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INTENTIONALITY AND BELIEF DE RE

A Critical Study Of Searle's Representative Internalism

It has been customary in recent philosophical writings to distinguish between beliefs de dicto - as in "Moses believes that the bush in front of him is burning", and beliefs de re - as in "Moses believes of the bush in front of him, that it is burning". Both are ascriptions of belief and both ascriptions have full propositional content, but, it is claimed, whereas the content of the (ascribed) belief in the first case is fully propositional, this is not so with the content of the belief in the second case. This content is not fully propositional, but more predicative in character: it ascribes a predicative property to an element which is not fully specified in the content of the belief itself.

In one of the most influential papers on the subject, Burge urges that "A de re belief is a belief whose correct ascription places a believer in an appropriate non-conceptual contextual relation to the objects the belief is about." {Burge T., "Belief De Re", Journal of Philosophy, 74, 1977, pp. 338-62.} Burge further argues that this contextual element renders the content of such a belief incapable of being analyzed in terms of Fregean Sinne, for the actual context and its objects are essential constituents of the content of such beliefs. That is to say, not only is the object to which the predicative property ascribed not fully specified within the content of the belief ascription (namely, in the content of the statement by which we ascribe belief to someone), but it is not conceptually specified or represented in the content of the belief itself. The believer stands to it in a "non-conceptual relation".

Burge's implied identification of "contextual" with "non-conceptual" may be questioned, and consequently his contention that a Fregean analysis of such beliefs is inadequate may prove unfounded. {Evans G., The Varieties of Reference, Oxford, 1982, chs.1 and 6. McDowell J., "De Re Sense", Philosophical Quarterly, 1984.} Burge is entirely right, however, in emphasizing the particular role played by the object of the belief in these cases: whether we say, with Burge, that it is not conceptually represented by the believer, or, with Evans and McDowell, that it is, we shall have to admit that it is essentially involved in such a belief: the existence and identity of the object of the belief are germane to a proper individuation of the belief-content in question. This does not mean that the object is a part, or a constituent of the content of the belief, in the manner in

which "Russellian proposition" are sometimes presented as being the contents of beliefs. The notion we are alluding to is somewhere between Russellian propositions, which have the object as an actual constituent, and "purely conceptual" propositions - whose individuation does not depend on the (token) identity and the very existence of the object. {Some important recent contributions are collected in Pettit P. and McDowell J. (eds.): 1986, Subject, Thought and Context, Oxford, though the position can be traced back to Frege, and is central in Wittgenstein's late writings. }

As against this, contents have been presented as purely conceptual. This does not mean that such a content must be construed solely in universal or general terms: it need not be "universalistic". Such a view may thus allow for contents that are particular, yet purely conceptual. Such is, for example, Searle's "internalistic" view which we shall discuss below. Much depends here on what is taken to be the representative nature of concepts. And the main question that looms in the background, I shall argue, is whether the relation between a representative concept and the object it represents is always extrinsic in the sense that the formation of this concept and its functioning in our thought do not essentially involve the object whose representation it is, and do not depend on its existence and identity. An internalist adopts a positive answer to this question: For him the relation between a concept and its object is extrinsic in the above sense. His opponent - the defender of broad psychological states, and of object-involving concepts - denies this, and contends that for many concepts it is impossible to describe their formation and their functioning in our thought independently of the very existence and identity of the objects whose representations they are.

In his Intentionality {Searle J.: Intentionality, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983} Searle advocates a view which is diametrically opposed to that of Burge and the de re theorists. {This is, at least, how Searle, and many others have seen it. In his recent "Vision and Intentional Content" (in: Lepore E. and Van Gulick R. (eds.): 1991 John Searle and His Critiques, Basil Blackwell, pp.195-214) Burge belittles the difference between them in this respect (p. 209). In his response Searle expresses some surprise in this, and says that judging the matter by Burge's position in that article "we are not really in disagreement" (p. 237). I shall not discuss here Burge's position and the question whether it has shifted.} According to him there are no beliefs de re in this sense, and what are usually referred to as such are members of a certain sub-class of beliefs de dicto - beliefs

whose full content is represented "conceptually" in the mind, where the object of the belief, its existence and its identity, are immaterial to the individuation of the belief once the appropriate representation has been formed. {In fact these representations are not purely conceptual in Searle's terminology. For him, as for so many others, what is conceptual must be general, and since he denies that all internal and intentional representations are general, he often formulates it by saying that they are not conceptual. This again, may be mainly a terminological issue. The basic issue is whether intentional states and their representations (including particular ones) can be described in internal terms.} Searle further detects the root of the commonly mistaken view to the contrary in what he sees as a confusion of an analysis of what beliefs are with an analysis of various kinds of talk about, or reports of beliefs. If Searle is right, there is much in current discussions in the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind that is mistaken from the very start, as he well realizes himself.

