque cético e evitar o solipsismo se puder estabelecer de forma coerente a transição da certeza subjetiva para a objetividade do conhecimento. O ataque cético à relação entre o caráter

qualitativo fenomenal da experiência sobre o próprio fato mental do sujeito e o caráter qualitativo da consciência sobre o objeto fenomenal pode ser evitado estabelecendo-se o imediatismo da experiência. O realista fenomenal obteve sucesso em estabelecer a certeza subjetiva sobre o conhecimento da consciência fenomenal, no entanto, falhou em estabelecer a certeza objetiva do conhecimento, o que leva a vários problemas epistemológicos (isto é, ceticismo sobre a existência independente do mundo externo, conhecimento sobre a realidade externa e a existência de outra mente; popularmente conhecido como o problema mais difícil da consciência) na filosofia da mente. Neste artigo, meu objetivo é revelar as consequências indesejáveis do representacionismo. O representacionismo não é uma opção ideal para responder ao ataque cético contra as outras mentes e a realidade do mundo externo. Sempre nos deixa uma questão em aberto sobre a relação entre a representação do objeto da experiência e a consciência. As teorias representacionistas da experiência violam os princípios da fenomenalidade ao rejeitar o imediatismo da experiência e tem cometido a contradição pragmática ao reduzir as propriedades fenomenais a propriedades representacionistas. A categorização do conhecimento sobre a fenomenalidade como conhecimento inferencial pelo representacionista não deixa espaço para o conhecimento fundamental sobre a fenomenalidade.

Palavras-chave: realismo fenomenal, transparência da experiência, realismo direto, fenomenalidade, representacionismo forte, representacionismo fraco, representacionismo naturalista.

RESUMEN

La tesis de la irreductibilidad de la conciencia fenoménica sólo puede triunfar contra el ataque escéptico y evitar el solipsismo si puede establecer coherentemente la transición de la certeza subjetiva a la objetividad del conocimiento. El ataque escéptico a la relación entre el carácter cualitativo fenoménico de la experiencia sobre el propio hecho mental del sujeto y el carácter cualitativo de la conciencia sobre el objeto fenoménico puede evitarse estableciendo la inmediatez de la experiencia. El realista fenoménico ha logrado establecer la certeza subjetiva sobre el conocimiento de la conciencia fenoménica, sin embargo, no ha logrado establecer la certeza objetiva del conocimiento, lo que conduce a varios problemas epistemológicos (es decir, el escepticismo sobre la existencia independiente del mundo externo, el conocimiento sobre la realidad externa y la existencia de otra mente (conocido popularmente como el problema más difícil de la conciencia) en la filosofía de la mente. En este artículo, mi objetivo es revelar las consecuencias indeseables del representacionismo. El representacionismo no es una opción ideal para responder al ataque escéptico contra las otras mentes y la realidad del mundo exterior. Siempre nos deja una pregunta abierta sobre la relación entre la representación del objeto de la experiencia y la conciencia. Las teorías representacionistas de la experiencia violan los principios de la fenomenalidad al rechazar la inmediatez de la experiencia y han estado cometiendo la contradicción pragmática al reducir las propiedades fenoménicas a propiedades representacionistas. La categorización del conocimiento sobre la fenomenalidad como conocimiento inferencial por el representacionista no deja espacio para el conocimiento fundamental sobre la fenomenalidad.

Palabras clave: realismo fenomenal, realismo fenomenal, realismo directo, fenomenalidad, representacionismo fuerte, representacionismo débil, representacionismo naturalista.

Introduction

Generally, there are two mainstreams in philosophy of mind which address the harder problem¹ of consciousness. One approach to the harder problem is the irreducibility thesis (phenomenal qualitative aspects of mental facts are ontological independent from functional as well as representational aspect of the mental fact), which is advocated by Nagel (1974), Jackson (1982,1986), Chalmers (1995), Block (2002a), Levine (2002) and Searle (2015), popularly known as non-reductionistic approach of phenomenal consciousness. They reject the reduction of phenomenal qualitative experience to representational states of the brain. On the contrary, the reductionistic thesis of consciousness defends the reduction of phenomenal consciousness to intentional-representational states of experience, advocated by Tye (2009), Alter (2008), Carruthers (2007), Stoljar (2005). In the former, the knowledge about the existence of other mind is an inference from the self-certainty of phenomenal consciousness. Their attempt for ensuring the subjective certainty of knowledge against scepticism provide relief for a second, however, they failed to succeed against cartesian scepticism of universal doubt. The latter attempt to resolve the harder problem by reducing the *subjective certainty of knowledge about phenomenality* to representational state (intentional states) of the experience.² They attempt to replace the role of the phenomenal character of experience with intentional content of experience. They proposed that by explaining how mental states are connected with intentional content of experience, the explanatory gap can be bridged without appealing to nonreductive private mental fact. One can demystify phenomenal consciousness and bypass the explanatory gap argument through complete reductive explanation of phenomenal-intentional content.

