

SEARLE'S THEORY OF INTENTIONALITY:
PROVIDING THE FOUNDATION FOR A
NATURALIZED THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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Table of Contents

Permission to Use.....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Searle's Definition of Intentionality	8
2.1 Intrinsic vs. Derived Intentionality	11
2.2 Conditions of Satisfaction	13
2.3 The Connection Principle	14
2.4 Millikan's Account of Intentionality	17
2.5 Inaccessible Intentional States	20
2.6 The Background	21
2.7 Solution to the Underdetermination Problem	27
3. The Intentionality of Perception	31
3.1 Searle's Account of Perception	32
3.2 Seeing vs. Seeing That	34
3.3 Dretske's Arguments	36
3.4 The Particularity Problem	40
4. Intentional Causation	45
4.1 Description of Intentional Causation	46
4.2 Thompson's Arguments	48
4.3 Logical Connection between Objects and Intentional Contents	49
4.4 Actual Cause vs. Cause as Requirement	51

4.5 Billiard Ball Causation	52
4.6 New Causation	54
4.7 Precausality	57
4.8 Emotions	62
5. Biological Naturalism	63
5.1 Searle's Definition of Biological Naturalism	64
5.2 Emergentism	67
5.3 Subjective Consciousness	70
5.4 Ontological vs. Causal Reduction	74
6. Conclusion	79
Sources Cited.....	83

Chapter One – Introduction

The concept of Intentionality was first introduced by the Medieval Scholastic philosophers in order to explain the connection between thoughts and the world, but we owe our modern use of the term to Brentano, who reintroduced it in the nineteenth century. According to Brentano, Intentionality is the quality that characterizes mental states – their being “about” something. He claims that

every mental phenomenon is characterized by . . . the [I]ntentional (or mental) inexistence¹ of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity.²

Thus my mental state of believing that George Bush is the president of the United States and my mental state of desiring that George Bush not be the president of the United States are both Intentional in that they are about George Bush. Brentano’s theory of Intentionality differs from that of most modern analytic philosophers in that it is characterized by his assertion that we should posit the existence of such things as Intentional objects; a notion that has been rejected since it leads to, the scourge of modern philosophy, an overly complicated ontology.

Brentano's theory of Intentionality is characterized by two further claims. The

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Brentano’s use of the term “Intentional inexistence” is taken to imply that Intentional objects are located “in the mind” of the thinker.

² Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, 88.

first is that Intentionality is a characteristic that belongs to every mental state. Brentano claims that “every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way”.³ The second claim is that Intentionality belongs only to mental states. According to Brentano, “[I]ntentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it”.⁴ The first has caused debate among those who believe that Intentionality and consciousness are co-extensional and those who believe that they are not; for example, Searle believes that there are conscious states that are not Intentional.

Brentano's second claim is less innocuous in that, if it were true that only mental states exhibit Intentionality, we seem to have a problem when trying to connect Intentionality with the physical world, which we must do if we are to accept physicalism.⁵ If Intentionality cannot be reduced to any non-mental phenomenon then, in order for Intentionality to be compatible with physicalism, some non-mental things must exhibit Intentionality. If only mental things are Intentional then Intentional realism and physicalism would be mutually exclusive. It appears as though philosophers face a dilemma; we must either reject physicalism or reject Intentional realism -- claiming that beliefs, desires etc. are not real. Many philosophers have been content to reject Intentional realism but I agree with Searle that this rejection is just as counter-intuitive as

³Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, 88.

⁴Ibid., 89.

⁵Physicalism here is the metaphysical claim that all there is is physical “stuff” and its properties. This I take to be a less strong claim than reductionism which would be physicalism with the added premise that everything is described best in terms of this physical “stuff”.

a rejection of physicalism. It is this dilemma that the attempts to naturalize Intentionality are trying to resolve. There are two main ways that Intentionality has been naturalized in the past, both of which have been rejected by Searle.

The first is to show that there are non-mental things which exhibit Intentionality and that mental Intentionality can then be explained in terms of this non-mental Intentionality. This would be the method taken by Dretske in his information-theoretic account of Intentionality. Dretske argues that Intentionality is not a characteristic only of the mental but that Intentionality is exhibited by any system that carries information. Since the Intentionality of language (or of any system) is “real” Intentionality, (i.e., the same Intentionality as is seen in conscious states) the Intentionality of the mental can be explained in terms of the Intentionality of language. While Searle also believes that a study of the Intentionality of language can help explain the Intentionality of the mind he rejects this method of naturalizing Intentionality because, he claims, non-mental forms of Intentionality (such as are found in speech acts) are cases of derived Intentionality, i.e. are derived from the underlying mental states that produce and are expressed in speech acts, whereas mental Intentionality is intrinsic, and thus, in an ontological order of description, mental Intentionality must precede non-mental Intentionality.

The second attempt at naturalizing Intentionality we owe to Ruth Millikan who offers a teleosemantic approach to Intentionality. Millikan claims that in order for something to have Intentionality or content it must be able to represent an object. She argues that it is only possible to have a representation if it is possible for the object to be misrepresented. To misrepresent an object is to malfunction. Millikan claims that

something can only be said to malfunction if it has a proper function to begin with. Therefore, function precedes Intentionality and function is necessary (but not sufficient) for Intentionality. Millikan argues that biological selection is a method of design, and that this design is the source of function, and this function is the source of Intentionality or content. Thus, Intentionality can be reduced to function. The problem with this, according to Searle, is that there are many cases of indeterminate function in biology. Searle argues that in the cases of indeterminate function the function is determined based upon the interests and underlying assumptions of the person doing the study. In “Consciousness, the Brain and the Connection Principle: A Reply”⁶ Searle argues that since the assignment of function seems to require Intentionality, Intentionality must precede function.

Searle attempts to naturalize Intentionality in an entirely different way than Millikan or Dretske. He attempts to show that questions about content are not ontological questions at all. Therefore, the claim that intrinsic Intentionality is found only in mental states does not threaten physicalism. While Searle explains Intentionality by appealing to non-mental forms of Intentionality (specifically linguistic forms), and while he believes that there is a direct logical connection between mental Intentionality and non-mental non-Intentional objects (through Intentional causation),⁷ Searle disagrees that there is a form of intrinsic Intentionality to be found in non-mental states or objects. Searle's naturalization of Intentionality occurs through his theory of Intentional causation,

⁶Searle, “Consciousness, the Brain and the Connection Principle”.

⁷Searle, *Intentionality*.

which shows that there is a logical connection between physical objects and the Intentional states that are about them.

Searle thus argues that, rather than naturalizing Intentionality by showing that there are non-mental objects that exhibit intrinsic Intentionality, or that mental Intentionality can be reduced to a form of physical Intentionality, Intentionality should be naturalized by showing that the question of Intentionality is compatible with the natural sciences in that it is not an ontological question at all. According to Searle the question “what is Intentionality?” results in an answer about logical structure. The connection between Intentionality and objects in the external world is thus a logical one.

