Intentionality and Perception

A Study of John Searle's Philosophy

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations of the names of Searle's works are employed throughout.

INT *Intentionality: an Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*, New York: Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1983.

RM *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, Cambridge: The MIT Press 1992.

STT *Seeing Things as They Are: A Theory of Perception*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015.

INTRODUCTION

In this PhD dissertation, I undertake to study the theory of intentionality and perception developed in the works of the American philosopher John Searle. The term 'intentionality' derives from the Latin word *intentio*, which is the noun form of the verb *intendere*. It literally means being directed towards some target or thing.[1] In philosophy, however, 'intentionality' is used as a technical term. Therefore, its literal meaning should not be confused with its philosophical meaning. Intentionality, philosophers say, is the property of mental states that they are about objects and states of affairs in the world. Most events and states of the mental lives of human beings or other higher cognitive mammals – perception, belief, desire, hope, love, hate, fear, etc. – exhibit this important feature. What unifies such mental states is that they all are *about* something other than themselves. For example, when I see a tree, my perceptual experience is *about* a tree; when I have a belief that my pen is in my bag, my belief is *about* the state of affairs that my pen is in my bag; and so on.

In this dissertation, I especially focus on the intentionality of perception. Peter Strawson once wrote that "a philosopher's views on [perception] are a key to his theory of knowledge and to his metaphysics".[2] I want to add that this is true for a theory of intentionality as well. Perception, as Searle puts it, is the primary medium by virtue of which subjects are related to the world. Therefore, questions on perception (such as "What is perception?", "Does perception give us direct access to the world?", "Does perception represent the world in the way beliefs or desires do?", "How can an account of perceptual intentionality fit into a broader account of intentionality?", etc.) have never drifted far from philosophical attention. Most philosophers who have developed theories of intentionality have also taken great pains to examine perception as well.

John Rogers Searle (born 1932) is not an exception in that sense. He is a well-known philosopher of our period,[3] who synthesised his theory of intentionality with his theory of

[1] Cf. Jacob (2014).

[2] Strawson (1979), 41.

[3] Searle pursued his graduate degrees at Oxford. At the University of Oxford, he got to know John Austin and Peter Strawson and was raised under the influence of their philosophical ideas. In 1959, Searle began to work at

perception. Generally speaking, Searle's research interest embraces a variety of topics which belong to a range of different areas of philosophical interest. He has written a number of different books on philosophy of mind, social philosophy, and philosophy of science. Nevertheless, Searle's magnum opus, *Speech Acts* (1969), was devoted to the problems of philosophy of language, which stood at the center of his early philosophical inquiry. Since his focus of research line in *Speech Acts* was also continued in *Expression and Meaning* (1979), and since this work has greatly motivated Searle's theory of intentionality, in this introduction I deem it useful to briefly consider its main topic.

In *Speech Acts*, Searle focuses on how speech acts – the minimal units of language – work.[4] However, he soon realises that, to better understand how speech acts function, he has to consider intentions. The reason for this is that, when people communicate, they do it intentionally. So Searle comes to the idea that the analysis of speech acts involves the concept of intention. According to this analysis, when the speaker says something to the hearer, he issues a speech act with the intention of letting the hearer to know what he (the speaker) says. For example, when I say to my friend "It is raining", I issue a speech act with the intention of letting my friend to know what the weather is.[5]

There is also another way that the analysis of speech acts involves the concept of intention and other mental concepts. When I say to my friend "I promise to come and visit you today", I am not only issuing a speech act intentionally but also, by virtue of the sentence, I am expressing the intention that I will come to visit my friend today. In that sense, of course, speech acts do not express only *intention*; they can also express different mental states of the speaker. When I make the statement "It is raining", I express the *belief* that it is raining. To use another example, when I say to my friend "Please, give me the salt", I express my *desire* to have the salt. These examples show that, to better understand speech acts, their specific relations with mental states should also be explained.

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the University of California at Berkeley, is now "Willis S. and Marion Slusser Professor Emeritus of the Philosophy of Mind and Language" at the same institution (see https://philosophy.berkeley.edu/people/faculty).

[4] He regards speech acts as the minimal units of language because, for him, language users do not use words only by referring or predicating. That is to say, when someone usually says something, he does not utter an expression such as "This man" and "is tall". He rather says "This man is tall" or "That man is drinking tea". Therefore, for Searle, referring ("That man" or "This man") and predicating ("is tall" or "is drinking tea") are only parts of the speech acts.

[5] Searle holds that the speaker has two more intentions here: the intention to get the hearer to recognise the first intention, and the intention to get the hearer to recognise that the rules of the language they speak are exhibited in the utterance of the sentence. For more on this, see Searle (1969), 49-50.

Such a close relation between speech acts and mental states is one reason why Searle's philosophical interests have changed in subsequent years. Apart from his works on the philosophy of language, he began to write different works on the philosophy of mind. Some philosophers even characterised the change of Searle's interest as his departure from the mainstream topics of analytic philosophy.[6]

The two works of Searle which are of most salient importance for me in this dissertation are *INT* and *STT*. Both of these books are about the philosophy of mind. The first book, *INT*, is the result of Searle's growing interest in the problems of philosophy of mind, which started from the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s.[7] The title of this work also shows that Searle here ventures into a new subject – intentionality. His primary aim in this book is "to develop a theory of Intentionality".[8] Yet this does not mean that he has ceased to regard questions on language as central to his philosophical investigations. In the introduction of *INT*, Searle says that another purpose of this work is "to provide a foundation for [his] two earlier books, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge University Press, 1969) and *Expression and Meaning* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), as well as for future investigations of these topics".[9] Searle thinks that these topics are related, because he now sees the philosophy of language as a branch of the philosophy of mind. In *INT*, he tries to elucidate some similarities and relations between language and mind. For him, the representational capacities of speech acts are derived from the representational capacities of mental states.[10] Therefore, in his view, if somebody wants to give a complete account of speech and language, then he should also explain how mental states relate the subject to reality. So it seems that a new subject matter – intentionality – does not radically shift Searle's attention away from the topics of the philosophy of language. Searle even dedicates some chapters of *INT* to the philosophical problems of language. In Chapters 6-9 of this book, he considers the problems of meaning, intensional reports, and proper names. Nevertheless, in this dissertation, without directly

[6] See e.g. Kemmerling (1991).

[7] Some ideas expressed in *INT* were indeed anticipated by Searle's papers published between 1979-1982 (see Searle (1979b), (1980a,b,c), (1982)). Searle says that it is very useful to publish philosophical ideas in a preliminary form before expressing them in a separate book, because, before the book has been published, the ideas expressed in the papers elicit critical comments that can be taken into account by the author later. I make no references to the papers whose ideas were repeatedly expressed in *INT*, because in comparison to these papers, *INT* is a later and riper product of Searle's development of them.

[8] *INT*, vii.

[9] Ibid.

[10] To Searle this is another way of saying that the intentionality of language is derived from the intentionality of mental states. I will have more to say about this later.

dealing with the problems of philosophy of language, I will mainly focus on those chapters of *INT* which are directly related to the problems of intentionality.

The second book, *STT*, is one of Searle's last works. In this book, Searle elaborates a theory of perception which sets out to explain "the relationship between perceptual experiences and the real world". Indeed, this is not a new subject matter for Searle. In *INT*, he had also given a philosophical analysis of perception as part of his theory of intentionality. In *STT*, he continues this analysis. Nevertheless, in this later book, Searle makes some revisions to his early theory of perception and lays out a new method to analyse the intentionality of perception. Moreover, in *STT*, he considers some new topics about the philosophy of perception; as we will see later, he criticises Disjunctivism and the classical theories of perception.

In this study, I will investigate Searle's theory of intentionality and perception elaborated in these different periods of his philosophical development. My purpose in this dissertation is neither to deliver a complete systematic account of his philosophy, nor to carry out a historical investigation which aims at showing Searle's place in the history of philosophical thought. Rather, what I intend to do in this dissertation is to critically analyse the relevant ideas from his works and also to attempt to give solutions to some problems that are related to these issues. In the dissertation, I will also consider some of Searle's critics – the relevant works of Daniel Dennett, Hilary Putnam, and Fred Dretske.

The dissertation contains eight chapters. It can be understood as consisting of two parts. The first part (Chapter I-III) elucidates Searle's theory of intentionality and his notion of Background. The second part (Chapter IV-VIII) focuses on Searle's analysis of perception. A fuller description of the content of these chapters is this: Chapter I outlines Searle's use of the term 'intentionality'; Chapter II, which is a relatively long one, examines the more central notions and theses of Searle's theory of intentionality; Chapter III focuses on his hypothesis of Background; Chapter IV considers Searle's arguments for the intentionality of perceptual experiences; Chapter V exposes the features which Searle regards as belonging to perception (these features, for him, distinguish the intentionality of perception from the intentionality of other mental states); Chapters VI and VII examine how Searle applies the central theses of his theory of intentionality and the notion of Background to the analysis of perceptual experiences; and, finally, Chapter VIII considers Searle's naïve (or Direct) realistic views on perception and his criticism of the other theories.

CHAPTER I

General Remarks on Searle's Notion of Intentionality

Searle starts the first chapter of his major work on intentionality[1] by telling us that:

> Intentionality is that property of many *mental* states and events by which they are *directed* at or *about* or of objects and states of affairs in the world. If, for example, I have a belief, it must be a belief that such and such is the case; if I have a fear, it must be a fear *of* something or that something will occur; if I have a desire, it must be a desire to do something or that something should happen or be the case; if I have an intention, it must be an intention to do something. And so on through a large number of other cases.[2]

Searle makes two important claims in this passage:

(1) Intentional states are mental states;
(2) Intentional states are about/of, or directed at, something.

Of course, these are not the theses that are accepted only by Searle. There have been, and are today, many philosophers who have dealt, and deal, with the same issues and who have shared these introductory theses.[3] Searle also maintains that by using them he "[follows] a long philosophical tradition".[4] Yet however familiar to us 'intentionality' may be, I think that it would be helpful to elucidate in the first chapter how exactly Searle uses this term.

To do this, I will first briefly consider Searle's notion of mind. The first thesis shows that, like the classical theorists of intentionality (such as F. Brentano and E. Husserl), Searle

[1] In *INT*, Searle capitalises 'intentionality' in order for the reader not to confuse it with the term 'intention'. He uses the former as a technical term, but the latter to denote "just one kind of Intentionality among others". I do not follow the capitalised version of 'intentionality' because I do not focus on intentions. I hope that in my work there is no danger of such confusion.
[2] *INT*, 1; emphases added.
[3] See Jacob (2014).
[4] *INT*, 1.

also characterises intentionality in terms of the notion of mind.[5] Moreover, in the first section below, I will try to explain Searle's distinction between conscious and unconscious mental states. Since Searle considers intentional states to be mental, he applies this distinction to them as well. In the second section, I will focus on Searle's characterisation of intentionality as directedness and aboutness/of-ness of mental states. In the third section of this chapter, the focus will be on Searle's use of three different notions of intentionality – *intrinsic*, *derived*, and *as-if* intentionality. For him, only the notion of intrinsic intentionality applies to mental states, whereas the other two notions of intentionality are invoked to characterise non-mental entities. Furthermore, in the remainder of the third section, I will be concerned with Dennett's criticism of Searle's distinction between *intrinsic* and *derived* intentionality.

1. Mind and intentionality

(1) presupposes an intrinsic relation between intentionality and the mind. Therefore we need to consider the notion of mind as well.

The term 'mind' is notoriously difficult to define. That is why, for most philosophers, it is convenient to introduce this term with the assistance of examples that are indisputably considered to be mental phenomena. These are phenomena that are well-known to everybody: perceiving, believing, desiring, loving, being in a pain, etc. Examples of mental phenomena are very diverse, and the problem here is that it is almost impossible to identify a common feature in terms of which these phenomena can equally be considered to be mental. To put it otherwise, the concept of mind used in philosophy seems to be very loose, because it is impossible to give an explanation of the mental by virtue of clear concepts which could pick out a single property constituting all these diverse phenomena. Therefore, there is no clear answer to the question "What is the hallmark of the mental?"

Although Searle also avoids giving a definition for the term 'mind', he does register some important characterisations of mental phenomena, which can help us to understand his use of the notion of mind. His foremost characterisation is that mental states are *biological* features of the brain. In Searle's picture, mental phenomena can be compared with biological phenomena such as digestion or the circulation of the blood:

[5] Some philosophers argue that entities without mental life can also have intentional states (see e.g. Dennett (1987), Milikan (1984)).

> [M]ental states are as real as any other biological phenomena, as real as lactation, photosynthesis, mitosis, or digestion. Like these other phenomena, mental states are caused by biological phenomena and in turn cause other biological phenomena. If one wanted a label one might call such a view "biological naturalism".[6]

What Searle says in this passage, however, does not mean that he is going to explain mental phenomena in purely naturalistic terms. He has in fact a critical attitude towards such theories. Searle thinks that mental phenomena as biological properties are supervenient on the neurophysiology of the brain, and their ontology, which is subjective,[7] is distinct from the ontology of brain states.[8]

The next important point in Searle's characterisation of mental phenomena is that he has a neat answer to the question "What is the hallmark of the mental?" To this question he maintains that "the primary and most essential feature of minds is consciousness".[9] In his view, consciousness is the hallmark of the mental. Of course, this does not mean that mental states must always be conscious. Searle divides mental phenomena into two classes in this respect: *conscious* mental phenomena and *unconscious* mental phenomena. He calls the second class *unconscious* not because they have nothing to do with consciousness, but because they can *in principle* be conscious.[10] For example, if I am now thinking that it is raining, then I am entertaining a conscious mental phenomenon. Nevertheless, at any given moment, the subject has an indefinite number of beliefs (or other kinds of intentional states) of which he is not conscious. While being in a deep sleep (in other words, while being unconscious) somebody can say about me, for example, that he believes that Berlin is the capital of Germany. In *INT*, Searle explains this point in the following way:

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[6] *INT*, 264.

[7] In Searle's usage, the term 'subjective' has a specific sense. The main point in his use of this term is to emphasise that all conscious mental states are experiences with a specific quality which cannot be captured by a third-person description. For Searle, to say that conscious states have subjective ontology is to say that they are not accessible to any observer, except the person who possesses them. He holds that the existence of conscious states is a first-person existence, and therefore the term 'subjective' here refers to an autonomous ontological category (cf. *RM*, 94).

[8] In this dissertation I won't focus on this issue in a detailed way. What I want to note here is that Searle seems not to be clear enough when he maintains, on the one hand, that intentional states are biological features of the brain and, on the other hand, that they have logical properties. He does not explain with adequate clarity how an entity can be both biological and have logical properties (later on, in Chapter II, I will examine Searle's notion of logical property).

[9] Searle (1998), 40.

[10] See his *connection principle* in Searle (1990) or *RM*, Chapter 7.

> I have many beliefs that I am not thinking about at present and I may never have thought of. For example, I believe that my paternal grandfather spent his entire life inside the continental United States but until this moment I never consciously formulated or considered that belief.[11]

Yet, though unconscious, this belief is also a mental phenomenon because it can also be consciously entertained.

Furthermore, Searle distinguishes unconscious mental phenomena from *nonconscious* phenomena:

> Think of the difference, for example, between my belief (when I am not thinking about it) that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris, and the myelination of the axons in my central nervous system. There is a sense in which both are unconscious. But there is a big difference between them in that the structural states of my axons couldn't themselves be conscious states, because there isn't anything mental about them. I assume for the sake of this argument that myelination functions essentially in the production of my mental states, but even if myelinated axons were themselves objects of experiences, even if I could feel inwardly the state of the myelin sheathes, still the actual structures are not themselves mental states. Not every unconscious feature of my brain that (like myelination) functions essentially in my mental life is itself a mental feature. But the belief that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris is a genuine mental state, even though it happens to be a mental state that most of the time is not present to consciousness. So here are two states in me, my belief and my axon myelination: both have something to do with my brain, and neither is conscious. But only one is mental […][12]

So Searle proposes to call the phenomena like myelination *nonconscious*. Moreover, he uses the term 'unconscious' to denote mental states that are accessible to consciousness. Searle thinks that what can be called *mental* either *is* conscious or *can be* conscious. And of greater importance here is that this applies to intentional states as well. Thus, in Searle's view,

[11] *INT*, 2.

[12] *RM*, 154.

intentional states are also subdivided into two classes: *conscious* intentional states and *unconscious* intentional states.

2. Intentionality as directedness

In *INT*, Searle brings several examples to introduce the notion of intentionality. For him, the following mental states are intentional:

> [B]elief, fear, hope, desire, love, hate, aversion, liking, disliking, doubting, wondering whether, joy, elation, depression, anxiety, pride, remorse, sorrow, grief, guilt, rejoicing, irritation, puzzlement, acceptance, forgiveness, hostility, affection, expectation, anger, admiration, contempt, respect, indignation, intention, wishing, wanting, imagining, fantasy, shame, lust, disgust, animosity, terror, pleasure, abhorrence, aspiration, amusement, and disappointment.[13]

As we saw in the passage quoted on the first page of this chapter, Searle maintains that the characteristic feature of these mental states is that they all are *directed at* certain objects.

This is a well-known characterisation of intentionality. But it is interesting that, for Searle, it is more than a characterisation. In *STT* (p. 55), he claims that *directedness* defines intentionality. However, this is not convincing in itself, because, as far as it concerns *directedness*, to say that "intentional states are those that are […] *directed at* objects and states of affairs in the world" is to make a metaphorical characterisation of intentionality. And one cannot give a definition in terms of a metaphorical expression.

To see that in (2) this expression is used metaphorically, let us consider some vernacular uses of the verb 'to be directed at/on/to':

(a) The light is directed on to the surface of the table.

(b) This bus is directed to the central station.

In these sentences, 'to be directed to' is the verb form of 'direction' which suggests the meaning *course pursued by one moving object to another*.[14] Here, 'to be directed to' functions as a two-place predicate. Vernacular sentences with this verb, such as (a) and (b), are satisfied

[13] *INT*, 4.

[14] Cf. Harper (2001-2019), https://www.etymonline.com/word/direction#etymonline_v_31451.

only when there is a physically (more exactly, a spatially) realised relation in which one object changing its location moves toward another location. Of course, in this kind of use, it is taken granted that both objects exist. However, in the case of intentionality, the existence of both relata is not a necessary condition for an intentional relation to be possible. When philosophers speak of intentionality, they say that this is a specific kind of relation, because one of the relata here, i.e. the intentional object, can be non-existent. For example, one can think of Pegasus or of the unicorn, or one can hallucinate that one sees a dagger in front of himself. "For this reason", as Brentano puts it, "one could doubt whether we really are dealing with something relational here, and not, rather, with something somewhat similar to something relational in a certain respect, which might, therefore, better be called 'quasi-relational'".[15] So if we compare the use of 'to be directed to' in (2) with its use in ordinary contexts, we can see that the term changes its ordinary meaning, because, in (2), 'to be directed to' refers to "quasi"-directedness rather than to a real relation. Furthermore, even if the object of the intentional state exists, one cannot again use 'to be directed' in (2) in the way that it is used in (a) and (b). Consider, for example, an astronomer who thinks of a star in the Andromeda Galaxy. Even if this star exists, it would still be odd to assume that the intentional state of the astronomer is directed to that star in the sense that the bus is directed to the central station. The reason for this is that, in the case of the astronomer, we have no evidence to assert that there is something in the subject which, changing its location, moves toward the object. That is why, when we use 'to be directed' in contexts like (2), it becomes figurative for two reasons: firstly, one of the relata might not exist; secondly, even if both relata exist, the term is not about the change of the object's location in space.

Nevertheless, one cannot say that (2) does not give a sense to the term 'intentionality'. Even if we put 'to be directed to' aside, we can see that, in (2), like most contemporary philosophers, Searle also uses the explanatory phrases 'about' and 'of'. In Searle's view, if one wants to clarify whether a given mental state is intentional, one can ask the question, "What is a certain mental state about or of?" For him, this is a clue to the distinction between intentional and non-intentional mental phenomena:[16]

> If I tell you I have a belief or a desire, it always makes sense for you to ask, "What is it exactly that you believe?" or "What is it that you desire?"; and it won't do for me

[15] Brentano (1995), 212.

[16] Examples for non-intentional mental phenomena, for Searle, are "forms of nervousness, elation, and undirected anxiety" (*INT*, 1).

> to say, "Oh I just have a belief and a desire without believing anything or desiring anything". My beliefs and desires must always be about something. But my nervousness and undirected anxiety need not in that way be about anything. Such states are characteristically accompanied by beliefs and desires, but undirected states are not identical with beliefs or desires. On my account if a state S is Intentional then there must be an answer to such questions as: What is S about? What is S of? What is it an S that?[17]

Nevertheless, Searle has an important misgiving concerning this characterisation. He tells us that in some cases reports on our mental states can mislead us, because some words we use in these reports are ambiguous. Searle is especially sensitive to the cases where we use the preposition 'of' in reporting our mental states. One peculiarity of 'of' consists in the fact that this preposition is used for reporting both non-intentional conscious states and intentional phenomena. Searle warns that this does not mean that such conscious states must be intentional:

> In defense of the view that there is an identity between consciousness and Intentionality it is sometimes said that all consciousness is consciousness of, that whenever one is conscious there is always something that one is conscious of. But this account of consciousness blurs a crucial distinction: when I have a conscious experience of anxiety, there is indeed something my experience is an experience of, namely anxiety, but this sense of "of" is quite different from the "of" of Intentionality, which occurs, for example, in the statement that I have a conscious fear of snakes; for in the case of anxiety, the experience of anxiety and the anxiety are identical; but the fear of snakes is not identical with snakes. It is characteristic of Intentional states, as I use the notion, that there is a distinction between the state and what the state is directed at or about or of […] On my account the "of" in the expression "the experience of anxiety" cannot be the "of" of Intentionality because the experience and the anxiety are identical.[18]

To sum up, in the quoted passages above, Searle puts forward two criteria to characterise intentionality. The first is that there must be an answer to the aboutness/of-ness

[17] *INT*, 1-2.
[18] Ibid. 2.

questions about an *intentional* mental state, and the second is that, in the case of intentionality, mental states themselves are distinct from their objects – they cannot be identical with their objects (henceforth, for the sake of brevity, I will call the second the *non-identity criterion*).

The non-identity criterion suggests that when one holds that a mental state is intentional, one presupposes that there is an intentional relation between two entities – a mental state and its intentional object (for example, if one believes that Earth rotates around the Sun, then one's belief is distinct from the intentional object – the Earth's rotation around the Sun). That seems to be clear enough because, in the case of intentionality, there must, by definition, be two interdependent sides (the intentional state and the object) in order for the state to be directed to something.

Against Searle's non-identity criterion, however, one might argue in the following way. The criterion cannot generally apply to all intentional cases because we can possess mental states whose intentional objects do not exist. In such cases, one might continue, the intentional object is not separate from the mental state. Suppose, for example, that I have an idea of the unicorn. Since the unicorn does not exist, one can be prone to hold that an intentional state whose part is the idea of the unicorn is not separate from its intentional object. Such examples can motivate an opponent of Searle's non-identity criterion to maintain that, when we entertain thoughts that are not directed to existing objects, the distinction between intentional state and its object becomes blurred, because we cannot find anything distinct outside our minds in order for the intentional state to be directed at it.

Searle nonetheless mentions another important feature of intentional states in terms of which he could block this possible objection. He maintains that each intentional state, independent of whether its object exists or not, has conditions of satisfaction[19] (for example, the belief that Pegasus has two wings also has conditions of satisfaction, even though Pegasus does not exist). To say that intentional states with non-existent objects also have conditions of satisfaction is to say that they represent the world counterfactually. It can be held that, though it is not (empirically) case that the objects of such mental states exist, it is theoretically (or conceptually) possible that they possess objects. This can further mean that, for each intentional state with a non-existent object, there is always an implicit supposition that if such and such conditions obtained, then the intentional state in question would have an existing

[19] Conditions of satisfaction of a mental state are the conditions "which […] must obtain if the state is to be satisfied" (*INT*, 12). I shall have much more to say about Searle's notion of conditions of satisfaction in the next chapter.

object (for example, the belief that Pegasus has two wings would have an object, or would be satisfied, if Pegasus existed and had two wings). Thus, Searle can maintain that an intentional state with a non-existent object is also directed to something, which, if it existed, would be distinct from the intentional state itself.[20]

3. *Intrinsic*, *derived*, and *as if* intentionality

At first glance, Searle's classification of intentional states into conscious and unconscious states can suggest that the term 'intentionality' in his usage applies only to mental phenomena. Nevertheless, in Searle's works, one can find three distinct notions of intentionality – *intrinsic*, *derived*, and *as if* intentionality. The latter two notions, in contrast to the first one, are invoked to apply to non-mental entities. Searle introduces the distinction of intrinsic (original) intentionality from *derived* and *as if* intentionality on the basis of the differences among the following cases:

1. I am now thirsty, really thirsty, because I haven't had anything to drink all day.
2. My lawn is thirsty, really thirsty, because it has not been watered in a week.
3. In French, "j'ai grand soif" means "I am very thirsty."[21]

Searle says that the first sentence literally ascribes a real, intrinsic intentional state. When one says "I am thirsty" and the statement is true, then one describes one's intrinsic intentional state – the desire to drink water. As a rule, we ascribe intrinsic intentionality to humans and other higher animals.

[20] Notice that Searle's notion of condition of satisfaction might be problematic in this respect. Since this notion is theoretically laden, the decision to use it to characterise intentionality carries Searle's theoretical presuppositions in itself. Searle uses the notion of conditions of satisfaction in combination with the notion of propositional content by arguing that mental states with *propositional contents* have (or determine) conditions of satisfaction. This makes it difficult to accept Searle's characterisation as a general one, because, as we will see in the following chapters, one cannot say that all intentional states have conditions of satisfaction. Here, we could use the notion of an intentional object instead of the notion of conditions of satisfaction. The notion of an intentional object applies to the very broad class of entities which can be either existent or non-existent. However, we must also take into account that Searle's own notion of an intentional object, which is a specific one, is distinct from the broadly accepted notion of an intentional object. Searle holds that intentional objects are only existent entities. Therefore, to defend Searle's non-identity criterion, one should not use his notion of an intentional object. I shall have more to say about Searle's notion of an intentional object and the notion of conditions of satisfaction in the next chapter.

[21] *RM*, 78.

The second sentence, however, is used metaphorically. It is obvious that the lawn has no mental life at all; hence, it cannot literally be thirsty. "When I say that it is thirsty", says Searle, "this is simply a metaphorical way of describing its capacity to absorb water".[22] To Searle it is harmless to say that the lawn is thirsty, "even though [one does not] suppose for a moment that it is literally thirsty".[23] The second sentence is not a sentence ascribing "any intentionality at all, intrinsic or otherwise; it is merely used to speak figuratively or metaphorically".[24] Searle therefore calls it *as-if* intentionality.

When it comes to the third sentence, in Searle's view, this sentence, like the first, is used *literally* to ascribe intentionality to the French sentence. However, its intentionality is not intrinsic to the sentence itself, because the sentence is just "a syntactical object". The intentionality of the sentence is derived from the intentionality of its users, i.e. of French speakers; words and sentences of a language are not originally intentional. Therefore, Searle ascribes to the latter sentence a derived intentionality.

3.1. Dennett's criticism

A heated debate between Searle and Dennett relates to these distinctions. Dennett claims that there is no need to make any distinction between intrinsic and derived (or as-if) intentionality. He thinks this because he does not share the motivation for the distinction that forces Searle to introduce different notions of intentionality – namely, the idea that intentionality is a mental phenomenon, and that other entities (a sentence, or a computer, for example), which might at first glance seem to be intentional, do not possess original intentionality. In Dennett's picture, there is only one kind of intentionality, and this might also be possessed by the entities without mental life. His view on intentionality can also be illustrated by the following quotation in a work co-authored with J. Haugeland:

> If we make an initial rough catalogue of the things that can be about things, it will include a great variety of *mental* states, and events (ideas, beliefs, desires, thoughts, hopes, fears, perceptions, dreams, hallucinations [...]) but also various *linguistic* items (sentences, questions, poems, headlines, instructions [...]) and perhaps other

[22] Searle (1990), 586.
[23] *RM*, 78.
[24] Ibid.

> sorts of *representations* as well (pictures, charts, films, symphonic tone poems, computer programs, [...]).[25]

Searle's view, on the contrary, suggests that if we use 'intentionality' in a Dennettian way, then it will become a debased term with uncertain applications. The reason for this is that, in Searle's picture, if poems or computers had (intrinsically) intentional properties, then everything that surrounds us in daily live (household machines, chairs, tables, etc.) would turn out to exhibit intentionality. For they are also tools used for certain purposes; they also "refer" or are dispositional "to refer" to certain destinations (for example, machines are designed to be used for certain purposes, chairs are constructed to sit on, etc.). Searle thus thinks that Dennett's view of intentionality encounters the *reductio ad absurdum* problem:

> [A]ny attempt to deny the distinction between intrinsic and as-if intentionality faces a general *reductio ad absurdum.* If you deny the distinction it turns out that everything in the universe has intentionality. Everything in the universe follows laws of nature, and for that reason everything behaves with a certain degree of regularity, and for that reason everything behaves as if it were following a rule, trying to carry out a certain project, acting in accordance with certain desires, and so on […] The price of denying the distinction between intrinsic and as-if intentionality, in short, is absurdity, because it makes everything in the universe mental.[26]

However, Searle's objection to Dennett here is unfair because Dennett himself foresees this problem. Dennett tries to rebut the *reductio ad absurdum* objection by distinguishing between:

> those intentional systems that *really* have beliefs and desires from those we may find it handy to treat *as if* they had beliefs and desires […]
> For instance, it seems the lectern in this lecture room can be construed as an intentional system, fully rational, believing that it is currently located at the center of the civilized world (as some of you may also think), and desiring above all else to remain at that center.[27]

[25] Dennett & Haugeland (1987), 384.
[26] Searle (1990), 587.
[27] Dennett (1987), 22-23.

Why, then, should we not attribute the corresponding belief and desire to the lectern? Dennett's answer is that, because the other stances – more accurately, the physical stance – explain why the lectern does not move, the intentional stance towards it is not required.[28] In the case of human beings, animals or computers, on the other hand, the intentional stance for Dennett seems to be indispensable, because in such cases the explanations from the physical and the design stances are unhelpful. Thus, according to Dennett's theory, the lectern cannot be an intentional system, for the other stances explain or predict its behaviour much better than the intentional stance; the intentional stance would be not "in place" for this case. Therefore, Dennett thinks, there is no need to ascribe intentionality to lecterns.

Of course, Searle would not agree with this answer because he does not accept the notion of intentional stance, on the basis of which Dennett answers this question. Yet the point here is that, given the framework of his own theory, Dennett does not face the *reductio ad absurdum* problem. Therefore, Searle's objection to him seems to be inapt. For this reason, let us put aside Searle's *reductio ad absurdum* objection.

After all, Dennett provides us with interesting arguments to deny the distinction between *intrinsic* and *derived* intentionality. He thinks that the original (or intrinsic) / derived (or as if) division causes a problem.[29] In Dennett's view, if we accept that there is derived intentionality, we will have to acknowledge that intentionality of the subject, i.e. our own intentionality, is also derived and, in this sense, is not distinct from intentionality of robots. To elaborate this idea, he uses Dawkins' (1976) Darwinian view that we, together with all other biological species, are:

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[28] For him, there are three strategies, or stances, to explain and predict behaviour of different systems: physical, design, and intentional. The physical stance explains systems by virtue of the data concerning their physical states and of physical laws. To use Dennett's chess-playing computer example, one can principally explain the functioning of the computer in terms of its microphysical structures and the corresponding laws of physics. If one does this, one uses the physical stance. The design stance, however, explains systems in terms of the assumption that they are designed to fulfil certain purposes. We do not need to know the details of the physical structure of (say) a washing machine in order to predict that it will stop after forty minutes if we have set it to stop after forty minutes. The washing machine is simply designed to do so. The intentional stance, in turn, explains the behaviour of complex systems by ascribing to them intentional states. It treats complex systems as rational beings. When we play chess against a computer, we can suppose that it will choose the most rational moves to beat us. We can suppose that the computer desires to put us in checkmate and to avoid being checkmated. Also, we can suppose that the computer believes that the chess pieces are in such and such a position on the board, and that such and such moves make better its position. In Dennett's view, the intentional stance is used when the system creates difficulties for the explanations from the other stances.

[29] Here, I deliberately conflate Searle's distinction between *derived* and *as if* intentionality. It seems to me that this distinction makes no sense in this context.

> "survival machines" designed to prolong the futures of our selfish genes. We are artifacts, in effect, designed over the eons as survival machines for genes that cannot act swiftly and informedly in their own interests.[30]

The core idea here is that we, as human beings, should be regarded as evolved robots. If so, then – Dennett continues – "our intentionality is derived from the intentionality of our 'selfish' genes [...] whose intentionality is surely a paradigm case of mere *as if* intentionality".[31] It thus turns out, according to Dennett's picture, that the intentionality of mental states is no more original than the intentionality of robots. But this, for Dennett, causes a problem because if *intentionality* of the human being (the term 'intentionality' is used *literally* here) is derived from the intentionality of our genes (here, the same term is used *metaphorically*), then we had to answer a bizarre question: "How could the literal depend on the metaphorical?"[32] That is why Dennett suggests for us to drop this distinction.

However, for those who use the notion of derived intentionality, there cannot be such a problem. Rather, Dennett's suggestion follows from his conflation of two understandings of derivedness: biological derivedness and semantic derivedness. To explicate the difference between these understandings, let us suppose that genes have the derived intentionality and the intentionality of human beings is derived from it. To put it otherwise, imagine that there is only the chain of derived intentionalities without the intrinsic or original one. It is only Mother Nature whose intentionality might be considered to be the original one, but we do not regard it so because Mother Nature has no conscious or purposeful engineering in the evolution of genes. We would then have the sequence of derived intentionalities, at the start of which would stand genes, for they are phylogenetically more basic. As the second element, we would have our own intentionality; as the third, the intentionality of artifacts created by human beings, because the latter, in its own turn, were derived from the former. But wait. Would the elements of the sequence be related to one another with the same kind of relation? I am not convinced that they would be. The derivedness relation between genes and us would not be the same as the derivedness relation between us and artifacts. Because even if the intentionality of human being were derivable from the intentionality of genes, it would be derived by virtue of the laws of evolution. However, we could not say that the intentionality

[30] Ibid. 298.