In what follows (part A) I shall criticize some of the central contentions of Searle's position which are pertinent to his views about beliefs de re. In particular I shall argue that:

1. Searle's notion of "conditions of satisfaction" is ambiguous as between (i) conditions (or states) of the world that make a mental state veridical, or valid; and (ii) conditions or features of the mental (representative) system that make a mental state veridical or valid, given certain states of the world. I shall argue that when this ambiguity is kept clearly in mind some central arguments and positions of Searle's are puzzling.
2. Searle is wrong in denying certain commitments of representations, which are implied by their logical and representational properties.

In part B I shall then apply these general considerations to Searle's conception of belief and internalism. I shall argue that in his critique of Putnam's position Searle seems to miss what I suggest to be the "basic issue" between the internalist and his opponents. As a result he also ignores the possibility of construing intentional content as essentially object-involving. I shall further argue that when due attention is paid to the above ambiguity of "conditions of satisfaction", Searle's conception of the content of perceptual states becomes incoherent: it implies both that the content determines the (token) perceptual experience and that two experiences can share the same content. This in itself presents a difficulty to Searle's internalistic account of certain belief states; in addition I

shall argue that Searle's positive account of the relations between de dicto and de re suffers from a failure to appreciate the above mentioned transference of commitments (ontological and conceptual) involved in seeing something as a representation of something else.

Although, as I suppose the above remarks make clear, the article is written from a general point of view of a "broad" or "object-involving" conception of intentional states, it does not aim at a direct exposition and defence of this conception, but only in a roundabout way - by criticizing what seems to me as one of the most important alternatives.

Part A: Conditions of Satisfaction and Commitments of Representation

Belief, according to Searle, is an intentional state, which is essentially representative. {Not all intentional states are representative according to Searle (cf. pp. 7-8) but we shall be concerned here only with those that are} The notion of representation involved is admittedly vague and Searle explicates it in terms of the quasi-technical notion of "conditions of satisfaction" (p. 12). For this latter notion we have a paradigm case which, according to Searle, is fairly clear - the notion of truth conditions for assertive statements (p. 4). Intentional states are marked off from other kinds of representation by being internally endowed with their conditions of satisfaction: their very content determines their conditions of satisfaction. (They also have a psychological mode which determines their "direction of fit", but this is a point I shall leave aside.) Thus, we may say that beliefs, or the way they are realized in the brain, are representations of their conditions of satisfaction (which, in general, are simply their truth conditions - the conditions under which they would be true or false), and they have this representative character not by dint of a special decree or convention, but "intrinsically", by their very nature.

Searle's notion of conditions of satisfaction and his conception of representation, raise some general difficulties that I shall briefly mention here, as a background for a more detailed discussion of his theory of belief.

1. Conditions Of Satisfaction

It is doubtful, in my opinion, whether for Searle's purposes, the notion of truth conditions for assertive statements is sufficiently clear. It may be that we have a fairly clear idea of

the structure of a theory of truth conditions for languages of particular kinds, but the notion of truth conditions is still hazy and unclear. Moreover, it is unclear exactly at the points where its relevance to intentionality seems most conspicuous: how can the idea that a statement is about something, and that this is part of its "meaning", be incorporated in a theory of truth conditions? It is pertinent to note here that the notion of truth - conditions lends itself to an extensional and an intensional construals. On the extensional reading the truth conditions of a sentence are the conditions for its truth - however these conditions are conceived. On this reading two logically equivalent sentences must have the same truth conditions, even though they may vary radically from a topical and cognitive point of view. However, when people speak about the truth conditions of a sentence as an explication of its (Fregean) sense, they often have a much stronger notion in mind: it is not just the truth conditions, but a particular way of conceiving them, which is explicative of the sense of the sentence. {I have elaborated on this interpretation of Frege in my "Reference And Aboutness In Frege" (forthcoming), and "The Notion Of Aboutness In Frege", *Iyyun*, 33 (1984, in Hebrew).} Such a conception, in one version or another, results in an intensional notion of truth conditions. When the sense of a sentence is thus construed as the particular way in which its truth conditions are conceived, a question arises about the relationship between this particular way and its truth conditions (in the narrower, extensional sense). {A related point was raised by Burge in his recent "Vision and intentional Content". Burge emphasizes at some length that in explicating Intentional content in terms of semantical notions, like truth conditions, one must express, in specifying the content, the particular perspective of the subject involved (p.199). He criticizes Searle for not living up to this requirement. }

These and related problems are pertinent to a full understanding of the notion of truth conditions as explicating the notion of the sense of assertive statements, and one would expect a theory of intentionality to help here. It is therefore quite disappointing to learn that the core of Searle's theory - the notion of conditions of satisfaction - is explained only to the extent that we already understand those aspects of its "paradigm case" - the notion of truth conditions.