The plan for the paper as follows. The first section of the article will define representationalism, categories of representationalism, present the argument and counter arguments of the representationalism and establish the position of its rival theories, The next section will emphasis on the critical response of direct realism to representationalism. The section three will delineate the phenomenal realist position and define how representationalist (especially reductive representationalist) violates the principles of phenomenality and commit pragmatic contradiction by reducing the phenomenal property to representational properties. The latter section will expose the question begging attitude of representationalist while addressing the sceptical attack. The section five will suggest the alternative solution of representationalism and show how Searlean phenomenal realism plausibly resolve the subjective-objective dichotomy without endorsing solipsism. The last section provides the concluding remarks that why representationalism can't be ideal option for responding scepticism.

1) Representationalism

Generally, there are two categories of definition on representation. The reductionistic approach to the definition of representation is that representation is the relation between the object of the external world or experience with the semantic and referent properties of the particular object of experience. It's the way of explaining how X bears the semantic and referent values of Y without direct accessibility of Y. Representation explains how a particular thing-X plays (in fact substitute) the explanatory role of Y, for instances, by perceiving the road sign board (which is consists of wood, iron, letter, marks etc), we are able to infer the semantic and referent property of Y (i.e., road safety travel instruction, direction etc.), which was not part of our awareness about the perceived information. In the similar way, phenomenal qualitative property of experience is the way it seems to the subject to be independent from representational properties. The representational properties of experience also serve the explanatory role

¹ Ned Block (2002) has articulated and highlighted this problem in order to explain the epistemic relation of the conscious organism with the phenomenal states of the subject.

² See, Kekes (1977, pp.87-90) Shoemaker (1990, pp.112-131), and Loar (2002, pp. 273-290) for detailed analysis of subjective certainty and the objective truth of knowledge, Dretske (1995 p.45) has defended for such kind of view.

for phenomenal qualitative properties of experience. The representation not only represent itself but also represent something other than itself.³

On the contrary, the non-reductionistic definition of representation leaves room for awareness about the object of experience and explains that representation is the explanation about the relation of both X and Y. Representation does not signify how X is related to Y rather how both X and Y related to each other without substituting one another. The awareness about both X and Y, their causal relations are significant elements for representation. Nonreductive representationalism acknowledges the epistemic independency of the phenomenal qualitative aspect of experience by categorizing it as a special kind of representation, which can neither be reduced to the intentional states, nor any other functional-representational states of the brain. Unlike reductive representationalism, nonreductive representationalism very courteously respond to the question that what kind of things can be the objects of representation, like state of affairs, existent and non-existent things that subsists, functional and representational aspects of moods, feeling, emotion and sensation⁴.

It is a considered opinion among representationalist that representationalism is more plausible with the scientific theories of consciousness (i.e., Quantum theory of physics) than phenomenal realism. Representationalist (Intentionalist) holds that in every experience of perception and cognition, there is a representational aspect- defended by Brentano (1874 p.88), Tye (1996), Alter (2008), and Stoljar (2005), which can resolve both hard and harder⁵ problem of consciousness. The alma mater of their argument is representation- indirect awareness about experiential objects, which holds the view that every mental state can be explained/reduced to the representational state of the content of experience. The role of phenomenal character can be replaced by intentional states of experience (Phenomenal states/character =⁶ Intentional states/content).

As Tye (1996) in his notable work, *The Ten problems of consciousness* illustrate

“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. (p.137)

The phenomenal character of your experience-certainly something you are introspectively aware of on such an occasion-must itself. be representational. Try to focus your attention on some intrinsic feature of the experience that distinguishes it from other experiences, something other than what it is an experience of. The task seems impossible: one's awareness seems always to slip through the experience to the redness and shininess, as instantiated together externally.” (p.136)

He has rejected the direct accessibility and independent existence of the external world. The experience of the external world is just a representation, and phenomenal character of qualitative property supervenes on the representational content of experience in both case of (i.e., veridical and hallucinatory) experience. The object of the external world is directly inaccessible. Every experience is mediated by the process of representation (The perceptual experience is mediated by a long chain of causes of brain states. i.e., Sense data). What is directly accessible by the subject is the representation of the object and state of affairs of the external world.

³ See Dretske (1995 p.42-48) for inquiry of the expandable limits and scope of representation. He has defended one kind of naturalistic representationalism. The semantic values of the experience are partially determinable by the natural world. Dretske has made the distinction between sensory-systemic representation and conceptual-acquired representation. A representation is not only about the relation of sensory mechanism with natural objects; rather it also signifies how the sensory representation is being conceptually represented.