[31] Ibid. 298-299.

[32] Ibid. 299.

of artifacts is evolutionally derived from the intentionality of mind. The latter relation would not be a kind of biological relation. We could say that our intentionality is derived from genes because in order for them to be able to survive, the organism which is composed of these genes has to produce intentional states. But once our intentional states have been evolved by the biology of genes, they would not pass down the same kind of relation to artifacts created by us. Evolution, or natural selection, would be irrelevant for the artifacts we create. In other words, artifacts could not be biologically derived from us, simply because they are neither our biological parts, nor copies of our genes.

Accordingly, the philosophers – including Searle – who willingly use the term 'derived intentionality' do not mean any biological feature under this term. When they say that artifacts have a derived intentionality, they mean that we, as creators of those artifacts, assign certain tasks to them, and then interpret their activity as deciding or intending to fulfill these tasks. This kind of derived intentionality is much like the intentionality of language. We consider the intentionality of language to be derived from our intentionality because we use language for communicative purposes. In other words, words of the language have also been loaded with tasks by us (they have meanings to express). Artifacts, in this sense, can be regarded as being similar to sentences: Just as sentences can be true or false, so artifacts can, or cannot, fulfill their tasks. Correspondingly, when some philosophers say that the "intentionality" of sentences or artifacts is derivable from the intentionality of the mind, they do not mean anything biological here, but rather that sentences or artifacts have purposefully assigned meanings or tasks.

So the problem with Dennett's usage is that when he says that both our intentionality and the intentionality of artifacts are derived, he conflates the semantical use of 'derived' with its possible biological use. Searle's distinction between intrinsic and derived intentionality, however, is a semantic issue; the biological questions seem to be irrelevant here. Searle seems to be right in making this distinction because the distinction presupposes that genuine intentionality is only a feature of mental phenomena.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter it has been shown that, to make his use of the term 'intentionality' clearer, Searle mentions the following important points: first, that intentional states are not always conscious – there are unconscious intentional states as well; second, that some, but not

all, mental states and events have intentional properties – namely, there are also non-intentional mental states; and third, that there are three kinds of intentionality: intrinsic, as-if, and derived intentionality. Moreover, it has been concluded that Dennett's criticism of Searle's distinction between the intrinsic and the derived intentionality is flawed.

CHAPTER II

The Fundamentals of Searle's Theory of Intentionality

This chapter begins with an exposition of some general features of Searle's theory, such as his characterisation of intentionality as representation and as a logical property. It then focuses on the main ingredients of this theory, specifically, on the notion of psychological mode, direction of fit, conditions of satisfaction, and intentional content. These are the notions with which Searle builds the most significant part of his theory. The main body of the chapter is dedicated to the explanation and critique of these notions and the central theses of Searle's theory.

1. Intentionality as representation

Besides the general expressions such as 'directed' and 'about', Searle uses another term – 'representation' – to characterise intentionality. An intentional relation between the subject and the world, for him, is a representational relation. However, he understands that to characterise intentionality as representation can be misleading, because 'representation' is an ambiguous term; it has different uses in philosophy and cognitive psychology. Searle thus needs to clarify his use of this term for the reader. He chooses a belief as an example to explain this point. He writes:

> When I say, for example, that a belief is a representation I am most emphatically not saying that a belief is a kind of picture, nor am I endorsing the Tractatus account of meaning, nor am I saying that a belief re-presents something that has been presented before, nor am I saying that a belief has a meaning, nor am I saying that it is a kind of thing from which one reads off its conditions of satisfaction by scrutinizing it […] *To say that a belief is a representation is simply to say that it has a propositional content and a psychological mode, that its propositional content determines a set of*

conditions of satisfaction […], *that its psychological mode determines a direction of fit of its propositional content* […][1]

The main purpose of this passage is to explain that the author is not going to use the term 'representation' in its well-known sense. That is to say, Searle rejects the wide-spread meaning of this term by distinguishing his own use from the use of the term that denotes pictorial and conventional kind of representations. The last sentence of the passage above clarifies in what sense, indeed, he prefers to use 'representation'. According to it, the statement that an intentional state is representation is a composite thesis that contains the following sub-theses:

1) An intentional state has two essential features – *psychological mode* and *intentional content*.[2]
2) They determine the other two essential features of the intentional state: the intentional content determines the *conditions of satisfaction*; the psychological mode determines *a direction of fit* of the intentional state.

Thus, Searle's thesis that intentionality is a representation must be explained in terms of four fundamental notions of his theory. In other words, for Searle, 'representation' is a catch-all term or, as he himself describes it, "a shorthand for a constellation of […] notions such as conditions of satisfaction, Intentional content, direction of fit, etc."[3] (These are the central notions of Searle's theory. Henceforth, for the sake of brevity, I will call them the *central notions*).[4]

Let us take an example and explain, based on this, why we need such diverse notions for a theory of intentionality. Consider the true sentence 'I believe that my laptop is on the table'. The sentence refers to my intentional state – to the belief – which, in turn, is about or represents a state of affairs. Thus, *prima facie*, we can distinguish two aspects here: first, the *intentional state* itself; second, the state of affairs or the intentional object, which the

[1] *INT*, 11-12; emphasis added.

[2] Sometimes, Searle uses the term 'representational content' to capture intentional states with non-propositional content, as well. Yet he claims that all intentional states have a propositional content in the final analysis, because they "contain" beliefs and desires (see *INT*, Chapter I).

[3] *INT*, 45.

[4] Searle is not the first philosopher who uses these notions. Similar accounts of these issues, maybe in different idioms, emerged almost in every phenomenological theory of intentionality (see, for example, Twardovski (1982), Husserl (2001). See Beyer (1997) for a comparison of Searle's theory with Husserl's).

intentional state is directed at.[5] Yet this would be a coarse-grained analysis of the case. For we know, at least from the introspection, that there can be various kinds of intentional states that refer to the same state of affairs: I can *desire* that my laptop should be on the table, *perceive* that my laptop is on the table, or *imagine* that my laptop is on the table, etc. All these concepts – desiring, perceiving, imagining – apply to different psychological modes that represent the same state of affairs in different manners.[6] However, these would not again be sufficient for the individuation of an intentional state, because there can be cases where the psychological mode and the state of affairs which the intentional state is directed at are the same, but the intentional states are still different. For example, of the same object, I might have a thought that *my laptop is on the table*, or a distinct thought that *my lovely gadget is on the table*. Given that my lovely gadget *is* my laptop, these two intentional states are distinct, though they are directed at the same object. Searle would say that what distinguishes them from each other is their (intentional) *content.* In the first case, the intentional state is directed at the state of affairs by virtue of the content *my laptop is on the table*, but in the second by virtue of the content *my lovely gadget is on the table*. In this instance, we can say that these are two different ways of being directed to the same object. Namely, they are two different intentional states.

So far, based on the example above, I have shown the salient motivations for distinguishing notions from one another, in a theory of intentionality. Nevertheless, Searle's theory, which is in agreement with these motivations, contains additional important points in that respect. In the next sections, I shall dwell on them to capture all main ingredients of his theory. But first, I will turn to his next general thesis about intentionality (or representation).

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[5] In Searle's view, to say that intentionality is representation is to say that intentional states *represent* their *conditions of satisfaction.* Metaphorically speaking, the latter is the target of the intentional state. In one sense, the state of affairs *is* the conditions of satisfaction of the intentional state, because for my belief to be true, the state of affairs that my laptop is on the table must obtain. Therefore, by staying with Searle's terminology, we can say that the second important point here also concerns the conditions of satisfaction of the intentional state. Later on I will explain this notion in a detailed way.

[6] Husserl, who is a founder of a classic theory of intentionality, puts this point in the following way:

> I also regard it as relevantly evident [...] that there are different 'manners of consciousness', different intentional relations to objects: the character of our intention is specifically different in the case of perceiving, of direct 'reproductive' recall, of pictorial representation (in the ordinary sense of the interpretation of statues, pictures etc.) […] To me it seems irrefragable that we only know of such differences because we envisage them in particular cases (apprehend them adequately and immediately), can then compare them and range them under concepts, and can thus make them into objects of varying acts of intuition and thought. (Husserl (2001), 105-106)

2. Logical analysis and logical properties

The next thesis says that the central notions of Searle's theory apply to the logical properties of a mental state. Namely, Searle considers intentional content, psychological mode, direction of fit, and conditions of satisfaction to be *logical properties* of mental states. But what does it mean to say that they are logical? In *INT*, Searle does not answer this question appropriately. Instead, in that work, his account of the logical properties is based on contrasting them with the ontological status of intentional states. Searle's idea that intentional states have logical properties presupposes that one should not make any claims on the existence of those properties. "[T]he question concerning the logical nature of Intentionality", says Searle, "is not an ontological problem at all".[7] For example,

> If the question "What is a belief really?" is taken to mean: what is a belief qua belief?, then the answer has to be given, at least in part, in terms of the logical properties of belief: a belief is a propositional content in a certain psychological mode, its mode determines a mind-to-world direction of fit, and its propositional content determines a set of conditions of satisfaction.[8]

In *INT*, Searle further maintains that although intentionality is realised in the neurology of the brain and the central nervous system, the notion of intentionality is not related to the psychological or neurological explanations, either. "[T]he question of how Intentional states are realized in the ontology of the world"[9], for Searle, is ultimately irrelevant to the explanation of intentionality.

Yet to say that something is a logical property because the questions about its existence and realisation are irrelevant is not good enough answer for its characterisation. Searle is seemingly aware of the point and, in *The Phenomenological Illusion*, tries to complete this gap. In that work, Searle elucidates his method of logical analysis by virtue of which he figures out the logical properties in question. For this reason, the consideration of this method can be helpful to better understand his idea that the central notions apply to the logical properties.

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[7] *INT*, 14.

[8] Ibid. 14-15.

[9] Ibid. 15.

Searle explains his logical analysis by comparing it to the phenomenological methods of Husserl and Heidegger. According to Searle, the basic defining feature of the logical analysis is that, in contrast to the phenomenological method, which mainly relies on the introspective abilities of the subject, it does not concentrate on the experience itself. Rather, it investigates conditions under which an intentional state or a speech act would be satisfied. The paradigm case of a logical analysis, for Searle, is Russell's theory of descriptions.[10] In this theory, "[Russell] tries to describe the conditions under which the sentence would be true. He arrives at his famous analysis by analyzing truth conditions [of assertive sentences]".[11] Searle, in turn, extends Russell's logical analysis into other kinds of speech acts and intentional states. He does this by introducing the notion of conditions of satisfaction to umbrella the analysis of all different cases. This kind of analysis is distinct from the phenomenological method because the latter, in contrast to the former, cannot discover "all sorts of conditions which simply have no immediate phenomenological reality".[12] In Searle's picture, our introspective abilities cannot bring into light all conditions of satisfaction of a mental state, because many of them are not available to consciousness. For example, the conditions of satisfaction of some kinds of intentional states (perception, memory, and action) have a specific causal condition that cannot be merely discovered via phenomenological reflection.

Let us take visual experience to elucidate this point. The visual experience has a feature Searle calls *the causal self-referentiality*. This means that, for a visual experience to be satisfied, it is necessary for it to be caused by its very object. Searle says that he borrows this point from Paul Grice's analysis of seeing:

> Grice gives a classic instance of this in his proof that there is a causal condition on seeing, even in cases where that causal condition is not experienced as part of the phenomenology of the visual experience. Thus, suppose I see an object, but a mirror is then inserted in such a way that I have exactly the same type of experience I had before, and I still take myself to be seeing the same object; but, in fact, the mirror image is reflecting a different but type-identical object. I am no longer seeing the

[10] See Russell (1905).

[11] Searle (2008), 113.

[12] Ibid. 116.

> object I was originally seeing because that object is not causing my visual experience.[13]

The point here is that if the causal condition is not satisfied, then we cannot say that the intentional state in question is satisfied, either.

Now, Searle puts forward a disputable idea. He maintains that the feature of causal self-referentiality of visual experiences "enters into" their intentional contents. This is, for him, because the causal self-referentiality is part of conditions of satisfaction of the experience, which are determined by the intentional content. In his view, to say that intentional content determines the conditions of satisfaction (whose part is the causal self-referentiality) is to say that it is the *intentional content* that requires that the object seen "must be the cause of that very visual experience".[14] Therefore, "[t]he Intentional content of the visual experience is entirely specified by stating the conditions of satisfaction of the visual experience […]".[15] Thus, according to Searle's theory, which is based on his logical analysis, the whole intentional content of the visual experience of (say) a yellow station wagon should be made explicit in the following form:

> I have a visual experience (that there is a yellow station wagon there and that there is a yellow station wagon there is causing this visual experience). [16]

Yet a phenomenological analysis does not describe the visual experience in this way. For a phenomenologist, there is no phenomenological fact that the causal self-referentiality is part of the intentional content because we do not experience it when we see something. If we ask the question "How do you make explicit the content?", a phenomenologist will probably answer that the intentional content of a perceptual state is brought into light by the subject, who directly experiences it from a first-person perspective by virtue of his reflection on the mental state. Thus, according to the phenomenological method, the specification of the intentional content should be committed to the subject's way of representation of objects or states of affairs the intentional state is directed to. Hence, the phenomenological description of the visual experience of a yellow station wagon should simply be as follows:

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[13] Ibid. 115-116.

[14] *INT,* 48.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

I have a visual experience (that there is a yellow station wagon there).

Searle, however, argues that such a description is only the beginning of the analysis, because what is brought into light by virtue of the phenomenological reflection is only part of its satisfaction conditions; the logical analysis should also add the causal condition to the specification.

Therefore, what we can conclude from the example above is that Searle's notion of intentional content does not apply to the phenomenological but the logical property. Because the latter cannot be discovered by the phenomenological method, it should be distinguished from the corresponding notions of the phenomenologist philosophers. So, in Searle's view, having an intentional content, as a property of intentional states, is discovered by logical analysis.

One important point concerning this discussion, nevertheless, is that to say that something is or is not a phenomenological property, without the clarification of what a phenomenological property is, might also be misleading. I think that the question whether there is a tension between Searle's view that his central notions apply to the logical properties and the view that they apply to the phenomenological properties depends partly on what we mean under the term 'phenomenological property'. Considering that Searle compares his method with Husserl's and Heidegger's, a difficulty concerning this term might be that the contemporary notion of phenomenological property is not the same as the notion of phenomenological property of the phenomenologists of a hundred years ago. When the contemporary philosophers speak of *phenomenological properties*, they mainly mean *what it is like-ness*, or *qualia*, of conscious states. However, the classics of phenomenology, especially Husserl, did not use this term in such a narrow sense. For him, the phenomenological investigation could not be confined to *what it is like-ness* of conscious states. In Husserl's view, the latter is only a real concrete *part* of our mental life, discovered by the phenomenological method. Also, apart from the qualitative features of conscious states, this method, for Husserl, can bring out more abstract features, which Searle would probably regard as logical properties.[17] (For example, by virtue of his method, Husserl invokes an abstract entity, called *noema*, to explain intentionality of mental states.)[18]

[17] It is not accidental that the central notions of Searle's theory are very similar to the corresponding notions of Husserl. There are philosophers who maintain that Searle's theory contains many points that are known to us from Husserl's works (see Beyer (1997), McIntyre (1984)).

[18] The noema consists of two important parts – *thetic* part and *noematic Sinn* – which correlate with parts of a concrete intentional state. The thetic part determines *psychological mode*, and the *noematic Sinn* (which is

So, we must distinguish two notions of phenomenological property: the narrow notion and the broad notion. If we take the term 'phenomenological property' to refer to only qualia of conscious states, then, of course, we use the narrow notion of this term. In this case, we must distinguish it from Searle's notion of logical properties. However, if we use this term in the broad (Husserlian) sense, then we have to say that, apart from qualia (what it is like-ness), our mental life has abstract features that are also picked out by the notion of phenomenological property. In that case, we cannot say that phenomenological properties are considerably distinct from what Searle calls *logical property*.[19]

Thus, concluding this section, we can say that Searle's logical properties are characterised by virtue of two important features: first, the questions about them have no ontological implications; they are "ontologically neutral". Second, in contrast to the phenomenological properties (if the term 'phenomenology' is used here in the narrow sense), the important aspects of logical properties cannot be revealed by simply introspecting on the phenomenal part of an experience.

3. Psychological mode and direction of fit

We have seen in the first section of this chapter why, in a theory of intentionality, one needs to distinguish the psychological mode from other parts of a mental state. This was because psychological modes have certain features which are distinct from other features of intentional states. Psychological modes specify the manner in which an intentional state is directed towards an object (as mentioned above, a psychological mode can be a belief, a desire, hope, fear, etc.).

The important feature of this notion in Searle's theory is that it is introduced in combination with the notion of a direction of fit. To explicate the notion of direction of fit, let us consider the passage from G. E. M. Anscombe (2000), which is Searle's inspiration for this notion. Anscombe tells us the following story:

> [L]et us consider a man going around town with a shopping list in his hand. Now it is clear that the relation of this list to the things he actually buys is one and the same

similar to Searle's notion of intentional content) makes possible the *directedness* of the mental state to an object under a certain aspect.

[19] The important exclusion here, as has been shown, is that Searle, in contrast to Husserl, argues that the intentional content can contain the features such as causal self-referentiality.

> whether his wife gave him the list or it is his own list; and that there is a different relation when a list is made by a detective following him about […] What then is the identical relation to what happens […] which is not shared by the record? It is precisely this: if the list and the things that the man actually buys do not agree, and this and this alone constitutes a mistake, then the mistake is not in the list but in the man's performance (if his wife were to say: "Look, it says butter and you have bought margarine," he would hardly reply: "What a mistake! We must put that right" and alter the word on the list to 'margarine'); whereas if the detective's record and what the man actually buys do not agree, then the mistake is in the record.[20]

Searle, in recourse to this story, compares the list with a propositional content and maintains that the content's relation to the world is determined depending on the kind of the psychological mode which it is combined with.[21] The gist of the idea here is that the shopper's list, in contrast to the detective's, has the world-to-word direction of fit; in other words, in order for everything to be correct, the world (or more exactly, some things in the world) should fit with the words in the list but not *vice versa*. To the extent that the shopper's list is an expression of his desire or intention to buy the things to which the words in the list refer, Searle compares the shopper's list with the corresponding mental states. He thinks that just as the shopper's list has the world-to-word direction of fit, so desires and intentions have the *world-to-mind* direction of fit. The words in the detective's list, however, express his beliefs. In the detective's case, in order for everything to be correct, the words in the list should fit with the world. That is to say, just as the detective's list has the *word-to-world* direction of fit, so his corresponding belief has the *mind-to-world* direction of fit. It can be concluded that, in this picture, an intentional state has either a *world-to-mind* direction of fit or a *mind-to-world* direction of fit.

As has been implied in Anscombe's example, a good way to identify the kind of direction of fit is to consider unsatisfied intentional states. To say that there are unsatisfied intentional states is to say that there can be discrepancies between the intentional contents and the world. For example, one can have false beliefs, unfulfilled desires and intentions, etc., which do not correspond to the world. In terms of the notion of direction of fit, it is possible to know how these discrepancies are rectified. Beliefs have the *mind-to-world* direction of fit because if, for example, one's belief that the laptop is on the table is false, then it is not some

[20] Anscombe (2000), 56.

[21] Cf. Searle (1979), 4.

state of affairs in the world which must be corrected, but rather the belief itself. In this case, for the things to be correct, one has to give up the false belief, rather than expecting appropriate changes in the world. Desires and intentions, however, possess the *world-to-mind* direction of fit; in order for them to be satisfied, the world must fit with them, but not *vice versa*. Searle explains these points as follows:

> If my beliefs turn out to be wrong, it is my beliefs and not the world which is at fault, as is shown by the fact that I can correct the situation simply by changing my beliefs. It is the responsibility of the belief, so to speak, to match the world, and where the match fails I repair the situation by changing the belief. But if I fail to carry out my intentions or if my desires are unfulfilled I cannot in that way correct the situation by simply changing the intention or desire. In these cases it is, so to speak, the fault of the world if it fails to match the intention or the desire, and I cannot fix things up by saying it was a mistaken intention or desire in a way that I can fix things up by saying it was a mistaken belief.[22]

The importance of the notion of direction of fit for Searle is that, as noted earlier, he states a central thesis of his theory in terms of this notion:

(PM): The psychological mode of an intentional state determines a direction of fit.

The gist of this thesis is simple. It shows how the direction of fit of an intentional state is dependent on its psychological mode. We have already illustrated this with the examples mentioned above. Nevertheless, there are some difficulties with (PM), which mainly have to do with the notion of direction of fit. Therefore, firstly, my focus in the following will centre on the problems with this notion, and then on the (PM) again, in order to see how these drawbacks affect the thesis in question.

3.1. The problem with the notion of direction of fit

Searle's purpose for using the notion of direction of fit is taxonomic. With this notion he wants to subdivide different kinds of intentional states into two classes. In *Expression and Meaning*, where Searle uses the notion of direction of fit to analyse speech acts, he says that "[i]t could be elegant if we could build our taxonomy entirely around this distinction in

[22] *INT*, 8.

direction of fit […]".[23] Also, in *INT*, he first subdivides all intentional states into two broad categories – "Cognition" (believing, feeling certain, supposing, etc.) and "Volition" (desiring, wishing, lusting, etc.) – and then considers possibility of pairing them with two directions of fit.[24] However, Searle soon realises that, for both speech acts and intentional states, there are difficulties in turning this notion into "the entire basis of the distinctions". The problem Searle discovers is that some intentional states possess neither a *mind-to-world* nor a *world-to-mind* direction of fit. A sorrow and a pleasure, for example, belong to these kinds of intentional states. They can be neither *true* or *false*, like beliefs, nor *fulfilled* or *unfulfilled*, like desires and intentions. In the case of a sorrow or a pleasure, for Searle, neither the world nor the mind takes responsibility to be fitted with each other. This is the problem which Searle himself discovers before his critics do; the application area of the notion of direction of fit is not general enough to cover all intentional states.[25]

It seems to me that the trouble with the taxonomic use of this notion is deeper than Searle considers it to be. Generally, two problems with it can be identified. The first is what Searle himself mentions: namely, that some kind of intentional states have no direction of fit. Here, it should be added that not only do sorrows, joys and some other intentional states such as love and hate (which can be categorised as feelings) have no direction of fit, but also some cognitive intentional states, such as assuming and imagining, do not possess this feature either. Consider a scientist who is assuming a hypothesis but is not making any claim concerning its truth. In this case, although he entertains thoughts which can be specified as cognitive intentional states, his thoughts have no "responsibility for fitting" the world. As J. David Velleman puts it:

> A lack of correspondence between the world and an assumption […] doesn't constitute a failure for which one party or the other must be to blame. If the assumption is made solely for the sake of argument, then it neither takes responsibility for fitting the world nor makes the world responsible for fitting it. Fit

[23] Searle (1979), 4.

[24] Cf. *INT*, 29-30.

[25] The same issue concerns his notion of conditions of satisfaction. Below it will be shown that Searle offers a hypothesis according to which although some intentional states have no directions of fit and conditions of satisfaction, they contain paradigm intentional states with these features. He tries to soften the problem in terms of this hypothesis.

between such an assumption and the world is of no importance and is therefore neither party's responsibility.[26]

The trouble with non-propositional imaginations in this respect is deeper than the trouble with sorrows and pleasures. The reason for this is that sorrows and pleasures, in contrast to non-propositional imaginations, possess *derived* directions of fit. For sorrows and pleasures, in contrast to imaginations, are founded on paradigm intentional states (their existence is dependent on beliefs and desires with which they share the same intentional content).[27] For example, since the pleasure *p* is founded on the belief *p* and the desire *p*, it has both the derived mind-to-world direction of fit (because of the belief *p*) and the derived world-to-mind direction of fit (because of the desire *p*). This is also suggested by the fact that pleasures, as Searle tells us, are either appropriate or inappropriate. (To say that the pleasure *p* is appropriate is to say that both the founding belief *p* and the founding desire *p* are satisfied.) Imaginations, however, can be neither satisfied or unsatisfied, like beliefs and desires, nor appropriate or inappropriate, like sorrows and pleasures, because they cannot be founded on (or, to use Searle's phrase, do not "contain") beliefs and desires. In this sense, imaginations are more alien to Searle's theory.

The second problem with the taxonomic use of the notion of direction of fit, which is often mentioned in philosophical writing on this issue,[28] is that pairing two broad categories of intentional states, "Cognition and Volition" (as Searle calls them), with two directions of fit – i.e. that cognitive intentional states have the *mind-to-world* direction of fit and conative intentional states the *world-to-mind* direction of fit – disguises some cognitive features of conative intentional states. G. F. Schueler (1991) focuses on this point by using *hopes* as an example. He mentions that, although hopes have the *world-to-mind* direction of fit, one cannot hope that *p* if one knows that being the case that *p* is impossible. To use Schueler's own example, "[i]f […] I know that today is Sunday (and know the days of the week) then I can't hope that tomorrow is not Monday […]".[29] In this sense, hopes, says Schueler, have "cognitive or believe-like features", and to say that they have the *world-to-mind* direction of fit "covers up or ignores this".[30]

[26] Velleman (1992), 13.

[27] I borrow the notion of founding from Smith (2004), who applies this Husserlian notion to background conditions of intentional states.

[28] See e.g. Archer (2015), Frost (2014).

[29] Schueler (1991), 279.

[30] Ibid.

One might add some other examples which can *prima facie* reinforce this second problem; even some desires seem to have cognitive features, for they, like hopes, also happen to be founded on beliefs. For example, if Anna desires to buy a new car *A* which costs, say, 9,000 Euros, but does not have enough money to realise this desire, then on the basis of the belief that she does not have enough money to buy *A*, she can form a new desire to buy a more affordable car *B* (such intentional states can be called *rational desires*). One might argue, in terms of such examples, that some desires also have the *mind-to-world* direction of fit, in addition to their *world-to-mind* direction of fit, because the subject, in forming rational desires, should also take into consideration the facts of the world; in such cases, one might say, the subject takes responsibility that her desire fits the world.

Yet, however tempting this idea might be, I think that it cannot give us enough justification to say that rational desires also have the *mind-to-world* direction of fit. A closer look suggests that the feature of *mind-to-world* direction of fit which are attributed to rational desires, as well as to hopes, is not their feature *per se*; rather this feature belongs to the beliefs which found such desires, or it is a derived feature of rational desires. To look again at the example above, the feature of Anna's desire to fit the fact that she does not have 9,000 Euros is indeed derived from the feature of her belief that she does not have 9,000 Euros – this belief leads to her desire to buy B. If one holds that the feature of the mind-to-world direction of fit belongs to both the founding belief and the desire (or the hope) in question, one would multiply entities beyond necessity.

This discussion shows that the second problem concerning the taxonomic use of the notion of direction of fit is not as severe as it is considered to be. Cognitive or belief-like features of hopes and rational desires are their derived features which originally belong to the founding mental states.

3.2 Back to the relationship between psychological mode and direction of fit

With (PM), the question is: To what extent can the problems mentioned about the notion of direction of fit injure the plausibility of this thesis? Firstly, the second problem should be distinguished from the first in that respect. This is because pairing cognitive and conative intentional states with two directions of fit, even if this disguises cognitive features of some conative states, does not make (PM) implausible. If one is not happy with the thesis on the ground that it says nothing about the determination of derived features, then (PM) can easily be qualified as follows. *The psychological mode can determine original and derived direction of fits of the intentional state.* However, the first problem, I think, does affect the

plausibility of (PM). This problem can be expressed in the following questions: If some intentional states have no direction of fit, how can their psychological modes determine it? Does it mean that (PM) should be confined to paradigm intentional states?

To find an answer for these questions is not so easy, because Searle is not clear enough on the issue that the central theses of his theory apply to all intentional states. Nonetheless, he puts forward a hypothesis in which it can be identified whether he thinks (PM) is general enough to apply them to all intentional states. He writes:

> [A]ll Intentional states, even those which do not have a direction of fit and those which do not have a whole proposition as content, nonetheless contain a [belief] or a [desire] or both […] If that hypothesis is true then the analysis of Intentionality in terms of representation of conditions of satisfaction under certain aspects and with a certain direction of fit is very general in its application and not simply confined to the central cases.[31]

Although Searle does not make a strong claim here, he thinks that, if all intentional states "contain" a belief or a desire – and he thinks they do (he uses the verb 'contain' in this context in several places) –, then it can be said that the central theses and the notions of his theory apply to all intentional states. He argues that, although a sorrow and a pleasure have no directions of fit in the way that beliefs and desires do, they nevertheless "contain" beliefs and desires. For example, according to Searle's theory, my sorrow for stepping on your foot "contains" the belief that I stepped on your foot and the desire that I should not step on your foot. Searle formulates the analysis of sorrows the following way:

$$\text{Sorry}(p) \rightarrow \text{Bel}(p) \,\&\, \text{Des}(\sim p).$$ [32]

However, the problem here is that there are intentional states which do not "contain" or "involve" beliefs and desires. A non-propositional imagination *x*, for example, does not "contain" any belief. But it is still an intentional state because it is directed towards something.

[31] *INT*, 35.

[32] Ibid. 32.

So the drawback of the hypothesis has important consequences for Searle's theory of intentionality. It shows that (PM) and the corresponding notions do not apply to all intentional states.

4. Conditions of Satisfaction and Intentional Content

A central thesis of Searle's theory of intentionality is:

(DET): Intentional content determines the conditions of satisfaction of the intentional state.

In this section I will consider this thesis. But, since getting clearer on it requires a better understanding of Searle's notion of *conditions of satisfaction*, I will first focus on this notion and the problems related to it. In particular, I will show how the ambiguity of the term injures (DET), and then separately examine (DET) itself.

4.1 Conditions of satisfaction

This is a term which is not so easy to understand, although Searle introduces it in a simple way. He writes: "Conditions of satisfaction are those conditions which […] must obtain if the [intentional] state is to be satisfied".[33] For example, a belief is satisfied if what is believed is true, a desire is satisfied if what is desired happens to be the case, an intention is satisfied if what is intended is realised, etc. As one can notice, here the term 'conditions of satisfaction' is a broadening of the term 'truth-conditions'. The latter term applies to beliefs and assertive sentences. In other words: one's belief *p*, or the assertive sentence *p*, is true if and only if *p* is the case. Yet the term 'truth-conditions' cannot be used to speak of intentional states such as desires, intentions, etc. One does not say that a desire will be true, but rather that a desire will be satisfied, or fulfilled. Searle thus uses the term 'conditions of satisfaction' to cover all these different cases. He writes:

> We need a notion more general than the notion of truth because we need a notion that covers not only those intentional states like beliefs that can be true or false, but states like desires and intentions, which can be fulfilled or frustrated, carried out or not

[33] Ibid. 13.

> carried out. Just as I can believe that I will go to the movies tonight, and thus have a state that is true or false, so I can desire to go to the movies tonight or intend to go the movies tonight. But my desires and intentions cannot be literally true or false. What stands to my belief as its truth conditions – that I go to the movies tonight – is exactly what stands to my desire as its fulfilment conditions – that I go to the movies tonight. I will say then that such intentional states such as beliefs and desires have *conditions of satisfaction*, a term that covers truth conditions for belief, fulfilment conditions for desires, carrying-out conditions for intentions, and so on.[34]

Yet the notion of conditions of satisfaction, I think, has some drawbacks. First, it is loose as a theoretical notion. Second, the term 'conditions of satisfaction' is ambiguous. Third, in one sense it can be confused for the notion of intentional object.

Let me now consider these issues one by one.

The looseness of the notion of conditions of satisfaction. This drawback has to do with the fact that in some cases Searle loads the term with a meaning which sets it apart from the meaning of 'truth conditions'. These are the cases where Searle maintains that certain features, such as the causal self-referentiality of perceptions or of remembering, and the consistency of beliefs are also parts of the conditions of satisfactions of those mental states. For example, in the case of remembering, Searle says, it is part of the conditions of satisfaction of the remembering that the occurrence of the remembered event must cause the memory of it.[35] Searle calls this *causal self-referentiality of remembering* and thinks that it is a necessary condition for having a memory of something.[36] Or, if one takes the category of beliefs, he says that "[g]iven that an animal holds two inconsistent beliefs, beliefs of the form p and not p, […] the animal [has] reason to abandon at least one of them […] Because it is part of the conditions of satisfaction of a belief that it cannot be true if its negation is true".[37] (I will continue to call this feature *the consistency of beliefs*.)

The problem with such a use of 'conditions of satisfaction' is that, if it is said that the conditions of satisfaction are fixed only by intentional content, then it cannot be maintained that the features such as causal-self referentiality belong to them. Moreover, the causal self-referentiality, or the consistency of beliefs, cannot be specified as part of the intentional

[34] Searle (1998), 100.

[35] Cf. *INT*, 52.

[36] He maintains that intentions are also causally self-referential (see *INT*, chapter 3).

[37] Searle (2008), 172.

content. Such features do not correspond to what the content of mental states transmits to us; they do not represent anything.

A simple way to show this would be to point to those features which are not given to introspection. One might say, for example, that the fact that features such as causal self-referentiality are not allowed to be specified as part of the content because they are not accessible to introspection: no matter how much I reflect on the content of my memory, I cannot find the causal self-referentiality in the content.[38] Yet, to block this argument, Searle claims that to say that the causal self-referentiality enters into the content does not mean "that [the content] contains a verbal or other representation of itself".[39] For Searle, this part of the content does not represent anything. Thus, on Searle's picture, the intentional content of some kinds of intentional states contains two different parts: namely, a representational and nonrepresentational part.