The most pressing questions that need to be answered in a discussion of Intentionality are what it would mean for an Intentional state to be true, how Intentional states can refer to non-existent objects, what the connection is between Intentionality, mental states, and consciousness, and whether the content of an Intentional state is determined internally to the agent having the Intentional state or externally. In *Intentionality and Rediscovery of the Mind* Searle attempts to give a unified account of Intentionality that answers all of these questions, largely by relying upon an analogy between the Intentionality of language and the Intentionality of the mental. While having a definition of Intentionality that can answer all of these questions is valuable, Searle’s theory of Intentionality can be said to greatly affect the philosophy of mind in that Searle resolves the apparent contradiction between Intentional realism and physicalism that was outlined by Quine and Chisholm without requiring the underlying theory of mind to be reductionist. Since a discussion of whether Intentional states are real is a topic too large

for this thesis, I will be taking for granted for my present purposes that Intentional states do exist and thus will be concentrating on showing that Intentional realism and physicalism are not truly at odds with one another.

I will argue that Searle succeeds at providing the foundation for a naturalistic account of Intentionality through his discussion of the Intentionality of perception and introduction of the notion of Intentional causation. Searle's account has been criticized on the grounds that it requires the introduction of a sense of causation that deviates from the standard regularity account. In so far as this deviation leaves us with a sense of causation that is still compatible with scientific uses of the term, while encompassing the common-sense uses, this amendment to standard regularity causation is not a sufficient reason to reject Searle's theory of Intentionality.

If one agreed with Brentano that all conscious mental states are Intentional then Searle's naturalistic account of Intentionality would go a long way towards naturalizing the mind. Searle does not agree with Brentano on this point, however, and thus claims that he has only made a step towards naturalizing the mind. This step would be that of solving the problem of Intentionality; however, the problem of phenomenal consciousness (or qualia) would still need to be accounted for in a naturalistic theory of consciousness. I disagree with Searle on this point and claim that in naturalizing Intentionality a far greater step has been made toward naturalizing the mind than Searle believes. This is because I disagree that it is possible to have Intentional states that are not conscious and I disagree with Searle's claim that undirected phenomenal states are possible. Thus a solution to the problem of Intentionality is also a solution to the problem of phenomenal

consciousness, and Searle's theory of Intentionality succeeds in laying the groundwork for a theory of mind that is both accessible to the natural sciences and non-reductionist.

In the following chapters I will defend Searle's theory of Intentionality by addressing certain criticisms of his theory rather than by contrasting his view with other accounts of Intentionality. I argue that a major benefit of Searle's theory is that it provides a solution to both Putnam's underdetermination problem and the "particularity problem" that face internalism, arguing against Dretske's claim that the problem of particularity can be solved without an appeal to Intentionality, and against Bach's claim that Searle's solution to the particularity problem is ultimately unsuccessful. I will also defend Searle's theory of Intentionality against Jacob and van Gulick, who claim that function and consciousness should precede Intentionality in an order of explanation, and I will also argue that Thompson and Dretske's arguments about mistaken cases of perception are based on a misunderstanding of Searle's theory of Intentionality. In the conclusion of my thesis I will address the motivation for my defense of Searle's theory of Intentionality, which is that it provides the only possible groundwork for a theory of mind that is both naturalistic and non-reductionist.

Chapter Two – Searle's Definition of Intentionality

Searle claims that "Intentionality" is the general term for all the various forms by which the mind can be directed at, or be about, or of, objects and states of affairs in the world'.⁸ To be a directed state for Searle means, roughly, that it makes sense to ask what it is about. For instance, if I have the state characterized as the belief in Santa Claus then this state is directed since the question "what is this state about?" is comprehensible. If I have the state characterized as boredom (or another emotion with no content) then, according to Searle, this state is not directed since the question "what is this state about?" seems to make no sense.

Searle's theory of Intentionality differs from some other theories in that he claims that "many conscious states are not Intentional, e.g., a sudden sense of elation, and many Intentional states are not conscious, e.g., I have many beliefs that I am not thinking about at present and I may never have thought of".⁹ According to Searle, we have some mental states, for example, some cases of anxiety or other emotions, which are not about anything and are, therefore, undirected. Searle also distinguishes between consciousness and Intentionality by claiming that there are some forms of Intentionality that are not conscious. One example of Intentionality that is not conscious would be any of my

⁸ Searle, *Mind, Language and Society*, 85.

⁹ Searle, *Intentionality*, 2.

beliefs that I am not thinking about at this moment. Searle claims that, while some people would argue that consciousness is always consciousness “of”, this is not the same “aboutness” relation as in Intentionality. The difference, according to Searle, between a state that is directed and therefore Intentional and a state that is still “of” but not Intentional is that in the latter case there is no difference between the state and what it is about. As an example of this difference Searle argues that if we have a case of anxiety that we don’t have a reason for, then this anxiety is not Intentional because the state and the anxiety are both the same thing. If we have a case of anxiety that is caused by our inability to pay the mortgage on our home then this anxiety is Intentional because it has the right sort of “aboutness”. Therefore, there is always a content of consciousness (there is always something that our conscious state is of) but, for Searle, this content is not always Intentional. He argues that pains are a good example of a conscious state that is not Intentional because “if I am conscious of a pain, the pain is not Intentional, because it does not represent anything beyond itself”.¹⁰ One obvious counter to this claim is that when we have a pain what the pain is directed at is a part of our body and, therefore, pains are Intentional as well. Searle solves this problem by admitting that the sense in which pains refer to a part of the body is Intentional because this has conditions of satisfaction (for example, in the case of phantom limbs, the condition of satisfaction is not met). However, Searle argues, most pains do not exhibit the same sort of about-ness relation as states that are truly Intentional.

Searle appears to be drawing a line here between consciousness and Intentionality

¹⁰Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, 84.

that does not hold up under scrutiny. Firstly, since phenomenal states (even those about themselves) are still directed, the line that Searle is drawing here seems very arbitrary. The only way, it seems to me, that Searle could justify maintaining this distinction is if he was to appeal to the inner/outer distinction that he explicitly rejects in *Rediscovery of the Mind*. This is because the only difference between truly Intentional states and states that Searle wants to characterize as non-Intentional would be that the former are about something in the external world whereas the latter can be said to be about nothing but the person having the state or their “internal” life.