⁴ Block (2002), Chalmers (2004) argued that there is a qualitative aspect of experience in these states which can neither be eliminated nor reducible, as the reductionist like Dennett (1987) and Churchland (1981) argued.

⁵ See Block (2002) for more details

⁶ The particular symbol is used for signifying the different version of reductionistic position (i.e., Equivalent to/reduced to/ identical to etc).

a) The Arguments for Representationalism:

Representationalistic thesis relied on some popular arguments which not only attempt to establish the plausibility of representationalism but also shows how direct realism is inconsistent with those arguments. One of the primary arguments of representational realism is the argument from hallucination⁷, which has got its motivation from the Cartesian sceptical argument of dream argument. There are several forms of illusion argument⁸; the simulation argument in contemporary philosophy of mind is also based on this argument, which raises the question against the immediacy of experience and direct accessibility of the object. This argument poses the epistemological problem- certainty of knowledge about the external world. Representational realism gets the motivation for establishing their thesis and uses these perceptual delusions against direct realism.

In the case of hallucinatory experience, there is no mind-independent object behind the experience unlike other non-veridical cases. No physical object is presented to the mind directly in hallucinatory experience; however, in veridical experience, there is a correspondence relation between the mind and representational object of the external world. Therefore, the object of the external world is directly unknowable, and what is directly accessible is the content of mind about the external world, representation of the object and state of affairs of the current experience. The argument of hallucination can be constructed in the following way

P1) Both veridical and hallucinatory experiences have the same qualitative properties⁹ of experience (because they are indistinguishable from veridical experience as long as experienced), which are directly accessible by the subject, is generated by the same cause.¹⁰

P2) The cause of the qualitative properties of experience can't be direct contact with the external world, because, there is no direct contact with the external object possible in case of hallucinatory experience that can be considered as the cause of phenomenal or intentional qualities of experience.¹¹

Therefore,

C) The cause of the qualitative properties of experience must be intermediary representational mechanism (i.e., internal/ construction of the neurofunctional brain activities-representational states or particular neurobiological states of the brain), that contains the representational properties¹² of objects and state of affairs of the external world.

There are several objections to the hallucination argument from direct realist as well as phenomenal realist. Representationalist has to face those objections for plausibly establish their position.

The objective of the argument (to show the incompatibility of the direct realism with the non-veridical cases of experience) can only succeed *iff* there is a collective agreement between both parties on the

⁷ Harrison (1993, pp. 18-19), Maclachlan (1989, pp. 36-38), and Price (1932, pp. 28-33) for defense of this argument.

⁸ The argument from illusion and the argument from hallucination even though have different structure, however, both of the argument has the same objective. Both the arguments have different approach in non-veridical experiences, however, in order to serve their common goal that direct accessibility and phenomenal distinguishability of experience is impossible, they stand on the same page.

⁹ For representationalist, phenomenal properties are identical with (or supervene on) representational properties. Dretske (1996, p.148) argues that phenomenal qualitative properties are relational and intentional properties.

¹⁰ The phenomenal indistinguishability of experience entails the ontological indistinguishability of the experiential object. The phenomenal character of the hallucinatory experience and veridical experience remains the same, despite of having no correspondence between the object of experience with the object of the physical world. The hardcore disjunctivist don't accept this premises. There is no need to accept mediatory representational content. For them, "how X is appears to Y" is equivalent to the disjunction of "X is either veridically accessing the experiential object such and such" or "X is non-veridically experiencing (i.e., hallucinating, or illusional about) Y".

¹¹ The premise tries to block the direct accessibility of the external object. The phenomenal-ontological indistinguishability of experience confirms the direct inaccessibility claim.

¹² For direct-realist, there is no representational properties in the experience, Searlean (2015) form of phenomenal realism named these properties as presentational properties.

phenomenal indistinguishability claim. Most of the direct realist¹³ try to block the first premise by drawing the line between veridical and non-veridical¹⁴ experiences. Some of the moderate disjunctivist¹⁵ though accept the phenomenal indistinguishability claim, the view that there is no difference in phenomenal qualitative properties of experience in both cases, however, don't consider the second premise as a valid one, because they demarcate the qualitative difference between veridical and non-veridical experience. In a veridical case, the subject is directly interacting with the object of the external world; however, in non-veridical cases, the subject is directly aware of the mental content of the physical object, which is stored in the memory from past experience or the content of experience that *subsists*. The subject is self-aware about the experience in the veridical case, which is not possible in non-veridical cases.