However, notice that it is analytically false to say that non-representational features, such as causal self-referentiality, enter into the intentional content. As M. Schmitz puts it, "[…] the notion of intentional content is precisely designed to capture the contents of minds with regard to their representational significance".[40] Moreover, even if one, like Searle, wanted to change this notion by re-defining it so that it captures some non-representational features, the features such as causal self-referentiality would not still be good candidates for that to which this new notion can be applied. To see this, let me consider one important feature of the content of most intentional states, namely *the variation possibility*. According to this possibility, besides the intentional state whose content it is, the content in question can also be part of other intentional states as well. In other words, the intentional content can be in different intentional states which have different psychological modes. For example, the content that the door is open can be the content of a belief, or of a desire, or of another intentional state. Accordingly, if features such as the causal self-referentiality of perception and memories, the consistency of belief states, etc. all belonged to the intentional content, then, like the other parts of the content (such as *the door is open*), they could also be parts of intentional states with different modes. However, what is seen when the mode of the intentional state changes is quite distinct. Although the contents such as *the door is open* is shareable among intentional states which can have propositional contents, features such as the causal-self referentiality or the consistency of beliefs depend only on whether the mode of the

[38] See Searle (2008), 115. There, Searle says that a similar critical remark was made by Dagfin Føllesdal; see also Armstrong (1991).

[39] *INT*, 49.

[40] Schmitz (2012), 62.

intentional state is kept constant; by changing the psychological mode, these features are abandoned. This shows that it is reasonable to maintain that features such as the causal self-referentiality belong to the psychological mode of the intentional state, rather than holding that they "enter into" the content.[41]

Another similar possibility to show that the features in question depend on the mode of the intentional state is to keep the psychological mode by changing the content. For example, if we take the belief that it is raining and the belief that the door is open, we can see that, although the contents of these beliefs are different, the feature of consistency remains. If belief states really possess such a feature, then it belongs to these states regardless of what their content is. It is therefore incorrect to say that such features are part of the intentional content.

Also, if conditions of satisfaction are given in terms of intentional content, the features in question cannot be part of the conditions of satisfaction either.

The ambiguity of the term. Searle himself confesses the ambiguity of the term 'conditions of satisfaction', although he thinks that this is "quite harmless". He writes:

> The expression 'conditions of satisfaction' has the usual process-product ambiguity as between *the requirement* and *the thing required*. So, for example, if I believe that it is raining then the conditions of satisfaction of my belief are that it should be the case that it is raining (requirement). That is what my belief requires in order that it be a true belief. And if my belief actually is a true belief then there will be a certain condition in the world, namely the condition that it is raining (thing required), which is the condition of satisfaction of my belief, i.e., the condition in the world which actually satisfies my belief. I think this ambiguity is quite harmless, indeed useful, provided that one is aware of it from the start.[42]

Searle distinguishes here between two notions of conditions of satisfaction: conditions of satisfaction *as a requirement*, and conditions of satisfaction *as a thing*. This distinction should be kept in mind. In the first sense, 'conditions of satisfaction' refers to the requirement, as

[41] Cf. Bach (2007).

[42] *INT*, 13. Notice that in this passage Searle also regards the notion of belief as a normative notion. He says that "the conditions of satisfaction of my belief are that it *should be* the case that it is raining (requirement)" (*INT*, 13; emphasis added). This suggests that, in Searle's view, the connection between the belief and its conditions of satisfaction is also normative. However, I think that this is not a correct characterisation of belief states. The notion of belief cannot be a normative notion because there are neither norms of belief, nor norms of truth conditions (see Kemmerling (2017), chapter 21, for a detailed discussion).

Burge puts it, "that has to be met for an Intentional state to be veridical (here the [condition of satisfaction] itself has Intentional or referential properties)".[43] In the second sense, 'conditions of satisfaction' refers to *the* thing in the world which fulfills the requirement of the intentional content. It is noteworthy that Searle neglects the negative role of this ambiguity, and, as we will see later, this negligence has serious effects on his theory.[44]

Conditions of satisfaction and intentional object. An important point concerning the notion of conditions of satisfaction (as a thing required) is that it ought not to be confused with Searle's notion of an intentional object. Searle distinguishes carefully between these two notions. In his picture, the conditions of satisfaction of an intentional state might or might not obtain, but intentional objects only exist. Therefore, the ontological status of conditions of satisfaction and intentional objects are distinct. To say that an intentional state has conditions of satisfaction is to say that its content represents a state of affairs which may or may not obtain in the actual world. The conditions of satisfaction are the conditions which are required for the satisfaction of the intentional state, but the fact that the intentional state has conditions of satisfaction does not guarantee that the required conditions actually obtain. However, when it comes to intentional objects, for Searle, it cannot be said that, like unicorns and other fictions, they can also be non-existent. On Searle's account, although there are intentional states that are about non-existent entities, one need not be committed to the view that some intentional objects do not exist. Consider, for example, the belief that the present King of France is bald. Given that there is no present King of France, Searle thinks that this belief has no intentional object. For him, "if nothing satisfies the referential portion of the representative content then the Intentional state does not have an Intentional object".[45] What is more, in Searle's view, in such cases there is no need to invoke Meinongian entities in order for intentional states to be about something. He writes:

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[43] Burge (1991), 196.

[44] Furthermore, in this passage, Searle characterises the ambiguity by saying that it is "the usual process-product ambiguity". However, it is difficult to see how 'conditions of satisfaction' is ambiguous in this sense, because the process-product ambiguity is the ambiguity in which the expression in question can be used to refer to its reference as both a process and the product of this process. But it is hard to see how conditions of satisfaction can be understood as a process on the one hand, and as the product resulting from that process on the other. Therefore, I suggest giving up treating this expression as having process-product ambiguity, and I only focus on the distinction between conditions of satisfaction *as the requirement* and conditions of satisfaction *as the thing required*.

[45] *INT*, 17.

> [A]n Intentional object is just an object like any other; it has no peculiar ontological status at all. To call something an Intentional object is just to say that it is what some Intentional state is about. Thus, for example, if Bill admires President Carter, then the Intentional object of his admiration is president Carter, the actual man and not some shadowy intermediate entity between Bill and the man.[46]

His position is thus that, in order for something to be an intentional object, it must exist. Intentional objects, for him, are just existing entities which intentional states can be directed towards.

However, at first glance, this view can too seem to be problematic, for it can raise the following questions: How can intentional objects be regarded as real entities, if intentional states can be about non-existent entities?[47] Or, how can an intentional state without an intentional object still be intentional? These are the questions which can be answered by considering, again, Searle's notion of conditions of satisfaction. In Searle's theory, having conditions of satisfaction is an essential feature which characterizes all intentional states. Yet, for him, some intentional states have no intentional object. In his theory, the term 'intentional object' can be understood in a stipulative sense; Searle's use of this term is such that his theory does not accept the general statement that all intentional states have intentional objects. His claim is rather that intentional states have or represent their conditions of satisfaction.[48] To put it otherwise, according to Searle's theory, having an intentional object (being directed to an existing entity) is not an internal or essential property of intentional states. For Searle, what are internal to an intentional state, besides the intentional content, are its conditions of satisfaction. They are also an internal property because, in contrast to intentional objects which *must* exist, "there is no way the agent can have [an intentional state] without it having its conditions of satisfaction".[49] For example, "part of what makes my wish that it were raining the wish it is", says Searle, "is that certain things will satisfy it and certain other things will not".[50] So, in his view, the about-ness of intentional states is established not by the fact that they have intentional objects, but that they possess conditions of satisfactions.

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[46] Ibid. 16-17.

[47] Cf. Crane (2001), 14-15.

[48] Yet notice that, as mentioned above, the notion of conditions of satisfaction does not apply to all intentional states.

[49] *INT*, 22.

[50] Ibid. 11.

After these remarks on the notion of conditions of satisfaction, let us now consider (DET).

4.2 On the relationship between intentional content and conditions of satisfaction

At first glance, it seems that (DET) is an indisputable thesis; one can provide plenty of simple examples to explain it. For example, if I have a belief that it is raining, the content of this belief [that it is raining] determines the conditions of satisfaction *that it is raining*. However, given the above remarks on the term 'conditions of satisfaction', one should be careful as the meaning of (DET) can change depending on the sense in which this term is used. Setting aside features such as causal self-referentiality, there can still be two possible readings of (DET):

(DET_t): Intentional content determines the conditions of satisfaction (*as a thing required*) of the intentional state;

(DET_r): Intentional content determines the conditions of satisfaction (*as a requirement*) of the intentional state.

In Searle's view, there is no distinction between (DET_t) and (DET_r). For him, (DET) is true in both readings. However, this distinction is very important, because depending on which meaning of 'conditions of satisfaction' is used, (DET) can change its meaning and truth value. That is to say, (DET_t) and (DET_r) express two distinct ideas. (DET_r) expresses the idea that an intentional state with a propositional content provides its satisfaction conditions. It can be formulated, like Tarski's biconditionals, as follows: *an intentional state S with a content p is satisfied if and only if p*. Note that the second *p* here expresses satisfaction (truth) conditions (in Searle's terminology 'conditions of satisfaction as a requirement'). Drawing on Burge (1991) again, we can say that the satisfaction conditions in this sense also have referential properties; they also need a satisfaction in order for S to be satisfied. An actual entity in the world (in Searle's terminology 'conditions of satisfaction as a thing'), which counts among the (possible) entities which meet the conditions laid down by the content of S can satisfy it. *Ipso facto* it makes S satisfied as well.

(DET_t) is a much stronger thesis, because it says that the intentional content also determines *the* entity (conditions of satisfaction as a thing) which *makes* the intentional state

satisfied. In the remainder of this section, my discussion will be confined to (DET_t) because it seems to be more disputable.

The internalism-externalism debate on (DET_t) between Searle and Putnam. Searle elaborates his ideas on (DET_t) in the context of the internalism-externalism debate. As an internalist philosopher, Searle argues that intentional content (or meaning) determines conditions of satisfaction as a thing required (or extension).[51] (Henceforth, following Chapter 8 of *INT*, I will use the term 'extension'.) Searle draws on the tradition stemming from Frege in this respect. Frege maintained that each expression is associated with a certain abstract meaning (Sinn) in virtue of which the expression refers to the object in question. This abstract entity needs to be mentally grasped by the subject in order for her to understand the meaning of the expression. Now, Searle holds that it is in virtue of intentional content in the head of the subject that she understands the reference of the expression.[52]

This view is set in opposition to externalism. The externalist philosophers (Putnam, Kripke, Burge, etc.) argue that "what is in the head" is not sufficient to determine reference (extension). They think that external features, such as casual relations between mental state (or expression) and reference, are also important in this respect.

In *INT*, Searle criticises some leading externalist philosophers from the perspective of his internalist position. Here, I will focus on Searle's criticism of Putnam. The understanding of who is right in this debate can help to clarify whether (DET_t) is true or not.

Searle attacks Putnam's ideas which the latter develops in *The Meaning of 'Meaning'*. In this famous work, Putnam champions an externalist view of meaning, by arguing that psychological (intentional) state is not sufficient to determine extension. He supports this view with two important arguments on which Searle focuses: 1) the argument from *the division of linguistic labor*; and 2) the argument from the *Twin Earth* thought experiment.[53] Let me consider these arguments separately and then examine Searle's criticism of them.

"The division of linguistic labor". For Putnam, this is the principle according to which, in every linguistic community, there are experts on whose usage the meanings of certain terms depend[54] (Putnam provides many examples to explain his argument in favour of this principle, but I will consider only the example which is also used by Searle). For example, as a rule,

[51] Searle thinks that intentional contents and meanings are identical. I will consider this issue later on.

[52] Cf. Ibid. 198.

[53] Searle says that "[Putnam] sometimes talks as if they were part of the same argument but, in fact, they are quite independent […]" (*INT*, 201). Searle is partly right. Putnam does not make an explicit division between these arguments. For expository convenience, I follow Searle's division of Putnam's arguments.

[54] Cf. Putnam (1975), 228.

biologists know the "criteria" for applying the terms 'beech' and 'elm' better than other people do. These terms refer to different kinds of trees, but these trees are so similar to each other that people without sufficient relevant knowledge cannot distinguish them. For Putnam, people who are non-experts, or ignorant of, the distinction between them have the same concept (intension) to attach to both words, although their extensions are different. And since having the same concept amounts to being in the same psychological state, Putnam says that their psychological states cannot determine the extensions.

Searle's reply to Putnam's argument from the hypothesis of the division of linguistic labor consists of several parts. Let us consider them separately.

Searle first maintains that this argument would create no worries for an internalist philosopher. He mentions that, according to the traditional internalist accounts,

> [T]he notions of intension and extension are not defined relative to idiolects [of the people who don't have sufficient knowledge to distinguish elm trees from beech trees]. As traditionally conceived, an intension or Fregean Sinn is an abstract entity which may be more or less imperfectly grasped by individual speakers.[55]

He goes on to say that the mental states of the speakers who grasp intensions imperfectly cannot determine relevant extensions, because they do not know the meanings of the words involved.

But notice that this reply is flawed, because Searle mixes up his own position with Frege's. The problem here is that although both philosophers have the internalist attitude concerning this issue, Searle does not accept Frege's abstract (third) realm.[56] In the same chapter of *INT*, a few pages above, Searle writes:

> [I]t is not necessary to postulate any special metaphysical realms in order to account for communication and shared Intentionality. If you think about the Evening Star under the mode of presentation "Evening Star", and I think about the same planet under the same mode of presentation, the sense in which we have an abstract entity in common is the utterly trivial sense in which, if I go for a walk in the Berkeley hills and you go for exactly the same walk, we share an abstract entity, the same walk, in

[55] *INT*, 201; emphasis added.

[56] Cf. Ibid. 197.

> common. The possibility of shared Intentional contents does not require a heavy metaphysical apparatus any more than the possibility of shared walks.[57]

This passage clarifies that Searle distinguishes his own position from Frege's with regard to the notion of *Sinn*, and this is important for dealing with the problem of ignorant speakers. This problem is not a trouble for Frege's theory, because to him it is the grasp of a relevant third realm entity (*Sinn*) which determines extension and that entity is not a subjective mental content of any speaker. Yet, as seen in the passage above, Searle does not accept the abstract realm, the grasp of whose entities makes possible the determination of extension. Moreover, there is no other notion in Searle's theory which could fill this gap (e.g. the notion of meaning, distinct from the notion of intentional content, could do this). He only places emphasis on intentional contents, but he neglects the fact that, for him, they are individual to each subject. The intentional contents which are "in the head" of ignorant speakers are distinct from the corresponding intentional contents of experts.[58] Because these speakers do not share the relevant intentional contents of, or (to use Searle's metaphor) "the same walk" as, the experts, their intentional contents cannot determine the extensions of the words. That is why the case of ignorant speaker *does* create a problem for Searle's theory.

Furthermore, Searle tries to refute Putnam's argument on the ground that, even in the case of the ignorant speaker, there can be a difference between the speaker's concept of *elm tree* and her concept of *beech tree*. For Searle, however imperfect the grasp of these intensions may be, the speaker can still know that "beeches are not elms and elms are not beeches"[59]; she can know that these are two distinct species of trees. Therefore, Searle concludes, the speaker's concept of *elm* is distinct from her concept of *beech*.

This remark is valuable as it shows that there might be conceptual differences even in some of those cases in which people attach very similar concepts to different words. However, this much is irrelevant to the point at issue with Putnam. The reason for this is that the ignorant speaker's distinction between the concept of *elm* and the concept of *beech* does not show that her concepts determine their extensions; knowing the difference in terms of conceptual knowledge, as in the case of the example of 'elm'/'beech', is clearly not sufficient for fixing *real* differences between the extensions of the terms. Such speakers do not know the features in terms of *which* elm trees differ from beech trees.

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[57] *INT*, 198.

[58] It is useful to remind here that, for Searle, intentional contents are features of the brain.

[59] Ibid. 202.

So I conclude that Searle's refutation of Putnam's argument from the division of linguistic labor is not successful. Let us now turn to Searle's criticism of Putnam's second argument.

The argument from the Twin Earth thought experiment. This is an argument based on Putnam's celebrated thought experiment. Suppose, Putnam says, that there is a planet in a distant galaxy which is exactly like Earth. Putnam calls this planet the *Twin Earth*. According to the thought experiment, everything that happens on Earth also happens on Twin Earth. The planets have the same geography and history. Also, the people on Twin Earth are indistinguishably similar to the people on Earth; their language and culture are also indistinguishable. Yet there is one important distinction between these planets: the molecular structure of water on Twin Earth is not H_2O but a distinct liquid whose chemical compound is XYZ, though the surface features of both kinds of water, such as liquidity, transparency, tastelessness, etc., are the same. That is to say, the people on both Earth and Twin Earth have the same concept of 'water' (or, as Putnam puts it, the same psychological state relative to this term) before the discovery of the chemical composition of water on those planets. According to Putnam, despite this, the term 'water' on Earth in 1750, before the discovery, referred to H_2O; but on Twin Earth in 1750, it referred to XYZ. This is to say, although people on both Earth and Twin Earth, while using the term 'water', had the same psychological state, the extensions of the term were different. Thus, for Putnam, psychological states cannot determine extension.

Putnam's idea that the term 'water' in both planets before 1750 referred to different entities can be challenged in the following way: 'Water' meant the same in both planets before 1750 and the microstructure was irrelevant to its meaning. However, to support his thesis against such assumptions, Putnam puts forward an interesting idea. He says that the extensions of natural-kind terms such as 'water' are determined *indexically* (he believes that the view that intension determines extension is not applicable to indexicals). Putnam's intuition here is that, in an indexical definition, the introducer of a term has a direct causal contact with its reference. For him, once the term has been baptised in a direct ostensive way, it will also pick up the microstructure of the reference, irrespective of whether it is known or not. Suppose, Putnam says, that in the actual world, "I am giving a meaning explanation by pointing to this glass and saying 'this is water'".[60] "When I say 'this (liquid) is water'," he goes on, "the 'this' is, so to speak, a *de re* 'this' – i.e. the force of my explanation is that' water' is whatever bears a certain equivalence relation (the relation we called 'sameL' […]) to the

[60] Putnam (1975), 230.

piece of liquid referred to as 'this' in the actual world".[61] Putnam is in fact making two claims here: first, that the indexical definition picks up the "whole" entity including its micro-structure, and, second, that the sample reference for the definition must bear the same liquid relation ("sameL") to the entities referred to by 'water' not only in our actual world, but also in all possible worlds, viz. in Twin Earth as well. He calls the latter *the sameness cross-world relation*. That is to say, the entity called 'water' must have "the same important physical properties" (liquidity, colourless, tasteless, H_2O microstructure, etc.) in all possible worlds, in order for the term to have the same extension. And because of its different (XYZ) microstructure, the extension of 'water' on Twin Earth cannot bear the sameness cross-world relation to the liquid which has the microstructure H_2O, namely the entity which the term 'water' is used to refer to on Earth. Therefore, for Putnam, what is called 'water' on Twin Earth is *not* water.

Notice again that Putnam does not say that natural-kind terms such as 'water', 'gold', 'tiger', etc. do not determine their extensions. To reiterate a point mentioned earlier, his purpose is to show that *concepts* (or psychological states with intentional contents) do not determine. In contrast to Searle, Putnam distinguishes indexically defined meanings from their psychological correlates. In Putnam's picture, the meanings of natural kind terms determine the extensions not because the subject attaches certain concepts to the terms, but because their definition contains an indexical component.

This shows that, in Putnam's theory, the issue of indexicality is central to the question whether the meaning of a natural kind term determines its extension. Searle's reply to the argument from the *Twin Earth* thought experiment is also based on his views on indexicality. Therefore, a short digression for this issue is required.

The Indexicality of natural-kind terms. Putnam emphasises the role of indexicality because he thinks that, while using indexical expressions, the subject does not need to know the descriptive details of the entity which are being referred to. For him, indexical expressions such as 'this' or 'that' pick up the micro-structure as well, even if the subject using these terms is ignorant of it. This is to say that, in Putnam's view, the referential powers of the indexical expression which designates a "whole entity", overstep the conceptual resources of the subject. Therefore, as Searle points it out, "Putnam supposes […] that the traditional view that what is in the head determines extension cannot be applied to indexicals".[62]

[61] Ibid. 231.

[62] *INT*, 206.

Searle, however, does not agree with Putnam's approach to indexicality. Although he shares Putnam's view that the natural-kind terms contain an indexical component and the indexical definition determines extension, he thinks that, in the case of indexicality as well, the extension is only determined by "what is in the head". Nevertheless, Searle acknowledges that the lexical meaning of indexical expressions is not sufficient to determine the reference. For him, in the case of indexicality, the Fregean sense has a more complex structure, which consists of three features: 1) the feature of self-referentiality; 2) the rest of the lexical meaning (the descriptive content); and 3) the awareness by the subject of the relevant features of the context of the utterance.[63] Let me begin by explicating each of these features briefly, starting with the first one.

Searle holds that, in uttering an expression, the expression *shows* the relation in which the reference stands to the utterance itself. He calls this the *self-referentiality* of the indexical expression. To him, self-referentiality is also a part of the lexical meaning of the expression. For example, if one says "I am a student", one does not simply refer to a certain object, but one also indicates that the reference of the utterance is the person uttering this sentence. Or, to use another example, if somebody says "John is a student now", somebody refers to John's being a student by also indicating that John is a student at the time of the utterance of this expression. Searle maintains that the self-referentiality here is shown because, like the causal self-referentiality of perception, the self-referentiality of indexical cases is not a representative part of the corresponding content. He writes:

> The sense in which the indexical cases are self-referential, like the case of Intentional self-reference, does not imply that the speaker in making the utterance performs a speech act of referring to the utterance, nor is the utterance explicitly represented in itself.[64]

For Searle, in the specification of the truth conditions of the sentence with an indexical expression, self-referentiality is not stated.

The other part of the lexical meaning of an indexical expression, for Searle, is *non-indexical descriptive content*. Non-indexical descriptive content expresses "the sort of entity being referred to". For example, expressions such as 'now', 'yesterday', 'today' indicate time relations between the utterer and the reference, 'here' and there' indicate place-relations, etc.

[63] Cf. Ibid. 222.

[64] Ibid, 223.

Searle adds that often an awareness of the context of an utterance is also important for the "completing Fregean sense".[65] (According to Searle's theory, the latter is also a component in the head.) For example, if somebody only says "that man is drunk", then "the descriptive content of 'man' together with the indexical does not provide the completing Fregean sense because the utterance is only meant and understood in the context of an accompanying visual perception of which man is meant […]".[66] Therefore, Searle says, "the proposition expressed has to contain the Intentional content of the perceptual experience that accompanied the utterance".[67]

In Searle's theory, the burden of explaining why in the case of indexicality "what is in the head" is sufficient to determine extension lies with the feature of self-referentiality. The crucial question to ask here is: What does this self-referentiality have to do with "what is in the head"? Searle's answer to this question is that the indexical expressions owe this feature to the intentional state expressed. On his view, it is the intentional content of the expressed psychological state "that indicates relations that the object [the speaker] is referring to has to the utterance itself".[68] For Searle, the intentional contents of such mental states contain the feature which is "sufficient to account for how the utterance of an indexical expression can have a completing Fregean sense".[69] He thinks that indexical cases are similar to some kinds of intentional states in this respect. This is suggested by the fact that, like the self-referentiality of perception, intention, and remembrance, the specification of conditions of satisfaction of indexical expressions also makes reference to their utterances (since, according to Searle, to remind ourselves, the conditions of satisfaction and the intentional content have the same specification). For example, if somebody says "I am hungry now", then, Searle tells us, the specification of the conditions of satisfaction of the utterance will be as follows:

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[65] A completing Fregean sense is needed when the sentence expresses an incomplete sense. For example, the sense of 'John was here' is incomplete, because the sentence alone does not completely express the thought in question. Or, to take another example, the sense of the sentence 'John was in Paris yesterday' is incomplete, because the sentence "does not suffice for the expression of the thought" (Frege (1956), 296), which also captures the time of John's being in Paris. Frege therefore wrote that "[i]f a time indication is needed by the present tense one must know when the sentence was uttered to apprehend the thought correctly" (Frege (1956), 296). He concluded that "the time of utterance is part of the expression of the thought" ((Frege (1956), 296).

[66] *INT*, 226.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid. 221-222.

[69] Ibid.

(the person making this utterance, "I", is hungry at the time of this utterance, "now").[70]

Here, we need to remember again that, for Searle, the sense of the expression is the same as the corresponding intentional content. In his picture, the intentional content that corresponds to the indexical expression is also self-referential. Thus, Searle's theory suggests that, if somebody utters the sentence 'I am a student', the specification of the corresponding intentional content is as follows:

(the person making the utterance 'I' is a student)[71]

This view seems to me implausible, because, as already noted, the notion of intentional content captures those mental features which have representational capacities, whereas self-referentiality, for Searle, is a non-representational feature. Therefore, to say that it should be specified in the intentional content is not correct. However, this does not mean that an indexical expression does not indicate self-referentiality. It *does* because self-referentiality is a feature of its literal meaning, which is distinct from the corresponding intentional content.

To confuse meaning with intentional content is a salient mistake of Searle's theory. Putnam is right when he says that intentional contents "[cannot be] identical with the meanings of words in a public language".[72] What makes the expression 'I' in my idiolect an expression about me (viz. a self-referential expression) is not that it meets a condition laid down by the corresponding intentional content, but that the meaning of 'I', as determined by (to use Wittgenstein's phrase) the language-game of our community, is such that when used in a sentence, it refers to the speaker himself. Thus, self-referentiality is external to the intentional content. And this, in turn, suggests that an indexical definition can determine its extension not by virtue of the intentional content expressed, but by virtue of the meaning of the indexical expression established by that definition.

On (DET_t) again. What conclusion can be drawn for (DET_t) from this discussion? I think that, after we have found that Searle makes a mistake by equating meaning with intentional content, two theses must be distinguished to determine whether (DET_t) is true:

[70] Ibid. 223.

[71] Cf. Ibid.

[72] Putnam (1996), xix.

(DET_{int}): Intentional content determines extension;

(DET_m): Meaning determines extension.

As discussed previously, the ignorant speaker case shows that (DET_{int}) is false. The intentional content, as a psychological entity, is individual to each person; it cannot determine the extension. (Moreover, we have seen that Searle's efforts to defend his position from Putnam's attacks were not successful.) (DET_m), however, is true. But here one should take into account that extension cannot wholly be understood as something readily given by nature. For the ways in which people see and deal with the world, and the different semantic policies they adopt based on them, also play an important role in determining what aspects of nature are relevant to the reference. That is to say, (DET_m) is true not because, as Putnam thinks, the meaning definitions of natural kind terms contain an indexical element that picks up real joints of the nature, but because the extension determination is partly the result of our categorisation of the world.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have considered the main theses of Searle's theory of intentionality. Searle uses a diversified conceptual apparatus to explain the intentionality of mental phenomena. Yet his concepts and theses derived from them are not good enough in this respect; they do not apply to all intentional states. Some intentional states possess neither conditions of satisfaction nor a direction of fit. Hence, (PM) and (DET) cannot explain all kinds of intentional phenomena.

Furthermore, we have seen that Searle designs the notion of conditions of satisfaction to capture not only those conditions which can be determined by the contentual part of the intentional state, but also those features (such as causal self-referentiality) which depend on its psychological mode. Then, in order to make this idea compatible with (DET), he holds that features such as causal self-referentiality also "enter into" the intentional content. That is to say, to save the idea that features such as causal self-referentiality are part of the conditions of satisfaction, and that the conditions of satisfaction are determined by the intentional content, he pays a high price; namely, he accepts the false view that the intentional content also contains a non-representational part.

Moreover, this chapter has shown that although Searle notes that the term 'conditions of satisfaction' is ambiguous, he neglects the fact that this injuries (DET). Therefore, two

readings of (DET) have been offered: (DET_r) and (DET_t). Nevertheless, we have seen that still another distinction within (DET_t) is needed: (DET_{int}) and (DET_m). By examining Searle's replies to Putnam's externalist challenges, I have concluded that (DET_{int}) is false. But (given that meanings are distinct from intentional contents) (DET_m) seemed to me to be true.

CHAPTER III

The Hypothesis of the Background

In this chapter I will discuss Searle's hypothesis of the Background, which is an important part of his theory of intentionality. According to this hypothesis, an intentional state only determines its conditions of satisfaction relative to non-intentional Background capacities.[1] Under the term 'Background', Searle mainly means our capacities such as walking, cycling, playing the piano, etc. For example, my desire to play the piano cannot be satisfied unless I have an appropriate capacity (finger motions corresponding to the sequence of notes).

Searle considered and reconsidered the hypothesis of the Background at various stages of his philosophical development. In his works, the questions which motivated this hypothesis were different, despite their connection with one another. I think that the consideration of these motivations can help to better understand this hypothesis. Therefore, I will first focus on them individually. As we will see, although Searle's basic motivation is the motivation from the literal meaning of a sentence, in his later works he also uses the notion of the Background to extend his theory of intentionality. For this purpose, he introduces another intermediary notion, namely the notion of Network of intentional states. I will claim that Searle is not successful in motivating the idea of the Background from both the notion of literal meaning and the Network. Furthermore, I will examine his idea that the Background is a mental phenomenon. By neglecting the role of the body in the constitution of Background capacities, Searle claims that these capacities consist of neurophysiological structures of the brain. I will try to show why such a reductive approach to the Background is unacceptable.

[1] Cf. *INT*, 143; *RM*, 175.

1. Motivations for the idea of the Background

1.1. Motivation from the literal meaning

For Searle, the central thesis of his theory – (DET) – has some "complications". According to this picture, this is partly because the intentional content alone is not sufficient for the determination of conditions of satisfaction. Yet, at first glance, there appears to be no difficulty in this thesis. Just by knowing what intentional state one is in, the conditions of satisfaction of this state can be easily identified. For example, if you assert that the cat is on the mat (Searle's example), then I can assume that you are in a belief state and the conditions of satisfaction of your belief (or assertion) are the obtaining of the state of affairs *that the cat is on the mat*. However, this point is often not so easy to clarify, because there can be different contexts in which you can assert that the cat is on the mat, and depending on these contexts, your assertion can represent different conditions of satisfactions. Suppose that there are two cats in the room and one of them is not on the mat. In this case, if the contextual elements are unknown to the hearer, your expression of the belief, i.e. the assertion 'the cat is on the mat', can be confusing, because there can be a case where the hearer does not know which cat in the room is meant, and he cannot therefore specify the conditions of satisfaction of the utterance. That is why the hearer must additionally be acquainted with certain features of the situation in which the sentence is uttered. These are the features located near to the speaker/belief-holder. Correspondingly, the sentence 'the cat is on the mat' (or the corresponding belief) should already contain implicit indexical elements in its utterance. This is suggested by the fact that if we need to specify more exactly which cat is being referred to, the indexical elements can be explicitly added: *this* cat *right here* is *now* on *this* mat.[2] Along with the literal meaning of the sentence, such indexical elements play an important role in the determination of the conditions of satisfaction. Yet, in contrast to the constant literal meaning, they are context-dependent features of the sentence; they can vary from context to context, while the literal meaning of the sentence remains unvaried.

This is a well-known issue in both philosophy and linguistics. In *Literal Meaning*, however, Searle argues that, in addition to contextual elements such as indexicality, there are also other contextual features, which are called *background assumptions*.[3] These background assumptions, in contrast to indexical elements, are not realised in the semantic structure of the

[2] Cf. Searle (1978), 210.

[3] In his later works, Searle capitalises "Background" (with a capital 'B'). I will use the capitalised version of the term, where it corresponds to Searle's usage.

sentence. To return to the example above, for Searle, to determine the truth conditions of the sentence "The cat is on the mat", apart from the indexical features, "the presupposition" of some physical conditions – such as the gravitational field of the earth, the solidity of the place on which the mat is situated, etc. – is also needed. Suppose, Searle tells us, that these conditions do not exist – there is no gravitational field to determine whether the cat is on the mat or the mat is on the cat ("cats and mats floating freely in outer space"[4]) – and that one utters the same sentence without "presupposing" the gravity of the earth and the solidity of the mat. How, in this case, could the truth conditions of the sentence be determinable? For Searle, in such circumstances it is impossible to determine the truth conditions of the sentence, because "the notion of the literal meaning of the sentence 'The cat is on the mat' does not have a clear application, unless we make some further assumptions […]".[5] Thus, "the presuppositions" that the earth has a gravitational field and that the mat is solid, Searle tells us, are the background assumptions, which are necessary for fixing the truth conditions of the sentence in question.[6]

The basic distinction between the background assumptions and the indexicality, for Searle, is that, whereas the latter is an element which indicates the speaker's utterance meaning, the background assumptions (paradoxical as it may sound) are contextual elements for the application of *the literal meaning*.[7] He therefore thinks that the background assumptions must be thematised separately. For him, such thematisation would help us to understand that they have "nothing to do with vagueness, indexicality, presuppositions, ambiguity, or any of the other stocks in trade of contemporary 'semantic' and 'pragmatic' theory […]".[8] So in *Literal Meaning*, by adding the background assumptions to the list of contextual elements such as indexicals (or the like), Searle broadens the notion of context. He thus claims that there is a new kind of contextual feature, namely background assumptions, on which the determination of the sentence's conditions of satisfaction depend.

We can hold that Searle's reflections on the context-dependency of literal meaning are the main motivation for his hypothesis of the Background. In his later works, he maintains that to examine the understanding of literal meaning is "[t]he simplest way to see that

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[4] Searle (1978), 211.

[5] Ibid.

[6] This suggests that "the presupposition" of the gravity and the solidity of any *y* can also be a background condition of many other "x is *on* y" kind of sentences.

[7] In *Literal Meaning*, Searle puts forward his radical contextualist thesis: "[T]he notion of the literal meaning of a sentence", he says, "only has application relative to a set of background assumptions…" (Searle (1978), 210).