The second problem is that there is good argument that the states that Searle is describing (undirected phenomenal states) do not actually exist. All of Searle’s examples of these states are cases of emotion where we are taking the word of the person suffering from the emotion that the emotion has no aboutness other than the emotion itself. As Patricia Greenspan points out in *Emotions and Reasons* it is more likely in these cases that the person suffering from the emotion is just not self-aware enough to determine the true object of their emotion. She outlines cases which seem to show that people are not always reliable sources when it comes to their emotions. Searle’s rejection of certain emotions’ Intentionality could be motivated by the fact that with emotion there is not always a direct link between the cause of the emotion and the object of the emotion as there seems to be in other Intentional states. I can be angry due to my not having slept well the night before but have the object of my emotion as my coffee maker not working quickly enough. That there is not always a direct connection between the object and cause of emotions would be a case for rejecting all emotions as Intentional, not just some

of them. This would be a more reasonable approach since emotions seem to provide the greatest counter to Searle's claims later on that Intentional states have a direct logical connection to their object. Rejecting emotions as Intentional outright, however, is also problematic since the line distinguishing emotions and other conscious processes is not clear. In order for Searle to argue that emotions are non-Intentional while other conscious states are Intentional, he needs to find a way to draw this dividing line between emotions and other conscious states. Arguing instead that emotions are Intentional in the same way that other mental states are would be far easier. This would also allow Searle's theory to do more work since all phenomenal states would be Intentional in the same way. In Chapter Four I will explain why emotions can't be used as a counter to Searle's theory; therefore, accepting that all phenomenal states are directed would not cause problems for Searle's theory of Intentional causation.

2.1 Intrinsic vs. Derived Intentionality

Part of Searle's rejection of a Dretskean form of naturalized Intentionality is that Searle believes that there is a distinction between derived and intrinsic Intentionality that can't be conflated. Searle distinguishes between intrinsic, derived, and "as-if" or metaphorical Intentionality. According to Searle, a statement of the type "I am hungry right now" expresses the intrinsic Intentionality of my mental states and perceptions, a statement like "In French 'J'ai grand faim en ce moment' means I am very hungry right now" expresses the derived Intentionality of language, and a statement like "the plants in my garden are hungry for nutrients" expresses the as-if Intentionality of plant-states.

Searle claims that “there are two kinds of genuine Intentionality, intrinsic and derived, but as-if Intentionality is not a third kind. Ascriptions of as-if Intentionality are metaphorical”¹¹. The difference between intrinsic and derived Intentionality is that

intrinsic Intentionality is observer-independent – I have a state of hunger regardless of what any observer thinks. Derived Intentionality is observer-dependent – it is only in relation to observers, users, and so on, that, for example, a sentence of French has the meaning it has.¹²

Intrinsic Intentionality is found in mental states like beliefs, desires, etc. and derived Intentionality is found in language. “An utterance can have Intentionality, just as a belief has Intentionality, but whereas the Intentionality of the belief is intrinsic the Intentionality of the utterance is derived”.¹³ Searle argues that ‘Intentional states represent objects and states of affairs in the same sense of “represent” that speech acts represent objects and states of affairs’¹⁴ but that “language is derived from [intrinsic] Intentionality and not conversely”.¹⁵ Searle justifies this distinction by claiming that if we rejected the distinction between derived and intrinsic Intentionality everything would become mental since everything can be interpreted in such a way as to have derived Intentionality.

As discussed in the introduction, Searle's distinction between derived and intrinsic Intentionality has a significant impact on his theory of language and meaning, as well as his theory of mind, since it means that the referential nature of the human mind cannot be reduced to the referential properties of language. This is because it is the Intentionality

¹¹Searle, *Mind, Language and Society*, 93.

¹²Ibid., 94.

¹³ Searle, *Intentionality*, 27.

¹⁴Ibid., 4.

¹⁵Ibid., 5.

of the mental that leads to linguistic Intentionality. I agree that this distinction is a valuable one to make, however in order for this distinction to be convincing the question of how exactly Intentionality is imposed by the mind upon sentences needs to be answered.

2.2 Conditions of Satisfaction

Searle claims that “the mind imposes Intentionality on entities that are not intrinsically Intentional by intentionally conferring the conditions of satisfaction of the expressed psychological state upon the external physical entity”.¹⁶ Thus a statement like "John is a bachelor" becomes Intentional when we impose conditions of satisfaction or truth conditions upon it (namely, that John actually be a bachelor). While this account of Intentionality seems to answer questions of how languages get their meaning and how it is possible for them to refer, it leaves us with another, possibly more difficult, question. The Intentionality of the mind is taken as a brute fact. The only answer given to the question of why mental states refer or have meaning is "they just do". This explains what is meant by those who criticize Searle’s theory of mind for relying upon “the magic of neurons”.

Searle attempts to partially answer this criticism by giving an evolutionary description of "why" the mind is Intentional. He argues that Intentionality is what allows our minds to deal with complex situations and to evaluate large amounts of novel information at once. All this seems to succeed at doing is pointing out the possible

¹⁶Searle, *Intentionality*, 27.

advantages of consciousness, which was not mysterious to begin with. However, by connecting Intentionality to evolutionary traits Searle has succeeded in giving a stronger reason for us to believe that a study of the neurons of the brain will lead, in the future, to an explanation of how these neurons cause mental states. This stance smacks of Paul Churchland's repeated claims that science will eventually solve our problems about the mind thus we should just put our faith in it. I am willing to accept Searle's use of this argument even while I reject Churchland's since, in my opinion, someone offering a counter-intuitive description of the mind (as Churchland does) needs to go further than merely claim that proof for their position will be found in the future, whereas someone who offers a common-sense view of the mind (Searle) is justified in accepting that all problems of the mind have not been solved but will be. This is because making a metaphysical assumption that is contrary to, or beyond, my direct experience (such as the assumption that my pain is ontologically eliminable in favour of neuron firings) requires a higher burden of proof. Certainly Searle's theory does not become waterproof until the referential power of the human mind is fully explained, but neither are there any serious arguments against the view that the human mind has this power.

2.3 The Connection Principle

One of the other aspects of Searle's theory of Intentionality that has come under attack is what he calls "the connection principle". This is his explanation of the connection between Intentionality and consciousness and has come under attack, since underlying this description is Searle's assumption that function is not ontologically prior

to consciousness or Intentionality. While Searle believes that Intentionality is an essential characteristic of consciousness he disagrees with some who claim that Intentionality is all that there is to consciousness. Searle describes the connection between Intentionality and consciousness by introducing what he calls “the connection principle”. He argues that not all Intentional states are conscious and not all conscious states are Intentional but that “there is an essential connection: we only understand Intentionality in terms of consciousness”.¹⁷ He argues that “only a being that could have conscious Intentional states could have Intentional states at all, and every unconscious Intentional state is at least potentially conscious”.¹⁸ So, while Searle believes that it is possible to have Intentional mental states that are not conscious, something can only be an Intentional state if it is “open” to consciousness. Likewise, according to Searle, it is impossible to have a mental state that is in principle closed to consciousness. He argues that “the attribution of a mental state to an agent is either an attribution of a conscious state or the attribution of a state that is the sort of thing that could be conscious”.¹⁹ Searle claims that only beings with consciousness could have intrinsic Intentionality because “it is only consciousness that provides a plausible basis for the perspectival nature of Intentional content”.²⁰ (Through most of the discussion Searle uses the term “aspectual shape” instead of “perspectival nature”.)