There is another prong of attack against representationalist from non-representational realism raised by Adverbialist¹⁶ which accept the phenomenal indistinguishability claim and rejects the direct inaccessibility claim. Adverbialist has accepted the phenomenality of experience as the *common factor principle* in all veridical and non-veridical experiences even though the nature of the object of experience differ according to experiential situation. The phenomenality of experience deals with how the subject sense or experience rather than what is it that the subject experience, for instances the subject (X) has the phenomenal experience of a property (i.e., sweetness) (Y) *iff* X senses Y-ly (sweetly). Adverbialist don't leave any distinct ontological space for the phenomenal adverbial property of experience like sense datum theory. They treat the phenomenal adverbial property of experience is indistinguishable and unmediated experiential property from the object of experience. Huemer (2001 p.82) argues that the awareness about the external object through perception for representationalist is an indirect mechanism of awareness. hence, for them, perception can only assure the indirect accessibility of the external object. Representationalist failed to grasp the fundamental difference between *the object of awareness* and *the vehicle of awareness* which leads them to conclude that perception is an indirect mechanism of awareness and the direct awareness of the object of external world is impossible.

b) Two version of representationalism

Representationalism construed that phenomenal character is supervened or completely determined by the representational content in both veridical and hallucinatory experiences. Generally, there are two categories of representationalism.

- **Strong or reductive representationalism**

The reductive representationalist¹⁷ has attempted to leave no room for subjective aspects of experience. Their objective is to reduce the subjective ontology of phenomenal character to objective ontology of representational character. Reductive representationalism tries to reduce the phenomenal character of

¹³ Campbell (2002, p.117), one of the proponents of direct realism, has raised the objection against the hallucination argument. He did not accept the phenomenal indistinguishability claim. The hallucinatory experience of a dagger and veridical experience of a dagger are two distinct experiences. Campbell is not alone in the objection to phenomenal indistinguishability claim, the strong disjunctivists, like Hinton (1967 p.12), McDowell (2000, p.146) and Johnston (2004, p.129) also made an attempt to expose the representationalist on this issue.

¹⁴ There are several non-veridical cases of experience which differ from each other, i.e., the hallucination (completely absence of object) and illusion (something is misperceived as something else), however, in all non-veridical cases their stimulative function overlaps with each other.

¹⁵ Snowdon (2005) argues that except the hallucinatory bad case, the other non-veridical cases share the same phenomenal qualitative properties with veridical experiences. Even if he accepts the phenomenal indistinguishability claim, however, became reluctant to accept the direct inaccessibility claim. See also Martin (2002), Siegel (2004) for defense of disjunctivism.

¹⁶ Adverbialism is the view that the non-veridical cases of experience have different modes of presentation (i.e., experiencing yellowly, redly, sensing painfully or wistfully) in which the object of experience presented to the subject seemingly for instance one can have experience of phenomenal redness as *sensing redly* without the localisation the experiential property-phenomenal redness (phenomenal adverbial property for adverbialist). The experiential properties are the product of the experiential process which can't be localised unlike the sense data view of sense datum theory. See Ducasse (1942, p.232), Chisholm (1957, p. 124) for detailed analysis.

¹⁷ Tye (1996, 2009), Harman (1996) and Dretske (1995) are the major proponent of reductive representationalism.

experience to representational character¹⁸, and by doing so, they construed that the mysteries of phenomenal qualities can be explained through naturalistic paradigm. The demystification project of phenomenal qualities of experience (like demystification of intentional/ representational content) can resolve the hard problem. Reductive representationalist argues that

P1) Phenomenal properties are identical to representational properties.¹⁹

P2) Representational properties are physically explainable and traceable in the naturalistic paradigm without any appeal to non-physical states of mind.²⁰

Therefore, Phenomenal realist's argument for ontologically distinct phenomenal qualitative properties from representational property of experience is misleading.

Reductive representationalist through this argument, try to vindicate the redundancy of the appeal of the explanatory gap and hard problem of consciousness.

Reply: Firstly, premise 1 violates the Leibniz law- the identity of indiscernibility principles which establish the fact that the properties (x) are indiscernibly identical with the properties (y) *iff* it shares the same characteristics. The principle of identity is based on the necessary relation. For the claim of A= (identical to) B, there must be a necessary relation between A and B. There can't be any case in which the presence of the properties of A is traceable excluding the properties of B. Similarly, it is the necessary condition for the plausibility of the argument of the identity of phenomenal-representational property that there can't be any instances of counter facts in which representational properties is traceable without phenomenal properties of experience and vice-a-versa. The counter facts, for instances unconscious perception, belief and thought have representational properties of experience without awareness of phenomenal property²¹. Reductive representationalist has to disprove the plausibility of unconscious perception and representation for successfully establish the phenomenal-representational properties identity. In extension to another category of counter facts, there are certain mental facts in which phenomenal properties of experience are traceable without representational properties of experience (i.e., Orgasm)²². From the above analysis, it is clear that the phenomenal properties and representational properties have distinct characteristics and at least, they are not necessarily identical properties.