And indeed, part of the above problem about truth conditions reflects immediately on Searle's notion of conditions of satisfaction. For there is a certain ambiguity in the notion of conditions of satisfaction of which Searle is aware but which nevertheless

impedes his discussion. Searle describes it as the ambiguity between a requirement and the thing required (p. 13). In the latter sense conditions of satisfaction are parts, or features, of the world: that the bush in front of Moses is burning. {Cf. e.g. p. 16 where Searle distinguishes between conditions of satisfaction and aspects under which they are represented; also p. 24, where he says of John's belief that King Arthur killed Sir Lancelot, that it "is as extensional as anything can get".} The existence and (token) identity of an object may be constitutive of the conditions of satisfaction in the latter sense but not in the former. In the former they are features of our representational system. The conditions of satisfaction of Moses' belief, for instance, are not the (possible) state of affairs of the bush in front of him being burnt (in which case the token identity of the bush in question would be a constitutive element). Rather, these conditions are, presumably, manifested in a certain mode, or feature of Moses' mind - of his mental situation at the moment. Searle contends that the ambiguity is harmless for his discussion, but as will emerge later on, it seems to me that at some crucial points it is not.

The above ambiguity of "conditions of satisfaction" shows up also in Searle's discussion of the relationship of an intentional content with its object- the intentional object. Searle emphasizes that ontologically there is nothing mysterious about intentional objects - they are ordinary "real" objects (e.g. p. 12). Where an intentional state purports to have an intentional object and it turns out that there is no such object (as in hallucination or false beliefs), then the intentional state does not have any intentional object. This supports the "internal" construal of "conditions of satisfaction", as features of the representing system. An intentional object, we may say, is just an object whose existence and properties (and relations to other objects) satisfy a veridical intentional state.

But how is a particular object determined as the "intentional object" of a particular intentional state? Searle's position seems to be that the intentional object of a particular state is determined by the conditions of satisfaction of that state. On the external construal of conditions of satisfaction this makes easy sense, since the object may be regarded as a constituent of the conditions of satisfaction. But on the internal one, which, as we have seen, is called for by the previous consideration, the determination is not easy at all to understand. First, as we have seen, it applies only to veridical states, which means that the notion of intentional object is not constitutive of intentional states. {This I believe, is a

notable departure from a venerable tradition in which the notion of an intentional object was marshalled in order to explicate the very having of an intentional state.) But even disregarding this point, in order to understand the very notion of satisfaction, we must understand the difference between "failure of existence" and "failure of predication", i.e. between a failure of the intended object to satisfy a predicative condition, and a failure of a condition to be satisfied because there is no intended object. {Searle's theory, as far as I can see, does not allow us a grip on that distinction. Searle indeed proposes a theory of particularity (in ch.2) but it does not seem to me to satisfactorily solve the problem. I cannot discuss it here in detail, though it certainly deserves such a discussion. A partial excuse is that my reasons for rejecting it have a lot in common with the considerations developed here.}

2. Representation

The second major problem has to do with Searle's tacit assumption (which I think is quite prevalent) that for x to be a representation of y is an "external" relation in the sense that it must be possible to have a full characterization of x independently of the existence and identity of y. A belief or report that the so and so is such and such must be specifiable, according to this assumption, independently of the existence and identity of the so ad so. Now it seems to me that when this is construed as a general claim it is wrong. The assumption seems to trade on an ambiguity of "representation" of which Searle himself is fully aware: We must distinguish between "representation" as used in referring to x as an entity in itself (in which case the assumption is true but harmless), and in referring to x as representing y, or to the relation of representation between x and y (in which case the assumption is wrong, or at least not generally true).

Searle seems to be using this assumption when he argues, for instance, that "...since the report [of an intentional state] is of the ground floor representation [i.e. a representation of a state of affairs] and not of what is represented by it, the commitments of the ground floor representation may be absent from the report..." (p. 193).{Cf. also p. 23. A belief that the Earth is round, for instance, is, in Searle's terminology, a ground floor representation of the state of affairs - that the Earth is round - which is represented in it.} Now, as far as the properties of the report in itself are concerned, or in Searle's terms as far as the "ontological properties" of the report are concerned (cf. pp. 14-15), this may be quite right, but if the "logical properties" are concerned, if the report is regarded as a

representation of the ground floor representation, then the claim need not be true. It is perfectly possible, at least for some representations, that they must carry, when regarded as representations, at least some of the commitments of what they represent. That is, there is no way of fully characterizing their logical properties without making reference to the logical properties of what they represent - in our case, to the commitments of the ground floor representation. For example, if a belief B is committed to the existence of x, it is perfectly conceivable that there is no way one can represent B as such (namely as a representation of its content) without being oneself committed to the existence of x. This seems to me plausible enough, but a weaker and much more plausible claim is that it is at least conceivable that some ways of representing B are such that they carry over some of its commitments, and our reports of beliefs may be cases in point.