Searle's claim that all Intentional states must, in principle, be of the type that they

¹⁷Searle, *Mind, Language and Society*, 65.

¹⁸Searle, *Intentionality*, 132.

¹⁹Searle, *Mind, Language and Society*, 76.

²⁰Manson, “Consciousness”, 141.

are potentially mental states and thus potentially conscious states is clearly influenced by his acceptance of the distinction between derived and intrinsic Intentionality. Jacob and van Gulick both disagree with Searle's connection principle arguing, first, that function should come before Intentionality and consciousness in an order of explanation and, second, that it is possible to have an Intentional state that is not of the sort that could be conscious.

Jacob believes that there are two problems with Searle's description of the connection between Intentionality and consciousness. The first is the implication that Intentionality is prior to function and the second problem is discussed in section E below. Jacob argues that if Intentionality were to precede function this would mean that "the ascription of biological function is somehow indeterminate, if not observer-dependent".²¹ Jacob argues that, if we accept Searle's position, we have to accept that we don't discover certain biological functions at all, for example, that the heart's function is to pump blood.

Searle responds to Jacob's first argument by claiming that all we discover in the study of biological systems are a lot of facts about these systems that are then interpreted in order to arrive at the function. The reason why biological function is discoverable is that, according to Searle, the interpretation of biological facts takes place within a framework that is (almost) universally accepted. Searle argues that

Harvey did indeed discover that the function of the heart is to pump blood, but he made that discovery by discovering a whole lot of facts about the heart and these facts are situated relative to a teleology which

²¹Jacob, "Consciousness, Intentionality and Function", 197.

is more or less universally accepted.²²

2.4 Millikan's account of Intentionality

Jacob's stance here is similar to that of Ruth Millikan, as described in the introduction. Millikan claims that in order for something to have Intentionality or content it must be able to represent an object. The ability to be represented implies that the object can be misrepresented. To misrepresent is to mis-function and in order for something to mis-function it must have a proper function to begin with. Therefore, function precedes Intentionality and function is necessary (but not sufficient) for Intentionality. Millikan argues that biological selection is a method of design, and that this design is the source of function, and this function is the source of Intentionality or content. Thus, Intentionality can be reduced to function.

The problems with this approach both have to do with what Fodor calls functional indeterminacy. Fodor argues that in interpreting a frog's food-seeking behavior we can claim either that the frog is snapping at flies or that the frog is snapping at small, dark, moving objects. This is because "fly" and "small, dark, moving object" are co-extensive in the frog's environment. Thus, it is impossible to determine whether the function here is "snap at flies" or "snap at small, dark, moving objects". Fodor argues that

appeals to mechanisms of selection won't decide between reliably equivalent content ascriptions; i.e., they won't decide between any pair of equivalent content ascriptions where the equivalence is counterfactual supporting.²³

²² Searle, "Consciousness, the Brain and the Connection Principle", 221.

²³ A statement is counterfactual supporting if it is not only true of its occurrences but also true of its non-occurrences. Fodor, *A Theory of Content and Other Essays*, 11.

This Fodor calls the “disjunction problem” and argues that “contrary to the many advertisements you may have seen – the teleological story about [I]ntentionality does not solve the disjunction problem”.²⁴

Millikan's response to this argument is that the correct function is the function that the trait was selected for. Thus the function of a heart is to pump blood and not to make a thumping noise. Millikan appeals to Sober’s distinction between what is *selected* vs. what is *selected for*. She claims that “what a system selects for depends upon the causal mechanisms of selection, in particular, upon the properties one has to mention in giving a causal explanation of how some items got selected in while others were selected out”.²⁵ As an example, she describes a child’s toy that sorts balls of different shapes. It just happens that all of the balls of a particular size are also the same colour. So the toy sorts both the smallest balls as well as all of the balls that are green. Millikan claims that in this case it is obvious that the toy is *selecting for* size while the fact that it also *selects* all of the green balls is only contingent. According to Millikan

disjunctive properties can enter into the premises of inferences from knowledge of earlier situations to knowledge of later ones, but this kind of deductive inference from past situations to future ones often has nothing to do with causal explanation. That the frog’s ancestors caught flies-or-bee-bees and there were no bee-bees, is no more part of a causal explanation for proliferation of frogs, than that I caught the measles or the flu and I didn’t catch the flu is part of the causal explanation of my red rash. Hence the frog’s fly-catching mechanisms assuredly are not flee-bee [sic] catchers; that is not one of their functions.²⁶

²⁴Fodor, *A Theory of Content and Other Essays*, 8.

²⁵Millikan, “Speaking up for Darwin”, 160.

²⁶Millikan, “Speaking up for Darwin”, 160.

She claims that “rabbit thumps signal rabbit dangers, but given how timid rabbits are, the count on actual correspondences of dangers to thumps is probably quite small”.²⁷ Just because the function of the rabbit thumping fails in many situations doesn’t mean that the function of the rabbit thumping isn’t to signal danger.

Fodor responds to Millikan here by claiming that

in Sober’s example, we know that what’s selected for is shape rather than color because we know that the following counterfactuals are true: a red ball of the same shape would have gone through; a green ball of a different shape would not have. So what makes the difference between selected and selected for is not history but counterfactuals.²⁸

Fodor argues that Millikan begs the question here. He argues that you can describe

the frog’s fly detector’s signals as caring precisely about whether the signals ‘correspond to some thing black or ambient or specklike,’ viz. they are mechanisms designed to perform certain chemical . . . processes on ambient black specklike things in a world where the ambient specklike things are largely food.²⁹

The problem with Millikan’s argument, according to Fodor, is that she doesn’t give a Darwinian reason for accepting her definition over the alternative.

The other way that functional indeterminacy causes problems for a teleosemantic account of Intentionality is that traits are often selected for many different reasons (they serve many different causal roles) so the function of a specific trait is not always obvious. For example, the particular colour of a lizard's skin may cause the lizard to be better camouflaged within its environment and it may also cause the lizard to attract a better mate. If the function of a trait determines its content then it must be possible to

²⁷Ibid., 162.

²⁸Fodor, “Reply to Millikan”, 294.

²⁹Ibid., 295.

determine which of these outcomes it is the true function of the lizard's colour to effect. Millikan responds to this argument by claiming that a trait can serve many different functions. The example above would show merely that there are some traits that have multiple functions – not that there are traits with indeterminate function. The problem with this is that having numerous but determinate functions still leaves us with indeterminate content.

Due to the problem of functional indeterminacy, outlined by Fodor, Jacob's claim that function should precede Intentionality is not a convincing reason to reject Searle's theory. The only problem with accepting Searle's view that Intentionality must precede function is that we still want to be able to claim that discoveries about function are still "discoveries". However, Searle attempts to solve this problem by appealing to the use of an "almost universally accepted framework".