Secondly, the entailment thesis²³ (defend premise 1) argues for the impossibility of *unconscious representational states*. There can't be any instances in which the subject is having a perceptual experiential state without being aware of it. Hence, phenomenal character of experience is indistinguishable from representational property of experience. There are several objections to entailment thesis. The cases like blind sight (partial damage of visual cortex) and inattentional blindness has disproved the entailment thesis. The response to the question that can there be representational properties without phenomenal properties and vice-a-versa, also determines the plausibility of the entailment theorist's argument. The mere possibility of one without other contradicts the premise 1. There are counter facts to the argument that falsify the premise, for instances, as block (2002a, pp. 174) argued that the phenomenal experience of orgasm doesn't have representational property (there is nothing to represent) even though it has phenomenal property of experience because there is something

¹⁸ Dretske (1995, p.144) argues that "Even if physically identical heads can harbour different thoughts, they cannot be having different sensations." Therefore, the phenomenal qualitative properties of experience are somehow identical with the natural representational properties.

¹⁹ Fregean Representationalism (1948) supports this view. The phenomenal properties and representational properties are two *modes of presentations* of the same properties. Despite being informative and non-trivial, both the terms have the similar referent which denotes a particular mental state, for example, the author of *Gitanjali* and the author of *Thokebali* are the two extensions of the same referent-Rabindra Nath Tagore. Though both extensions have different meaning; however, represents the same person; similarly, the phenomenal properties and representational properties represent the same thing. Therefore, phenomenal properties are ontologically identical to representational properties.

²⁰ The exponent of naturalised Intentionality (Shea 2013, pp.496-509, Dennett 1969, p.21) gives justification for the premise.

²¹ See, Bernat, Shevrin & Snodgrass (2004), and Taylor (2019) for the defense of unconscious thought, perception, belief.

²² See, Block (1995) for the defense of non-reductive phenomenal consciousness.

²³ Williamson (2000), Stroud (2009). and Cassam (2009) are the proponent of the thesis. they argue that unconscious perception isn't possible in veridical experiences.

like to have experience of orgasm. The reductive representationalist argues for the phenomenal properties-independent experience; therefore, reductive representationalism is itself inconsistent with its own argument and contradicts the premise.

Thirdly, any form of reductive representationalist thesis will have to always face off with the explanatory gap argument. The argument is as follows

P1) The principles of theoretical identity entails that the fact about the objects/entity (which uphold the identity relation) are completely explainable.

P2) Phenomenal-representational identity thesis is not completely explanatory, because it will always leave a permanent arbitrariness (leaving things unexplained about “phenomenal character”, its relation with representational and functional states).

P3) The explanatory gap between phenomenal and representational aspect of experience is unbridgeable.²⁴

Therefore, phenomenal-representational identity thesis is misleading.

At least, from the prima facie evidence it is clear that reductive representationalist failed to undermine the phenomenal realist’s conclusion- “the non-derivability of phenomenal facts from natural-representational fact”. Chalmers (2004 p.5) provides the counter argument against *entailment thesis*. There are some instances of perceptual experience in which there are only representational properties like *unconscious belief, thoughts*; without having phenomenal properties of experience. Hence, reductive representationalist has to disprove the model of unconscious perception/ representation in order to establish the phenomenal-representational identity theory. They have to block all the possibility of unconscious representation.

- **Weak or Non- reductive representationalism**

The overall view of non-reductive representationalism is that phenomenal properties supervene²⁵ on representational properties. If two subjects share common intentional/representational properties, then their phenomenal properties will be the same. The same representational properties instantiate the same phenomenal properties. In other words, the changes in representational properties can make a difference in phenomenal properties. Non-reductive representationalist, unlike reductive intentionalist, recognized that the phenomenal properties are distinct from the representational properties; however, the phenomenal qualities are dependent on intentional content and representational process of the mind. Unlike the former, the non-reductive representationalism is compatible with sense-datum theory and leave the room for the non-naturalistic theory of representation²⁶. There can be another kind of non-reductive naturalism that upholds the position of emergentist by making the distinction between phenomenal character and representational properties without reducing to one another.

The nonreductive representationalism either fall in the category of mere supervenience though covariance or supervenience with metaphysical necessity in which the basic phenomenological principle of experience- the immediacy of experience can’t be preserved. On the one hand, the denial of

²⁴ Phenomenal realist like, McGinn (1982) Nagel (1974) argues that the explanatory gap is unbreachable, because, there is an ontological gap between them. The phenomenal states (What it feels) and representational states (What it represents) are distinct kind of mental states. They are informative, non-trivial, epistemically and ontologically explainable and independently traceable. They have different explanatory as well as functional role in experience. Type C materialism only accept the explanatory gap, however, deny that there is an ontological gap. The reason behind emergence of explanatory gap is insufficient knowledge about the phenomenal and representational aspect of experience.