Suppose, for example, that John is watching four episodes in which four different persons are performing different actions. John doesn't notice the difference between them and is sure that one and the same person is performing in all four episodes. Moreover, the sequence of actions seems to him to be evidently goal-directed, and he says: "The man out there is well organized". Can I, knowing that four different persons were involved, report his "belief" by saying: "John believes that the man out there is well organized"? It seems to me that I cannot. Of course, something does go on in John's mind; I can speculate on it and guess: "John believes that there is one man over there...". But I cannot ascribe to him the purported original, supposedly singular belief, since it means nothing to me. I know that there is no such belief, that it has no content.

What this means is that in order for John to succeed in forming a belief, certain conditions (commitments) must be met. In reporting his belief I - and he - are committed to at least some of these. And knowing they are not met, we cannot ascribe this "belief" to anyone.

For similar reasons I cannot ascribe to Bush the belief that Reagan is president, if Reagan never existed (as Searle suggests; cf. p. 196).

And for similar reasons, if I don't believe in demons, I cannot ascribe to John the belief that a little demon hit him on the nose, in spite of his sincere insistence on it (I assume here that "demon" is a primitive term - undefinable in other terms).

Admittedly, in many such cases, we are inclined to ascribe such beliefs, even where, by our terms, they don't literally have any content. But in doing that, we assume

(often rather naively) that an analysis or paraphrase, acceptable in our terms, can be provided. This may indeed be the case, but we should note that even where it is, important commitments are carried over (though in an opposite direction). For these analyses and paraphrases may be formulated in terms that are unavailable, and incomprehensible to the believer. Can we regard such formulations as adequate reports of his beliefs? I think that the answer, again, should be - no. And this means, again, that conceptual commitments may impose severe restrictions on ascriptions of beliefs (we shall return to this point in the sequel).

When it is realized that in talking of a belief as a representation, it is not the means of representation that is concerned but the content, it can be more readily admitted that the reporter of the belief is committed to much that the belief itself is committed to, for the simple reason that otherwise the content in question might not be available to him, so that his report could not be regarded as a representation of it.

In other words, when we ascribe a particular representation to someone, and having this representation is conceived as what the medievals called "objective" (in contrast to "formal"), it is at least arguable that in many cases the ascription carries over some of the commitments of the representation ascribed.

Part B: Belief and Representative Internalism

In these general remarks I have critically discussed some ideas which are central to Searle's general conception of intentionality. I shall now exemplify this critique by a more detailed analysis of his ideas of "representative internalism" and belief de_re, which are to be found mainly in ch.8 of his book.

Searle's attack on belief de_re has two facets. He first presents a view according to which there cannot be such beliefs, and then goes on to propose his own analysis of what are considered to be cases of such beliefs. I shall discuss these points in turn.

1. Internalism - The main Issue

The general view, according to which there cannot be beliefs de_re, is representative internalism. It is the view that mental representations are necessarily internal - they are "in the head". Searle takes this to be evident ("where else could they be?") and devotes some space to criticizing purported arguments to the contrary. The metaphor of internal/external, or what is in the head and what is outside, may be

profoundly misleading here: It is clear that in some sense the means of representation are in the head. But the crucial problem, as we have remarked in the outset, is whether we ought to (or can) describe these representations, i.e. their contents, in terms that do not depend, in some essential sense, on the existence and identity of the objects represented. This, I suppose, is what Searle means, or ought to mean, by talking about their being in or out of the head.

Searle's intentionalistic position amounts, therefore, to the view that the contents of beliefs (de re) can be specified in terms that do not relate to, and do not depend on the existence and identity of outer objects:

In addition to the two options of "conceptual" or "contextual" there is a third possibility, there are forms of intentionality which are not general but particular and yet are entirely in the head, entirely internal. (p. 211)

Later on he makes a similar point with respect to contextual features:

The de re theorists [...] correctly see that there is a class of beliefs that cannot be accounted for in purely general terms. They also see that these beliefs depend on contextual features, and they then mistakenly suppose that these contextual features cannot themselves be entirely represented as part of the Intentional content. (p. 214)

The general point made here seems to me entirely right. What is surprising in Searle's position (and what, I believe, makes it in the end incoherent) is his insistence on regarding this view as "internalistic", as conforming to the view that meanings and contents are "in the head". Searle is right in criticizing many "anti-Fregeans" for ignoring the possibility of conceptual contents which are particular - involving reference to particular objects. But a similar criticism can be leveled against his internalism - he ignores the crucial possibility that intentional content may only be specified in terms that make essential reference to "external" objects, where by "essential" I mean here that it is impossible to specify the content without taking into account the existence and identity of the object in question. He assumes that in talking of a content as being Intentional, we are committed to conceiving it in purely internalistic terms. This assumption is unjustified and it leads Searle, as we shall see, to an incoherent position.