2.5 Inaccessible Intentional States

Jacob's second problem for Searle is that, in Searle's account, Intentional states must in principle be open to consciousness. Jacob argues that discoveries in cognitive science have led us to believe that there is a lot of Intentional processing which is not only unconscious but which is also not of the sort that can become conscious. Van Gulick also agrees that it is possible to have an Intentional mental state that is in principle closed to consciousness. He expounds on Jacob's point, claiming that "unconscious mental states play a prominent role in many models of perception, language-processing, and reasoning, and the relevant states are generally not of a sort to which we could gain

access".³⁰

The problem with this argument is that it is difficult to have proof of something that is in principle closed to our consciousness. Neither Jacob nor van Gulick explain what exactly it is about these states that makes them closed to consciousness in principle. It seems as though the examples are cases where the state is not conscious to the subject, but this does not show that the state is in principle closed to the subject. Van Gulick claims that these states are “not of a sort” where it would be possible to gain access but doesn't describe what characterizes this set or what it is that makes this set inaccessible to consciousness. The other problems with this argument is that theories positing a linguistic module in the brain (which is the main theory I assume Jacob and van Gulick are referring to) are, though widely accepted, not proven and that, even if they were proven, there is no reason, so far as I can see, to believe that this type of intrinsic linguistic rule-following is Intentional according to Searle's definition.

2.6 The Background

One of the things that characterizes Searle's definition of Intentionality is that our Intentional states do not exist in a vacuum. He claims that “each intentional state has its content and determines its conditions of satisfaction only in relation to numerous other Intentional states”.³¹ As an internalist, Searle claims that our mental states have the content that they have due to their connection to our other mental states – this is how

³⁰Van Gulick, “Why the Connection Argument Doesn't Work”, 201.

³¹Searle, *Intentionality*, 141.

Searle attempts to solve Putnam's underdetermination problem. The connection that our mental states have to one another is due to the fact that Intentionality functions within a "Network". The Network, as defined by Searle, is the position that

beliefs and desires are only part of a larger complex of other psychological states; there will be subsidiary Intentions as well as hopes and fears, anxieties and anticipations, feelings of frustration and satisfaction. For short, I have been calling this entire holistic network, simply, the "Network".³²

For example, Searle argues that a contemporary man who thinks "I am going to become the president of the United States" is different from a caveman having this exact same thought. This is because the present-day man has knowledge about democracy, the United States, and the presidency which the caveman lacks. This is why the caveman's thought is unintelligible while the present-day man's thought makes perfect sense. All of this knowledge about the world which enables the present-day man's thought to be intelligible is part of the Network. That our Intentional states have this sort of connection to one another is not nearly as contentious as Searle's claim that it is these connections that determines what the content is of a particular mental state.

The most controversial element of Searle's discussion of the Network however is his introduction of the Background which consists of pre-Intentional mental states. "The "hypothesis of the Background" is the claim that Intentional states are underlain by nonrepresentational, preintentional capacities".³³ This Background, according to Searle, is "a set of non-representational mental capacities that enable all representing to take

³²Ibid.

³³Searle, *Intentionality*, 144.

place".³⁴ These are the things that it is necessary that we know in order for our Intentional content to make sense but that are not actually part of that Intentional content. According to Searle "the Background provides necessary but not sufficient conditions for understanding, believing, desiring, intending, etc., and in that sense it is enabling and not determining".³⁵ For example, in order for me to do something as simple as walking across a room I require the non-Intentional assumptions that the ground is solid, that I won't float away into the air, as well as numerous "assumptions" about how to move my body etc.

Searle's explanation of the theory of the Background begins with him asking the reader to try to imagine the fundamental state that is at the core of a particular Intentional state. Searle argues that discovery of this fundamental state is impossible because we always have underlying assumptions about every Intentional state that leads us back to another. He argues that a reason why discovery of a fundamental state is impossible may be because most "of the Network is submerged in the unconscious and we don't quite know how to dredge it up".³⁶ Another problem, according to Searle, could be that "the states in the Network do not individuate; we don't know, for example, how to count beliefs".³⁷ Searle claims that at the core of our Intentional states are pre-intentional assumptions about the world.³⁸ We can't discover our primary beliefs because "they are

³⁴Ibid., 143.

³⁵Ibid., 158.

³⁶Ibid., 142.

³⁷Ibid., 142.

³⁸By "assumption" here Searle clearly means something non-representational, so Searle appears to be using the term "assumption" in a somewhat metaphorical way. What he means by assumption is that the Network is taken for granted, rather than that there is a

in a sense too fundamental to qualify as beliefs, even as unconscious beliefs”.³⁹ Searle argues that

anyone who tries seriously to follow out the threads in the Network will eventually reach a bedrock of mental capacities that do not themselves consist in Intentional states (representations), but nonetheless form the preconditions for the functioning of Intentional states. The Background is “preintentional” in the sense that though not a form or forms of Intentionality, it is nonetheless a precondition or set of preconditions of Intentionality.⁴⁰

As an example, Searle claims that a great many Intentional states and actions rely upon the idea that a table is solid. Searle claims that, while the expectation of the solidity of tables is certainly a candidate for an Intentional state, it normally isn’t. Human beings behave in ways that presuppose the solidity of objects around them without having anything that could properly be called a “belief” because such expectations lack the complicated logical structure of beliefs. These expectations are still mental, however, since they have, at least what appear to be, conditions of satisfaction. In fact, is it often only when these conditions fail to be met that we notice these background expectations at all.

Searle complicates the issue further by distinguishing between

the ‘deep-Background’, which would include at least all of those background capacities that are common to all normal human beings in virtue of their biological makeup – capacities such as walking, eating, grasping, perceiving, recognizing, and the preintentional stance that takes account of the solidity of things, and the independent existence of

supposition involved. I will be using the term “expectation” rather than “assumption” in my discussion here since “expectation” doesn’t imply Intentional content in the same way that ‘assumption’ does.

³⁹Searle, *Intentionality*, 142.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 143.

objects and other people – from what we might call the ‘local Background’ or ‘local cultural practices’, which would include such things as opening doors, drinking beer from bottles, and the preintentional stance that we take toward such things as cars, refrigerators, money and cocktail parties.⁴¹

Searle claims that without the Background no representation is possible. This is because the explanation of a representational state must rely upon a non-representational state in order to halt regress. Searle claims that “if representation presupposes a Background, then the Background cannot itself consist in representations without generating an infinite regress”.⁴² Searle argues that

Intentional states only have the conditions of satisfaction that they do, and thus only are the states that they are, against a Background of abilities that are not themselves Intentional states. In order that I can now have the Intentional states that I do I must have certain kinds of know-how: I must know how things are and I must know how to do things, but the kinds of “know-how” in question are not, in these cases forms of “knowing-that”.⁴³

Searle admits however that there is no sharp dividing line between cases of know-how and cases of know-that, which seems to imply that there is likewise no sharp dividing line between what would count as the Network and what would count as the Background. This is a fairly intuitive assumption since, as Searle points out earlier, states that belong to the Background can become Intentional (basically by “being noticed”).