²⁵ See, Krigel (2004), McGinn (1997) and Márton (2022) for defense of nonreductive representationalism. See also, Shoemaker (1990, pp.109-131), Peacocke (1983, pp.4-26) and Loar (2002, pp. 273-290) for another set of defense of supervenience theory of representationalism and weak representationalism.

²⁶ Macpherson (2014) argues for this kind of non-reductive representationalism which is compatible with sense data theory.

immediacy principles of experience makes the weak or non-reductive representationalist thesis venerable to attack of scepticism. On the other hand, the weak or nonreductive representationalist if acknowledge this particular principle, will no longer be called a representationalist thesis. Supervenience is also a kind of reduction. The dependency of phenomenal properties of experience on intentional properties entails the fact that it endorsed some kind of reductionism.

2) Direct Realism

Direct realism argues for the mind-independent external world and the direct accessibility of the external world. It argues against the fundamental knowledge claim of representationalism that phenomenal properties of experience are identical with representational properties (P. Properties = R. Properties). There can be organisms which has indistinguishable representational properties, however, deviates in their phenomenal properties from other living organism. The non-biological agents have no phenomenal properties at all even though they share the same representational properties of experience, for instance, the representational content of colour detection by the A.I machines can be indistinguishable from human agents, however, they differ in the phenomenality²⁷ of experience. There can't be representational properties only for phenomenal experience. The conscious agents are not accessing the world from representational point of view only, which can also be done by the non-living agents (i.e., A.I. machines).²⁸ In every conscious experience, the subject is not merely looking for the intentional object of the experience instead of accessing the quale of the particular experience of the moment. Therefore, "*what it's feels like*" is different from "*what it represents*." The claim that phenomenal qualities are representational qualities, is a categorical mistake. The reduction of one to other will always commit the fallacy of ambiguity. Representationalist argued that unlike representational properties, the phenomenal properties are untraceable in introspection. For direct realist, the introspection about a particular experience (i.e., colour experience) and the experience of the colour experience in the first place are two distinct kinds of experience. Their content of experience also differs in the case of introspection. The experiential content is directly related to the memory of the particular experience and can be objectively definable (i.e., through propositional attitude), whereas in the latter case, there is a direct interaction between the subject and its experiential content.

The issue with direct realism is that it can't accommodate the objective features of experience, that is intentionality. The conflict of phenomenality and intentionality has not been plausibly resolved without endorsing an explanatory gap.

3) Phenomenal Realism:

Most of the representational theory of experience whether it is first order theory or higher order theory don't accept the fundamental difference between phenomenal properties and representational properties. As a result, commit the phenomenological fallacy by rejecting the immediacy principle of experience. The direct inaccessibility connection of the mind with the world leads to several epistemological problems and invites sceptical attack on the reality of the external world.²⁹ Therefore, representationalism is not an ideal option for providing a plausible explanation about the relation between the subject and the external world. The direct realism struggle to address the content of non-veridicality of experience, however, there is another approach popularly named as phenomenal realism;

²⁷ See, Sahu (2020), (MS) and (2021) for comprehensive analysis of epistemic role of phenomenality of experience and how it plays the role of distinguishable feature for AI agency and human agency.

²⁸ The non-living beings can also have intentionality because of having the same feature of object directedness or aboutness towards something (i.e., artificial agents, chatbot, textbook/ A.I machines). They shared the same feature of object directedness which represents something and corresponds to the physical world, popularly known as derived intentionality. The representationalist couldn't distinguish the unconscious intentionality from conscious intentionality.

²⁹ It invites the open question like what is the relationship between the experience of the external object and the object itself? What is the difference between the experience of the *intentional inexistent* object in the dream and hallucinatory states of experience and the experience of the real objects of the external world and state of affairs in veridical cases?

work as a synthesiser between direct realism and representationalism, advocated by Ingmar Persson (1985), Ned Block (2002), Nagel (1974), Campbell (2002) stated that both consciousness and the external world are real and independent from each other. The phenomenal consciousness can't be reduced to representational or functional states of the brain. Campbell (2002, p.116) as argued that

"The phenomenal character of your experience is constituted not by the way your surroundings are, but by the contents of your representational states,"

Phenomenal realism by acknowledging the reality of the world and upholding the direct relation of the mind with the object of the experience, try to avoid the limitation of representational realism. The phenomenal character itself confirms that there is a conscious living experience. There is something independent from the mind. Which has an effect on human action and behavior and provides the ground for generating the phenomenality of experience. Phenomenal realist argued that the object X in condition Y is experienced directly without any inter-mediatory process of representation between consciousness and the object of the external world. McGinn (1982, p.8), Searle (1983, p.2), and Block 1995, p.234) argues for the distinctive feature of phenomenality and intentionality of experience. As they illustrate

By sensations, we shall mean bodily feelings ... as well as perceptual experiences. bodily sensations do not have an intentional object in the way that perceptual experiences do. We distinguish between visual experience and what it is an experience of, but we do not make this distinction in respect of pains. Or again, visual experiences represent the world as being a certain way, but pains have no such representational content. (McGinn 1982, p. 8)

Many conscious states are not Intentional, e.g., a sudden sense of elation. Searle (1983, p. 2)

Note ... that phenomenal content need not be representational at all (my favorite example is the phenomenal content of orgasm). Block (1995, p. 234).