2.Searle's Critique of Putnam

The same point seems to me to disable Searle's critique of the conclusions Putnam drew from his observation that most of us cannot tell elms from beeches, although, as

competent English speakers we know that elms are not beeches. {Putnam H.: "The Meaning of Meaning", in his Philosophical Papers, vol. II, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980.}

Searle argues that Putnam's position is actually incoherent. The argument is that if he (Putnam) knows his argument to be valid, he knows that beeches are not elms (though he can't distinguish between them) and this knowledge should be part of the conceptual meaning of the terms involved. Hence, the meanings cannot be the same even in Putnam's own idiolect, in contradiction to the assumption. But, surely, to regard this knowledge (that elms are not beeches) as part of the conceptual meaning which is in Putnam's head is to beg the question and to use the very notion of meaning that Putnam wants to establish - a notion by which the meaning of a term is determined partly by its extension (or by information that makes essential reference to its extension). The notion Putnam wants to discard is that the meaning of a term is a set of purely conceptual conditions, where "purely conceptual" means that, in principle, they are specifiable without making any reference to the extension of the term. {Putnam ascribed this view to Frege, and presented his arguments as discarding a Fregean conception. I believe that the ascription is mistaken. Cf. my "Frege and the Determination of Reference" Erkenntnis 16, 1981, 137-160.} Whether this amounts to construing meanings as being "in the head" or not seems to me an idle question that rests on a misleading metaphor. Searle himself suggests a similar characterization when he describes the position of the de re theorist which he criticizes. He says that according to this position "De re beliefs [...] cannot be individuated solely in terms of their mental contents (de dicto), because the object itself (res) has to be part of the principle of individuation of the belief" (p. 198).

On the basis of his famous "Twin Earth" experiment Putnam further argued that if knowing the meaning of a term is construed on a purely internal model then meaning cannot be regarded as determining extension; for, obviously, we can imagine two subjects being in exactly the same internal state and yet the extensions of their terms be different (due, perhaps, to differences unnoticed by them).

Putnam's positive suggestion is that the extensions of many terms are determined "indexically" by a procedure in which we first identify an item (ostensibly, or by some other indexical manner), and then fix the extension in question as comprising whatever stands in some specified relation (usually an equivalence relation that is determined by theoretical properties of the identified item) to that item.

Searle rejects this argument, as well as the thesis he takes it to purport to establish. Both rejections are central to his position. He first argues that Putnam's argument does not tell against a conceptual analysis of meaning in terms of intentional content, but simply substitutes an indexical one for the traditional cluster-of-concepts idea. This, he claims, does not show that such meanings (i.e. indexical contents) are not in the head.

We seem to face here a similar misunderstanding to the one we have observed before: If "being in the head" just means being an intentional content, Searle is of course right, but at the expense of robbing the notion of any significance it might have in this context. The question (of de re content), as we have noticed before, is whether an adequate description of such contents must make an essential reference to outside objects or other features of the surrounding situation, and Putnam's argument does show at least that much: that for many terms we do not have a conception of their meaning (as determining their extension) in a way that does not make essential use (by ostensive, or other indexical means) of actual parts of these extensions. {Let me quote here with approval, Burge's perceptive comment on Putnam's "Twin Earth" argument. After clearing away a misconception about indexicality Burge writes: "Seen aright the example suggests a picture in which the individuation of a given individual's mental contents depends partly on the nature (or what his fellows think to be the nature) of entities about which he or his fellows have de re beliefs. The identity of one's mental contents, states, and events is not independent of the nature of one's physical and social environment." {Burge T.: "Other Bodies", in Woodfield (ed.): Thought and Object, Oxford, 1982, p. 107.}

More important is Searle's reaction to Putnam's thesis itself, and his positive suggestion. Putnam's contention, according to Searle, is that we can't account for the difference in extension of the expressions in question in terms of mental content alone.