Searle believes that one reason to assume that there is a background of dispositional states is that we can turn “know-that” into “know-how” where we have internalized the rules for performing certain actions. He appeals to a description of

⁴¹Searle, *Intentionality*, 144.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 148.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 143.

athletic knowledge as an example of a rule being internalized to the point where it becomes preintentional. Searle argues that

as the skier gets better he does not internalize the rules better, but rather the rules become progressively irrelevant. The rules do not become ‘wired in’ as unconscious Intentional contents, but the repeated experiences create physical capacities, presumably realized as neural pathways, that make the rules simply irrelevant.⁴⁴

This idea relies upon the folk-psychological concept of “body knowledge”. Many athletes claim that the moment that they became good at a particular sport was the moment that they stopped thinking about what they were doing and just let their body guide them. A less complex example might be something like touching a hot stove. It appears as though we pull our hand away from the stove even before we realize that we are touching something hot.

However, this example serves to illuminate the flaw in Searle’s argument. In the case of touching the hot stove the biological explanation for us pulling away before mentally processing the information is that our nervous system has certain responses that don’t rely upon mental processing at all. It is possible that by “internalizing rules” an athlete hasn’t actually begun to have preintentional mental states but rather that their reactions no longer rely upon mental states at all. This is evidenced by the fact that the response times of athletes are occasionally happening too quickly for a message to be sent up to their brain and then back to the body part(s) that need to be manipulated.

2.7 Solution to the Underdetermination Problem

⁴⁴Searle, *Intentionality*, 150.

Searle's main argument for the Background is that without these pre-Intentional assumptions interpretation of language is underdetermined. Searle argues that it is only by positing the Background that we can account for the fact that people properly (most of the time) interpret sentences such as "the cat is on the mat". He argues that this is evidenced by the fact that imagining a change in these background assumptions will leave us with different conditions of satisfaction and a different truth value for the sentence.

Searle argues that

this has the consequence that the notion of the literal meaning of a sentence is not a context free notion; it only has application relative to a set of preintentional Background assumptions and practices.⁴⁵

As an example Searle uses the many different interpretations that we can have for the literal translation of the word "open" depending upon which context the word is used in.⁴⁶

Just as the interpretation of the literal meaning of sentences creates problems unless one presupposes a Background, so the metaphorical interpretation of sentences creates even more problems. Firstly, it is difficult to determine what it is that causes people to assume that a sentence is intended to be taken metaphorically. Searle claims that "there is no algorithm for discovering when an utterance is intended metaphorically".⁴⁷ It also seems impossible to determine exactly why it is that people understand certain metaphors. Searle claims that metaphorical utterances can be

⁴⁵Searle, *Intentionality*, 145.

⁴⁶The examples he gives are "John opened the door", "the surgeon opened the wound", and "the artillery opened fire".

⁴⁷Searle, *Intentionality*, 149.

interpreted as “X is like Y with regard to certain features F” but what those features are exactly cannot be determined algorithmically either. Searle claims that “there are many metaphors whose interpretation does not rely on any perception of literal similarity between the extension of the Y term and the referent of the X term”.⁴⁸ As an example Searle appeals to metaphors about taste and temperature. We claim that some people have a “bitter disposition” or a “hot temper”,

but in neither case of the taste metaphors nor the case of the temperature metaphors are there any literal similarities between the extension of the Y term and the referent of the X term which are sufficient to account for the metaphorical utterance meaning.⁴⁹

Searle argues that

the nonalgorithmic character of the rules and the fact that some of the associations are not determined by rules at all suggest that there are nonrepresentational capacities involved, but that claim would be misleading if it is taken to imply that a complete and algorithmic set of rules for metaphor would show that there is no such Background; for even such rules would require a Background for their application as we shall see.⁵⁰

He claims that ‘it just seems to be a fact about our mental 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’.⁵¹

Searle gets us to imagine that we could write down all of our beliefs and principles or inferences that lead to the development of further beliefs on a piece of paper as axioms. It seems as though, depending upon the Background expectations that are

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Searle, *Intentionality*, 149.

already in place, these axioms can be interpreted in numerous different ways. Searle argues that

about this list I want to say, if all we have is a verbal expression of the content of your beliefs, then so far we have no Intentionality at all. And this is not because what you have written down are “lifeless” marks, without significance, but because even if we construe them as expressing Fregean semantic entities, i.e., as propositional contents, the propositions are not self-applying. You still have to know what to do with the semantic elements before they can function; you have to be able to apply the semantic contents in order that they determine conditions of satisfaction. Now it is this capacity for applying or interpreting Intentional contents which I am saying is a characteristic function of the Background.⁵²

Searle takes this to show that

we do have Intentional states, some conscious, many unconscious; they form a complex Network. The Network shades off into a Background of capacities (including various skills, abilities, preintentional assumptions and presuppositions, stances, and nonrepresentational attitudes). The Background is not on the periphery of Intentionality but permeates the entire Network of Intentional states; since without the Background the states could not function, they could not determine conditions of satisfaction.⁵³

Searle’s description of Intentionality up to this point was that the necessary and sufficient conditions for Intentionality are that a state has conditions of satisfaction, “aboutness”, and that this aboutness is of something other than the state itself. The Background is potentially conscious, according to Searle, since it has conditions of satisfaction that become obvious only when they do not obtain (you would be very surprised one day if you went to place your coffee mug on your desk and it was no longer solid); however, the Background is not Intentional since it lacks the logical

⁵²Ibid., 153.

⁵³Ibid., 151.

structure of Intentional states. The thesis that Intentionality can be explained by a discussion of logical structure results in one immediate difficulty. Obviously the Intentionality that is seen in language is not a problem since Searle can claim that this form of Intentionality is derived from the Intentionality of mental states. The problem is that not only complex mental states and linguistic components, but basic perceptions appear to have Intentionality as well. Rather than argue that perceptions do not have Intentionality Searle attempts to solve this problem by arguing instead that perceptions have Intentional content.

Chapter Three – The Intentionality of Perception

In customary Searlean manner the chapter on the Intentionality of perception begins with a rejection of how the problem of perception has been looked at in the past. Searle claims that the inner/outer metaphor used for perception is inherently flawed since our minds are as much a part of the “external” world as anything else is. He also claims that we need to reject the notion that our perceptions have mental objects since this leads to there being double the objects for every perception. Thus the question “how do our internal perceptions relate to the external world?” needs to be reformulated. Searle appears to be splitting hairs here since he doesn’t actually attempt to reformulate this question and actually, for all intents and purposes, answers the very question that he claims to reject. Searle’s actual intention here appears to be informing the reader of the fact that he is going to propose a naïve realist view of perception and that this view will deviate somewhat from the theories proposed by other philosophers.