[8] Ibid. 213.

representation presupposes a nonrepresentational Background of capacities".[9] (Notice that Searle uses two kinds of terms to talk about Background phenomena. The first group of terms – 'assumptions', 'presuppositions' – which he mainly uses in his earlier works, are metaphorical; they are literally wrong, "because they imply the apparatus of representation",[10] whereas the Background phenomena, as will become clear later, are non-representational. The second group of terms – 'capacities', 'abilities', 'skills', 'know-how' – characterises their extensions as dispositional features. In his later works, he prefers dealing with the second group.) As the continuation of the main idea of *Literal Meaning*, in *INT* too Searle argues that "[t]he understanding of the literal meaning of sentences […] requires preintentional Background".[11] To underpin this claim, he takes a phrase with an "impeccable" literal meaning, and uses it in the sentences whose truth conditions, for him, are determined differently because of the different Backgrounds against which they function. All these sample sentences are in the form *x opened y*, where *x* and *y* are variables and the predicate 'opened' stays constant:

(I) Tom opened the door.
Sally opened her eyes.
The carpenters opened the wall.
Sam opened his book to page 37.
The surgeon opened the wound.

(II) Bill opened the mountain.
Bill opened the grass.
Bill opened the sun.

Searle claims that although in all these sentences 'open' has the same literal meaning,[12] "the truth conditions marked by the word 'open' are different"[13], because, to use the group (I),

[9] *RM*, 178.
[10] *INT*, 156.
[11] Ibid. 145.
[12] In *RM*, Searle employs the method of conjunction reduction to illustrate how it can be determined that a word retains its literal meaning in different occurrences (cf. *RM*, 178f). He uses the following example to explain this method: instead of saying that "General Electric has invented a new device that will open the sun, open the door, and open the wound", it can be said that "General Electric has invented a new device that will open the sun, the door, and the wound". In other words, the last two occurrences of 'open' in the last sentence can simply be eliminated, without changing the meaning of the sentence. This suggests, for Searle, that the literal meaning of the word 'open' is the same in all three occurrences, although each occurrence of this word is interpreted

"[w]hat constitutes opening a wound is quite different from what constitutes opening a book, and understanding these sentences literally requires understanding each differently […]".[14] That is to say that, in Searle's view, since the verb 'open' "marks" different truth conditions in these sentences, they have different interpretations.

This is, I think, a correct conclusion, but its argument needs qualification. As C. Beyer (1997) points out,

> [I]t is not true that the word 'open(ed)' marks different truth conditions […] – for the simple reason that this word, in either case, marks no truth conditions whatsoever. Rather, what happens in these cases is that due to different syntactico-semantic *combinations* of 'opened' with one of the expressions 'Tom', 'Sally', 'the surgeon', respectively, 'on the left' and with one of the expressions 'the door', 'her eyes' and 'the wound', respectively, 'on the right' the three *sentences* of group [I], which all *contain* the verb 'opened' in one of these combinations, respectively, mark different truth conditions.[15]

Nevertheless, Searle's argument in question can be qualified in the following way: instead of saying that the word 'open' marks different truth conditions in these sentences, we can hold that *the opening processes* marked by the word 'open' are different. To put this another way, since we consider each of these activities – opening a door, opening one's eyes, and opening a wound – as distinct from one another, the interpretation of the verb 'open' in each of these sentences will also correspond to distinct activities, which is to say, to distinct Background capacities; the opening process denoted in the first sentence of (I) is distinct from the opening relation denoted in the second and third sentences of (I). Thus, the conditions of satisfaction of the sentences in (I) will differ not only because of the distinct names in place of the variables, but also because of their distinct Background capacities.

In order to demonstrate the necessity of Background capacities in the determination of conditions of satisfaction, Searle compares the sentences in (II) with the sentences in (I). He maintains that, like (I), (II) is also composed of perfect sentences, because the literal meanings of the words used in them are understandable and they do not violate grammatical rules. But in Searle's view, the problem with (II), in contrast to (I), is that "we have no idea at all of how

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differently because of the different Background capacities which stand behind their interpretations.

[13] *INT*, 146.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Beyer (1997), 341.

to interpret these sentences".[16] This is, for him, because "we simply have no common practices [Background capacities] of opening mountains, grass or suns".[17] On Searle's picture, the lack of Background capacities in such cases makes it impossible to understand these sentences.[18] And for him, this shows how the Background is important in the determination of conditions of satisfaction of sentences.

However, to say that we do not understand the sentences in (II) is false. A competent English speaker *does* understand them sufficiently well, because he knows what the truth conditions of the sentence in question are. As E. Borg (2004) puts it,

> If the competent language user understands all the parts of the sentence (she knows the property denoted by the term 'cut', she grasps the meaning of the referring term 'John'and she understands the definite description 'the sun') and she understands this construction of parts, then she knows that the utterance of this sentence is true just in case John cuts the sun, that is, just in case John stands in the cutting relation to the sun. Now clearly any world which satisfies this condition is going to be pretty unusual […] but there will be, it seems, some pretty clear cases on either side of the divide. For instance, any world where John's actions do not have any effect on the physical status of the sun is clearly going to be a world where the truth-condition is not satisfied. While any world where John's actions do result in some kind of severing of the physical unity of the mass of the sun is a world where the truth-condition is satisfied.[19]

Drawing on what Borg says here, we can maintain that, *pace* Searle, the examples in II cannot show that the Background capacities are necessary for the determination of conditions of satisfaction of sentences. For the literal meaning of the sentence alone seems to suffice for the determination of their conditions of satisfaction.

Here, a Searlean would reply that, since the verb 'opened' applies to different properties in all the sentences of I and II without being ambiguous, the conditions of satisfaction of the relevant propositions will also be different. After all, he would say, *opening the door* as a property has to be distinct from *opening the sun*, just as it is distinct from

[16] *INT*, 147.
[17] Ibid. The bracketed expressions are mine.
[18] Cf. Ibid. 147.
[19] Borg (2004), 236.

opening the page of a book. Yet notice that, however distinct these relations may be, there is something common (more exactly, there is a common opening property denoted by the verb 'open') to all these opening relations and this is what enables the established use of the *x opened y* kinds of sentences. Otherwise, the verb 'opened' used in the sentences above would be ambiguous. Therefore, that the verb 'opened' can denote different more specific properties in these sentences does not suggest that the literal meanings of these sentences underdetermine their conditions of satisfaction. For this reason, the Background capacities are irrelevant to the determination of conditions of satisfaction.

1.2. Motivation from the notion of Network

In *INT*, before introducing the hypothesis of the Background, Searle uses another notion – that of *Network* – to explain the intra-mental contextual features which, for him, affect the determination of conditions of satisfaction of an intentional state. This notion can be regarded as another motivation of Searle's for introducing the hypothesis of the Background.

Searle invokes the notion of Network because he thinks that the functioning of intentional states occurs in a holistic way. For him, intentional states "do not function in an independent or atomistic fashion, for each Intentional state […] determines its conditions of satisfaction only in relation to numerous other Intentional states".[20] In Searle's view, an intentional state is always connected to the Network of other intentional states which play a role of (intra-mental) context in determining its conditions of satisfaction. Here is an example which Searle employs to explain the notion of Network: suppose Carter has an intention (or a desire) to run for the Presidency of the USA. For Searle, Carter cannot have this mental state in an isolated way; in order to possess the intention in question, Carter must have beliefs that the USA is a republic, that it has periodic elections, that the holding of elections is subjected to certain rules, and so on. Furthermore, he must have desires that "people work for his candidacy, that voters cast votes for him",[21] etc. Though none of these beliefs and desires are part of the conditions of satisfaction of the intention to run for the Presidency of the USA, for Searle, without such a Network of beliefs and desires this intention could not have the conditions of satisfaction that it does.

Searle tries to explain this issue by contrasting the intention of Carter, as a politically ambitious man, with the same intention of a Pleistocene man, who, according to the thought experiment, lived in a totally different culture thousands of years ago:

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[20] *INT*, 141.

[21] Ibid.

> Suppose there was a particular moment at which Jimmy Carter first formed the desire to run for the Presidency of the United States, and suppose further that this Intentional state was realized according to everybody's favorite theories of the ontology of the mental: he said to himself "I want to run for the Presidency of the United States"; he had a certain neural configuration in a certain part of his brain which realized his desire, he thought wordlessly and with fierce resolve: "I want to do it", etc. Now suppose further that exactly these same type-identical realizations of the mental state occurred in the mind and brain of a Pleistocene man living in a hunter-gatherer society of thousands of years ago. He had a type-identical neural configuration to that which corresponded to Carter's desire, he found himself uttering the phonetic sequence, "I want to run for the Presidency of the United States", etc. All the same, however type-identical the two realizations might be, the Pleistocene man's mental state could not have been the desire to run for the Presidency of the United States. Why not? Well, to put it as an understatement, the circumstances were not appropriate […] In order to have the desire to run for the Presidency, that desire has to be embedded in a whole Network of other Intentional states.[22]

But, for Searle, the Pleistocene man had no appropriate Network of intentional states to embed his "desire" within it; he could not have the belief that the USA is a republic, the desire that voters cast votes for him, or the like. Therefore, in Searle's view, the corresponding intentional state of the Pleistocene man could not have the conditions of satisfaction that he runs for the Presidency of the United States. Hence, for Searle, "Intentional states are in general parts of Networks of Intentional states and only have their conditions of satisfaction relative to their position in the Network".[23]

An important point here is that, in *INT* as well, where Searle speaks of the notion of Network, he comes to the idea that this notion is insufficient for the explanation of the large and interwoven context of mental states. For him, the context which determines the conditions of satisfaction seems to have more peculiarities than what is elucidated by the notion of Network. Searle reaches this point by raising the issue of "actually spelling out each of the intentional states in the Network".[24] He soon finds that this task is unrealisable because he

[22] Ibid. 19-20.
[23] Ibid. 20-21.
[24] Ibid. 142.

thinks that an uncountable number of intentional states are all submerged in the deep unconscious and that they cannot be individuated. Moreover, what is more important for him is that part of these mental states is so fundamental that Searle avoids adding them to the list of intentional states in the Network. For example, the propositions such as [elections are held at the surface of the earth], [the earth has a gravitational field], [the things people walk on are generally solid], [the surface of the earth is solid] (all of which are applicable to Searle's "Carter's intention" example) are distinct from the unconscious beliefs with the content [the USA has periodic elections], [the USA is a republic], etc., because to him the former propositions are not near the surface of consciousness in order to be regarded as belonging to the Network. In Searle's opinion, it is false to say that Carter's Network, for the intention in question, must "contain" the belief that the things people walk on are generally solid, or other similar beliefs, "because they are in a sense too fundamental to qualify as beliefs even as unconscious beliefs".[25] For him, they should rather be regarded as entities that specify *dispositions* (or stances), or practical capacities that we adopt towards things, but not as contents of beliefs. (To better characterise such capacities, Searle uses the term 'know-how', which denotes our skills of dealing with the environment. In daily life, for example, we know how to cope with different things. We know how to sit at a table, how to walk, how to open a door, and so on.)

Nonetheless, Searle does not deny that Carter *could* have such "fishy" beliefs. His point is that, in order to have a disposition towards a solid entity for walking on it, the belief that the surface of the earth is solid is not needed. Rather, what is necessary for Carter's intention is a certain kind of "know-how", namely his knowledge of how to walk on the solid surface of the earth, but not the corresponding belief.[26] He explains this point as follows:

> A man might indeed believe unconsciously […] that larger states have more electoral votes than smaller states, but it seems wrong to say that I now, in that sense, also believe that the table that I am working on will offer resistance to touch. I would certainly be surprised if it didn't, and that at least suggests that we have something like conditions of satisfaction. Furthermore, a man certainly *could* have the belief that tables offer resistance to touch, but […] that isn't the correct way to describe the

[25] Ibid.

[26] To use another example from Searle: "[W]hen I eat lunch I do not in that way eat lunch because I believe the external world exists. I do not engage in my activities on the basis of beliefs in the existence of the facts that are presupposed by my activities" (Searle (2010), 126).

> stance that I, for example, now take towards this table and other solid objects. For me, the hardness of tables manifests itself in the fact that I know how to sit at a table, I can write on a table, I put stacks of books on tables, I use a table as a work bench, and so on. And as I do each of these things I do not in addition think unconsciously to myself, "it offers resistance to touch".[27]

Thus, Searle is convinced that, although in some special cases, in which we think about the solidity of tables, the propositions such as [the surface of the table is solid] *can* be the content of a belief, they are often not contents of beliefs. For him, these kinds of propositions are essentially distinct from propositions such as [the USA is a republic], in the sense that they often *only* specify the *know-how* kind of knowledge. In Searle's picture, in addition to the corresponding know-how, one need not have the unconscious belief that the surface of the table is solid, in order to cope with the table and its solidity.

However, there is room for disagreement as to whether one can ascribe such "deep" unconscious beliefs to Carter. For some philosophers, it can be said of Carter that, in addition to his practical capacities, he believes that the surface of the earth is solid.[28] This idea can be endorsed for the following reason: If that person, Carter, possesses the corresponding concepts (in our example, the concepts *the surface of the table* and *solidness*) and can thereby entertain the corresponding propositional content in the belief mode, then there is no reason not to ascribe that belief to him. That such beliefs are "submerged" in the "deep" unconscious and that they "look fishy" do not change anything in that respect.

Notice that this is not to say that there is only one entity here about which we should decide that it is either a corresponding Background capacity or an unconscious belief. Of course, the person has, or can have, the corresponding Background capacity towards entities. Nevertheless, that the person possesses that Background capacity does not exclude that he has the belief that the surface of the table is solid.[29]

So, it seems that the notion of the Background cannot be motivated in that way from the notion of the Network. "Fishy beliefs", with content such as [the earth is solid] are still beliefs. Hence, the Network contains them as well.

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[27] *INT*, 142.

[28] See e.g. Beyer (1997), 338. According to Beyer, D. Føllesdal thinks along similar lines.

[29] Cf. Stroud (1991), 252.

1.3. Motivation from the regress argument and from the consideration of physical skills

Searle holds that he has a formal argument for the hypothesis of the Background, according to which Intentional or semantic contents cannot be endlessly self-applying "without generating an infinite regress".[30] Let us call this *the regress argument.*

This issue is better explained by Searle's motivation from the consideration of *physical skills*.[31] According to this consideration, by focusing on how we acquire physical skills, Searle criticises the traditional cognitivist view according to which the learning of abilities, such as skiing, playing tennis, swimming, etc., consists in internalising the instructive rules. Cognitive scientists argue that although the rules, which also have semantic contents, become unconscious after the learning process, they still function as representations. To them, while skiing, for example, a skier makes harmonious, flexible movements, because on the basis of these "representations" that he exercises rapid unconscious calculations. Searle, however, thinks that this view is implausible. He believes that the skier, while practicing the rules, does not internalise them, "but rather the rules become progressively irrelevant".[32] In his opinion, the trained body of the skier responds automatically to different variations of the terrain, and the rules no longer have any role in this process. For Searle, if the unconscious rules continued to function as representations, a regress would ensue, because, as stated above, each

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[30] Cf. *INT*, 152.

[31] In *INT*, Searle maintains that the question of the understanding of metaphor is also a consideration which pushed him to the hypothesis of the Background. He criticises the view according to which the understanding of metaphors in the form X is Y ("The snow is a white blanket", for example) is possible on the basis of interpreting it as follows: X is like Y with respect to certain features F (in our example, F is the feature of covering – the snow, like a blanket, also covers something). However, for Searle, this cannot be the general rule applied to the understanding of all metaphorical utterances. There are metaphors – for instance, sweet^{Y} person^{X}, warm^{Y} welcome^{X}, lukewarm^{Y} friendship^{X} (Searle's examples) – to which the rule above does not apply, because, for Searle, there are no similarities between the extensions of the first and the second words of these metaphors. "For example, the metaphorical utterance meaning of the expression 'a lukewarm reception'", says Searle, "is not based on any literal similarity between lukewarm things and the character of the reception so described" (*INT*, 149). On his view, in such examples, there is no rule that would determine associations between the words. But what, then, does enable to understand these expressions as metaphors? Searle's choice is again Background capacities:

> It just seems to be a fact about our mental [Background] capacities that we are able to interpret certain sorts of metaphor without the application of any underlying 'rules' or 'principles' other than the sheer ability to make certain associations. I don't know any better way to describe these abilities than to say that they are non-representational mental capacities. (*INT*, 149)

(See Stroud (1991) for criticism of Searle's motivation of the idea of the Background from the consideration of metaphors. Stroud also shows how this consideration is related to the regress issue.)

[32] *INT*, 150.

rule has a "semantic" content and this content needs an application. And if applications were also (unconscious) rules – if they had also "semantic" contents – then the infinite regress would threaten. This is because, insofar as the application itself has a "semantic" content, it would need further contents as an application, and that would have no end. However, the infinite regress is impossible because of the limited mental capacities of a person. Therefore, there must be a kind of knowledge (know-how) which is *an application* of the "semantic" content, but itself does not have a "semantic" content.

Notice that the regress argument also goes for intentional states (including the understanding of literal meaning) in general. If a person entertaining an intentional state *x* must possess another intentional state *y* as its application, then insofar as *y* is also an intentional state, the person possessing *y* must also have another intentional state *z* for the application of *y*. Then the person will need another intentional state for applying *z*, and so on. Thus, the infinite regress is inevitable in the case of intentional states as well, and again the non-intentional Background is needed to stop it. That is to say, at the end of the chain, there must be a "deep" unconscious intentional state whose application is a Background capacity, but not another deeper unconscious intentional state.

So it seems that Searle's regress argument is a good motivation for the introduction of the hypothesis of the Background. But that, of course, does not show that the Background is relevant to the determination of conditions of satisfaction.

2. Non-representationality of the Background

The regress argument has shown an important feature of Background capacities: namely, that they are non-representational. For Searle, this is to say that Background capacities are not intentional phenomena. Searle treats the Background as a precondition of representation (intentionality), as "a bedrock of mental capacities that do not themselves consist in Intentional states (representations) […]".[33] He goes on to say the following:

> The Background is a set of nonrepresentational mental capacities that enable all representing to take place. Intentional states only have the conditions of satisfaction that they do, and thus only are the states that they are, against a Background of

[33] Ibid. 143.

abilities that are not themselves Intentional states.[34]

Another way to put Searle's point is like this: The domain of the mentality not only consists of intentional states such as beliefs, desires, perception, etc., but it also contains applications of these states, which themselves are not intentional (or representational). For example, one can suppose a rule for walking and express this rule, as Searle puts it, as follows: "First move the left foot forward, then the right one, then the left one again, and continue on in this manner".[35] Obviously, the rule has a certain representative content *per se*. But walking itself, or the neurophysiological capacity that causes walking, is distinct from having the semantic content of the rule of how to walk. One can hear and understand the rule, yet these alone are not equal to walking itself. The latter requires more complex capacities than uttering/hearing (or deploying) the representative content of the rule, and these capacities, for Searle, are not representational.

3. The Background as a mental feature

An important question about the Background phenomena concerns their nature. As stated above, Searle argues that the Background, along with intentional states, is a mental phenomenon. However, for some philosophers, this view is disputable, as *the background of intentional states* can be very distinct entities. D. W. Smith, for example, building on Wittgenstein's insight, characterises it as a social phenomenon.[36] Smith argues against Searle

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid. 152.

[36] In *On Certainty*, which is to use Searle's phrase, "one of the best books" on the Background, Wittgenstein considers some kinds of empirical propositions, such as the Moorean "Here is a hand", or "The earth is solid", "My name is Ludwig", etc. and maintains that their peculiarity is that we know them with certainty. On his view, these are fundamental empirical propositions which form our "world-picture" (Weltbild), and are also grounds of our language-games. Wittgenstein indeed hesitates to call them *bona fide* propositions, because one of their important feature among thems consists in the fact that, they merge with rules of practice (see Wittgenstein (1969)). That is to say, although the sentences such as 'Here is a hand' have the form of an empirical proposition, they function as a rule which regulates our speaking about, or coping with, things. The fundamental empirical propositions, for Wittgenstein, can be regarded as propositions when we learn them for the first time, but then, after being internalised, they shade off into our practice. For example, when a mother, in order to teach her baby that a hand is called 'hand', utters the sentence "Here is a hand", the baby forms a belief with the corresponding propositional content. But then this belief gradually shades off into the Background of practical rules. That is, after internalising that a hand is called 'hand', the baby, using this as an implicit "rule", can have different intentional states with such propositional contents as [my hands are cold] or [I should raise my hand in order to

that we cannot say that the background of our intentionality is only a mental entity, because it is also extant in the community as "elements of communal knowledge".[37] For example, to say that the rule that a hand is called 'hand' is a background for uttering the sentence 'My left hand is cold' implies that some kinds of background exist in the social space, because it is up to the society to determine the rules of our language-games. In this sense, Smith tells us, (at least some kinds of) background of intentionality are distinct from our individual skills or capacities.

So, *prima facie*, it seems that background phenomena, depending on their kind, can be either *mental* or *socio-cultural*. However, one might still argue that this is not the end of the story, because some examples can even give us reason to say that the background is a physical phenomenon. To see this, let us consider Searle's example of "The cat is on the mat" again. One can suppose here different kinds of background conditions for uttering this sentence: 1) mental conditions: the capability to utter an English sentence, presupposition of the gravity of the earth, etc.; 2) socio-cultural conditions: the rules that a cat is called 'cat', that a mat is called 'mat', etc.; 3) ontological or physical conditions: that the truth conditions of the sentence are dependent on physical circumstances (e.g. on the gravity of the earth), the existence of cats and mats in the world, etc. According to these distinctions, one can argue that the background of intentional states is a heterogeneous phenomenon and the question "What kind of phenomenon is it?" has no precise answer. Or, like Smith, one can maintain that there are different kinds of entities in the background of our intentionality, and Searle's notion of the Background applies to one of these kinds.[38]

It might seem tempting to think that Background phenomena are so diverse and so to baptise 'Background' as an umbrella term denoting different kind of entities. However, such an understanding would suggest a conglomerate picture of the Background phenomena. Also, it would be difficult to say how far this can be helpful for a theory of intentionality, because it would contain irrelevant aspects.

Searle therefore avoids conceptualising it in the way that Smith does. His purpose, of course, is to develop a theory of intentionality within the framework of the philosophy of mind. He therefore baptises 'Background' as a term referring to mental phenomena. Searle does not regard social or physical phenomena as the Background of intentional states *per se*.

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answer the question], etc.

[37] Smith (2004), 160.

[38] Cf. Ibid. 161.

For him, they only have relevance insofar as they have effects on our mind or brain. He writes:

> [T]he Background is indeed derived from the congeries of relations which each biological-social being has to the world around itself. Without my biological constitution, and without the set of social relations in which I am embedded, I could not have the Background that I have. But all of these relations, biological, social, physical, all this embeddedness, is only relevant to the production of the Background because of the effects that it has on me, specifically the effects that it has on my mind-brain.[39]

Nevertheless, Searle is not happy only with the claim that the Background must be distinguished from the corresponding social or other phenomena. In his later works, he collapses the Background into the brain capacities by neglecting the role of the body. For example, in his reply to B. Stroud's criticism of his idea of the Background, Searle writes: "[I]t is important to emphasise that Background abilities are not dependent on how things in fact work in the world. *All of my Background capacities are 'in my head'* […]".[40] In *Rationality in Action*, he offers to regard these capacities "as a set of brain structures".[41] Also, in *The Construction of Social Reality*, Searle dwells on this view by identifying behaviours with their neurophysiological basis:

> When I say, for example, that I am able to speak English, I am talking about *a causal capacity of my brain*; but there is no objection to identifying that capacity as, e.g., "the ability to speak English" without knowing the details of its neurophysiological realization.[42]

In light of this, the following points are conspicuous in Searle's conceptualisation of the Background:

1) The Background of intentionality is not an entity which exists in the social/cultural realm, or the like, but it is only mental;

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[39] *INT*, 154.

[40] Searle (1991), 291; emphasis added.

[41] Searle (2001), 58.

[42] Searle (1995), 129-130; emphasis added.

2) The Background is a dispositional feature of *brain structures*.

The first point seems to be a verbal, rather than a substantial, issue. After all, Searle also does not deny that the socio-cultural (or the physical) realm contains entities which have effects on our mental life (e.g. the language rule that a hand is called 'hand' is a ground of our usage to refer to a hand while uttering 'hand'). Yet Searle's conceptualisation of the Background is such that these entities become irrelevant to his investigations *per se*.

The second point, however, is substantial in the sense that it concerns the constitutive basis of our Background capacities. This view implies that dispositions to bodily actions (such as walking, dancing, skiing, etc.), along with dispositions to entertaining conscious intentional states, are also features of the neurophysiology of the brain. However, the view in question is problematic because one might ask: Given the empirical fact that bodily actions are realised in the body, why not regard them as the capacities of the whole body, instead of considering them to be the features of brain structures?

I think that this (second) point concerning Background capacities is the result of Searle's questions about clarifying boundary cases between the Network and the Background, which he poses in *RM*.[43] How can one determine that the propositions that Carter wore underwear, and that Carter had two ears, belong to the Network of the intention to run for the Presidency of the USA? (One can find many such examples in which it is difficult to determine whether they belong to the Network or to the Background. But notice that such questions emerge because Searle denies that propositions, such as *the earth is solid*, are the content of a belief. For those who do not deny that a person normally possesses such unconscious beliefs, there is no such problem.) In order to avoid such questions, Searle comes up with the idea that the Network of unconscious intentional states is a part of the Background.[44] To him, "when we describe a man as having an unconscious belief, we are

[43] Cf. *RM*, 187.

[44] Searle argues that the questions about the boundary cases emerge because we regard the mind "as containing an inventory of mental states," or "as a kind of big library or filing cabinet of representations" (*RM*, 187), and we then consider Network and Background to belong to parts of this "container", because the former, we assume, consists of intentional states, but the latter is a set of non-representational capacities. But now, in *RM*, Searle says that it is a mistake to treat the mind as an entity containing an inventory of mental states. He instead offers to regard the mind "as a mechanism for generating current performance, including conscious thoughts and actions, based on past experience" (*RM*, 187). On this view of the mind, when somebody forms the intention to run for the Presidency of the USA, the unconscious belief that *the USA has periodic elections* and the Background disposition that *the things people walk on are generally solid* must not be considered to be something lying in the brain of the person. In fact, the brain of the person who forms the intention contains neuronal structures, which enable him to realise different mental phenomena, such as the belief that the USA has periodic elections, or

describing [his] neurophysiology in terms of its dispositional capacity to cause conscious thoughts […]" and "the Background consists entirely in such capacities".[45] (Moreover, he maintains that some other capacities of the brain function to generate different actions such as running, walking, dancing, speaking, etc.[46]) It seems that it is this line of thought – the thought that focuses on the relationship of the brain and the Network (of unconscious intentional states) – pushed him to forget the essential role of the body in the Background phenomena.

However, to regard the dispositions to bodily actions as structures of the brain is not a correct characterisation of the Background capacities, because, to repeat, the Background capacities are often realised not only in the brain, but in the whole body. This is to say that our (bodily) Background capacities involve more parts of the body than our neurophysiology. An example is speaking. On the one hand, it is true that neurons responsible for speaking are necessary for producing speech acts. But the ability to speak does not only consist of the corresponding neurophysiological capacity. In addition to the latter, we need tongue, mouth, etc. and their ability to function in the appropriate way. Speaking is embedded in the greater part of the body, and this ability cannot therefore be identifiable with the corresponding neurophysiological structures of the brain. Many other examples are also easily to hand: walking, skiing, playing tennis, dancing, etc. These are the kinds of knowledge (know-how) which cannot be possessed by the resources of the brain alone, because the realisation of all these activities necessarily involves the body. Hence, the ability to produce these actions cannot be attributed only to the brain.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered Searle's hypothesis of the Background and his motivations. I have tried to show that his motivations for the hypothesis of the Background from the notion of the literal meaning and the Network are not successful. Furthermore, I have focused on Searle's attempt to reduce the Background to the neurophysiological structures. In

(Background) dispositions which we take toward solid things. That is to say, "the real occurrence" of both unconscious intentional states, which Searle calls *Network*, and the Background capacities is neuronal structures with their dispositions to cause conscious thoughts and behaviour. Therefore, Searle concludes: the Network is a part of the Background.

[45] *RM*, 188.

[46] Cf. Ibid.

my view, this is unacceptable because Background capacities often necessarily require the other parts of the body.

CHAPTER IV

Arguments for the Intentionality of Perceptual Experiences

To explain perceptual experiences, Searle uses the conceptual apparatus of his theory of intentionality, which we considered in the previous chapter. In this chapter, we shall see that he discusses the problems of perception mainly in the context of this theory. Searle maintains that:

> There are two phenomena in the conscious perceptual situation: there are ontologically subjective, conscious perceptual experiences in the head, and the ontologically objective states of affairs and objects in the world perceived, typically outside the head.[1]

For him, the first phenomenon is directed at the second phenomenon. In other words, he claims that visual or perceptual experiences are also intentional.[2]

Searle's arguments for the intentionality of visual experiences can be said to fall under two names. His first argument is that visual experiences exhibit the features for intentionality, features which comprise intentional content, conditions of satisfaction, direction of fit, and causal self-referentiality (reflexivity).[3] Let us call the first argument the *Argument from Basic Features*. Searle's second argument is the *Argument from Transparency*, which can be formulated as follows: the description of the visual experience of *x* is the same as the description of the state of affairs that the subject sees *x*.

In this chapter I will be concerned with these two arguments. I will start with the *Argument from Basic Features*. To examine it, I will begin with the exposition of the features

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[1] *STT*, 52.

[2] Searle indeed distinguishes between visual experience and perception. According to this distinction, "the notion of perception involves the notion of succeeding" (*INT*, 38). A visual experience, however, might be unsuccessful. On his view, hallucinations and illusions are visual experiences, but not perceptual experiences. I will use the terms 'perception' and 'visual experience' interchangeably where such a usage is not harmful to the sense at hand.

[3] Cf. *STT*, Chapter II.

such as intentional content, direction of fit, and causal self-referentiality. Of these features, the first two seem to me simpler to explain than the others, and the third has besides already been more or less explained in Chapter II. I will therefore consider these features in one section. In the second section of this chapter, I will turn to the *Argument from Transparency*. Then, in the third section, I will examine the feature of the conditions of satisfaction of perceptual experiences and the thesis (DET) for this applied to visual experiences. Lastly, at the end of the chapter, I will be concerned with Searle's thesis that the content of a visual experience is always propositional. This thesis seems to support Searle's idea that the content of visual experiences determines the conditions of satisfaction "in exactly the same sense" that the content of beliefs do. I will address the question whether Searle's arguments for the thesis concerning the propositionality of the content of visual experiences are sound.

1. Argument from Basic Features

1.1. Intentional content

Suppose there is a red ball in front of you. For Searle, if your eyes are open and you are conscious, then, given normal conditions, you see this ball. Even if your visual experience is a hallucination, there is still something that *appears* to you in front of you. This something, which in Searle's view consists of "the sheer phenomenology", is the intentional content of your experience. On the other hand, hallucinations or illusions show that the fact that a visual experience has an intentional content does not depend on whether the experience is veridical; the experience can also be non-veridical, though it always has an intentional content. And this, for Searle, "is a mark of intentionality".[4]

1.2. Direction of fit

Searle maintains that, apart from intentional content, visual experience also has a direction of fit. This, for him, strengthens the thesis that visual experience is intentional. He writes:

> Visual perception, like belief, and unlike desire and intention, always [have] the mind-to-world direction of fit. If the conditions of satisfaction are not in fact

[4] *STT*, 56.

> fulfilled, as in the case of hallucination, delusion, illusion, etc., it is the visual experience and not the world which is at fault. In such cases we say that "our senses deceive us" and though we do not describe our visual experiences as true or false […] we do feel inclined to describe failure to achieve fit in terms such as "deceive", "mislead", "distort", "illusion", and "delusion"[…][5]

We have to mention one point here. Given that not all intentional states have directions of fit, one might hold that the plausibility of this argument should come into question. Yet this caveat cannot be a serious trouble for Searle because it does not affect Searle's use of the thesis that visual experiences have a direction of fit, in order to back up the idea that they are intentional. Rather, one can use this thesis to back up the latter idea, even having accepted that some, but not all, intentional states have directions of fit. This is because only intentional states (or entities that have derived intentionality), not non-intentional entities, exhibit this feature.

1.3 Causal self-referentiality (reflexivity)[6]

"Perceptual intentionality", Searle tells us, "like memory and prior intentions, but unlike beliefs and desires, has as part of its conditions of satisfaction a causal relation between the intentional state and the external world".[7] Notice that here too, as in the case of the direction of fit, one might say that the idea that causal self-referentiality is a mark of intentionality is problematic because not all intentional states exhibit this feature. Yet Searle, I think, might respond to this objection by saying that this is not a feature exhibited by non-intentional causal relations, and therefore it *is* a mark of intentionality. We cannot hold, for example, that the truth conditions of the sentence, 'This coin made a sign on the wax', are causally self-referential, even though the sentence refers to a state of affairs that exhibits a causal relation. The reason for this is that it is not the case here that part of the truth conditions of the sentence in question is caused by the rest of its truth conditions. In this sense, we can say that causal self-referentiality is a special feature of only (some) intentional states.

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[5] *INT*, 42-43.

[6] This is the feature which we have already discussed in Chapter II. Here I therefore won't focus on its details.

[7] *STT*, 58.

2. Argument from Transparency

In *STT*, Searle says that "the most powerful argument" for the intentionality of perceptual experiences is the *Argument from Transparency*. He puts this argument in the following way: "If you try to describe the subjective visual experience in your head, what you will find is that you are giving the same description that you would give of the state of affairs in the world".[8] For example, if you see San Francisco Bay (Searle's example) and, following introspection of your visual experience, describe it in the manner *I see San Francisco Bay*, then you can note that in doing so you give the description of the state of affairs that you (or, rather, "*I*" in your idiolect) *see San Francisco Bay*. For Searle, the reason that the visual experience and the state of affairs the subject sees have the same description is that the visual experience is "a presentation of the state of affairs that constitutes its conditions of satisfaction".[9] On Searle's view, presentation (an aspect which is to be discussed in the following chapter) is a special feature of visual experiences. "The visual experience […]", he says, "does not just represent the state of affairs perceived; rather, when satisfied, it gives us direct access to it, and in that sense it is a presentation of that state of affairs".[10] Therefore, Searle thinks that the description of the visual experience of *x* and the description of the state of affairs that you see *x* is the same. And, more importantly in this case, for him, since this is the result of a visual experience's being presentational, it shows that the visual experience is intentional.