Searle proposes to refute this by offering his own analysis of such differences, which he claims to be in terms of purely mental contents. His main idea is that in

perceptual cases two people can be in type-identical mental states ... down to the last microparticle, and their intentional contents can still be different; they can have different conditions of satisfaction". (207)

This is fine. But does that mean that conditions of satisfaction of a particular intentional content are not fully represented internally? We seem to face, again, the aforementioned ambiguity in the key notion of conditions of satisfaction: if conditions of satisfaction of a particular intentional state are objective (actual or possible, though this introduces a complication) pieces of the outside world - objects, or events, or states of affairs that make a particular intentional content veridical or not - then there surely are features of such conditions that will fail to be internally represented. If, on the other hand, conditions of satisfaction are features of the representation, if they are those aspects of the content that an intentional object has to satisfy in order for the content to be veridical, then conditions of satisfaction must be internally represented (or better, they must belong to the representation) in their entirety. On this rendering it is just senseless to speak of features of the conditions of satisfaction of a state that are not features, or parts, of the representation.

It seems to me clear that by the general tenor of his theory it is the second interpretation of the notion that Searle must have in mind, and therefore his idea that the very (token) identity of the intentional object (water on Earth and water on Twin Earth) may not be internally represented (the intentional states might be type-identical down to the last particle), means that it is not part of the conditions of satisfaction. Searle's contention that the conditions of satisfaction of the two similar cases might still be different rests, perhaps, on confusing the two notions alluded to above. {In his recent contribution to Lepore E. et. al. (eds.) 1991 John Searle and His Critics, Searle says more explicitly that conditions of satisfaction are the requirement ("in the head"), and not the thing required ("in the world"); cf. for instance, p. 229.}

3. Internalism in Terms of "This Experience"

A crucial feature of Searle's theory is the account he gives of the content of an experience in terms of a causal self-referential clause, of the form "... x is causing this experience ...". The identity of a perceived object, for instance, is secured in his theory by the identity of the perceptual experience: my seeing that Sally is there has the content: I have a visual experience of Sally-being-there, and Sally is causing this experience.

Now, when the demonstrative indexical "this" occurs within a content (the conditions of satisfaction) of an intentional state, is it the token identity of the

demonstratum (in our case - this experience) or the type that individuates the content?

And can these token experiences be individuated on the "brain in a vat" model?

Searle is explicit that two experiences may be "numerically different" though "qualitatively similar". In other words, there are different experience tokens of the same experience-type (213). The latter is what is determined by conditions of satisfaction: "...what we share is a common set of conditions of satisfaction" (ibid.); experience tokens, of course, are not shared. This means that token distinctions do not show up in conditions of satisfaction. But the content of a state is fully characterized, or determined, by its conditions of satisfaction. If that is so, how can two contents differ in reference to tokens of the same experience-type? And if they can't, what "this experience" determines within the specification of content must be an experience type.

On the other hand it is vital to Searle's theory that a content may refer to token experiences (the difference between my seeing Sally and my doppelganger seeing Sally's doppelganger on Twin Earth). Hence, it is either the (token) identity of the object (the difference between Sally and her twin) that is constitutive to the individuation of the content, or the (token) identity of the experience. But it can be neither, because token identities are not represented in conditions of satisfaction, and therefore cannot be individuating of Intentional contents on Searle's internalistic view.

McDowell has suggested that the role of "this experience" in specifying the content of an experience makes the appropriate contents irreducibly object-involving, in what Searle may be consider a harmless way: the object involved here is an experience - an inner object; hence it does not threaten his internalistic position. McDowell further suggests that if this is allowed there is no reason not to apply the same idea to external objects in certain contexts, and to endorse an object-involving theory of intentionality in a broad sense, as he and Evans suggest elsewhere. {"Intentionality De Re", in Lepore E. et. al. (eds.) 1991 John Searle and His Critics, pp.215-225.}

On a superficial reading, it may seem that presenting this as a mere possibility is not only weak in itself, but that in doing so McDowell loses sight of Searle's main motivation - developing an internalistic theory of Intentionality - and ignores Searle's claim that in the light of general philosophical reasons such a position is preferable. If McDowell allows Searle the possibility of his "reductive strategy" - analyzing externally directed contents in terms of reference to the internal occurrent experience - he shall give

him, in the light of these general reasons, all that a philosophical position on these matters may claim to its credit. Even if Searle succeeds only in presenting a possible, coherent theory of Intentionality in internalistic terms (as McDowell's formulation may seem to suggest), that would be a tremendous achievement.

McDowell is, of course, aware of this, and attacks Searle's general philosophical reasons (section 7 of his article). At the root of Searle's view, he suggests, lies a wrong and confused notion of the relationship between Intentionality, subjectivity and internalism: Searle was right in correlating the first two, but wrong in correlating the second to the third. Unfortunately, this section is formulated in very general terms, and leaves an uncomfortable air of inconclusiveness.

As argued above, I believe that Searle's internalism is wrong, in fact incoherent, in its own terms, and not only because of a flaw in his motivation. Let me put the difficulty in another way. Searle's theory incorporates the following two claims:

1. An experience has a content, that determines a set of conditions of satisfaction. Searle understands this in a way which admits that two different experience-tokens may have the same content, and may share the same conditions of satisfaction (i.e. a content is a function of experience-token, but not the other way around.)