Representationalist has been failed to provide a plausible explanation on bridging the explanatory gap due to mischaracterization of the phenomenal property as reducible to representational property.

a) Phenomenal Properties and Representational Properties

Phenomenal properties of experience are not the properties of the external world. These are mental properties that depended on mental states only. They are by nature, non-functional, non-dispositional, non-structural, non-relational, and independent from representational properties. The reduction of the phenomenal properties to representational properties is the product of reductionistic chauvinism. They are two distinct kinds of properties of experience. Phenomenal properties are subjective; can only be accessible from the first-person perspective and present in both veridical and hallucinatory experiences. Whereas representational properties are objective; accessible from a third-person perspective, and only present in veridical experiences. All mental states have phenomenal properties (presentational content), however, all mental states need not have representational properties or content.³⁰ Phenomenal character is accounted for direct relation with worldly objects and their properties. Representational properties are mediated through the process of representation (i.e., faculty of reason, natural representational mechanism and functional states of the brain), whereas the presentational phenomenal properties are immediate and directly accessible by the subject. There are some instances in which the subject is aware of the phenomenal qualitative character of experience without being aware about the representational properties. In veridical and hallucinatory experiences, the representational content of experiences might not be identical, however, their phenomenal content remains the same. The debate on phenomenal properties and representation properties is also known as *Content-Object Dichotomy*³¹ in the philosophy

³⁰ There are no representational properties that correspond to the object and state of affairs of the external world in hallucinatory experiences. It is evident that sometimes though there is a representational aspect in experience, However, it does not correspond to the object and state of affairs of the external world i.e., *intentional inexistent* objects like sky flower, unicorn, golden mountain.

³¹ See, Alves (2012), for the debate between direct realist and representationalist on the primacy of object and content in the experience. The object view give emphasis on the external object and the surrounding of environment as crucial part in the experience; is being directly

of perception. Representationalism argues for representational content, whereas direct realism argues for a presentational object rather than the content of experience. As Alves (2012) illustrates,

"The role played by the representational content in determining the phenomenal character of perceptual experiences is central to the content view, and it is explicitly denied by the object view. This denial is sometimes put in the following way: the object view denies that perceptual experiences have representational contents." (p. 420).

In order to reconcile the debate, non-reductive representationalist argued that phenomenality (Awareness about the phenomenal character of the subjective accessibility of a particular information) and Intentionality (awareness about the representational character of the objective accessibility³² of a particular information) are two aspects of the phenomenal experience. The reduction of one to another will lead to the violation of the principles of the phenomenality and commit *pragmatic contradiction*. Because both phenomenality and intentionality play different explanatory roles in the epistemological process of experience. Therefore, both of the categories of phenomenal experience can't substitute each of their epistemic roles.

4) Scepticism and Representationalism

One of the most important prongs of attack against representationalism is that representationalism can't provide an irrefutable response to scepticism. In fact, it yields scepticism by inviting the circular and infinite regression of mediatory process between mind and the world. Representationalism can't give a plausible explanation of physical reality through intentional content in various cases of experience. For example, the intentional content of belief about the object and state of affairs of the external world and thinking about that particular object and states of affairs about the external world would remain the same. The thought that "there is a brown table in the room" and perception that "there is a brown table in the room" or "his visual experience of the particular brown table" have same intentional content, though there are different experiences altogether. There is no differentiating factor in the representationalist thesis, which will make the distinction between intentional content of different propositional attitudes i.e., belief, thought, desire, etc. In other words, the distinction of perceptual relation and intentional relation is untraceable by representational thesis.³³ The representationalist thesis has been suffered from the problem of uncertainty about the external world and leaves room for scepticism. It's a legitimate question for any kind of representationalism that- what is the relationship between the representation and existent object of the external world? If representational or intentional content is independent of physical reality (some intentional content does not correspond to the reality of the external world i.e., unicorn, golden mountain, sky flower, etc.) and a product of delusion then the sceptic may ask the legitimate question, that-how one can be certain about the intentional contents which represent the objective ontology about the mental state of the subject as real and not a product of illusion/hallucination? The sceptic might have also raised the question of whether intentional content truly represents the object or not? What are the criteria for certainty about the knowledge of the representation of the physical world? This is the common mistake that has been committed from the history of philosophy by every representational theory till now that phenomenal objects are directly inaccessible. Once the direct interaction between the mind and the physical world is denied, it becomes impossible to establish the existence of the external world and the certainty of the knowledge about the object of the physical world. This is the main reason behind the failure of the transcendental argument of Kant while he attempt to solve the problem of scepticism.³⁴ The same mistake has been committed by Descartes, Locke, Berkley, Frege, Russell, even by some contemporary representationalist like Tye (2009), Dennett (1987), and Rosenthal (2002) throughout the history. In order to provide a plausible response to sceptic

aware of by the subject, represented by direct realist and in the content view, the subject can never experience the external object *as it is* directly but the content of it, is defended by the representationalists.