3. Conditions of satisfaction: The continuation of the Argument from Basic Features

An attentive reader may notice that Searle's strategy to elaborate the Argument from Basic Features mainly consists in comparing visual experiences with paradigm intentional states. For example, in *STT*, he writes:

[8] Ibid. 59.

[9] Ibid.

[10] *INT*, 46.

> It ought to be obvious from everything I have said that perceptual experiences like beliefs, intentions, and desires will be either satisfied or not satisfied. The world will either be or not be the way it perceptually seems to me.[11]

As the result of such a comparison, Searle puts forward an important idea of his theory of perception. He says that visual experiences also have conditions of satisfaction. Searle also uses this idea as the key argument, when in *INT* he speaks of the intentionality of visual experiences. Here, again, in comparing visual experiences with paradigm intentional states, he states the following thesis:

> (C): "The visual experience has conditions of satisfaction in exactly the same sense that beliefs and desires have conditions of satisfaction".[12]

To explain this thesis, he then goes on to say that:

> In both the cases of belief and visual experience I might be wrong about what states of affairs actually exist in the world. Perhaps I am having a hallucination and perhaps it isn't actually raining. But notice that in each case what counts as a mistake, whether a hallucination or a false belief, is already determined by the Intentional state or event in question. In the case of the belief, even if I am in fact mistaken, I know what must be the case in order that I not be mistaken, and to say that is simply to say that the Intentional content of the belief determines its conditions of satisfaction; it determines under what conditions the belief is true or false! Now exactly analogously I want to say that in the case of the visual experience, even if I am having a hallucination, I know what must be the case in order that the experience not be a hallucination, and to say that is simply to say that the Intentional content of the visual experience determines its conditions of satisfaction; it determines what must be the case in order that the experience not be a hallucination in exactly the same sense that the content of the belief determines its conditions of satisfaction.[13]

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[11] *STT*, 57.

[12] *INT*, 39.

[13] Ibid. 39-40.

Thus, according to this passage, (C) is also presupposed by the thesis that the conditions of satisfaction of a visual experience are determined by its intentional content. That is, for Searle, to say that:

(D_{same}): (DET) applies to visual experiences "in exactly the same" sense that it applies to beliefs.

According to the same passage, in the case of both a visual experience and a belief, the subject knows what conditions satisfy her mental states. Since she knows them from the intentional content of the state, we can formulate this idea as follows:

(K_{same}): The subject entertaining a visual experience and belief knows, from the intentional content of the relevant state, what the conditions of satisfaction of the state are.[14]

As stated above, (D_{same}) presupposes (C). A simple reason for this is that, in the context of Searle's theory, for an intentional state to have conditions of satisfaction is to determine it. Nevertheless, because (D_{same}) seems to be more directly related to Searle's central thesis (namely to (DET)), I will focus on it and (K_{same}), which explains (D_{same}).

I will first examine (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) in the context of Dretske's (2003) criticism of Searle's theory of perception. Dretske's criticism is interesting for the following feature: in rejecting (K_{same}), and hence (D_{same}), it attacks Searle's notion of intentional content of visual experiences. Dretske's argument for this is unconvincing to me and I will try to show the reasons why I think this. After having considered Dretske's criticism, I will directly focus on the elucidation of (D_{same}) and (K_{same}). I will expound these two theses by considering their respective constituent parts.

3.1. Dretske's criticism

Searle is committed to the view that an intentional content is a necessary condition for having a visual experience. Dretske is a philosopher who does not accept this view. He thinks that one does not need to elaborate a theory with the notion of intentional content in order to

[14] Here, again, Searle does not apply his useful distinction between conditions of satisfaction *as a requirement* and conditions of satisfaction *as a thing*. I think that (K_{same}) is true if we use the notion of conditions of satisfaction as a requirement in it. I elaborate on this issue below.

explain visual experiences. I think that Dretske's arguments are interesting and that they are worth considered in connection with (D_{same}) and (K_{same}), which, as mentioned, are central theses in Searle's attempt to show that visual experiences, like beliefs and desires, are also intentional.

In his criticism of Searle's theory, Dretske follows Searle's comparison of visual experiences with beliefs. Yet, in contrast to Searle, he comes up with the idea that perceptual experiences do not represent objects in the way that beliefs do. Dretske's view suggests that one does not need Searle's notion of intentional content in order to give an account of perception. And that implies that, in Dretske's view, (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) are redundant for a theory designed to elucidate perceptual experiences.

To support his claim, Dretske compares perceptual experiences with photographs. He says that perceptual experiences are similar to photographs but that they are not similar to beliefs. In his view, just as a photograph is a photograph of a yellow station wagon because of the fact that the yellow station wagon is "the causal origin of the image on the paper",[15] so too a perceptual experience is a perceptual experience of a yellow station wagon because of the fact that a yellow station wagon causes that experience. Also, to stress that in both cases the casual relation is the only necessary point in question, Dretske maintains that even if the image on the paper does not look like the yellow station wagon, it is nevertheless a photograph of it, because "[w]hat makes a photograph of x a photograph of x is not that it looks like x", but that x is "at the other end of an appropriate causal chain".[16] He then adds that the same goes for perceptual experiences as well: What makes a perceptual experience of x a perceptual experience of x is not that that experience has a content which "looks like" x, but rather that the experience is caused by x. Thus, for Dretske, all that is needed in the case of the experience, just as in the case of a photograph, is an appropriate causal relation between the subject and the object seen. Therefore, in his view, as in the case of the photograph, one does not need the notion of intentional content to explain perceptual cases.

What is more interesting in Dretske's criticism is that, to back up his view in question, he launches an attack against (K_{same}). Dretske maintains that there can be cases in which, from the perceptual experience alone, one cannot know what one sees. For example, the yellow station wagon can look like a tiny speck from a long distance. Dretske tells that "[o]ne may, in fact, think that it actually *is* a speck (of dirt, say) on the windshield".[17] To him it seems that in

[15] Dretske (2003), 156.

[16] Ibid. 157.

[17] Ibid. 161.

the case of "the speckish experience", "one [could not], as it were, 'read off' the experience its conditions of satisfaction in the same way that one could 'read off' a belief or a statement about a speck (that it is a yellow station wagon) its conditions of satisfaction". Yet "the speckish experience", in his view, is still an experience *of* the yellow station wagon, because it is caused by that object.[18] So Dretske's view suggests that (K_{same}) is false, because, for him, there are cases in which the subject entertaining a visual experience does not know (or, to use Dretske's phase, cannot "read off") from the intentional content of this visual experience what its conditions of satisfaction are.

However, Dretske's argument against (K_{same}) is unacceptable. I say this because, even in the case of "the speckish experience", the subject can know from (or "read off") the content its conditions of satisfaction (as a requirement). To see this, let us first make a small remark concerning the term 'know' in this context: When we hold that we know, on the basis of a visual experience of x, something about x, in most cases we succumb to the temptation to think that the visual experience is rich enough to know from its content the essential kind properties of the object seen. (To use Searle's example again, *being a station wagon* is the essential kind property of the object in question.) However, if seeing conditions are not good enough, as is so in Dretske's example, then it is difficult for us to see the object as having its essential kind properties. In such cases, therefore, we do not know from the content of the experience *what* we see. But this, of course, does not mean that we see nothing. Searle rightly emphasises that the structure of our visual perception is hierarchical. That is to say, we see objects around us as having both basic and higher-level properties.[19] In the case of "speckish seeing", we see the object as having (at least) basic features (color and shape), even if we do not know precisely what kind of object it is. And this is sufficient to hold that, in such cases, we can know, from the content of the experience, that there is *a* thing/body in our visual field. For our perceptual system, delineating the borders of the object against the background of the visual field on the basis of attributing to it color and shape, enables us to see the object as an instance of a very general and basic kind, or in other words as *a thing/body*. Therefore, in such cases, although the perceptual content is not rich enough to determine the conditions of satisfaction in such a way that we can sufficiently answer the question "What are we seeing?", the experience still has conditions of satisfaction. For this reason, Dretske's attack on (K_{same}) is flawed.

[18] 'Of' here is used in the non-intentional sense.

[19] I shall have more to say on this issue in Chapter V.

3.2. Expounding the central theses

Notice that to say that Dretske is incorrect in this debate does not imply that (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) are true. For it might be the case that these theses are false for different reasons. Therefore, we need to consider separately to what extent (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) are plausible theses.

A simple way to examine (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) is to divide them into their constituent parts. They contain the following sub-theses:

(D_{vis}): The content of a visual experience determines its conditions of satisfaction;

(K_{vis}): The subject entertaining a visual experience knows, from the intentional content of that experience, what the conditions of satisfaction of the experience are.

Moreover, notice that, like (D_{vis}), (K_{vis}) also has a general version, which is part of (K_{same}), as well:

(K): The subject entertaining an intentional state knows, from the intentional content of that state, what the conditions of satisfaction of the state are.

To answer the question whether (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) are true, we should examine all these sub-theses, whilst keeping additionally in mind our conclusions on (DET_r)/(DET_t) from Chapter II.

Let us start with (D_{vis}). Here, we have to remember Searle's distinction between conditions of satisfaction *as a requirement* and conditions of satisfaction *as a thing*. Because of this distinction, (D_{vis}) can be read in two ways:

(D_{visR}): The content of a visual experience determines its conditions of satisfaction *as a requirement*;

(D_{visT}): The content of a visual experience determines its conditions of satisfaction *as a thing*.

Setting aside Searle's idea that the intentional content determines the feature of causal self-referentiality, (D_{visR}) seems to be true. (D_{visT}), however, does not.

To show this, let us suppose that I, being ignorant of the fact that elms and beeches are different trees, enjoy a visual experience that the belm tree is P (where 'belm' stands for my visual percept of the unknown to me elm or beech tree,[20] which, in turn, is directed to a composite set of (some) visual properties shared by both elm and beech trees; and where P denotes my percept of *a* property also shared by these two kinds of trees). Suppose, furthermore, that I cannot have a thought that the tree I am seeing is either an elm tree or a beech tree, because I do not know that beeches are not elms trees and elms are not beech trees. In this case, the content of my visual experience lays down the conditions of satisfaction (as a requirement) that *the belm tree is P*. This can suggest that (D_{visR}) is true.

(D_{visT}), however, is not a true thesis. The reason for this is that, as with our example, the content of the experience often cannot determine the thing which satisfies the experience. My visual experience that the belm tree is P can be made satisfied by both an elm tree and a beech tree. In that case, the experience cannot determine which kind of tree it is about.

Let me now focus on (K). Notice again that, because the term 'conditions of satisfaction' is ambiguous, (K) can also be read in two ways:

(K_r): The subject entertaining an intentional state knows, from the intentional content of that state, what the conditions of satisfaction *as a requirement* are;

(K_t): The subject entertaining an intentional state knows, from the intentional content of that state, what the conditions of satisfaction *as a thing* are.

As with (DET_r),[21] (K_r) seems to be true; but (K_t) is often not true.

To see this, let us suppose that I have a true belief that Jones is the tallest man in our city, without knowing who he is. Then, assuming that I have mastered the concept of satisfaction, I know, from the content of my belief, that my belief is satisfied if and only if

[20] By *the visual percept of an object*, I mean a set of visual experiences that can be caused by the same or similar kinds of entities in our perceptual system. For example, an elm tree can cause different visual experiences when seen from different perspectives. Yet although the experiences are different, the same object is perceived; that is, the percept of the object here remains constant. If the subject cannot distinguish elm trees from beech trees when he sees them, then he will perceive them as the same kind of entity. In other words, his percept of both kinds of trees will be the same.

[21] See Chapter II.

Jones is the tallest man in our city. That is to say, I know the conditions of satisfaction *as a requirement* of the belief. However, notice that, in that case, I do not know which thing (person) in the world can make my belief satisfied. For I do not know who Jones is and I have never seen him. In that case, I do not know the conditions of satisfaction *as a thing* of my belief.

Now let me consider (K_{vis}). Notice that what goes for beliefs in the case above goes for visual experiences as well. Firstly, here too, because of the ambiguity of the term 'conditions of satisfaction', it is important to distinguish between two readings of (K_{vis}):

(K_{visR}): The subject entertaining a visual experience knows, from the intentional content of that experience, what the conditions of satisfaction *as a requirement* are;

(K_{visT}): The subject entertaining a visual experience knows, from the intentional content of that experience, what the conditions of satisfaction *as a thing* are.

Secondly, like (K_r) and (K_t), (K_{visR}) also seems to be true, but (K_{visT}) does not. That is to say, Searle's idea in the passage above (from *INT*, p. 39) – the idea that if one hallucinates he knows "what must be the case in order that the experience not be a hallucination"– applies to (K_{visR}) but not to (K_{visT}). To use the example above, when I have a veridical visual experience that the belm tree is P, then I know, from the content of my visual experience, that the conditions of satisfaction (as a requirement) of the experience are that *the belm tree is P*. However, in this case, I do not know what kind of tree (an elm tree or a beech tree) it is which would be making my experience veridical.

Now, putting altogether our examination of (D_{vis}) and (K_{vis}), as well as (K) on the one hand, and our conclusions on (DET_r)/(DET_t) from Chapter II on the other hand,[22] we can assert the following: to say that (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) are true means that both (DET)/(K) and (D_{vis})/(K_{vis}) can be read in two ways, one of which is true and the other of which is false. Taken in this way, visual experiences are similar to beliefs.

However, notice that what justifies our conclusion concerning (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) is different from Searle's reasoning for the same claim. Searle does not come to his conclusion that (D_{same}) and (K_{same}) are true in the same way that we did. The reason for this is that he does not apply the distinction between conditions of satisfaction *as a thing* and conditions of

[22] (DET_t) here applies to intentional contents but not to meanings.

satisfaction *as a requirement* to this case, either. For Searle, to use this distinction is redundant because he falsely believes that the contents of intentional states determine both kinds of conditions of satisfaction. And it is in this sense that Searle takes visual experiences to be similar to beliefs.

4. Arguments for the propositionality of the content of a visual experience

A central thesis of Searle's theory of perception that can support (D_{same}) is the following:

(P): The content of a visual experience is always equivalent to a proposition.[23]

In other words, Searle thinks that (a part of the content of) the visual experience of (say) a station wagon is that *there is a station wagon there*, but not simply *a station wagon*. Therefore, he argues that (P) makes visual experiences more similar to the paradigm intentional states.[24]

He uses two arguments to support this idea. The first is that "[v]isual experience is never simply of an object", but rather it must always be of a state of affairs.[25] The second, which he calls *the syntactical argument*, is that the description of a visual experience in the form "S sees *x*", which can suggest that the content of the experience is non-propositional, can always be paraphrased as follows: *S sees that there is x there*.

Let me reply first to the first argument.

4.1. The first argument

In Searle's view, "[t]he fact that visual experiences have propositional Intentional contents is an immediate (and trivial) consequence of the fact that they have conditions of satisfaction, for conditions of satisfaction are always that such and such is the case".[26] Searle's line of reasoning in this assertion can be formulated as follows:

1. A visual exprerience has conditions of satisfaction;

[23] Cf. *INT*, 40.

[24] Those who think that (P) is not related to (D_{same}) can regard the former as an independent thesis of Searle's theory of perception.

[25] Cf. *INT*, 40.

[26] Ibid. 41.

2. Conditions of satisfaction are always that such and such is the case;

3. Therefore, the content of the visual experience is propositional.

This argument is incomplete and defective. To show this, let me first consider the premises of the argument.

In the first premise of the argument, Searle uses the term 'conditions of satisfaction' in the sense of *a state of affairs* (= conditions of satisfaction *as a thing*). He maintains (in *INT*, p. 40) that

(SOF): The intentional content of a visual experience always requires the existence of a state of affairs for its satisfaction.

I will dwell on (SOF), for it is a more specific way of stating the first premise.

For Searle, the reason for holding (SOF) is a special feature of visual experience – namely that, when we see objects, we also see them as having the property of location, specified by Searle as being *there* or *in front of us*. To me (SOF) (and so the first premise) is true. (Here I want only to add that we see things not only as having location properties, but also as having other properties such as color, shape, etc. And this shows that, for the satisfaction of a visual experience, not only a state of affairs with a location property, but also states of affairs with a color, shape, etc. properties can also be required.)

The second premise of the argument is true as well. However, it contains a linguistic trick to reach the conclusion. Searle describes conditions of satisfaction, viz. a state of affairs, in the form "that such and such is the case". Notice that, from this, it is easy to succumb to the conclusion that the content is propositional. However, Searle neglects to say that the second premise could also be stated in the following way: Conditions of satisfaction, viz. a state of affairs, are always x's (an object's) being F (a property/attribute). The point here is that, in the case of the latter description, we would have less of a temptation to conclude (P) from the premises. Like the description of a state of affairs in the form "such and such is the case", its alternative – the description of a state of affairs in the form "S's being F" – is also right. Yet this alternative does not suggest that the content of the visual experience is propositional.

The latter point, I think, is of greater importance. It shows that, although the premises of the first argument are true, this is not enough to say that the conclusion is also true.

There is another important point concerning the first argument. Even if a state of affairs/conditions of satisfaction had only one kind of specification (the specification *that such and such is the case*), this still does not mean that Searle's first argument is valid. For this argument is circular in the context of Searle's theory. To see this, notice that the premises

per se are not sufficient to conclude the conclusion of the argument, because to have conditions of satisfaction alone, described in the form "that such and such is the case", does not imply that the content of the intentional state possessing those conditions of satisfaction must be propositional. For this conclusion, the assertion of some additional relation between the intentional content and the conditions of satisfaction is needed.

(DET) is the thesis that describes this relation. Also, for Searle, (DET) implies that "the specification of the content is already a specification of the conditions of satisfaction".[27] Thus, Searle thinks that the determination relation between an experience's intentional content and the conditions of satisfaction affects their specifications as well. That is to say, given that the content of an experience is propositional, the conditions of satisfaction must be specified by the sentence expressing a proposition.

So, taking into account these issues from Searle's theory, the first argument should be completely restated as follows:

1. A visual experience (which necessarily has an intentional content) has conditions of satisfaction;

a. The intentional content of this experience determines its conditions of satisfaction;

b. Therefore, the specification of its content is a specification of the conditions of satisfaction;

c. Therefore, given that *the content is propositional*, the conditions of satisfaction must also be specified with a sentence expressing the proposition.[28]

2. Conditions of satisfaction are always that such and such is the case;

3. Therefore, *the content* of the visual experience *is propositional*.

Thus, according to Searle's theory, in order for the conditions of satisfaction to have a propositional specification, *the intentional content* (due to (DET)) *must also be propositional*. But the latter (the idea expressed by the sentence in italics) is the conclusion of the argument in question. So, it seems that, in order to conclude the conclusion of the first argument, we should also presuppose the conclusion.

[27] Ibid. 13.

[28] Notice that, in c, we cannot change 'given' with 'if' because, for Searle, intentional states with conditions of satisfaction always have propositional contents.

4.2. The syntactical argument

Searle says that he has an additional argument for (P), which he calls *the syntactical argument*. Here is the passage where this argument is explicated:

> [T]he verb "see" takes spatial modifiers that under natural interpretations require us to postulate an entire proposition as the content of the visual experience. When I say, for example, "I see a station wagon in front of me", I don't normally just mean that I see a station wagon which also happens to be in front of me but rather I see that there is a station wagon in front of me.[29]

This argument is also unacceptable. To say that the sentence 'I see *x* in front of me' means that 'I see that there is *x* in front of me' does not show that the intentional contents of visual experiences must always be propositional. The reason for this is that the converse is also possible: We can just as well hold that the sentence 'I see that there is *x* in front of me' means that 'I see *x* in front of me'. Just as paraphrasing sentences in the latter way cannot show that the intentional content must be non-propositional, so too the converse of the paraphrase (which is the Searlean way of paraphrasing) cannot show that the content must be propositional.

Searle nevertheless says that he has "an additional clue that the 'see that' form expresses the Intentional content of the visual experience".[30] His clue is that the 'see that' form, in contrast to the '*x* sees *y*' form, is intensional. For him, the 'see that' form does not allow the terms that refer to the same entity to be swapped, because it can be the case that the subject of the corresponding intentional state does not know that these terms have the same reference. And, in that case, we cannot preserve the truth value of the sentence. Searle uses the following example to support this idea:

> *Jones saw that the bank president was standing in front of the bank*
>
> together with the identity statements
>
> *The bank president is the tallest man in town*
>
> and
>
> *The bank is the lowest building in town*
>
> do not entail

[29] Ibid. 41.

[30] Ibid.

Jones saw that the tallest man in town was standing in front of the lowest building in town.

But

Jones saw the bank president

together with the identity statement does entail

Jones saw the tallest man in town.[31]

I think this argument does not work either, because the 'see that' form is not always intensional. In one reading of this sentence, it is also extensional. According to this reading, in such sentences, the substitution of the terms with the same reference is possible without changing the truth value of the sentence. Correspondingly, the sentence 'Jones sees that the bank president is standing there' can be read in two ways:[32]

(Sn): Jones sees that the bank president is standing there [where 'the bank president' stands for *the mode of presentation* in which Jones sees the relevant person];

(Sw): There is exactly one object which is the bank president and Jones sees that he is standing there [where 'the bank president' indicates the relevant person without standing for the mode of presentation in which Jones sees that person].[33]

The context of (Sn) is intensional because in it we are committed to reporting how Jones sees the state of affairs in question. The term 'the bank president' in (Sn), therefore, indicates the mode of presentation in which Jones sees the object. But this is not the case with (Sw). In (Sw), we simply say, without committing ourselves to the report of the relevant intentional content, that there is exactly one thing which is the bank president and Jones sees him. The

[31] Ibid. 41-42; my italics. The italics indicate the statements used as an example.

[32] Here I simplify Searle's example for ease of exposition.

[33] This kind of distinction originally belongs to Russell. However, according to Russell's analysis, (Sn) should have been given in the following way:

R(Sn): Jones sees that there is exactly one object which is the bank president and he is standing there.

Russell prefers R(Sn) because he thinks that the sentence 'The bank president is standing there' is properly analysed by means of the sentence 'There is exactly one object which is the bank president and he is standing there'. However, he forgets that, independent of whether this analysis is right or not, these two sentences cannot be swapped in the psychological contexts. For the psychological context is committed to how the state of affairs is given to the subject; Jones does not see the objects in a complex way as it is described by R(Sn). In this sense, R(Sn) is problematic.

context of (Sw) is extensional, and therefore we can change the term ‘the bank president’ with a term which also has the same reference as the former, without changing the truth value of the sentence. So there are two readings of the ‘seeing that’ sentences and Searle’s “clue” is not eligible for the extensional reading of these sentences.

I thus conclude that neither of Searle’s arguments for (P) is acceptable, and that one cannot support (D_{same}) by presupposing (P).

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered Searle’s arguments for the view that visual experiences are intentional. In general, I agree with Searle on this idea. However, it seemed to me that there are some drawbacks in some of his arguments. We have seen that there is some trouble with (D_{same}) and (K_{same}), in particular; in stating these theses, Searle does not take into account the ambiguity of the term ‘conditions of satisfaction’. Moreover, I have tried to show that neither of Searle’s arguments for (P) is acceptable.

CHAPTER V

Special Features of Perceptual Intentionality

In this chapter, I will consider the special features described by Searle to elucidate perceptual experiences. These are: consciousness, direct causation, presentationality (as well as some other features that derive from presentationality), and hierarchical structuredness. For Searle, the fact that the perceptual experiences exhibit these features suggests that they are *sui generis* intentional states.

I have divided this chapter into four sections in which I consider these special features one by one. In the first section of the chapter, I will focus on Searle's thesis that consciousness is a special feature of perception. On the basis of empirical findings, it will be shown that this thesis is false. In the second section, I will examine the feature of direct causation. Searle maintains that this feature can be experienced. I think, however, he is mistaken on this issue, and in this section I will try to show why. Then, in the third section, I will consider the feature of presentationality and other features – such as non-detachability, indexicality, continuousness and determinacy – which derive from presentationality. In the fourth section, I will be concerned with Searle's ideas on the hierarchical structuredness of visual experiences.

1. Consciousness

For Searle, an important feature of perceptual experiences which distinguish them from other paradigm representational states is *consciousness*. Beliefs and desires, as we know, can be either conscious or unconscious. However, when it comes to perceptual experiences, in Searle's view, they are (in most cases) *conscious*.[1]

[1] Here, I use the phrase "in most cases" because, as we will see later in this section, Searle does not hold that perception necessarily involves consciousness. He thinks that there can be unconscious perceptual phenomena, though they occur very rarely.

There are two important issues here. The first concerns the ontological implication of the thesis that consciousness is a special feature of perception. The second can be posed by virtue of the following questions: How exactly should we understand Searle's thesis in question? Does it say that consciousness is a necessary feature of perception? I start with the first issue, and then move onto the second.

Searle thinks that the fact that visual experiences are conscious also has ontological implications, because, for him, all conscious mental states are ontologically subjective. Contrasting visual experiences with paradigm intentional states, Searle maintains that the former are distinct from them in that we need to speak in ontologically neutral terms about beliefs and desires,[2] whereas visual experiences have in general a subjective ontology.[3] He thus writes:

> [V]isual and other sorts of perceptual experiences are conscious mental events. The Intentionality of a representation is independent of whether it is realized in consciousness or not, but in general the Intentionality of a perceptual experience is realized in quite specific phenomenal properties of conscious mental events. For this reason the claim that there are visual experiences goes beyond the claim that the perception has Intentionality, since it is an ontological claim about how the Intentionality is realized; it is, in general, realized in conscious mental events.[4]

Let us now turn to the second issue.

Searle's thesis that consciousness is a special feature of perceptual intentionality is not true. A growing body of experimental work confirms the existence of unconscious perceptual phenomena. Let me mention some of them.

One of these well-known experiments, studied by L. Weiskrantz (1986), concerns *blindsight* cases, which occur as a result of certain brain lesions. In such cases, although the patient can correctly answer the questions about objects in his blind visual field, he claims that he does not see anything. The results of this experiment give us a reason to say that the patient is able to perceive the objects presented to his blind visual field without phenomenology, because if he did not perceive the objects, he could not answer the questions. That is to say, although in his blind visual field the patient does not enjoy any conscious

[2] To remind ourselves, for Searle, "there is no special ontology carried by the notion of representation" (*INT*, 45), which applies to beliefs and desires.

[3] See fn. 7 in Chapter I for the term 'subjective ontology'.

[4] *INT*, 45.

visual experience, the stimuli presented to that field still produce certain processes in the patient's perceptual system, as a result of which the patient gives correct answers. This kind of experiment[5] motivates some philosophers (as well as some psychologists) to maintain that consciousness is not an essential feature of perception.[6]

Searle is also well aware of the experiments which support the idea that there are unconscious perceptual phenomena. However, despite his awareness of them, he still maintains that consciousness is a special feature of perceptual intentionality. This seems problematic, because one might ask: Given that one is aware of the empirical data showing that there are unconscious perceptual phenomena, how can one still claim that consciousness is a special feature of perceptual intentionality? Those who think that this is a reasonable question might assume that there is a conceptual point at issue here. That is to say, one might think that if Searle holds that consciousness is a special feature of perception, then consciousness should be considered as a necessary condition for applying the concept of perception. However, this would be a wrong interpretation of Searle's position. The reason for this is that, when Searle speaks of the specialness of consciousness for perception, he does not maintain that consciousness is a necessary feature of perception; for him, the point at issue here is not conceptual. In contrast, in Searle's view, the claim that visual experiences are conscious mental events is an empirical claim. This claim should be understood in the context in which perception is contrasted with beliefs and desires. Searle maintains that most of our beliefs and desires are unconscious, but when it comes to perception, we can see that it is "in general" or "characteristically" conscious. For him, this means that what the experiments with the blindsight people show are "very marginal cases of perception", in contrast with our daily activity, which is mainly based on conscious perception. By relying on common sense, he reminds us that "[n]obody can drive a car, or for that matter write a book or watch a movie, using only the resources of blindsight".[7] In Searle's view, it is in this empirical sense that consciousness should be understood to be a special feature of perception.

However, to respond to this issue in this way is itself not free from problems, because the empirical works on unconscious perception show that it is not only a marginal

[5] There are also other kinds of similar experiments such as change blindness, binocular rivalry, etc., which back up the thesis that there are unconscious perceptual phenomena.

[6] See, for example, Jesse Prinz (2015). Prinz argues against the view that perception necessarily involves consciousness. In his picture, if there is empirical data showing that consciousness and perception can come apart, then we cannot hold that the former is a necessary feature of the latter.

[7] *STT*, 214-215.

phenomenon occurring in the pathological cases, but also a phenomenon that is characteristic of the perceptual systems of healthy people.

One of the well-studied cases which shows that unconscious perception is characteristic of "normal" perceptual systems is visual masking. In this experiment, two different stimuli are presented to the subjects. The first stimulus is the target stimulus, which the subjects participating in the experiment are asked to identify. The purpose of the second stimulus is to 'mask' the first (the second stimulus is usually a stimulus from figures with different shapes). The main goal in the experiment is to illustrate that, if the first stimulus is presented for under 25 milliseconds, the subjects' answers concerning its identification are at chance level of accuracy. This suggests that the subjects are not conscious of what is presented. Nevertheless, such a brief stimulus can also be perceived.[8]

It is interesting that Searle also mentions some non-pathological cases of unconscious perception. For example, he holds that track runners start moving before they are conscious of the firing of the starter-gun that sets off the race.[9] This is a case which shows that the sound waves from the starter-gun stimulate the auditory system of the runners and the auditory stimulation causes the runners to move before it gets to the stage of consciousness. That is to say, the runners' movements are initiated before they consciously hear that the gun has gone off.

Although, to repeat, such examples are well known to Searle, he tries to belittle their significance by holding either that they are pathological and marginal cases, or that only skilled sportsmen can begin moving before the corresponding stimuli are consciously experienced. For Searle, unconscious perception is not generally characteristic of normal perceivers.

Yet Searle seems to be wrong. If what these empirical findings, including the experiments of visual masking, suggest is true, then we cannot assume that unconscious perception is a rare phenomenon. Unconscious perception can be considered to be characteristic of even normal perceivers as well. The reason for this is that, since, at any given moment when our eyes are open, our perceptual system can be exposed to very brief, different stimuli that never get to the stage of consciousness, it is reasonable to suppose that unconscious visual processing occurs on a much more frequent basis. And this suggests that unconscious perception is neither a marginal phenomenon nor a special feature of the perceptual system of experienced sportsmen or of blindsight people alone. Hence, Searle's

[8] See Naccache & Dehaene (2001).

[9] Cf. *STT*, 212. Unfortunately, Searle does not provide any reference to the literature about this empirical test.

thesis that (in the empirical sense) consciousness is a special feature of perceptual intentionality is false.

2. Direct causation experienced

By *direct causation* (experienced), Searle means the feature of being "experienced as directly caused by the conditions of satisfaction".[10] For Searle, when a person sees, say, a yellow station wagon, she sees that object *as causing* the experience (of seeing a yellow station wagon). In Searle's view, this kind of causation is distinct from the other causal components of a perceptual state (such as the physiological make-up of a perceptual system, information-processing going on in the brain, etc.), because it is also *experience*d by the subject.

To support the idea that perception has an experienced causal component, Searle compares visual experiences with imaginations. He writes:

> Imagine that you have the capacity to form visual images in your imagination that were just as vivid as actually seeing an object. Close your eyes and form a mental image of the scene around you and imagine that you had the capacity to form a mental image that had as much "force and vivacity" (to use Hume's expression) as actually seeing the scene. All the same, there would be a tremendous difference in the phenomenology, because in the case of seeing the scene, you experience the visual experience involuntarily […] You experience the experiences as caused by the scene you are seeing, whereas the visual images that you voluntarily form are experienced as caused by you.[11]

I think that Searle's comparison in this passage is unhelpful and the ideas expressed in it cannot support his thesis that the direct causation is experienced. To see these points, let us dwell further on the passage by explicating the important points in it.

In the passage, Searle maintains that, even if the imagination of an object *x* were as vivid as the visual experience of *x*, their phenomenology would still be different. As the passage claims, this is because the imagination is experienced *voluntarily* but the visual

[10] *STT*, 61.
[11] *STT*, 61-62.

experience *involuntarily*. Searle considers visual experience to be involuntarily experienced, because, for him, given that our eyes are open, "[we] are forced to experience the visual experience by the presence of the scene in front of [us]".[12] And this involuntariness, in his view, makes a phenomenological difference while having a visual experience.

Yet, strictly speaking, Searle makes a mistake when he says that the visual experience is experienced *involuntarily*. In a certain sense, the visual experience, like the imagination, is also experienced voluntarily, because it is up to the subject that undergoes the visual experience to stop it. (Here, I use the phrase "in a certain sense" because, in another sense, there might be room to argue that the visual experience is experienced voluntarily. If a subject with normal perceptual apparatus could not move his head and eyeballs, and could not close the eyes, then he would be forced to see the objects in front of him. But that, of course, does not mean that under normal conditions the visual experience is experienced involuntarily.) For example, under normal conditions, I, as a normal perceiver, can easily stop my visual experience of a yellow station wagon by changing the position of my head or body, so that I do not see that object.