It becomes obvious that the latter is the case when Searle goes on to claim that perceptions have conditions of satisfaction and propositional content. The truly controversial aspect of Searle’s theory of perception, however, is his claim that this propositional content is Intentional in the very same way that beliefs and desires are and that perceptions are self-referential in nature. I will be examining the first of these claims about which Dretske claims “it is amazing what impeccable logic and a false premise can

make you say”.⁵⁴ I will also be looking at Dretske’s replies to Searle; his claims that the causal theory of perception does not need to appeal to Intentionality in order to solve the particularity problem, that cases of mistaken perception undermine the claim that perceptions have conditions of satisfaction, and that perceptions do not represent the world in the same way that sentences do.

3.1 Searle’s Account of Perception

Searle’s major claim in Chapter Two of *Intentionality*, “The Intentionality of Perception”, is that “the visual experience is as much directed at or of objects and states of affairs in the world as any of the paradigm Intentional states”.⁵⁵ He claims that this is evidenced by the fact that perceptions have conditions of satisfaction and representational content just as beliefs and desires do. Searle defines conditions of satisfaction by claiming that “conditions of satisfaction are those conditions which, as determined by the Intentional content, must obtain if the state is to be satisfied”.⁵⁶ According to Searle when we have a perception it is not the case, strictly speaking, that it is true or false but merely that it is satisfied in that it is an accurate representation of the world. Perceptions are different from beliefs and desires because they have a world-to-mind direction of fit (meaning that the mind is responsible if it is a mistaken perception) whereas beliefs and desires have a mind-to-world direction of fit (meaning that it is the responsibility of the mind to achieve the conditions of satisfaction).

⁵⁴Dretske, “The Intentionality of Perception”, 163.

⁵⁵Searle, *Intentionality*, 39.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 12 – 13.

Searle claims it is obvious that perceptions have conditions of satisfaction because of the fact that we speak of perceptions as being illusory or incorrect. When we have a perception of a station wagon that perception has the condition of satisfaction that there is a station wagon there and that this station wagon is causing the experience. Searle argues that, just as one cannot separate a belief from what it is a belief about, one can also not separate a perception from what it is a perception of. The conditions of satisfaction are part of the perception itself since the perception tells us what needs to be the case in order for the experience to be veridical. This means that, according to Searle, perceptions have representational content (Searle uses the term “presentational”) in the same way that beliefs and desires do.

If Searle is correct here then the content of our perceptions is always a proposition, i.e. “all seeing is seeing that”.⁵⁷ He argues that visual experience is never simply of an object but rather it must always be that such and such is the case. Thus, if the content of my perception is “I am having a visual perception of a yellow station wagon” it is part of this very content that my perception is satisfied only if there actually is a yellow station wagon in front of me and if this yellow station wagon is causing this very perception. Therefore, it is part of the content of the perception that it is of a specific object. This “of” is Intentional since the perceptual experience of a yellow station wagon is not itself a yellow station wagon as the perception of anxiety is itself the anxiety.

⁵⁷Searle, *Intentionality*, 40.

3.2 Seeing vs. Seeing That

Searle argues for the Intentionality of perception by pointing out the differences between the idioms “seeing” and “seeing that”. One difference being that ‘the “see x” form does not commit the reporter to reporting how it seemed to the agent, but the “see that” form does’.⁵⁸ So, in the case of a mistaken perception, it is correct to say that “Jane saw a yellow station wagon” even though she thought that she was seeing a Cadillac, but it does not make any sense to say that “Jane saw that there was a yellow station wagon but she thought that she was seeing a Cadillac”. According to Searle, since all seeing is “seeing that”, then the content of our Intentional state is a proposition. Searle argues that it is the very nature of perception itself that we assume that the conditions of satisfaction obtain, thus, the conditions of satisfaction are built in to every one of our perceptions. Therefore, perceptions are always self-referential in the sense that “it figures in its own conditions of satisfaction”.⁵⁹ Searle claims that

the Intentional content of the visual experience, which requires that there be a yellow station wagon in front of me in order that it be satisfied, also requires the fact that there is a yellow station wagon in front of me must be the cause of that very visual experience.⁶⁰

So the content of our perceptions becomes “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)”.⁶¹ Thus Searle has amended the causal theory of perception and created the theory of Intentional causation. This self-reference means that part of the

⁵⁸Searle, *Intentionality*, 42.

⁵⁹Ibid., 49.

⁶⁰Ibid., 48.

⁶¹Ibid., 48.

content of the Intentional state is that it be caused by the actual object and this means that there is a causal relation as part of the content of the Intentional state.

Searle claims that the difference between the causal theory of perception and the theory of Intentional causation is that the latter recognizes that Intentionality is built into perception in the sense that "it could not be this very visual experience if it was not an experience whose Intentionality was that it is a case of seeming to see this thing in front of me".⁶² The reason why my perception of a computer screen in front of me is intrinsically Intentional is that it is a condition of my having this visual experience that I refer to the computer screen in front of me. Searle claims that the Intentionality of vision cannot be a case of derived Intentionality since "the seeming to see is not added on to the visual experience in a way that the referential relation to a particular man is added on to the word Clinton".⁶³ He claims that "visual experience is never simply of an object but rather it must always be that such and such is the case".⁶⁴

Searle argues that Intentionality in the case of vision can be extended to show that all cases of perception are Intentional and, in fact, even actions are intrinsically Intentional. Searle gives an example of a man who is anesthetized and is trying to raise his arm which is, unbeknownst to him, tied down to the bed. When the man opens his eyes he is surprised to discover that his arm has not been raised. Searle claims that this is just like the cases of visual hallucination where the subject has an experience but the conditions of satisfaction of the Intentional state fail to obtain. Searle also gives an

⁶²Searle, *Mind, Language and Society*, 97.

⁶³Ibid., 98.

⁶⁴Searle, *Intentionality*, 40.

example of patients who are caused to raise their arm by the application of an electrode to their motor cortex. According to Penfield the responses of the patients is “I didn't do that. You did.”

Searle argues that the difference between these two cases is a phenomenal one. He claims that “the two cases feel different to the patient; and secondly that this phenomenal difference carries with it a logical difference in the sense that the experience of moving one's hand has certain conditions of satisfaction. Such concepts as “trying”, “succeeding”, and “failing” apply to it in ways that they do not apply to the experiences the patient has when he simply observes his hand moving”.⁶⁵ So this phenomenal quality of action is what is Intentional and can be analogized to the visual experience. Action is also similar to perception in that the latter has as conditions of satisfaction that there are certain states of affairs or objects in the world and that these objects or states of affairs are what is causing the perception, and the former has as conditions of satisfaction that there are certain bodily movements or states and that it is the agent's intentions that are causing these bodily movements or states. Action differs from perception in that the former has a world-to-mind direction of fit and a mind-to-world direction of causation and the latter has a mind-to-world direction of fit and a world-to-mind direction of causation.