2. The content (i.e. the conditions of satisfaction) of many kinds of intentional states contains a (causal) self referential clause, namely, a clause that refers back to the experience.

These two claims are essential to the theory. Now the difficulty I am alluding to stems from the impression that these two claims are inconsistent with one another. For "experience" in the second claim must mean "experience-token"; but then, a content determines the experience (token) whose content it is.

Searle has accused Burge and McDowell of misunderstanding his position in this crucial respect: in putting the self referential clause into the formulation of the content of an experience he didn't mean to imply that the subject refers to the experience, or that there is reference to the experience in the content. Hence, there is no place for the question of how the experience is determined by the content. {Cf. John Searle and His Critiques, p.238.} This may answer some objections. But it doesn't meet the difficulty we have raised above: that Searle works with two incompatible notions of content - one that

determines a token experience, and one that is common to various tokens of the same experience type.

Somewhat the same difficulty besets Searle's discussion of beliefs de re. Searle analyzes Burge's example of a man vaguely seeing somebody approaching him in the distance, and believing him to be wearing a red cap. Searle contends that the identity of the seen object is secured by the causal self-referential clause of the perceptual content involved:

"...the (de dicto) Intentional content of the visual experience individuates the man, and that content is part of the de dicto content of the belief. The relevant (de dicto) Intentional content of the belief can be expressed as follows: There is a man there causing this visual experience and that man is wearing a red cap." (p. 212)

Again, Searle's use of the indexicals in specifying the (internal) content raises the objections mentioned above. {Searle claims further that the above content is "consistent with the hypothesis that there is no man there at all. Such a belief as this could be held by a brain in a vat" (ibid. Cf. also p. 196). Now, this must be a slip. The fact that someone holds this belief may be arguably consistent with the hypothesis, but not the content of the belief in question. This content can't be true if the hypothesis is. We shall see later on that there are reasons for doubting if even the fact that someone holds this belief is consistent with the hypothesis. }

Moreover, how does the perceptual content get into the content of the belief? Searle seems to argue as follows: My belief is about a certain man. The only way this man is presented to me is by the perceptual experience. No other way of representing him is available to me. Since in articulating the content of my belief I must individuate this man in some way, I must use the only way available to me.

Now, in the situation he describes, for instance, Searle must allow for the distinction between:

I believe of this man that he is wearing a red cap.

and

I believe that I see a man there, who is wearing a red cap.

I can have the first belief without having the second even if in fact the only way this man is presented to me is by seeing him. For I may have the first belief even where I don't believe that I see a man there, not because I disbelieve this, but simply because I fail

to believe it. Searle would probably insist that this does not affect the content of my belief, which must still include the perceptual clause. But then, how should we account for the difference between the two cases, if not in terms of the difference between their contents?

4. Commitments of Representation

Let us turn now to Searle's own account of the de dicto/ de re distinction. In his view, as we have seen, all beliefs are de dicto, they are all internal representations (in some psychological mode) of a propositional content. To say that this is to say that in no case does the specification of such a content depend essentially on the existence, or identity, of outside objects and on other features of the surrounding situation. Philosophers, according to Searle, have mistakenly concluded that there are de re beliefs by conflating the beliefs themselves (that is the mental states) with reports of beliefs. What they regard as ascriptions of de re beliefs are in fact certain kinds of reports of de dicto beliefs. These reports have either or both of the following features:

- (i) They give only a partial specification of the intentional object. In particular they do not specify the object as it is represented by the believer.
- (ii) In addition to reporting the subject's belief, they express a commitment of the reporter.

A full (not partial) and pure (with no further commitments of the reporter) description of someone's belief would always be, on that view, de dicto.

This view is open to criticism on the general score of the relationships between mental states and the kinds of ascriptions and reports of them that it assumes: Searle's opponent can argue that we don't have any access to the nature of the mental states in question apart from a systematic analysis of the kinds of reports and ascriptions we make of them. The issues raised here are large and intricate - they concern basic features of the relationship between the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind - which I don't want to pursue further here. Instead I want to focus on other features with which we have been concerned above.

Even if we accept Searle's point about partial specification, it doesn't follow that a full specification of the content of a belief is available in purely internalistic terms, as Searle's theory requires. It is far from clear that beliefs reported by using "this" "that man", "I", etc. have a content that can be specified completely in terms that do not make

essential reference to the objects concerned. And it is doubtful whether there is any clear content to Bush's belief that Reagan is President, "even if it turned out that Reagan never existed" (cf. p. 196).