So Searle's position needs qualification, and we can qualify it in the following way. We can maintain that the vivid imagination of *x* is distinct from the visual experience of *x*, because the ways that they depend on my "volition" are distinct. If I want to stop or continue enjoying the visual experience, I need to have different capacities from those which are needed for the imagination. I can open or close my eyes if they are closed or open, or I can change the position of my body or head, if I want to change the content of the experience. However, to imagine something, I need no bodily movement, but only to "internally" entertain or stop the imagination. This is to say, as far as dependence on volition is concerned, the visual experience and the imagination are related to different Background abilities in entertaining or stopping these experiences. And since our Background capacities have an influence on our experiences, that can have different effects on their phenomenology as well.

But how can the fact that this dependence of a visual experience on volition is distinct from that of the imagination show that the content of the visual experience contains a causal element? In my view, the experience-volition relation cannot show that there is a causal element in the content. Apart from the fact that this point seems to be irrelevant for the thesis that the content of a visual experience contains a causal component, this is explainable simply because causality cannot be part of the phenomenal content. If you are doubtful of this claim, just ask yourself: Given that an experience is a qualitative state, what is the "what-it-is-like-

[12] Ibid. 62.

ness" of causation? Suppose you first see a yellow station wagon. Then you turn around and see a big red house. If causality were experienced, there had to be some constant feature shared by these two different experiences. However, although both experiences are (also) caused by their objects, there is no constant experienced feature, no experiential core, between them which can be called *an experienced direct causation*.

A Searlian might nevertheless object that the causal component need not be the same or constant in different visual experiences. He might say that each visual experience has its own causal component which is experienced distinctly. However, this view is question-begging. In that case, the Searlian should answer the question, "Why should part of experienced components of visual experiences be causal?" In Searle's works, I could not find a satisfactory answer to this question, apart from the passage from *STT* quoted above and his statement that we see objects *as causing* our visual experiences. The passage, as mentioned, seemed to be irrelevant as an argument; the statement in question is insufficient as an answer.

Seeing objects *as causing* the visual experience can also be regarded as a specific form of seeing which involves the notion of causation. Nevertheless, for Searle, seeing objects as being caused by the objects seen cannot be a result of the fact that the subject can use the notion of causation while enjoying visual experiences. Searle is clear enough on this point. He thinks that subjects which do not possess the concept of causation, such as young children and animals, can also experience that causation. Therefore, in his picture, causation *as experienced* must be distinct from the notion of causation used in the experience. But, to repeat, Searle has no convincing answer to the question, "Why should we take causation to be experienced in all visual experiences?"

3. Presentationality

Searle holds that the direct causation is also important because it is the basis for an "essential feature" of visual experiences, which he calls *presentationality*. In his view, because of this feature, the visual experience not only represents the object, but also "provides direct access to it".[13] For him in this sense too, visual experiences differ from beliefs and desires:

[13] *INT*, 45-46.

> The visual experience is not an independent entity that represents the objects and state of affairs I am seeing; it gives me *direct perception* of those objects and states of affairs. My beliefs, for example, are a series of propositional *representations*. But that is not how it is with visual experience.[14]

One should be cautious here. Just because the visual experiences are presentations, it does not mean that they are not representations. To avoid such an implication, Searle reminds us that he uses the term 'representation' in a technical sense – namely, as mentioned in Chapter II, this term is for him "a shorthand" for denoting "anything that has conditions of satisfaction".[15] And to the extent that the visual experiences also have conditions of satisfaction and the other "defining conditions" of representations (intentional content, direction of fit, etc.), they are "species of representations".[16]

Furthermore, Searle maintains that presentationality, as a central feature of visual experiences, is a ground for other special features such as *non-detachability*, *indexicality*, *continuousness* and *determinacy*. Of these, the first and second features can be considered to be relational because they characterise the relations between visual experience and its conditions of satisfaction. The third and fourth, however, are features that can be characterised as intrinsic specificities of visual experiences.

Let me consider each one in a more detailed way.

3.1. Non-detachability and indexicality

Searle thinks that it is a consequence of the fact that visual experiences are presentational (and conscious) that they are non-detachable from their conditions of satisfaction. He explains this feature by contrasting visual experiences with thoughts:

> I can shift my thoughts at will. I can stop thinking about San Francisco and think about something else or I can examine the thought independently of the thing that it is a thought about. But in the case where I am actually looking at the scene in front of me, there is no way that I can detach these experiences from the actual scene. I

[14] *STT*, 61.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

> cannot shuffle these experiences around at will, the way I can shuffle representations around at will.[17]

In Searle's view, another consequence of non-detachability, together with (conscious) presentationality of visual experiences, is that they are "essentially indexical" – namely they are "essentially of the here and now". Here, again, Searle compares visual experiences with paradigm intentional states:

> My desires and my beliefs are not tied to my immediate environment in the way my visual experiences are. But when I open my eyes and look around in broad daylight, it is not up to me what I see; rather I am, by the very nature of the visual experience, forced to see the here and the now.[18]

Since I accept these views without reservations, let me directly consider the next features.

3.2. Continuousness and determinacy

Searle maintains that provided that our eyes are open in full light and we are conscious, our visual experiences present the environment around us "in a continuous fashion". (For the comparison, he adds that "beliefs have a kind of discreteness" in this respect.) *Continuousness*, on his view, is "both spatial and temporal", because "the world itself is continuous spatially and temporally, and the perception presents the world to me".[19]

Another special feature of perception for Searle that "derives from the presentational character of the intentionality" is *determinacy*. An easy way to show how Searle understands this feature is to consider again his comparison of perception with paradigm intentional states. Searle writes that perception "gives determinacy in a way that representations do not".[20] For Searle, beliefs and desires do not represent their objects in a determinate way. On his view, objects (or the world) are always determinate but representations are not. He uses the following example to explicate the point:

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[17] Ibid. 63.

[18] Ibid. 65-66.

[19] Ibid. 67.

[20] Ibid. 68. Notice that Searle, in contrasting perception with the paradigm intentional states, treats it as *not* being a kind of representation. This is incompatible with his use of the term 'representation' because, as we noted earlier, he holds that this term denotes all kinds of intentional states which have conditions of satisfaction.

> If I have a *belief* that Sally has brown hair, that belief represents the world in an indeterminate way. What exact shade of brown? What exact texture of shade of brown? Sally's actual hair is determinate in all its features, but the representation in the form of a belief is not in that way determinate.[21]

Furthermore, in this context, Searle mentions Leibniz's determinism. Like Leibniz, he also thinks that reality is determinate. And he adds that perception exhibit this feature as well.[22] However, Searle is not clear enough on this issue. It is especially difficult to understand him when he mentions Leibniz's determinism, because Searle does not clarify this remark.

There is nonetheless here a point that can shed a light on what Searle means. This is again Searle's comparison of visual experiences with beliefs. The main idea of the above example is similar to the idea of *richness* of visual experiences, as elaborated by Dretske (1981) and Martin (1992). The latter idea, when it is stripped of all details, comes down to the view that visual experiences usually convey more detailed information about their objects than the corresponding beliefs do. If what Searle means by the *determinacy* of perception is the same as, or similar to, what Dretske and Martin call the *richness* of perception, then he seems to be right on this issue. *Determinacy* in this sense, we might say, is a special feature of visual experiences.

4. Hierarchical structuredness

In *STT*, Searle also puts forward the view that visual experiences are structured hierarchically. Although he does not examine this feature in the chapter where he considers the special features of visual experiences, it is obvious that being hierarchically structured is

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[21] *STT*, 68.

[22] Searle nonetheless holds that if we compare the determinacy of perception with the determinacy of reality, we can see that the former is not as determinate as the latter:

> The visual experience cannot be fully determinate, because it is not reality itself. It is a *presentation* of certain aspects of reality, but not of all […] For example, humans cannot see the infrared and ultraviolet colors of the object that we are perceiving, because of the limitations of our perceptual apparatus […] (*STT*, 68).

also a special feature of perceptual intentionality; intentional states such as beliefs and desires does not represent their objects hierarchically. Searle explains this feature as follows:

> [T]he visual experience for normal humans is extremely rich in its intentional content. I do not just see colors and shapes, but I see cars and houses, and indeed, I do not just see cars and houses, I see my car and my house, for example. Now, how is all of that possible? It is possible because the rich intentional content requires a hierarchical structure of lower perceptual features, all of which are part of the content of the seeing as.[23]

So, in this passage, Searle maintains that one sees all objects as having basic features – colors and shapes – and without seeing basic features, one cannot see higher-level features (cars, houses, etc.). Moreover, he thinks that the higher-level features can also be subdivided into different levels. To use Searle's example, I cannot see a black car unless I see its shape and color. Also, I cannot see this car as a *911 Carrera 4* (a more higher-level feature) unless I see it as a car. As Searle puts it, "in each case, the perception of the object as having the higher level feature requires perception of the lower level features".[24] Being a car or being a 911 Carrera 4 are not basic features, because one sees the objects as having these features, only if their basic features are seen. Thus, the fact that one sees very different objects in the world is parasitic on one's perception of their lower level (or more basic) features.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the features that Searle considered to be specifically possessed by visual experiences. I have argued that Searle makes some mistakes about this issue. His thesis that consciousness is a special feature of perceptual intentionality is false. Moreover, I have tried to show that, *pace* Searle, the feature of direct causation of perception cannot be experienced.

[23] *STT*, 111.

[24] Ibid. 112.

CHAPTER VI

The Central Thesis of the Theory of Perception Reconsidered

In *STT*, Searle reconsiders the central thesis of his theory of perception – the thesis that the intentional content of a visual experience determines the conditions of satisfaction – by focusing on the phenomenological features of visual experiences. The central chapters of *STT* are mainly dedicated to answering the following question:

(Q): How do the phenomenological features of a visual experience determine ("at least in part") the conditions of satisfaction?

Notice that, in this later work, Searle changes the central question of his theory of perception. Instead of asking "What are the conditions of satisfaction of a visual experience which are determined by the intentional content?", in *STT* he focuses on the hypothesis that *the phenomenological features* of a visual experience determine or fix the conditions of satisfaction.

In this chapter, in showing how Searle answers (Q), I will be concerned with two further issues: 1) I will try to show how Searle changes his method of investigation; and 2) on the basis of colour experience as an example, I will address the question "What are the conditions of satisfaction determined by the phenomenological features of a visual experience?".

Let me start with the first issue.

1. Searle's new method

A specificity of *STT*, as a work of Searle's later period, is that, in this work, Searle changes his method for answering some similar questions on which he already focused in *INT*. (Q) is one of these questions. In *STT*, this question is answered differently because the method Searle uses to answer it is distinct. The gist of the new method, which Searle calls the *Backward road*, is to reconsider the relation between a perceptual experience and its

conditions of satisfaction. The main idea of the *Backward road* boils down to the following: the direction of explanation of the relation between an experience and the conditions of satisfaction should go from the world to the experience, but not from the experience to the world. This means that, in *STT*, Searle does not follow the tradition of analytic philosophy, the tradition that in its analysis goes from representation to the world. To analyse the truth conditions of a sentence, a philosopher following the analytic tradition first focuses on the meaning of the sentence, because it is the meaning (representation) which determines its truth conditions. In *INT*, Searle applied the traditional method by asking "What are the elements that go to make up the truth conditions of sentences of the form 'x sees y' where x is a perceiver, human or animal, and y is, for example, a material object?"[1] However, now he thinks that we need not apply the same method in order to analyse the truth conditions of the sentence which describes a visual experience or the conditions of satisfaction of that experience.

In *STT*, Searle gives two reasons for choosing the new method. The first is that, because of the drawbacks he discovered later, he does not want to use the method of *INT* (which is the method of the analytic tradition), which he calls *disquotational.* (Searle says that he does not use the traditional notion of disquotation, according to which, for specifying truth conditions, we simply need to drop the quotation marks on the right-hand side as follows: 'S is P' is true if and only if S is P. Searle holds that he "[has] extended that notion in cases where we have a commonality but without quotation marks".[2]) The second reason is that Searle now comes up with the idea that the relation between the experience and the conditions of satisfaction is *internal*.

Let me consider these two reasons in detail, beginning with the first. Searle tells that, in *INT*, he did not think that "there was a substantive question of how *intrinsic* perceptual intentionality fixes conditions of satisfaction".[3] In this work, he simply took for granted that (intrinsically) intentional mental states, including perceptual experiences, determine their conditions of satisfaction. Therefore, to specify conditions of satisfaction, he used a "disquotational" method, without seeking any other specific reason for the specification in this way. In *STT*, to explain this point of *INT* with an example, he wrote:

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[1] *INT*, 37.

[2] *STT*, 134, fn5. To better understand what Searle means here, remember how we state conditions of satisfaction of intentional states: in stating them, we do not need to use quotation marks on the left-hand side, although there is a commonality with the specification of the truth conditions of sentences here.

[3] *STT*, 115.

> The only reason that we can give why [the visual experience that there is a red ball there] fixes the conditions of satisfaction that there is a red ball there is that this experience is precisely one of seeming to see that there is a red ball there, in the sense that it is satisfied only if the presence and redness of the ball are causing this very visual experience.
>
> On this disquotational conception there cannot be any question of how the raw phenomenology fixes the conditions of satisfaction, because the raw phenomenology just is the presentation of those conditions of satisfaction.[4]

Yet, as already stated, in *STT* Searle puts aside the method of *INT*, which is mentioned in this passage. He now comes up with the idea that "[(Q)] has to be answered non-intentionalistically" (i.e. without using the disquotational method). Searle thinks this for two reasons: first, he regards visual experiences as events in the world; according to Searle's viewpoint in *STT*, given that a visual experience is an event, it must have some non-intentional features in virtue of which its conditions of satisfaction are determined. Second, Searle now thinks that the "disquotational" (i.e. intentional) specification is circular and it therefore "does not explain anything".[5] Here is how Searle, mentioning the basic visual experiences such as the seeing of colour or shape, explicates his second reason:

> [I]t is true that the experiences of the basic features have intrinsic intentionality, but those very intrinsic intentional features are intentional *in virtue of* something, and that something has now got to be specified, and it cannot be specified simply disquotationally. That they are basic and that they are intrinsically intentional seemed to me to imply that there is nothing more to be said. But that is a mistake. The point that the basic visual features have intrinsic intentionality does not by itself answer the question, How do they get the specific intentionality that they have?[6]

These were the reasons why in *STT* Searle gives up the disquotational method. Let me now turn to Searle's second reason for choosing the new method: the *Backward road*.

The second reason that motivated Searle to choose the *backward* explanation, to remind ourselves, was that there is an *internal* relation "between the character of the

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. 117.

[6] Ibid.

experience and the condition of satisfaction".[7] By *internal relation*, Searle means a relation whose relata are essentially or systematically connected to each other. He explains this kind of relation by contrasting visual experiences with sentences. In his view, there is no internal relation between a sentence and its conditions of satisfaction, because the meaning of the sentence is conventional. This means that "that very sentence could be used to mean anything".[8] However, the relation between the visual experience, say, of red and the property of being red, is not conventional but internal. For Searle, this is because there is a systematic relation between the property of being red and the experience of seeing something as red. He maintains that it is the essence of the property of being red that it causes *this* kind of experience in normal perceivers under normal conditions. In Searle's view, if two entities A and B instantiate an internal relation, then there must be a causal relation between them and that causal relation must be essential. In other words, for him, if A causes B, then in order for this causal relation to be an internal relation, it must be the essence of A that it is capable of causing B.

Searle invokes the essentiality constraint because he believes that causality alone is not enough to characterise this kind of relation. For him, "[b]y itself causation has no explanatory power […]".[9] He presents the point in question in the following way:

> Let us suppose that a certain sort of experience is caused by red objects. That is indeed the case, but by itself that does not explain why the experience has red objects as the condition of satisfaction. Roughly speaking, anything can cause anything. Suppose seeing red objects invariably caused in me a painful sensation. This would not make the painful sensation into an intentional state that had redness as its condition of satisfaction.[10]

Thus, in Searle's view, because a causal relation between the experience and the external object that causes that experience can be abnormal, we need to confine that relation to those cases which are central to normal perceivers. And for him, this is to say that the internal relation in question is both causal and essential.[11]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid. 119.

[10] Ibid. 119-120.

[11] Furthermore, Searle maintains that the point at issue here is definitional. He writes: "The internal connection between the experience and its object is guaranteed by the fact that the object essentially, so to speak, *by*

Yet Searle's notion of internal relation is confusing. This is because there are passages in the same chapter of *STT* in which Searle also takes the internal relation to be the relation between the property of being red and the property of causing the experience of red. It turns out that, for Searle, the internal relation is not only a relation between a visual experience and its conditions of satisfaction. For example, on p. 125, he writes:

> The fact that makes [an object] red is, at least in part, that it is capable of causing a certain sort of experience. So you get an internal set of relations of something *being red* and it *causing a certain sort of visual experience*.[12]

Notice that in this passage Searle does not say that the internal relation, which motivates him to prefer the *Backward road*, is a relation between the experience and the property of being red, but that it is a relation between the property of *being red* and the property of *causing the experience of seeing something as red*. The problem here is that, even if both were internal relations in the sense that there is a systematic or essential connection between their relata, these two relations still had to be regarded as different, at least in the context in which Searle considers them. The reason for this is that, as Searle states at the beginning of the corresponding chapter of *STT*, what should support the thesis that the phenomenal features of a visual experience determine the conditions of satisfaction is the assumption that there is an internal relation between the *content* of the experience and its *conditions of satisfaction*, not that there is an internal relation between the corresponding property of being *x* and the property of causing the visual experience of *x*. This is because the kind of relation which exists between "two" properties is distinct from the kind of relation which exists between the content of the experience and the conditions of satisfaction. Strictly speaking, for Searle, the property of being red and the property of causing the experience of seeing something as red are not two different properties, but one and the same property under two different names. In Searle's view, the concept of *causing the experience of seeing something as red* defines *redness*. "[T]he essence of redness", he writes, "is the ability to

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definition consists in, at least in part, the ability to cause that type of experience" (*STT*, 127; emphasis added). That is to say, we first assume that there is something in the world which has the ability to systematically cause a certain experience in normal perceivers, and then we invoke a concept defined to pick up this property. He thinks that this also shows that the relation between the experience and the conditions of satisfaction is conceptual (or necessary) (cf. STT, 144).

[12] *STT*, 125; emphasis added.

cause experiences that have this character […]".[13] This means that the property of being red *is* the property of causing the experience of seeing something as red[14] ('is' here denotes the identity relation). If this is true, then we should keep apart the kind of relation which exists between the experience and its conditions of satisfaction from the kind of relation which exists between the property of being red and the property of causing the experience of red. The reason for this is that the former is not an identity relation (furthermore, in the former relation, the first relatum, in contrast to the latter, is not defined by the second relatum).

However, to answer the question "What are the relata of the internal relation?" is not so difficult if we remember that Searle has invoked the notion of internal relation to ground the *Backward road*. This road is supposed to lead from the world to representations, and therefore it is reasonable to regard the notion of an internal relation as a notion which applies to the relation between the experience and its conditions of satisfaction.

2. Answering the question of how phenomenological features of a visual experience determine the conditions of satisfaction

So far, we have discussed Searle's reasons for choosing the *Backward road*. Now let us focus on the issue of how Searle answers (Q) in virtue of this method.

His answer to this question is as follows. The phenomenological features of a visual experience determine the conditions of satisfaction, because it is (in part) the essence of the conditions of satisfaction that they have the ability to cause *this* kind of experience.[15] In other words, Searle's "non-intentionalistical" answer to (Q) is that there is an internal or systematic relation between the experience and the conditions of satisfaction.[16] And for him, the

[13] Ibid. 124. In another place in *STT*, he says that "[t]he object of the experience [the property of being red, in our example] is its cause and these features are defined by their ability […] to cause these sorts of experiences" (*STT*, 134; bracketed expressions are mine).

[14] This point, of course, is "generalizable to all colors". As Searle puts it, "[f]or an object to be a certain color is simply for it to be capable of causing certain sorts of experiences in normal perceivers under normal lighting conditions" (*STT*, 125).

[15] Cf. *STT*, 124.

[16] Searle indeed thinks that the systematic internal relation is not enough for holding that the property of being red is the condition of satisfaction of a visual experience of seeing something as red. On his picture, "for something to be the object of a perceptual experience is for it to be experienced as the cause of the experience" (122f). Here I set aside this point, because I have already focused on it in Chapter V.

obtaining of such a relation explains how phenomenal features of a visual experience determine the conditions of satisfaction.

Searle extends this analysis to higher-level perceptual features as well. For him, higher-level features (being a book, being a computer, being a redwood tree, etc.) are seen on the basis of seeing basic features such as colour and shape. In other words, he thinks that we recognise higher-level features because we see basic perceptual features that make them up:

> I recognize [a California coastal redwood] in virtue of the fact that there is a particular set of features to the structure of the tree and the structure of fronds that constitute the visible features of the California redwood. Now the features that go to make up the fronds' colors and shapes, and the bark color, shape, and texture, are all basic features. I can make a composite of the basic features to get the totality. I have been taught that anything that causes this sort of visual experience is a California coastal redwood.[17]

So, for Searle, the content of the corresponding experience determines the conditions of satisfaction, because the property of being something (a higher-level feature) is partly constituted by being able to essentially cause the sorts of experiences that it causes. "[H]aving those features", Searle tells us, "is a matter of causing certain sorts of visual experiences".[18]

Thus, for the explanation of higher-level cases as well, Searle uses the method which he has elaborated for the analysis of basic features.

3. Conditions of satisfaction determined by the phenomenological features of a visual experience

A remaining important issue here is to clarify the conditions of satisfaction of a visual experience which are determined by its phenomenological features. According to Searle's theory of perception, the conditions of satisfaction of an experience are an entity which causes that experience. For example, to say that the conditions of satisfaction of the experience of seeing something as red are the property of being red is to say that this property causes *this* kind of experience. However, the problem here is that it is often difficult to specify

[17] *STT*, 144-145.

[18] Ibid. 144.

phenomenological properties. When we think, for example, about colour, we can have two different specifications of it. On the one hand, under the influence of physics, we can be tempted to characterising colours as mind-independent entities in the world; on the other hand, we say that colours are entities to which we have access by virtue of our subjective visual experiences. According to the first characterisation, colour is a physical property, or more exactly, a certain reflectance profile of objects. On this characterisation, we see the world in different colours because the surfaces of objects reflect photons with different wavelengths. For example, the surface of a red object emits light waves at approximately 650 nm. Nevertheless, those who tend to give a subjectivist characterisation of colour maintain that colour is a property which makes objects *look* colourful in normal circumstances and for normal observers. According to this view, we see the world in different colours because different objects have abilities to appear in distinctive ways to us. In other words, they have powers to cause different colour experiences. This view is often called *subjectivist*, because, on this view, colours are defined in terms of how the relevant aspects of the world seem to the perceiving subject. I think that both views are correct and they are not incompatible with each other. These views invoke two notions of colour which define it in two distinct ways: colour as a property of being able to reflect light waves, and colour as a property of being able to cause certain experiences in us.[19]

Searle mainly uses the second notion of colour when he speaks of the conditions of satisfaction of a colour experience. For him, the content of the experience of seeing something as red determines its conditions of satisfaction as *a property of being able to cause this kind of experience.* Nevertheless, he does not deny that the corresponding reflectance profile is also part of the conditions of satisfaction. In *STT*, Searle says that the phenomenological features of a colour experience determine, *at least in part*, the conditions of satisfaction.[20] In footnote 6 of Chapter 4, he explains the purpose of using the expression "at least in part" by reminding us that, by the term 'colour', physicists mainly mean photon emissions. Searle therefore thinks that, strictly speaking, the conditions of satisfaction of the experience of seeing something as red should involve two properties: the property of being able to emit or reflect photons (which I henceforth refer to as *RP*), and the property of being able to cause *this* kind of experience (henceforth, *CP*). Searle's view suggests that the content of the experience can only determine the latter as its conditions of satisfaction.

[19] See Jackson (2007) for a more detailed explanation of how the distinction between these two properties is motivated.

[20] Cf. *STT*, 100.

It seems to me that Searle is right when he says that the conditions of satisfaction determined by the phenomenological features of an experience are CP. Yet I think that, in contrast to Searle, RP is not part of the conditions of satisfaction of the corresponding experience. This is not because, as Searle also holds, RP cannot be determined by the content, but because it is irrelevant to the content of the experience at all.

To see this, let me specify the conditions of satisfaction of the experience of seeing something as red:

(S): The experience of seeing something as red is satisfied if and only if it is caused by CP in normal perceivers under normal conditions.

(S) does not mention RP, because there is nothing in the content of the experience which (representationally) stands for it. Moreover, in (S) we cannot change CP with RP. This is because, first, RP is a distal cause of the experience; second, different reflectance profiles can be a ground for causing the same kind of experience (for example, photon emissions with wavelengths at 650 nm, 652 nm, 655 nm cause the same visual experience)), such that RP, in contrast to CP, is a continuous magnitude which considerably outstrips our representational capacities.

There are also empirical grounds for thinking that RP is irrelevant as conditions of satisfaction of the colour experience. One of them, I think, is the visual spectrum which shows that very different reflectance profiles can exemplify properties of being able to cause relatively similar visual experiences. Violet, which stands on the left end of the spectrum, is experientially much more similar to red, which is on the far right end of the spectrum, than to blue. Yet, if we consider them objectively, violet (390-455 nm) is much closer to blue (455-492 nm) than to red (622-780 nm). This shows that qualitatively similar experiences can have very distinct external stimuli.

Another empirical support for the point at issue here can be a rainbow. Goldstone & Hendrickson (2009) tell us about an interesting feature of the rainbow, when they write:

> When we look at a rainbow, we tend to see about seven distinct bands of colour, even though we know from physics that the dominant wavelength of light that meets one's eye changes smoothly from the top to bottom of the rainbow. Although the rainbow presents itself to us with *a continuous and full range of visible wavelengths*

of light, we tend to see it in terms of distinct colors such as red, yellow, blue, and violet.[21]

So, the rainbow case, like the visual spectrum, illustrates that there is no smooth correlation between CP and RP. And this can show how these properties come apart.

All these aspects – the point concerning (S) and the above-mentioned empirical grounds – give us reason for saying that RP cannot be considered to be the conditions of satisfaction of the experience of seeing something as red.[22] What is determined by the phenomenological features of the visual experience is only the property of being able to cause *this* kind of experience. That is to say, Searle's addition of "at least in part" can be avoided because, by this expression, Searle means the property of being able to emit photons, which is irrelevant to the content of the experience.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered how (Q) is "nonintentionalistically" answered by Searle. We have seen that, in *STT*, Searle uses another method, *the Backward road*, to answer this question. By virtue of this method, he puts forward the view that the phenomenological features of a visual experience determine the conditions of satisfaction because there is an internal relation between the experience and the conditions of satisfaction. Moreover, in this chapter, I have tried to show that the expression "at least in part" in Searle's thesis that the conditions of satisfaction are determined, at least in part, by the phenomenological features of the experience, is redundant, because the reflectance profiles of objects, for which the expression in question is added, cannot be a part of the conditions of satisfaction.

[21] Goldstone & Hendrickson (2009), 69; emphasis added.

[22] Notice that, given that RP is not (part of) the conditions of satisfaction, here we cannot use the distinction between conditions of satisfaction as *a requirement* and conditions of satisfaction as *a thing*. The reason for this is that, provided that CP is the only conditions of satisfaction, there is no possibility from the side of the world to make the experience satisfied by a more specific entity. This is because what satisfies the experience, or the property of being able to cause *this* kind of experience, is defined in virtue of the kind of the experience. However, if RP is the conditions of satisfaction, we could assume that the conditions of satisfaction of the experience of seeing something as red are wavelengths at 650 nm in one case, but 655 nm in another case, etc. That is to say, in each different case, the conditions of satisfaction as *a thing* could be distinct reflectance profiles.

CHAPTER VII

The Background of Visual Experiences

In this chapter I will examine Searle's following thesis:

(VB): The content of a visual experience determines the conditions of satisfaction against the Background.

I will be concerned with (VB) by considering the examples that motivate Searle to postulate this thesis. In his works, Searle provides diverse examples to support (VB). Yet I think some of his examples are unhelpful in this respect. In this discussion I will try to show why it is so. Moreover, in my view, since there are some cases which indicate that visual experiences can also *not* be affected by the rest of the mind, (VB), as a general thesis, should be given up.

I have divided Searle's examples for (VB) into two groups. The first group contains the examples which, for him, suggest a certain relation between visual experience and *the background intentional state* that affects it. Searle gives these examples in *INT*. The second group tries to show how some Background capacities, which are *part of the perceptual system*, play a role in the determination of conditions of satisfaction. In *STT*, (VB) is explained in virtue of the second group of examples.

Let me begin with the first group.

1. The examples from *INT*

In this work, Searle shows that (VB) is partially motivated by the empirical findings which indicate that our expectations and linguistic skills affect how we see the world. He makes recourse to L. Postman et al. (1951), which suggests that the expectations "select, organize, and transform" the perceptual information. Moreover, in *INT*, to support (VB), Searle maintains that concepts which we possess also affect our visual experiences. He provides three kinds of examples to illustrate these issues. However, I think that some of these

examples are not acceptable in this respect. Some of them are even incompatible with (VB). Let me focus on this issue by considering Searle's examples one by one.

Here is the passage with the *first* example:

> Consider, for example, the difference between looking at the front of a house where one takes it to be the front of a whole house and looking at the front of a house where one takes it to be a mere façade, e.g., as part of a movie set. If one believes one is seeing a whole house, the front of the house actually looks different from the way it looks if one believes one is seeing a false façade of a house, even though the optical stimuli may be identical in the two cases. And this difference in the actual character of the visual experiences is reflected in the differences between the two sets of conditions of satisfaction. It is part of the content of my visual experience when I look at a whole house that I expect the rest of the house to be there if, for example, I enter the house or go around to the back. In these sorts of cases the character of the visual experience and its conditions of satisfaction will be affected by the content of the beliefs that one has about the perceptual situation.[1]

The passage with its example of seeing a house suggests the following points: 1) The belief that I see a house/façade affects the visual experience in the sense that, depending on the background belief, the conditions of satisfaction of the visual experience will be distinct; 2) The content of the visual experience contains the expectation that the rest of the house is there. Let us consider these points.

It seems that Searle is right concerning the first point – the background belief can affect the conditions of satisfaction. Nevertheless, this is not general for all such cases. To see this, we should clarify an important issue here. If we remember the idea of hierarchical structuredness of visual experiences, we can notice that seeing a house or the façade of a house cannot be possible without seeing its basic features, such as shape and color. And the point here is that the visual experience of the basic perceptual features of the object cannot be affected by such background beliefs. Namely, independent of whether I see the object as a house or as a mere façade in a movie set, the conditions of satisfaction of the experience of seeing the object's color and shape do not change. That is to say, Searle's thesis that the background beliefs affect visual experiences does not apply to the experience of seeing the basic perceptual features. Yet, in *INT*, Searle does not mention this point. The gist of the first

[1] *INT*, 55.

example is only to show how the background belief affects seeing higher-level features of the object (or at least Searle's example in question suggests only this). To put this otherwise, Searle does not show how (VB) is applicable to the experience of seeing objects as having basic perceptual features. This is, I think, an important point which suggests that (VB) is not general to all visual experiences.

The second point of the first example seems simply false – the content of the visual experience cannot contain an expectation. Of course, we can expect, and believe, many things when we look at different objects. But this does not mean that we can hold that the content of the experience contains an expectation. An expectation is a kind of intentional state and the content of visual experiences cannot contain any other sort of intentional states. Moreover, it is important to notice that even if, for the sake of the discussion, we accepted that the content of the visual experience somehow contains the expectation, that would still not support (VB). The reason for this is that, even in that case, the expectation would not be part of the Background (or of the Network of intentional states) that affects the experience to determine the conditions of satisfaction. Rather, it would be part of the content itself.

Searle's *second* example concerns the cases "where the content of the beliefs is actually inconsistent with the content of the visual experience".[2] He reminds us that, when we see the moon on the horizon, it looks us to be bigger than it does when it is overhead. That is to say, in these two cases, we have inconsistent visual experiences. Yet although the experiences are inconsistent with each other, our belief that the moon is of the same size remains constant.[3] In such cases, Searle says that "the Intentionality of belief [overrides] the Intentionality of our visual experiences".[4] In virtue of such examples, Searle comes to the conclusion that "[t]he same beliefs coexist with different visual experiences with different conditions of satisfaction even though the content of the experiences is inconsistent with the content of the beliefs and is overridden by the beliefs".[5]

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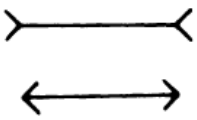
[2] *INT*, 55.

[3] Another example for this, also used by Searle, is Müller-Lyer lines:



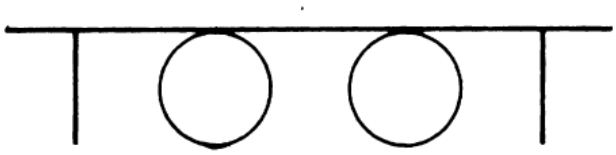
These lines exhibit an optical illusion. Although the lines have the same length, they look to be different lengths to us.

[4] *INT*, 56.

[5] Ibid. 57.

Yet Searle's second example and that of Müller-Lyer lines (see footnote 3) are not only unhelpful to explain (VB) but also misleading in that respect. Such examples are famously used to show how our visual experiences can resist influence from the cognitive part of the mind. For example, Z. Pylyshyn (1999), who also mentions Müller-Lyer lines as an example, argues that perception is cognitively impenetrable. (To remind us, Searle's purpose is contrary to Pylyshyn's: (VB) suggests that the cognitive part of the mind affects perception.) Even if you measure Müller-Lyer lines and form the belief that the lines have the same length, this belief does not make the perceptual illusion disappear. Hence, we can conclude that the corresponding belief cannot play any role in the determination of the experience's conditions of satisfaction. (The same goes for the "moon" example.) In that sense it is obscure why Searle uses this kind of examples when he tries to back up (VB).