³² For subjective and objective accessibility of information distinction see, Sahu (Forthcoming) and Searle, (2015, ch.1).

³³ Campbell (2002, p.45) has a similar kind of view against *Representational Content Thesis*. See also Searle (2004, p.117), there is no difference in representational content, even though have different psychological modes (i.e., beliefs, desires, thought, etc.), which can represent the same representational content.

³⁴ See, Sahu (2021) for detailed analysis

(sometimes for explaining their own perpetuated representational mechanism), representationalist has been induced the infinite explanatory chain (i.e., the debate of first order and higher order representationalism). In addition to that, representationalist are not transparent enough while categorising the knowledge about the phenomenal experience. All most all representationalist, whether it is Dretske (1995), Tye (2009) Shoemaker (1990), Carruthers (2007) or Stoljar (2005), everyone categories the knowledge about the phenomenality as inferential. The problem with inference is that it cannot provide certainty of phenomenal knowledge that leave no space for sceptical attack. In fact, representationalistic theories yields sceptical attack due to being non transparent about phenomenality, rejection of immediacy principle and direct accessibility of phenomenal object.

5) Searlean Phenomenal Realism

John Searle has responded to the challenge of scepticism about the reality of the external world by making the distinction between the subjective-objective aspect of reality both from an ontological and epistemological perspective.³⁵ Searle argues that though the phenomenal experience is ontologically subjective because of the inaccessibility of phenomenal qualitative properties from the objective ontology; however, there is no limitation for the knowledge of the phenomenality of others. The phenomenal properties are ontologically subjective at the same time, are also epistemically objective.³⁶

Searle argues against representationalism that it leads to the problem of scepticism about the external world. As he stated

“When I have a belief, it seems to me that the belief represents how things are in the world, when I have a visual experience, it seems to me that the world is the way that I am perceiving it as being. Of course, just as I might discover that my belief is false, so I might discover that my visual experience is not veridical. In that case I have a visual experience that is not satisfied in exactly the same sense in which my beliefs are, not satisfied when they are not true, and in which my desires are not satisfied when they are not fulfilled, and so on through other standard forms of intentionality.” (Searle, 2015, p.58)

Searle has introduced the *conditions of satisfaction* as a tool to defend the commonsensical view of reality against the scepticism, that is, the thought about the existence of a particular object of the external world exists *iff* it satisfies the condition of satisfaction.

Searle argues that there is no mediator called sense-data, which mediates the experience, he argues

“if I am looking at a computer in front of me, I do not have evidence that there is a computer there, I literally see that there is a computer there.” (Ibid, 77).

Searle argued that sceptical questions could be responded by acknowledging the irreducibility of phenomenality of experience because it conforms to the certainty of ontological subjectivity and plausibly explains how ontological subjectivity sets the conditions of satisfaction in order to establish the epistemic objectivity. In the hallucinatory case, there will be a problem of fulfilling the criteria of ontological objectivity. There is an internal relation between ontological subjectivity of knowledge with the epistemic objectivity of knowledge, which reveals the reality.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, we can arrive at the conclusion that representationalism will always leave an open question in front of us about the relationship between the object of the external world and consciousness. It will never give indubitable certainty of knowledge. In order to solve the problem of scepticism, we need a secure foundation which can be the ground for certainty of knowledge of the

35 See, Sahu (2019 pp.80-87) and Searle (2015, ch.1)

36 Searle agree with Wittgenstein's critique of private language in the sense that we can have objective knowledge about the phenomenality of others without the direct accessibility of the particular phenomenal state.

world. Phenomenal realism, which reconciliate the subjectivism and objectivism, like Searlean phenomenal realism, can be the best option to serve this purpose. In addition to that, representationalist, especially reductive representationalist failed to provide a transparent account with certainty of knowledge about phenomenal experience. Because knowledge about the phenomenal experience bound to be inferential in representationalistic approach due to the involvement of the mediatory processes of representation. The immediacy principle of experience (as defended by phenomenal realist) is incompatible with the representationalistic principle of inference. As a result, epistemic certainty about phenomenal experience became impossible in representationalistic paradigm. Representationalist failed to provide the epistemic foundation for knowledge of phenomenality unlike their opponent.

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