Searle's conviction to the contrary, his persuasion that internalism must be right and, therefore, the idea of de re belief bogus, are connected, I think, to an over-simplified point he makes about the commitments of representation. A belief, according to Searle, is a representation (of ground level). And a belief about someone's belief, or a report of it, is a representation of this belief (or of its content). Searle contends that a representation of level n need not carry the commitments of that of level $n-1$. This is, of course, correct with respect to some commitments. In reporting a belief, for instance, one is not committed to the truth of the belief. But it often happens that what is required for such a representation is unavailable to one who lacks some of the commitments of the (first-level) belief. The fact that in reporting a belief I represent a representation does not mean that I am free from its commitments, because I do not represent its "ontological properties", but its representative or logical ones. Therefore, the mere fact that reporting a belief is a second-level representation does not imply that the report (or reporter) is not committed by (some of) the commitments of the belief reported. This seems evident in reporting what someone knows, or sees. {In explaining the intensionality-with-an-s of belief reports, Searle makes much of the "drop out" of commitments in reporting mental states. He rightly observes that in reporting what someone believes I am not claiming, or stating the content of his belief. And he uses this observation in order to explain the failure of existential quantification out of belief contexts (192-3). The explanation seems to me insufficient: in stating a conditional like $Fa \rightarrow Ga$, for instance, one does not state or assert the antecedent, and yet existential quantification is valid. More has to be said to distinguish this from belief reports. }

Moreover, commitments are carried over between believer and reporter (or ascriber) in both ways: Not only are commitments of the believer (e.g. as to the existence of something) carried over to the reporter, but also commitments of the reporter (e.g. the availability of certain concepts) are carried over to the believer. This is particularly important in appreciating Searle's approach: When I spell out the content of someone's belief, I must be confined to his "conceptual repertoire" - to concepts that are available to him. Consider a Chinese farmer who sees someone approaching and believes him to be

wearing a red cap. Searle analyzes his belief and spells out its content in terms of his favorite self-referential causal clause:...and x is causing this experience... But suppose the poor guy doesn't have this peculiar concept of causality in his conceptual repertoire; suppose he doesn't have the concept of causality at all. What would it mean to ascribe to him a belief whose content is couched in terms that are unavailable to him?

Searle's position on the issue seems to be that concepts used in reporting or ascribing a belief need not be available to the believer. {Though some passages in Intentionality may suggest a different interpretation; see, for instance, pp.123-4.} In his response to Burge (in John Searle And His Critics) he denies the need to be aware of any "second order" concepts, even where they are part of the content ascribed to the subject. Referring to a formulation of the content of a visual experience, Searle says: "I am not claiming that the perceiver thinks to himself in words the sentence in the brackets [formulating the content G.B.] or even that the perceiver has any consciousness of this articulation of these conditions at all" (p. 228). Well, the question is not whether the perceiver or believer says this or that sentence to himself, but whether he may be held as master of some concepts. Searle is getting nearer to that point when he says: "In the theory of intentionality we are uncovering complexities in the actual content which may not be immediately available to the agent" (ibid). And he is even more explicit in denying the need to have the relevant concepts when he says: "And that is part of the man's intentional content: he is using "Schnee" to refer to snow even though he may not have the second-order concept of reference" (p. 230). All this may support the supposition that for Searle, the content ascribed to a believer may be couched in terms of concepts that need not be available to the believer.

I am not sure I understand what Searle means here by "second-order concept". He probably means concepts we use in specifying the content of the belief, in contrast to the concepts used by the believer. In that case I don't find his examples convincing. If the fact that "Schnee" refers to snow is indeed part of the content of a certain belief, then this belief cannot be ascribed to someone lacking the concept of reference (of course, he need not have a special single word for it, or be aware of it in believing the belief in question).

In the cases we have considered above it is conceptual commitments that are carried over. We have seen before that on many occasions there are ontological commitments that are binding. The two together make an especially strong case because

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many of the ontological problematic cases, as when we ascribe to someone a belief in what, by our lights, does not exist, may be thought to be capable of being handled by some analysis and paraphrase. But these analyses could then turn out to be conceptually problematic - they could be seen as cases in which we ascribe to someone concepts which are unavailable to him.

I have claimed before that the way Searle uses the notion of conditions of satisfaction, and the self-referential clauses to current experience ("this experience") do not cohere with his internalism. The above considerations about representation show, I believe, that when the conceptual dependence relations between a representation and what it represents are kept clearly in view, the way is open to regarding at least some of the commitments of a de re report as being carried over to the reported belief itself. The object-dependence and other kinds of dependence on contextual features of a de re report may thus be seen as features of the belief state itself. This, of course, is not a refutation of internalism, but it does suggest that the way Searle supports his view that internalism must be correct is unfounded.