Searle's *third* example is to show how visual experiences differ as a result of the Background effect, but that their conditions of satisfaction remain constant. He uses the following figure to illustrate this:



Searle says that the above figure can be seen in different ways. One can see it "as the word 'TOOT', as a table with two large balloons underneath, as the numeral 1001 with a line over the top, as a bridge with two pipelines crossing underneath, as the eyes of a man wearing a hat with a string hanging down each side, and so on".[6] Searle adds that, although the visual stimuli remain constant, these are different experiences. Because we have mastered different concepts and cultural skills, this enables us to see the above figure in different ways. In Searle's view, using concepts in visual experiences and the corresponding cultural skills are "the Background capacities that [we] bring to bear on the experience",[7] and, without having them, we could not see the figure in such different ways. For example, without the ability of reading, one could not have the experience of seeing this figure as the word "TOOT".

Searle seems to be right when he says that the concepts and cultural skills the subject possess affect how the figure above is seen. This example shows that, given that bringing concepts to visual experiences is a Background capacity, the content of the experience *can*

[6] *INT*, 54.

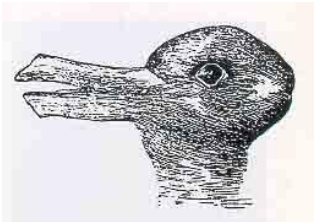
[7] *STT*, 74.

require this capacity to determine the conditions of satisfaction. However, this does not mean that the visual experience should *always* need the conceptual apparatus to determine the conditions of satisfaction. Suppose that a man who has never seen a duck and a rabbit, and who does not possess either the concept of duck or the concept of rabbit, is looking at Jastrow's duck-rabbit picture.[8] In that case, the visual experience of this man cannot have the conditions of satisfaction that there is a picture of a rabbit, or a picture of a duck, there. Nevertheless, his visual experience *does* have conditions of satisfaction. (The visual experience has non-conceptual phenomenological features and they determine certain other conditions of satisfaction.) That is why the content of his experience does not necessarily need the conceptual apparatus to determine conditions of satisfaction.

Searle's conclusion concerning the third example is also mistaken. He claims that seeing the above figure as the word "TOOT", as a table with two large balloons underneath, as the numeral 1001 with a line over the top, etc. has the same conditions of satisfaction. His reason for this is that, in this case, "we are not in the least inclined to think anything is different in the real world corresponding to differences in the experiences".[9] For Searle, the figure is the same figure and the only thing that changes is the visual experience. This view is also incorrect, for the experiences have different conditions of satisfaction. Seeing the figure as the word 'TOOT' is distinct from seeing the figure, say, as a table with two large balloons underneath, because in the first case the conditions of satisfaction of the experience are the property of resembling a token of the word 'TOOT', but in the second case the conditions of satisfaction are the property of resembling a table with two large balloons underneath. If the figure, say, did not resemble the word 'TOOT', the experience of seeing figure as 'TOOT' would not be satisfied.

Moreover, notice that, even if Searle were right on this issue, then he has to say the same thing concerning the first and the duck/rabbit example as well. The reason for this is that, in these examples too, our experiences are caused by the same stimuli. Or, to use Searle's own phrase, in the first example (and in the duck/rabbit example), too, by seeing the object in one case as a house (a duck) and in another case as a façade (a rabbit), the subjects

[8] Jastrow's duck-rabbit picture:



[9] *INT*, 56.

do not think that there is a change "in the real world corresponding to differences in the experiences"[10]. However, as mentioned, when it comes to these examples, Searle does not say that the visual experiences have the same conditions of satisfaction.

2. The examples from *STT*

In *STT*, Searle tries to back up (VB) by considering some capacities of the perceptual system. In this work, he chooses the phenomenon of depth perception to explain the Background of visual experiences. Searle says that the perception of depth is also related to our Background ability. This is, for him, the ability which converts a two dimensional stimulus on our retina to the perception of three dimensional objects. In his view, that Background ability is subject to the laws of perspective, and the mastery of such abilities is important for the determination of conditions of satisfaction:

> The impact of the light on the visual system will produce effects in the subjective visual field that are consequences of the laws of perspective. So, if you are looking at the railroad tracks extending away from you into the distance, your subjective visual field will contain the subjective correlates of two lines getting progressively closer together toward the top of the objective visual field. The basic subjective elements [the visual correlates of lines and angels] do not fix the conditions of satisfaction of three-dimensional space by themselves. But given our Background mastery of perspective, the subjective visual field carries an intentional content that has the three-dimensional as its conditions of satisfaction.[11]

Given that the ability to convert the two dimensional stimulus into the three-dimensional perception is a Background ability, the example in this passage supports (VB). To understand this more clearly, we can assume a case in which this, or a similar, ability is distinct; and its result is that the visual experience has distinct conditions of satisfaction.

There are some empirical findings which can be helpful here. W. H. R. Rivers' (1901) research, for example, showed that the indigenous people of the Australian Murray Island had

[10] Ibid.

[11] *STT*, 140-141; Bracketed expressions are mine.

a distinct perception of Müller-Lyer lines.[12] He noted that since these people lived in the environment which did not contain many rectilinear entities, their perceptual system was less susceptible to the Müller-Lyer illusion.[13] To use Searle's terminology, that is to say that the indigenous people of the Australian Murray had a distinct Background ability to perceive some entities. This suggests that when they looked at the Müller-Lyer lines, their visual experiences were distinct from the corresponding experiences of the European people, also in the sense that their experiences had distinct conditions of satisfaction.

If we compare Searle's example from *STT* with the house/façade example from *INT*, we can see that, in these examples, there is a distinction in the kind of the relations between the visual experience and the Background.[14] In the example of *STT*, the Background is a constitutive part of the perceptual system. In other words, the two-dimensional stimulus on the retina alone, which is a subjective correlate of the basic perceptual feature of (say) the railroad tracks, is not sufficient to be able to see the railroad tracks as extending away into the distance.[15] We need here the corresponding ability which makes the experience possible by converting the stimulus to the three-dimensional perception. However, when it comes to the house/façade example, we cannot say that the background belief that affects the visual experience in question is a constitutive part of the experience. (As has been stated above, the belief that I see a house/façade cannot be part of the perceptual system.)

Most of Searle's unhelpful examples we discussed above concern cases in which the relation between the Background and the visual experience is similar to the relation between the background belief and the experience in the house/façade example. This might at first glance suggest that, if we want to back up (VB), we should consider the cases in which the Background is a constitutive part of the visual experience. However, there can be cases which show that this view is incorrect. In *STT*, Searle mentions an interesting feature of the paintings of the prominent Spanish Renaissance artist El Greco. El Greco painted elongated figures. In the early 1900s, there was an explanation according to which the reason for El Greco's weird painting style was that he suffered from uncommon astigmatism, and so he perceived everything as elongated. On this hypothesis, when El Greco saw an object which would look ordinary to normal perceivers, he experienced the object as vertically stretched-out, and therefore he painted an elongated object. However, as Searle also emphasises, this is not a

[12] See footnote 3.

[13] A similar experiment with different people was conducted by M. H. Segall, et. al. (1963) and John W. Berry (1968).

[14] Here I compare them because they both support (VB).

[15] The example has been taken from *STT*.

correct explanation; even if El Greco truly saw the object as vertically stretched-out, that could not be the reason for the fact that he painted elongated objects. This is because, given that El Greco painted exactly what he saw, he would see not only the objects, but also the paintings of these objects as elongated. Yet although El Greco's paintings looked elongated to him, we would see them as normally as we see the objects which the paintings are of.

Now, let us forget about the paintings and suppose that El Greco really suffered from a certain kind of astigmatism so that he saw objects as vertically stretched-out. To use Searle's terminology, that would be to say that El Greco had a distinct Background capacity to see objects. To this Searle would add that this astigmatism would affect the determination of conditions of satisfaction of his visual experiences. Thus, Searle's theory suggests that, if El Greco really suffered from this kind of astigmatism, the conditions of satisfaction of his experience of seeing an object as having, say, a height of one meter would be distinct from the conditions of satisfaction of the corresponding visual experiences of normal perceivers. However, I think that this would be wrong; El Greco would not perceive objects as having different heights. If a normal perceiver and El Greco saw an object with one meter height, they would have different visual experiences. Nevertheless, the conditions of satisfaction of both experiences would be the same. This is because El Greco would see the object as vertically stretched-out not only from one perspective but from all perspectives. Furthermore, he would see not only one object as elongated but all objects. And that is to say that these distortions would cancel each other out.

The message we can draw from this thought experiment is the following. There can be cases in which the Background abilities of subjects, which are constitutive parts of their perceptual systems, are distinct, but the visual experiences still have the same conditions of satisfaction. In such cases, the differences in the Background abilities do not affect the conditions of satisfaction.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to show that there are examples in Searle's works which do not support (VB), and that Searle's interpretation of some of them is incorrect. The Müller-Lyer illusion and the "moon" example cannot show that (VB) is true. Also, Searle's conclusion on the "TOOT" example is incorrect. Furthermore, in the second paragraph of the chapter, we have seen that even if we regard the capacities of the perceptual system as a

Background ability, this still does not ensure that (VB) have to be accepted. Nevertheless, it has also been shown that there are many cases that can support the thesis in question. Searle's first example in *INT* was one of such cases. (There are plenty of empirical studies in the psychological literature, which are called *top-down effects in visual perception*, and which indicate that our concepts, expectations, goals, and desires can affect visual experiences.) However, since some cases show that the Background does not always affect perception to determine the conditions of satisfaction, (VB) is falsified by these cases, and therefore this thesis (as a general one) should be given up.

CHAPTER VIII

Naïve Realism

The following questions are eminently important in the philosophy of perception: Does perception give us direct access to the world? Do we perceive objects and states of affairs as they really are? Or do we perceive them by way of perceiving something else which mediates our perceptual experiences in the world? These are hotly debated questions in the philosophy of perception. In this chapter I will examine Searle's response to them.

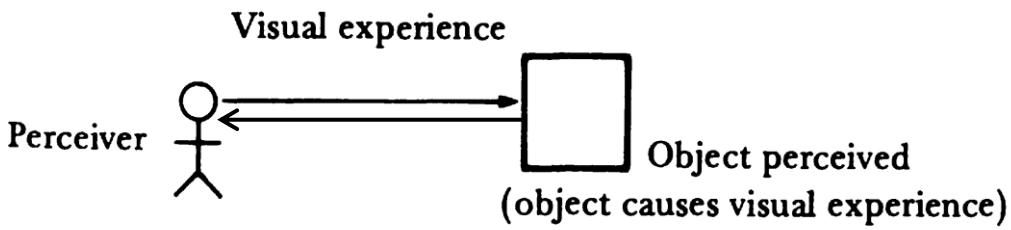
In response to the questions above, two different trends have generally been given in the history of philosophy. One group of philosophers (Searle mentions as examples Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Ayer) holds that we cannot directly perceive the world. On the other hand, another group, which is called *direct (naïve) realists*, argue against them. Searle considers himself to be a direct, or *naïve*, realist. Nevertheless, he also criticises the theories of the disjunctivist philosophers, who are also regarded as the representatives of Naïve Realism.[1] Searle argues that the disjunctivist philosophers and the classical theorists of perception (Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Ayer, etc.) commit the same fallacy. He calls their argument *the Bad Argument*. In this chapter, I will first consider the general features of Searle's own understanding of Naïve Realism, before going on to expound his criticism of "the Bad Argument". In the third section of the chapter, I will focus on Searle's second argument against the Argument from Illusion (this latter being one of the most influential arguments against Naïve Realism). In sections four and five, I will return to "the Bad Argument". In these sections, I will examine Searle's claim that, in the works of both the classical theorists and the disjunctivist philosophers, different versions of "the Bad Argument" are found. Furthermore, Searle argues that "the Bad Argument" arises as a result of the fact that these philosophers do not understand the intentionality of perceptual experiences. In the remainder of the chapter, I will turn to this issue.

[1] The disjunctivists, in contrast to Searle, defend Naïve Realism by arguing that veridical perceptual experience and the hallucination indistinguishable from it are not the same kind of mental states. I will have more to say about this issue later.

1. General features of Searle's Naïve Realism

Searle says that his account of visual experiences is "a version of 'naïve' (direct, common sense) realism".[2] The main thesis of his naïve realist view is that "[subjects] directly perceive objects and state of affairs".[3] Here, Searle also uses the term "Direct Realism" in order to distinguish his version of Naïve Realism from the realism of the disjunctivist philosophers. He maintains that "[his view of perception] is called 'realism' because it says we do have perceptual access to the real world, and 'direct' because it says that we do not first have to perceive something else by way of which we perceive the real world".[4]

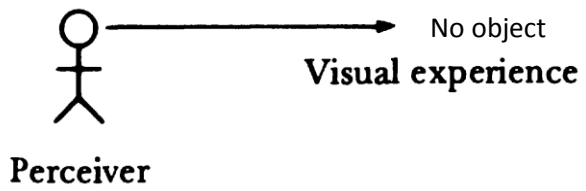
These ideas fit together with Searle's view that there are two important phenomena in the case of a veridical visual experience. He describes these two phenomena respectively as "an ontologically objective state of affairs in the world outside your head and an ontologically subjective visual experience of that state of affairs entirely inside your head".[5] The latter view is indeed important for Searle to back up his version of Naïve Realism. To show that, in the case of perception, the subjective experience and the objective state of affairs (i.e. the object of perception) are distinct phenomena, Searle adopts a simple line of explanation. He maintains that if, when seeing something, we close our eyes, the subjective experience in our head will cease to continue, but the object seen will not cease to exist. The important relation between the subjective and the objective phenomena in perception is that the former is caused by the latter. Moreover, in the veridical cases, the causal relation between the experience and the object perceived is such that objects are perceived as how they really are. Searle pictures this relation in terms of the following diagram:[6]



[2] *INT*, 57.
[3] *STT*, 15.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid. 17.
[6] Cf. *INT*, 57.

In the diagram, the arrow above illustrates the intentionality of visual experience, by indicating that the subject's experience is directed at an intentional object; the arrow below represents the direction of causation in the visual experience.

In this context, Searle also compares veridical experience with non-veridical cases (hallucinations and illusions). In the case of a hallucination, of course, there is no external object to cause the visual experience. In such cases, the experience is not caused by anything other than internal processes in the brain. Here is the diagram which Searle uses to illustrate the hallucination cases.[7]



Apart from the question of the intentionality of perception, in *STT* Searle devotes more pages to rebut arguments against Naïve Realism instead of further elucidating his own position. Yet in one sense this is not surprising. The central theses of Naïve Realism are simple. It says that there is a real, mind-independent world and that, in the case of veridical perceptual experiences, we directly perceive it. However, when it comes to the criticism of this view, one can easily see by looking at the history of philosophy that different prominent philosophers have put forward different arguments against Naïve Realism. As Searle stresses:

> [Naïve Realism] is denied by just about every famous philosopher who writes on this subject. Indeed of the philosophers that have written about perception since the seventeenth century, I do not know of any Great Philosopher who even accepted Naïve or Direct Realism. ("Great Philosophers" in this period begin with Bacon and Descartes and end with Kant. They include Locke, Leibniz, Spinoza, Berkeley, Bacon and Hume […]).[8]

For this reason, one of Searle's primary concerns is to defend his version of Naïve Realism against the attacks of these "Great Philosophers".

[7] Cf. Ibid. 58.

[8] *STT*, 20.

To do this, Searle undertakes to argue the following steps. First, and most importantly, by generalising the arguments of those who refute his version of Naïve Realism and of the contemporary disjunctivist philosophers, he tries to show what their mistake consists in. He calls their argument *the Bad Argument*. Second, drawing on J. L. Austin, he tries to rebut the Argument from Illusion separately.

In what follows, I will first examine Searle's objections to the arguments against his version of Naïve Realism.[9] Then, in the following sections, I will consider Searle's criticism of some classical theories of perception and of some disjunctivist philosophers. Lastly, as already mentioned above, I will focus on how Searle relates "the Bad Argument" to the intentionality of perception.

2. "The Bad Argument"

A central contention in Searle's criticism of these theories is that he subsumes the arguments against his position under one name – *The Bad Argument*. For him, although one can find different arguments against Naïve or Direct Realism, they "rest on exactly the same mistake".[10] To show this, Searle first considers the well-known arguments against Direct Realism: the Argument from Hallucination and the Argument from Illusion.[11] A hallucination is an experience which, by definition, the subject cannot distinguish from a corresponding veridical perceptual experience. For example, suppose that one is having a veridical experience of seeing a red ball. The idea that there can be hallucinations implies that the same subject could have a visual experience which is, for the subject at the very moment of experience, qualitatively indistinguishable from the experience of seeing a red ball, when

[9] I often write "his version of Naïve Realism" because, as noted, Searle also criticises the contemporary philosophers who advocate the other forms of Naïve Realism. These philosophers are called *the disjunctivists*. The disjunctivists also hold that we *directly* perceive objects in the world, although, as will be shown later, there are some fundamental tenets which Searle and the disjunctivist philosophers do not share.

[10] *STT*, 20.

[11] In *STT*, Searle also mentions the Argument from Science as another argument against Direct Realism. According to this argument, perceptual processes begin when photons reflected off the surface of objects stimulate the photoreceptor cells in the retina. This in turn causes a sequence of neurological processes in the brain. The scientific analysis of perception does not mention that we see real objects such as a table, a cup of tea, etc. According to the science of perception, "we never see the real world but see only a series of events that are the result of the impact of the real world, by way of light reflectances, on our nervous system" (*STT*, 22). I will not go into further details of this argument because focusing on the Argument from Illusion and the Argument from Hallucination is sufficient for our purposes.

there is indeed no red ball being perceived. To put this in another way, the point at issue here is that, in both the veridical and the hallucinatory cases, the subjective qualitative element of these experiences is common. This motivates some philosophers to think that both cases must be explained by the same account. Also, because in the hallucination case there is no physical object causing the visual experience, the same account requirement entails that the object of the hallucination must be a mental entity or sense-datum. For some philosophers, the latter conclusion, together again with the same account requirement, entails that the object of the veridical case is also sense-data. Therefore, they conclude, we do not see real objects in the veridical case either.

A similar kind of reasoning is known to us from the Argument from Illusion. An illusion is here understood as "any perceptual situation in which a physical object is actually perceived, but in which that object perceptually appears other than it really is".[12] Searle uses the example of *the "bent" stick* to illustrate the Argument from Illusion. Perhaps someone who has seen a straight stick partly immersed in water will have noticed that it appears to be bent. Those who try to refute Direct Realism say that, if something appears to us to be bent when it is in fact not bent, then in such cases we do not see real objects but only *appearances* or *sense data*. As a next step, they claim that, because the veridical and illusory cases must have the same account, and because in the illusory cases we do not see how objects really are, we do not see real objects and their properties in the veridical cases either.

Searle, as a naïve realist, does not think that he should block the Argument from Hallucination and the Argument from Illusion in different ways. He holds that both these arguments "rest on the same fallacy". To expose this fallacy, Searle combines these arguments by analysing them together in the series of steps. He writes:

> Step One: In both the veridical (good) case and in the hallucination (bad) case, there is a common element—a qualitative subjective experience going on in the visual system.
>
> Step Two: Because the common element is qualitatively identical in the two cases, whatever analysis we give of one, we must give of the other.
>
> Step Three: In both the veridical case and the hallucination case we are aware of something (are conscious of something, see something).
>
> Step Four: But in the hallucination case it cannot be a material object; therefore, it must be a subjective mental entity. Just to have a name, call it "sense datum."

[12] Smith (2002), 23.

> Step Five: But by step two we have to give the same analysis for both cases. So in the veridical case, as in the hallucination, we see only sense data.
> Step Six: Because in both hallucinations and in veridical perceptions themselves we see only sense data, then we have to conclude that we never see material objects or other ontologically objective phenomena. So Direct Realism is refuted.[13]

The philosophers' approaches diverge as to whether the Argument is defective or not. (To refer to the argument in question, I use the word "Argument" with a capital 'A'.) For example, classical theorists of perception hold that the Argument is valid and its conclusion is true. However, the disjunctivist philosophers and Searle think that there is a problem with the Argument. Most of the disjunctivists do not accept Step One in the Argument. Searle nevertheless argues that there is a problem in Step Three. I will come back to the disjunctivists' concern later. In the remainder of this section, I want to elaborate Searle's approach to the Argument in particular.

2.1. On Step Three of the Argument

According to Searle's account of the Argument, the crucial step here is Step Three, "which says that in both the hallucination and the veridical case we are 'aware of' or 'conscious of' something".[14] To Searle this step contains an ambiguous phrase – "aware of" – which has two senses. Searle calls the first sense of this phrase the "aware of" of *intentionality*, and the second the "aware of" of *constitution* or *identity*.[15] He explains this distinction in the following way:

> You can see the difference if you contrast two common-sense claims. First, when I push my hand hard against this table, I am aware of the table. And second, when I push my hand hard against this table, I am aware of a painful sensation in my hand.
> (a) I am aware of the table.
> (b) I am aware of a painful sensation in my hand.

[13] *STT*, 22-23.
[14] *STT*, 24.
[15] Furthermore, Searle distinguishes the kind of ambiguity in "aware of" from the ambiguity in the homonymous words. He says that the ambiguity in "aware of" is distinct from the ambiguity in the "bank", which can mean either "a finance house" or "a side of the river". For Searle, this is "because there is a common phenomenon to both the hallucination and the veridical perception" (*STT*, 26).

> Both of these are true and though they look similar, they are radically different. (a) describes an intentional relation between me and the table. I had a sensation where the table was its intentional object. The presence and features of the table are the conditions of satisfaction of the sensation. In (a) the "aware of" is the "aware of " of intentionality. But in (b) the only thing I am aware of is the painful sensation itself. Here the "aware of" is the "aware of" of identity or the constitution of the experience. The object I am aware of and the sensation are identical. I had only one sensation: a painful sensation of the table. I was aware of (in the sense of identity or constitution) the sensation, but I was also aware of (in the sense of intentionality) the table.[16]

After having distinguished two senses of "aware of", Searle reconsiders the Argument. He holds that, in the description of the veridical experience, we use the intentionalistic sense of "aware of", but in the case of the description of a hallucination, "aware of" is used in the sense of constitution or identity. For Searle, in the hallucinatory experience, the subject is not aware *of* anything in the same sense as he is when he is aware *of* something (say, a table), in the veridical case. The hallucinatory experiences, on his account, do not possess any external object, they have only intentional content. Searle therefore thinks that, in the description of a hallucination, we do not use the intentionalistic sense of "aware of". In his view, because, in the hallucination case, the visual experience is identical with the awareness, in the description of it "aware of" is used in the sense of identity (constitution). Thus, according to Searle, it turns out that there is "a simple fallacy of ambiguity, over the use of the English expressions 'aware of' and 'conscious of'"[17] in Step Three of the Argument. And this infects both the Argument from Illusion and the Argument from Hallucination.[18]

This point, however, can be disputed. Against Searle, one might argue that the word "aware of" in the sentence used to describe a hallucinatory experience can also be used with the intentionalistic sense. The reason for this can be simple. A hallucination, one might say, is also an intentional state; it is also about, or directed at, *something* that does not exist. After all, there is a good reason to think that this is in fact so. The possibility of being about a non-existent object is a peculiarity of intentional states. And visual experiences, like beliefs and desires, can also be about objects that do not exist. Thus, it seems that, since hallucinations

[16] *STT*, 24-25.

[17] Ibid. 25.

[18] Searle claims that "the Argument from Science commits the same fallacy", as well. See *STT*, 29.

are also intentional states, it is pretty safe to say that in the Argument "aware of" can be used with the intentionalistic sense without using this phrase ambiguously.[19] And this can suggest that the conclusion that we perceive mind-dependent objects in the case of veridical perceptual experiences is true, because the Argument is valid. However, it seems to me that, even if "aware of" were used only in the intentionalistic sense – that is, even if Searle's ambiguity claim were incorrect – the conclusions of the Argument would still be false. Let me elaborate this issue.

Suppose that "aware of" is used only in the intentionalistic sense in the Argument. This would suggest that, in the hallucination case, the subject is aware of a mind-dependent (intentional) object that does not exist. From this, those who advocate the classical theories of perception would conclude (together with Step Two and Step Five) that the veridical case also has a mind-dependent object. Yet, to repeat, this conclusion is false. To see this, let me pose the question in a more explicit way. From the idea that the object of a hallucinatory experience is mind-dependent, how could one infer that the veridical perceptual experience also has a mind-dependent object? The answer to this question can be formulated as follows. What in the Argument premise such an inference are Step One and Step Two, which say that the hallucinatory and the veridical cases should be analysed in the same way because of the common element that they both have. But if the analysis only concerns the "qualitative subjective experience", i.e. the common element, then the intentional objects of these states, which are not part of the experience,[20] cannot be the subject of the analysis.[21] Therefore, from the fact that the hallucination has a mind-dependent (more exactly, an experience-dependent) object, one cannot infer that the veridical perceptual experience also has a mind-dependent object. Hence, one cannot conclude that we do not see material objects.

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[19] Notice that what we have said about the use of "aware of" goes for illusions as well. Although illusions are non-veridical experiences, they are still intentional – they are still *about* something. That is to say, in the description of illusory cases, "aware of" can also be used in the intentionalistic sense.

[20] A hallucination also has a non-existent intentional object which is not part of the experience. Suppose that I am hallucinating that there is a unicorn in front of me. The unicorn, as *the intentional object* of my experience, is not part of the experience. In the hallucination case, the unicorn, like a real physical object, seems to be located physically in space. I "see" it from a certain perspective and, as in the veridical case, I presuppose that this object has other hidden dimensions that I cannot now "see". That is to say, the intentional object of my hallucination, i.e. the unicorn, supposedly does not consist in only what is given to the visual experience.

[21] Searle would not agree that a hallucination has an intentional object. As mentioned earlier, he considers intentional objects to be real objects. But this is not a substantial issue because Searle, instead, uses the notion of conditions of satisfaction. Therefore, in the context of this discussion, we can replace the term "intentional object" with the term "conditions of satisfaction" without doing any harm to the gist of the discussion. So, to retain Searle's vocabulary, we can say that a hallucinatory experience also has conditions of satisfaction and that those conditions are not part of the experience.

3. Searle's objection to the Argument from Illusion

If somebody who is under the influence of the Argument from Illusion perceives a round coin turned at an angle as elliptical, he is prone to think that he does not directly see the coin, because the coin itself is round. Therefore, he would insist that he sees his sense data. However, Searle thinks that this is wrong. He writes:

> The literally false step in the argument is the one that says: because I directly perceive something elliptical and because the coin itself is not elliptical, it follows that I do not directly perceive the coin. But it does not follow, because the meaning of the sentence, "I see the elliptical appearance of the coin," implies "I see the way the coin looks." And that in turn implies that I see the coin. There is no way I can see the appearance of the coin without seeing the coin. And from the fact that I see that the coin looks elliptical from this point of view and the fact that the coin is not elliptical, it does not follow that I do not see the coin.[22]

Searle owes the argument in this passage to J. L. Austin (1962). According to Searle, Austin held that "there is no way you can see the appearance of the coin without seeing the coin itself, because the appearance is just the way the coin looks".[23] The important point in this argument is that it points out that objects always look in a certain way to perceivers. One might see a round coin as elliptical because there is at least one aspect in which the round coin looks elliptical. And because there is no way to see the coin without seeing it in a certain aspect, the elliptical appearance of the coin is also (abstract) part of seeing the same coin.

What about the stick in water which looks bent? It seems that in this case we cannot say that one can see a straight stick as bent, because there is an aspect of the stick whereby it is perceived as bent. The reason for this is that, whatever the stick's positioning and its orientation relative to the subject might be, if a part of the stick is immersed in water, then it will always look bent. And since the bentness we "see" is not a real property of the stick, the suggestion is to accept that what we "see" is a mind-dependent entity.

However, the latter sentence is false. We can see this if we remember that the refractive features of the physical environment also have an important role in the seeing of objects. That is to say, in a visual experience, the way that an object appears to an observer

[22] *STT*, 91.

[23] Ibid.

also depends on the conditions of refraction.[24] In air, we see the straight stick straight also because the refractive features of air is such that when light waves are reflected off, the straight stick is perceived to be straight. Yet when the stick is immersed in water, it is perceived as bent from the part from which the immersion in water begins. This is because the refractive features of water are distinct from that of air. So, given that the refractive features of a medium through which light waves are transmitted are also a condition of our seeing objects, it seems that there is no reason to state that, if something is straight, then it must look straight under all conditions. The same object will cause a different kind of visual experience, if we alter the refractive features of the environment. Thus, the *bent appearance* of the straight stick immersed in water is also a way of the givenness of that object – crucially, a way of givenness that does not depend on the object's positioning and its orientation relative to the subject, but that depends on the refractive features of the environment. As Searle puts it, "[t]he important thing to see in these cases is that the subject does not literally see anything bent [...] What he sees is something that, *under those conditions*, 'looks bent'[…]".[25]

Searle also tries to refute the Argument from Illusion by using the conceptual apparatus of his own theory. He argues that to say that *the straight stick immersed in water looks bent* or that *the round coin looks elliptical* "is not to describe an actual bent or elliptical object of […] perception but rather *the conditions of satisfaction* of a perceptual experience".[26] For Searle, this is to say that the conditions of satisfaction of the visual experience are that there be an elliptical coin (or a bent stick) which causes this (or that) experience. Yet, because the coin is not elliptical (or the stick is not bent), the experience is not satisfied.

Searle makes a mistake when he conflates these two examples. In contrast to the example of bent stick, when one sees a round coin as elliptical from a certain angle, the conditions of satisfaction of the experience do not change. In the case of the coin, the conditions of satisfaction of the visual experience are not that there is an elliptical coin which causes the experience but that there is a round coin which causes the experience. This is because of the phenomenon of shape constancy, which is a kind of perceptual constancy. Shape constancy is a feature of the perceiver's perceptual system which enables the shape properties of objects to remain representatively the same, despite significant changes in the retinal image. The retinal image of the object changes if there is a change in the orientation of

[24] According to physicists, "[a] light ray is refracted when it passes from one medium into another" (Feynman et al. (1963), 26-2). In our example, air and water are different mediums.

[25] *STT*, 91; emphasis added.

[26] Ibid; emphasis added.

the object relative to the subject. Yet, despite this, the percept of the shape remains constant.[27] Now, to apply this to Searle's example, the retinal image of the round coin depends on its orientation relative to the subject. If the coin is slightly slanted at an angle, its retinal image will be elliptical. In other words, the coin might look elliptical to the subject.[28] However, the percept of the coin's shape will not be affected. In other words, the subject will still have the experience of seeing the round coin. And, accordingly, its conditions of satisfaction will not be that there is an elliptical coin which causes the experience.

Yet, in the case of the "bent" stick, we cannot say that the condition of satisfaction for the visual experience of the "bent" stick is the straight stick, although what the subject in fact sees is a straight stick. This case, of course, has nothing to do with the phenomenon of perceptual constancy. The "bent" stick case, in contrast to the "elliptical" coin case, is an illusion in which the content of the experience does not match the world itself.

4. The classical theories

In *STT*, Searle criticises some well-known philosophers on the grounds that their theories illustrate versions of "the Bad Argument". Throughout the history of philosophy, there are two grand theories which share this argument: the Representative Theory and Phenomenalism. To explain perception, both theories postulate an entity above subjects and the world, which is however given different names (idea, impression, representation, sense-datum), and which suggests that we cannot directly perceive the world. (I shall henceforth use the term 'sense-datum' to refer to what these theories regard as the object of perception.) However, in Searle's view, to say that, in perception, there is a sense-datum or an "internal visual experience" between us and the world is "one of the major mistakes" of these theories. For him, the main drawback here is that they cannot answer the question, "What is the relationship between the sense data which we do see and the material object which apparently we do not see?" According to Searle, it is one of the most beneficial advantages of Naïve Realism that, in contrast to classical theories of perception, it does not meet with such a

[27] Cf. Pizlo (1994).

[28] I write "might look" instead of "look" because I am not sure that this is always so. I cannot myself have the visual experience of an elliptical coin when I hold up a round coin in front of my face and turn it at an angle. Under normal conditions, I will always see the coin as round.

difficulty. Yet, he thinks, if one *does* accept sense-data as objects of perception, then it is difficult for him to answer this question.

In an attempt to answer the question above, the representative theorists (Descartes, Locke, etc.) hold that there is a resemblance relation between our sense data and material objects. For example, in their view, when one looks at a cup, one's experience represents the real shape of the cup, because the content of the experience resembles the shape of the cup. Searle, however, does not accept this answer. He mentions the well-known difficulty with this theory: that the Representative Theory of perception does not answer the question "What reason can one offer for the view that representations or ideas resemble objects, if objects are by definition inaccessible to our senses?"

This is an important criticism also stated by Berkeley. Searle agrees with its value, especially because there is another similar, and for his theory important, question which the classical theories of perception cannot answer. This question is, "How is it that the specific features of the perceptual experience determine the conditions of satisfaction that they do?"[29] Searle thinks that if a representative theorist also used his terminology, he would say that the visual experience determines the conditions of satisfaction because there is a resemblance relation between the experience and its conditions of satisfaction. However, Searle is not happy with this answer, because, as mentioned, the resemblance relation between the experience and its object cannot be grounded.[30]

Searle does not accept Phenomenalism either. He has three objections against it in particular. First, according to his account, the main difficulty with Phenomenalism is that "it reduces the public ontologically objective world to a set of private ontologically subjective phenomena" and "this results in solipsism".[31] That is to say that, according to Phenomenalism, our experiences cannot "reach right out to independently existing objects and states of affairs in the world".[32] Second, for Searle, Phenomenalism has difficulties in explaining how communication in a public language is possible. He thinks that a public language presupposes "a public world", and to say that what we perceive is our private sense datum is to deny that there is a public language at all.

The first and the second objections Searle mentions here are well-known criticism of Phenomenalism, having been made by several other critics as well. Yet Searle's third objection is motivated by his own theory. He complains that, if we try to answer the question

[29] *STT*, 231.

[30] Cf. Ibid. 226.

[31] Ibid. 226-227.

[32] Ibid. 229.

of how perceptual experiences determine "conditions of satisfaction such that the experiences are presentations of objects and states of affairs in the ontologically objective world", we can see that "the phenomenalist theory is even worse" in that respect. For Searle, the reason for this is that "[i]n the phenomenalist theory there is not anything to the object except the sequence of our experiences".[33] Hence, according to Phenomenalism, Searle thinks that his "central question" cannot be posed.[34]

Yet despite this, in *STT*, Searle mainly considers the phenomenalist philosophers. To illustrate examples for "The Bad Argument", he focuses on G. Berkeley, D. Hume, and A. J. Ayer. In the remainder of this section, I will consider Searle's criticism of Berkeley and Ayer, which seem to me the more interesting in this respect.

4.1. Berkeley

To offer a classic example for "The Bad Argument" in the phenomenalist tradition, Searle first focuses on Berkeley's arguments. Berkeley holds that the objects which we perceive consist of combinations of different sensible qualities – qualities that are "immediately perceived by sense". Searle quotes a passage from Berkeley, where the latter tries to show that the object "immediately perceived" and the experience are the same. Searle, in criticizing this view, points out the following:

> [Berkeley's] argument is a beautiful illustration of the fallacy of ambiguity in the Bad Argument. "Immediately perceived" has two different senses, one where what is immediately perceived is an ontologically objective state of affairs in the world, in this case the heat of an actual fire. This is the intentional sense of "immediately perceived," and in this sense the quality perceived is ontologically objective. In the other sense of "immediately perceived," what is immediately perceived is the sensation itself, the painful sensation of heat. This is the constitutive sense of "immediately perceived," and in this sense the quality perceived is ontologically subjective. Berkeley starts with the first of these in his notion of "immediately

[33] Ibid. 231.

[34] Notice that to criticise a theory because of the fact that the critics' central question cannot be posed is not reasonable. A phenomenalist could respond that, if Searle cannot pose his central question, this is a point in favor of Phenomenalism, because in that case there will be one problem less to worry about. I thank Andreas Kemmerling for mentioning this point.

perceived," but he then uses the ambiguity to establish that all we perceive are ontologically subjective experiences.[35]

Berkeley, however, could object to Searle's ambiguity claim in the following way. He could say that there is no ambiguity in his use of the phrase "immediately perceived", because this phrase, in the context of his philosophy, cannot denote the material world (or, to use Searle's term, ontologically objective states of affairs). The reason for this would be simple to him. Berkeley is an idealist philosopher who rejects the existence of the material, mind-independent world; in his account, all we perceive are our ideas. Therefore, it seems that whether Searle is right on this issue depends on whether Berkeley's ontological views are true or not.

4.2. Ayer

Searle also considers the arguments of more recent philosophers of the phenomenalist tradition. In *STT*, he analyses a passage from Ayer's work *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge.* In this passage, Ayer maintains that even in the case in which we do not see "the real quality of a material thing" (for example, in the case of an illusion), we still see *something*. To use Ayer's example, if one "sees" a mirage in the desert, one does not perceive any oasis or any other material object. Nevertheless, for Ayer, this does not mean that "his experience is […] an experience of nothing".[36] Rather, in his view, this perceptual experience also "has a definite content". He calls the content "sense-datum" and claims that it is the object of perception. Also, because experiencing an illusion is "similar in character" to experiencing veridical perceptual cases, Ayer generalises this point to include veridical visual experiences as well.

Searle, however, claims that Ayer's reasoning in this line of argument is fallacious. He especially focuses on Ayer's thesis that the illusory experience is "not an experience of nothing; it has a definite content". For Searle, this thesis suggests the following false idea: *the content of the experience is its object*. In his account, provided that "of" is used here in the intentionalistic sense, "[it] is precisely an experience of nothing because in the oasis line of business there is nothing there".[37] The illusory experience has only an intentional content

[35] Ibid. 83.
[36] Ayer (1953), 4.
[37] *STT*, 86.

which, for Searle, "presents an oasis as the condition of satisfaction", and its content is not the object of the experience. He thus writes:

> The fact that the experience has a definite content does not show that it has an object. The content is not itself the object of the experience, unless, of course, we are using "experience of" in precisely the constitutive and not the intentionalistic sense. When Ayer writes the clauses, "his experience is not an experience of nothing; it has a definite content," he thinks that the second clause substantiates the first, that the existence of the content proves that it is not an experience of nothing. But it does not. The experience is precisely the experience of nothing in the intentionalistic sense. He can only suppose that the existence of the content is a something because he is committing the fallacy of ambiguity. The intentional content is only the object in the constitutive, but not in the intentionalistic, sense.[38]

Therefore Searle's criticism of Ayer, again, mentions the fact that the phenomenalist philosophers, including Berkeley, often falsely treat the content of the experience as the object of the experience.

5. Disjunctivism

As earlier noted, in *STT*, Searle criticises the disjunctivist philosophers as well. The disjunctivists deny that there is a common component between hallucinatory and veridical experiences. In other words, they think that the good (veridical) and the bad (hallucinatory and illusory) cases share no mental core in common.[39] These philosophers hold that the philosophical theories of perception do not need to give the same account for both the good and the bad cases. The main disjunctivist argument for this is that the nature of veridical perceptual experiences is distinct from the nature of hallucinations. That is to say, whereas in the veridical case, there is a direct perceptual relation between the experience and the mind-

[38] Ibid. 86-87.

[39] By rejecting the commonality thesis, the disjunctivists do not deny that veridical perceptual experiences and hallucinations can have nothing in common. They allow that some aspect of these mental events can be common or similar. Rather, the central claim of Disjunctivism is that veridical experiences and hallucinations cannot be mental events of the same *fundamental* kind. See Soteriou (2014).

independent object, in the case of the hallucination, no mind-independent object is perceived. And this, for the disjunctivist philosophers, affects the phenomenology of the experience.

5.1.Stipulation vs. Hypothesis

In his criticism of Disjunctivism, Searle focuses on several important aspects of it. He first begins with idea that the commonality thesis – the thesis that veridical perceptual experiences and the hallucination indistinguishable from it have a common qualitative subjective element – is a stipulation. That is to say, Searle does not accept any empirical or introspective argument against the idea that the good and the bad cases are the same kind of experiences. He puts forward this idea against the disjunctivist view that the commonality thesis is a false *hypothesis* without any empirical and introspective grounds of reasoning.[40] Without going into the details of this discussion, Searle maintains that the empirical or the introspective issues are irrelevant here. For him, it is a *stipulation* that there can be hallucinations indistinguishable from the veridical experiences:

> In philosophy (unlike neuroscience), the idea that there can be hallucinations that have the same phenomenology and the same intentional content as the veridical experience is not a hypothesis, it is a stipulation. We just decide as a thought experiment to stipulate not only that there are hallucinations and veridical experiences that are indiscriminable, but that they are indiscriminable for the reason that they have exactly the same phenomenological features.[41]

As outlined here, Searle thinks that, to refute the commonality thesis, we need neither to show that we can be mistaken about our experiences while introspecting the good and the bad cases, nor rely on any empirical investigation. On his view, it is a mere logical possibility that there can be hallucination cases that are phenomenologically indistinguishable from the veridical cases. Thus, to refute the commonality thesis, "[one] would have to show that it is logically impossible that there could be a common phenomenology".[42]

However, notice that to say that something is only logically possible is cheap; there is an indefinite number of things that can be logically possible and to mention them has sometimes no cognitive value. One need not stipulate the commonality thesis if there are

[40] Cf. *STT*, 167.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

empirical grounds to suppose that hallucinations and veridical perceptual experiences can have a common intentional content.

Some other investigations on this issue confirm this hypothesis. For example, Teunisse et al. (1996), relying on the reports of patients, maintain that in some cases hallucinations can be indistinguishable from veridical experiences. They say that some patients report that "hallucinated objects [look] ordinary and [fit] realistically in the surroundings […]".[43] It is interesting that Searle also mentions a number of articles about empirical investigations on this issue.[44] He considers an article by ffytche et al. (1998), in which the authors investigated patients that suffer from Bonnet's syndrome. Searle says that "[ffytche] reports that [the patient's] response to the question, "What goes on in the brain when you hallucinate?" is "It's the same as when you experience real things"".[45] Such investigations can give us reason to suppose that the good and the bad cases indeed have common features, and that this is not a hypothesis without empirical grounds.

Nevertheless, the disjunctivists can maintain that the common features in question are not essential features of these experiences. As mentioned, the disjunctivist philosophers indeed argue that the veridical experience and the hallucination indistinguishable from it are essentially distinct, because, in the former case, the subject perceives a mind-independent object, but in the latter case, there is no such an object perceived. So, the disjunctivist might say that the good and the bad cases are fundamentally distinct because they have different (intentional) objects.

At this point, Searle makes an interesting claim about Disjunctivism. He argues that the disjunctivist philosophers also ground their theses on the basis of the stipulation. On his account, the following two important claims of the disjunctivists are based on the stipulation: 1) "[P]erceptual experiences are individuated by whether or not they are veridical"[46]; 2) The commonality thesis is false. I think, however, that the second claim cannot be true about all disjunctivist philosophers. To show this, let me focus on M. F. G. Martin's ideas on this very issue. (An important justification for my choice to consider Martin's ideas is that Searle also examines his disjunctivist views.)

Searle claims that, to distinguish hallucinations from veridical cases, Martin also uses a stipulation. He writes: "Martin *stipulates* that [veridical experience and hallucinations]

[43] Teunisse et al. (1996), 795-796.

[44] Cf. *STT*, 165.

[45] Ibid.

[46] *STT*, 170.

cannot be 'of fundamentally the same kind'".[47] However, if we look at Martin's works, it would be difficult to find any reason to claim that there is such a stipulation there. Martin is committed to the view that, in the veridical cases, the objects of perception and their properties partly constitute the subject's experience, and that the phenomenal character of the experience is determined by them. For Martin, since in the case of a hallucination the subject does not perceive mind-independent objects, its phenomenal character should have a distinct account. He thus maintains that "[n]o experience like [the good case], no experience of fundamentally the same kind, could have occurred had no appropriate candidate for awareness existed".[48] This is to say that, on Martin's picture, the fact that in the veridical case we are aware of, or perceive, a mind-independent object has an essentially distinct effect on the phenomenology of the experience. This shows that, even if we accept that there is a stipulation in Martin's work that "perceptual experiences are individuated by whether or not they are veridical", there is no reason to claim that his rejection of the commonality thesis is also a stipulation. The latter is implied from Martin's thesis that, in the veridical cases, in contrast to the indistinguishable hallucinations, the objects and their properties partly constitute the perceptual experience, and this distinctly affects the phenomenology of the veridical experience.

5.2. The central claim of Disjunctivism

The idea that in the veridical experience the object seen is literally part of the experience, and hence is "fundamentally" different from the hallucinatory experience, is shared not only by Martin but also by many other disjunctivist philosophers. This is the central thesis of Disjunctivism.

Searle therefore considers this thesis in a more detailed way. He says that there are two ways of interpreting the claim that the object is literally part of the perceptual experience. The first way, which, for Searle, is trivially true, is to focus on the truth conditions of the sentence "the subject S sees object O". In this sentence, the term "O" occurs extensionally. That is, if the sentence is true, then O exists. And "in that sense", says Searle, "the object is part of the total set of truth conditions of the statement, so the [disjunctivists'] claim is trivially true".[49] According to Searle's second interpretation, however, this claim is trivially false, because "the

[47] Ibid. 169; emphasis added.

[48] Martin (2008), 273.

[49] *STT*, 174.

physical object seen cannot literally be a piece of the subjective perceptual experience in the head".[50]

Searle's second interpretation is correct but the first is not. The mistake in Searle's first interpretation of the disjunctivists' claim consists in the fact that he conflates the truth conditions of the experience of seeing an object O with the truth conditions of the sentence "the subject S sees object O." Yet, these two truth conditions are distinct, because the experience in question, in contrast to the truth conditions of the sentence, does not make reference to the subject of this experience. The perceptual experience is *not* of *oneself* seeing the object but simply of seeing the object. To put this in another way, in contrast to what the sentence says, the subject of the experience is not the intentional object of the experience. Therefore, the truth (satisfaction) conditions of the experience and the truth conditions of the sentence are not the same. Hence, to say that "the object is part of the total set of truth conditions of the [sentence]" should be taken as distinct from the claim that the object seen is part of the perceptual experience.

For Searle, there is also another sense in which the disjunctivists' claim can be understood. Searle relates this interpretation to the presentational intentionality of the experience. He writes:

> [T]here is also a deeper sense in which the object is *a constitutive part*, and that is precisely because the form of the experience is that of presentational intentionality. The conditions will not be satisfied unless the intentionality reaches right up to the object and unless the object causes the experience of it. Remember, perception is not just a representation, but a direct presentation. So once again, direct perception is not an argument in favor of Disjunctivism; rather, it is a natural consequence of the presentational intentionality of perception.[51]

This is one of the most difficult passages in Searle's works to understand. The passage does not explicitly say a part of *what* the object is, and this creates the following difficulty. Given that Searle writes this passage when he discusses the disjunctivist claim that the object perceived is part of the experience, one might suppose that what he wants to say here is that the object is "a constitutive part" of the perceptual *experience*. But this would be confusing, because it would mean that, in this passage, Searle is *accepting* the disjunctivists' claim which

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.; emphasis added.

he is trying to refute throughout the corresponding chapter of *STT*. However, there might be another reading according to which what Searle wants to say here is that the object perceived is a constitutive part of the perceptual *situation* that involves both the subject and the object (recall the picture on p. 120). This interpretation, which seems to me to be correct, might be more attractive if we remember the central theses of Searle's naïve realistic view.[52] It is a fact that throughout the chapter on Disjunctivism, Searle tries to refute the disjunctivists' claim that the object seen is part of the perceptual experience and, after all, he has good arguments for this. I now want to consider them one by one.

Searle's first argument is entirely intuitive and common-sensical. In it he says that there are two important components in a perceptual situation: the subjective experience in the head and the object that is not in the head. For him, the object seen cannot literally be part of the perceptual experience, because, when the subject closes her eyes, the subjective experience in her head ceases to exist, but the object seen does not.

His second argument is also made against those who (like M. Martin and A. Noë)[53] think that, in the case of the veridical perceptual experience, "consciousness goes outside the head and envelops the object itself".[54] Searle rightly thinks that this is wrong because consciousness is only realised in certain physical and biological systems. To him, if there is no appropriate physical condition, the consciousness cannot "go outside the head". To put this in another way, for Searle, a conscious state is realised "in systems of cells—in this case, neurons—and there is no way that [it] could, so to speak, leak outside the brain and be floating around the neighboring area".[55] Therefore, Searle thinks that the object perceived cannot be part of the experience. When elaborating his criticism further, Searle asserts that the disjunctivist accounts of perception have this drawback in question because they do not give a coherent account of the spatial and causal relationships between the object and the corresponding perceptual experience. He thinks that, according to their account, we cannot pose the question "What exactly are the relations between the ontologically subjective conscious experience and the ontologically objective objects seen?"[56]

Another argument which Searle puts forward against the disjunctivist claim in question is the argument from time delay. Consider, Searle says, the following example:

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[52] See the first pages of this chapter.

[53] See *STT*, 36.

[54] Ibid.179.

[55] Ibid. 175.

[56] Ibid. 178.

> I now see a star through a telescope that I know ceased to exist twenty-seven million years ago. In one respect, the experience is not veridical because, again, all experiences are of the here and now, and it seems to me that the star is existing here and now when I know in fact it does not. All the same, I know that I am seeing that particular star. Now I can draw a picture of that, indeed I have drawn such a picture in this chapter. The star causes in me a visual experience. I would like to see the picture drawn by the Disjunctivists. I do not think they can draw a coherent picture. In what sense exactly for them is the star a constituent part of the experience of it? It is pretty tough to describe that for an object that ceased to exist twenty-seven million years ago.[57]

Since I have no specific reservations towards Searle's arguments here, let me consider the next issue.

5.3. The commonality thesis as a threat to Naïve Realism?

The disjunctivist philosophers often regard themselves as naïve realists, and they consider the commonality thesis to stand against Naïve Realism. On the disjunctivists' picture, if we do not deny the commonality thesis, we have to accept that Naïve Realism is false. For them, the commonality thesis and Naïve Realism are incompatible. This is, they think, because if one holds that the commonality thesis were true, then "the highest common factor" between the good and the bad case would be the object of the perceptual experience. But the latter, for the disjunctivist philosophers, cannot be true. In their view, at least some of our visual experiences are direct presentations of the real world, and there is no "highest common factor" between the good and the bad cases.

Searle also shares the view that perceptual experiences are presentations. But he thinks that the commonality thesis does not show that Naïve Realism is false. On the other hand, on Searle's view, to say that the commonality thesis threatens Naïve Realism is "a variation of the Bad Argument". He thinks that, like the classical theorists of perception, the disjunctivist philosophers also make the same mistake, when they claim that "the commonality thesis implies that the common element is perceived in both the veridical and the hallucinatory case".[58]

[57] Ibid. 198.

[58] Ibid. 173-174.

It seems that Searle is correct on this issue. The fact that there is a "highest common factor" between the good and the bad cases does not imply that we have to perceive the common factor instead of real objects. I am convinced that the common factor in question is a way of givenness by virtue of which a subject can perceive objects. A hallucination, say, as of a red ball represents that there is a red ball in front of the subject, and it represents a non-existent red ball in the very way that an existent red ball appears to the subject. This is to say that the same kind of appearance can occur in the veridical case as well.

To further press on Searle's views about Disjunctivism, let us now consider his criticism of John Campbell's theory.

5.4. Searle's criticism of Campbell

In *STT*, Searle puts forward two important claims about Campbell's theory. The first is that Campbell denies the existence of consciousness. The second is that Campbell also shares the view that the object perceived is part of the experience. Let me begin with the first claim.

In Searle's view, Campbell's denial of the existence of consciousness is implicit in his theory; for Searle, Campbell does not explicitly say that consciousness does not exist. Searle thinks, however, that this is suggested by Campbell's theory, because in his theory Campbell maintains that there are three components in the perceptual situation: the perceiver, the object, and the point of view. On Searle's view, this amounts to the denial of the perceptual consciousness.[59] To me this criticism is implausible for two reasons. *First*, to say that perception consists of the three abovementioned components does not entail that conscious perception does not exist. Campbell might argue that there are conscious perceptual experiences, but consciousness is not a necessary feature of perception because there is a phenomenon that we call unconscious perception. And the three components, Campbell might continue, are necessary components of perceptual experiences. *Second*, if we look at Campbell's work in question,[60] we can see that he often uses the notion of consciousness by giving a central role to this notion in his theory. One of Campbell's central claims in this work is that conscious attention to the object seen is necessary for the demonstrative reference in

[59] Ibid. 196. Furthermore, Searle maintains that Campbell's account denies the following essential features of perceptual experiences – the fact that the veridical experience is caused by the object perceived and intrinsic intentionality. He says that Campbell's argument for denying these features, including consciousness, is the transparency of perception. Searle thinks that transparency cannot be argument for denying the abovementioned features of perception. On the contrary, as mentioned in Chapter IV, in Searle's view, transparency is an argument for the intentionality of perceptual experiences.

[60] Searle quotes from Campbell (2002).

perception. Moreover, in this work, he also pursues the question "Why do we need the notion of the phenomenal character of experience?"[61] Obviously, one cannot pose such a question by denying the existence of consciousness. Therefore, it is difficult to see a ground for Searle's claim that Campbell denies the existence of consciousness.

Searle's second important objection to Campbell has to do with the relational theory of perception. According to this theory of Campbell, says Searle,

> the phenomenal character of your experience, as you look around the room, is constituted by the actual layout of the room itself: which particular objects are there, their intrinsic properties, such as color and shape, and how they are arranged in relation to one another and to you.[62]

This passage suggests that Campbell, as a disjunctivist philosopher, is also committed to the view that objects and properties perceived are part of the experience. Searle, however, argues against Campbell's (relational) account, namely that conscious perceptual experience does not contain its object. He uses the following simple example to illustrate his argument for this: feeling the smoothness of the table in one's fingertips is distinct from the smoothness of the table itself. This is because, he continues, when one who feels the smoothness of the table in his fingertips lifts his hand from the table, the feeling of smoothness ceases, but the smoothness of the table does not cease.[63]

In my view, Campbell and the other disjunctivist philosophers make a mistake when they maintain that the object perceived is part of the experience. The physical object cannot be part of the experience because the object and the experience belong to different ontological categories. As Husserl puts it, an experience is distinct from a physical object, say, from a tree, which is a thing in nature and, in contrast to the experience, "can burn or may be dissolved in its chemical elements, etc.".[64] That is to say, the nature of a physical object is so distinct from the nature of an experience that the former cannot be part of the latter.

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[61] Campbell (2002), 139.

[62] *STT*, 195.

[63] This argument is a version of Searle's first argument against Disjunctivism (see p. 138).

[64] Husserl, *Ideen I*, 222.3.

6. “The Bad Argument” and intentionality

An important aspect of Searle’s criticism of the classical theories of perception and the disjunctivist philosophers is that he relates this issue to the problem of intentionality. He holds that the mistake in “the Bad Argument” derives from the fact that some philosophers fail to understand the intentionality of visual experience. As noted, Searle distinguishes the intentional content of experience from its intentional object. Moreover, he holds that although there is no intentional object in the hallucination case, the latter, nonetheless, as an intentional state, possesses conditions of satisfaction. Therefore, for him, there are two common entities in both the veridical perceptual experience and the corresponding hallucination – intentional content and conditions of satisfaction. Searle argues that both the classical theorists and the disjunctivist philosophers fail to distinguish these entities from the object of the experience. He places special emphasis on the fact that these philosophers conflate the intentional content of the experience with its object. For Searle, as just mentioned, the intentional content is a common element of the veridical experience and the indistinguishable hallucination, and if somebody fails to see this common element and commits the fallacy of “the Bad Argument”, he is “likely to think that the something in common is itself the object of perception”.[65] Not only that, what is for Searle more special in this issue is that it is directly related to the problem of intentionality:

> The Bad Argument is an instance of a very general fallacy about intentionality, and it results from confusion about the very nature of intentionality. It is a confusion between the content of an intentional state and the object of the intentional state. In the case of a hallucination, the visual experience has a content, indeed it can have exactly the same content as the veridical experience, but there is no object. The assumption that some authors make is that every intentional state must have an object, but this is confusion between the true claim that every intentional state must have a content and the false claim that every intentional state must have an object.[66]

So, for Searle, what combines the classical theorists and those who advocate different forms of Disjunctivism is that they both confuse the intentional content with the object of the experience. They repeat “the basic principle that gives rise to the Bad Argument, namely

[65] *STT*, 27.

[66] Ibid.

same content implies same object".[67] However, in Searle's view, the common content between the hallucinatory and veridical cases does not imply that they have the same object. To repeat the point made earlier, for Searle, this is false, because the hallucinatory case has no object at all.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered Searle's Naïve (or Direct) Realism and his criticism of the classical theories of perception and Disjunctivism. Although the disjunctivist philosophers also do not accept the classical theories because of their anti-naïve realistic views, Searle compares them with each other by arguing that the disjunctivist philosophers also make the mistake that one can find in the classical theories. For him, the "serious" argument for Disjunctivism should also be recognised as "the Bad Argument". I have agreed with Searle on the main points of his criticism of both the classical theories and Disjunctivism. Furthermore, I have agreed with Searle on the point that, like the disjunctivists, to deny Step One on the ground that commitment to the existence of the common element in both the good and the bad cases runs up against the plausibility of the idea that the object of perception is a mind-independent one, is not correct.

Nevertheless, we have seen that Searle makes some mistakes when he criticises the classical theories of perception and Disjunctivism. Let me now summarise them in the conclusion of this chapter:

1) Searle conflates the stick case with the coin case. Because of the phenomenon of shape constancy, in contrast to the stick case, the conditions of satisfaction of the experience of seeing the round coin do not change, even if the coin might appear to be elliptical from a certain angle.
2) Searle maintains that the commonality thesis is a stipulation. However, as has been shown, one need not stipulate the commonality thesis, given that there are empirical grounds for stating it. Furthermore, by drawing on M. Martin's ideas, we have seen that Searle's assumption that the disjunctivists stipulate the commonality thesis is false.
3) Searle's first interpretation of the disjunctivist claim that the object is part of the perceptual experience is not correct. For the truth conditions of the sentence "the subject

[67] Ibid. 182.

S sees object O" are distinct from the truth conditions of the corresponding visual experience.

4) Searle's claim that Campbell denies the existence of consciousness is incorrect.

CONCLUSION

In this PhD dissertation, I have tried to critically study Searle's theory of intentionality, including his ideas on perceptual intentionality. I argued that Searle's theory of intentionality is not general enough to explain all intentional mental states. Searle also hesitated to regard his theory as a general one, because in *INT* he did not discuss all kinds of intentional states. Yet I tried to show that there are also other reasons for claiming that Searle's theory is not general. In order to show that his theory is not confined to the central intentional states, Searle put forward a hypothesis according to which intentional states without a propositional content, conditions of satisfaction, and a direction of fit (such as fear, sorrow, etc.) can also be explained by his theory, because those states "contain" a belief or a desire (i.e. paradigm intentional states), which possess all these features. Nevertheless, he neglected to point out that some other intentional states (such as non-propositional imaginations) do not "contain" either a belief or a desire, and that they do not possess either a direction of fit or conditions of satisfaction. That is to say, the central concepts and theses of his theory – that the intentional content determines the conditions of satisfaction and that the psychological mode determines the direction of fit – do not apply to those intentional states.

I also focused on the issue that a central term of Searle's theory – 'conditions of satisfaction' – is problematic in other respects as well. This term is ambiguous. It has two meanings – conditions of satisfaction *as a requirement* and conditions of satisfaction *as a thing*. Although Searle himself made reference to this ambiguity, he neglected the fact that the ambiguity in question infects one of his central theses. Because of this ambiguity, the thesis that an intentional content determines the conditions of satisfaction can be read in two ways. Searle did not distinguish between these two readings. However, this distinction is important because, on one reading, the thesis in question – (DET_r) – is true, but on another reading – (DET_t) – it is false: the intentional content does not (always) determine the conditions of satisfaction *as a thing*. (Notice that, as was shown in Chapter IV, this ambiguity infects in the same way the thesis that the intentional content of a visual experience determines the conditions of satisfaction – (D_{vis}).)

I also tried to show that Searle's notion of conditions of satisfaction is loose. This notion is designed by Searle also to capture the features such as causal self-referentiality. However, as has been shown in Chapter II, the causal self-referentiality of perceptual experiences (or of intentions and memories) depends on the psychological mode of the

intentional state, and therefore the question whether the intentional content determines such features as part of the conditions of satisfaction cannot be put properly.

The other interesting point about the term 'conditions of satisfaction' concerned its use in the sense of conditions of satisfaction *as a thing*. This notion can be confused with the notion of intentional object, which is used more often in other theories of intentionality. Searle also uses the term 'intentional object', but the sense of this term in his usage is different from the sense used in other theories. Whereas in most theories of intentionality the term 'intentional object' applies to both existent and non-existent entities, in Searle's usage this term denotes only existent entities. In order to denote both existent and non-existent entities, Searle uses another term – 'conditions of satisfaction'. However, I tried to show that using the latter term instead of the term 'intentional object' in its classical sense created a problem for Searle's theory. The problem was that the term 'conditions of satisfaction', unlike the term 'intentional object' in the classical sense, is not general enough to cover all intentional states. As mentioned above, some intentional states have no conditions of satisfaction, but they do have intentional objects (in the classical sense of the term).

In this dissertation, I also tried to show that some aspects of Searle's hypothesis of the Background (Chapter III) are problematic too. I argued that, *pace* Searle, this hypothesis cannot be motivated from the notion of literal meaning and the notion of the Network. Moreover, an unacceptable point in the hypothesis in question was that, by neglecting the role of the body in the constitution of our Background capacities, Searle tried to reduce them to the neurophysiology of the brain. Searle also made some mistakes when he applied the hypothesis of the Background to perceptual experiences (Chapter VII). In Searle's works, the thesis that the content of a visual experience determines the conditions of satisfaction against the Background – (VB) – was explained with recourse to examples, some of which do not support the hypothesis. Searle's interpretations of the Müller-Lyer illusion and the "moon" example, for instance, were incorrect. I argued that these examples indeed falsify (VB) as a general thesis, because they show that visual experiences can also *not* be affected by the rest of the mind.

In Chapter V, I considered the features described by Searle as *special features* of perceptual intentionality. I accepted without specific reservations Searle's ideas on hierarchical structuredness, presentationality, and the features that derive from presentationality (i.e. non-detachability, indexicality, continuousness and determinacy). However, I argued that Searle makes a mistake when he holds that consciousness is also a special feature of perception. On the basis of empirical findings about unconscious

perception, I tried to show that consciousness is *not* a special feature of perceptual experiences. Moreover, it seemed to me that Searle was unsuccessful in justifying his thesis that the direct causation (another special feature of perception) is experienced by the perceiver.

In Chapter VI, I focused on Searle's new method to answer the question "How do the phenomenological features of a visual experience determine (at least in part) the conditions of satisfaction?" In this chapter, on the basis of colour experience as an example, I tried to show that the expression "at least in part" in Searle's thesis that the phenomenological features of the experience determine (at least in part) the conditions of satisfaction is redundant.

Furthermore, in this dissertation, I considered the ideas of some prominent philosophers (such as Dennett, Putnam, and Dretske) who have previously criticised Searle's theory of intentionality. Dennett's criticism of the distinction between intrinsic and derived (or as if) intentionality seemed to me to be flawed, because the problem identified by Dennett concerning this distinction – the alleged problem that, if there were derived intentionality, our own intentionality, i.e. intrinsic intentionality, would also be derived, because it is derived from the intentionality of our genes, which is not regarded as intrinsic (or original) intentionality – rests on the conflation of two meanings of 'derivedness': *biological* derivedness and *semantic* derivedness (Chapter I). I argued that the notion of biological derivedness – which is the one that Dennett uses when he states that "our intentionality is derived from the intentionality of our 'selfish' genes" – is irrelevant to Searle's notion of derived intentionality, which is mainly applicable to language (or sentences).

Moreover, I tried to show that Searle's replies to Putnam's externalist arguments are flawed (Chapter II). In his debate with Putnam, Searle defended an internalist position. The distinction between the views of these philosophers mainly stemmed from their different approaches to indexicality. Putnam argued that the definition of natural-kind terms (such as water, tiger, etc.) contains an indexical component which determines extension and, thanks to this indexical component, the subject using the natural-kind term does not need to know the descriptive details of the entity to which the term refers. However, Searle maintained that the indexical component in question does not show that Putnam's externalism is a cogent theory. For Searle, the indexical component is also part of "what is in the head" and, hence, to say that the definition of the natural-kind term contains an indexical component does not mean that what determines the extension is external to the mind. According to his picture, the meaning of an indexical expression has the feature of self-referentiality in virtue of which the reference stands in a certain semantic relation to the utterance itself. He claimed that the

indexical expression owes the feature of self-referentiality to the corresponding intentional state. For Searle, the content of the intentional state which is expressed by the speech act containing the indexical expression possesses this feature as its non-representational part. I argued that this view is implausible, because intentional contents do not contain non-representational parts, and that the self-referentiality is a feature of the *meaning* of the indexical expression, *which*, pace Searle, is distinct from the intentional content. Hence, it seemed to me that Searle's version of internalism is not correct.

Furthermore, I considered Dretske's criticism of Searle's notion of the intentional content of visual experiences (Chapter IV). His criticism was based on visual experiences in which the subject cannot know from the content of the experience what kind of entity she perceives. Dretske maintained that even if, because of bad seeing conditions, the subject does not know from the content that she is seeing *x*, the experience is nevertheless an experience of *x* because *x* is at the end of the causal chain, or, in other words, *x* is *causing* the experience (*x* here denotes a kind property, such as a tree, a station wagon, etc.). On Dretske's view, the appropriate causal relation is sufficient to maintain that the experience is of *x*. Therefore, for him, to say that the experience is of *x* because of its intentional content does not make any sense. I tried to defend Searle's position by maintaining that, even in the case of bad seeing conditions, the subject can know from the content the conditions of satisfaction. My argument was that, even if seeing conditions are not good enough to see the object as having its (essential) kind properties, the experience still has conditions of satisfaction which can be "read off" from its content. This is because, in such cases, we see the object as having (at least) basic features such as color and shape, even if we cannot see precisely what kind of object it is. Therefore, in the case of bad seeing conditions too, we can know, from the content of the experience, that there is *a* thing/body there. Hence, the notion of intentional content keeps its explanatory role for such cases as well.

In this dissertation, I also focused on Searle's criticism of the disjunctivist philosophers such as Campbell and Martin (Chapter VIII). Like these philosophers, Searle is also regarded as a naïve realist philosopher. Yet we saw that Searle criticises them by arguing that they repeat the mistake of the classical theories of perception, which he calls "the Bad Argument". For Searle, the disjunctivist philosophers make a mistake when they reject the (commonality) thesis that veridical experiences and their corresponding hallucinatory experiences share a common element. *Pace* the disjunctivist philosophers, Searle held that the commonality thesis is not a threat to Naïve Realism because the common element between the hallucinatory and the veridical cases is not the object of the experience. He maintained that

the disjunctivist philosophers, like the classical theories of perception, do not distinguish the content of the perceptual experience from its object, and therefore they do not notice that the common element in question is the intentional content of the experience. Searle seemed to be correct in this debate. However, I also argued that he makes some mistakes in criticising the disjunctivist philosophers. Given that there are empirical grounds to state the commonality thesis, Searle considered this to be a stipulation or a mere logical possibility. Furthermore, he falsely claimed that Martin's view that the commonality thesis is false is also a stipulation (Chapter VIII). Moreover, I argued that it is a mistake to think that Campbell denies the existence of consciousness (Chapter VIII). Searle considered consciousness to be a special feature of perception and criticised Campbell on the ground that he implicitly denies that consciousness exists. It seemed to me that Searle is not correct in his criticism.

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