3.3 Dretske's Arguments

Dretske agrees with Searle that in order to perceive something we must have a

⁶⁵Searle, *Intentionality*, 90.

conscious experience of it but claims that “one reason [this] isn’t enough is that the way x causes an experience in us may be so unusual or deviant that we refuse to count it as a perception of x”.⁶⁶ He uses the example of someone who perceives a yellow station wagon by having a particular smell. According to Dretske, even if this olfactory experience were caused by the station wagon, many of us would not be inclined to say that the person was actually having a perception of the station wagon. In agreement with Searle, Dretske claims that it is not enough that x causes a perception in us but that this perception is of the very object x. Dretske’s disagreements with Searle begin when Searle claims that perceptual states represent objects in the same way that sentences do. Dretske claims that “it is by no means obvious that if an experience is of a yellow station wagon then it must represent the yellow station wagon in the way a statement . . . about the car represents it”.⁶⁷

Dretske attempts to prove this point by analogizing perception to a photograph instead of a sentence. He claims that the photograph is not "of" something in virtue of what we take it to be but in virtue of the causal chain involved in creating it. He argues that “what makes it a picture of a yellow station wagon . . . is simply the fact that it is my (not your) car that is at the other end of an appropriate causal chain”.⁶⁸ In fact, he argues, a photograph can look very unlike what it is actually a picture of. That the photograph appears to be a house when it is in fact of a facade gives us reason to believe that those taking it to be a house are mistaken. Dretske argues that there is no reason for

⁶⁶Dretske, “The Intentionality of Perception”, 155.

⁶⁷Ibid., 156.

⁶⁸Ibid., 157.

us to assume that perceptions represent reality in the same way that sentences do rather than as photographs do. It is plausible, Dretske argues, (far more plausible than Searle's account) that a perception is of a particular object purely in virtue of a causal connection between the perceiver and the object. Dretske claims that we call visual experiences illusory, not because they have representational content, but that "the only sense in which experiences are false or misleading is the sense in which thermometer readings can be false or misleading; they can produce false beliefs in those who depend on them for information".⁶⁹

Dretske also believes that cases of mistaken perceptions create a problem for Searle's account. He uses the example of a yellow station wagon that is so far away that it appears to be a speck on our windshield at first and asks

when one first saw the yellow station wagon, at the time when it looked like (and you thought that it might actually be) a speck on the windshield, did one's experience of it represent it as a yellow station wagon?⁷⁰

He answers his own question, arguing that "there need be nothing in or about an experience of x that reveals what it is an experience of".⁷¹

This argument strikes to the heart of our intuitions about perceptions; however, it is flawed in that it is caused by a misunderstanding of Searle's position. Searle never claims that the conditions of satisfaction of a perception are always satisfied, in fact, he acknowledges the fact that we can have mistaken perceptions. In the case of mistaken

⁶⁹Dretske, "The Intentionality of Perception", 165.

⁷⁰Ibid., 161.

⁷¹Ibid., 162.

perceptions, that the yellow speck on our windshield is a yellow station wagon is not part of the content because the conditions of satisfaction are not that there is a yellow station wagon there (since that is not what we take ourselves to be seeing) but rather that there is a yellow speck on our windshield. As the yellow station wagon comes closer our perception now has the conditions of satisfaction that there is a yellow station wagon there and we realize that our former perception was mistaken. It is not the case that our perceptions have as their content what the object is that is causing them; rather, our perceptions have as their content what we take ourselves to perceive. Searle's argument is that when we have a perceptual experience it is always an experience "of" something, not that we are always correct about what our experience is of. Dretske's argument about the yellow speck in fact supports this argument since it shows that we cannot have a perception without making assumptions about what it is we perceive. Even if something is moving past us too quickly to discern, if we are truly perceiving it, then we perceive it as "that fast moving yellow thing" etc. Searle argues that "I no more infer that the car is the cause of my visual experience than I infer that it is yellow".⁷²

Dretske further argues that Searle's proposal that perceptions are Intentional suffers from logical flaws. Dretske claims that perceptual experiences don't embody propositional attitudes at all and that the belief that they do is caused by mistaking

an x that is F (an object that is a yellow station wagon) with seeing x as F (which, at least on one reading, is a propositional attitude – viz. taking x to be F) or seeing that x is F (which, on any reading is a propositional attitude – viz. knowing, hence believing that x is F).⁷³

⁷²Searle, *Intentionality*, 73.

⁷³Dretske, "The Intentionality of Perception", 160.

Dretske believes that we can have a visual experience of a station wagon without recognizing what it is that we are having an experience of; we can see a yellow station wagon without seeing that the thing in front of us is a station wagon. He argues that the fact that one can be mistaken about whether x is an F or not means that our perceptions cannot have propositional content because our perception can only be a representation after we have identified a particular object.

This argument is flawed because it is just as possible to have mistaken propositional content as it is to have mistaken cases of perception and because it does seem as though our cases of perceiving do involve the underlying assumptions that Searle claims that they do. Namely, we assume that there is an object of our perception and that this object is causing our perception. There are certain situations where it would make sense to say that “I am perceiving X but I don't believe that there is actually an X there”; however, these cases are far from what is usual. In fact, the only time when this sort of description would make sense seems to involve a failure of perception that is known to the observer, e.g., hallucinations.

3.4 The Particularity Problem

The most compelling reason to accept Searle's Intentional causation account of perception over Dretske's causal account is that Searle's account solves the problem of particularity or how it is that our perceptions are “of” particular objects. Searle formulates this problem as:

what is it about Jones's visual experience right here on our earth that

makes it the case that it can only be satisfied by one particular previously identified woman and not by some other woman who happened to be type identical with that woman, whether Jones can tell the difference or not?⁷⁴

Searle claims that an appeal to Intentionality is needed because the causal theory does not solve this problem. He argues that the causal theory “fails to answer the question as to how this fact [that Jones takes himself to be seeing a particular previously identified woman] gets into the Intentional content”.⁷⁵ In other words, the causal theory only solves the particularity problem from a third-person perspective whereas, according to Searle, it needs to be solved from a first person point of view. Therefore ‘the question . . . is not “under what conditions does he in fact see Sally whether he knows it or not?”’, but “under what conditions does he take himself to be seeing that Sally is in front of him?”’.⁷⁶ One of the problems for the causal theory is that when Jones takes Sally to be Jane there is a sense in which his perception is referring to Jane even though the cause of his perception is Sally. It is this that the causal theory cannot account for.

Searle attempts to solve the particularity problem by appealing to a discussion of the Network and the Background. It is the indexicality of the Network and the Background, i.e., the characteristic of the Network and the Background that allows us to baptize a particular object of perception as “that one”, which solves the problem of particularity. Searle claims that

the conditions of satisfaction of each experience and each memory after the initial encounter with Sally are not just that the experience should

⁷⁴Searle, *Intentionality*, 63.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 63.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 64.

be satisfied by a woman satisfying Sally's description in general terms but that it should be caused by the same woman who caused Jones's other experiences and memories.⁷⁷

Searle claims this is proven by that fact that if it were discovered that Sally and Jane had been switched at birth and that Sally has really been Jane all along, then Jones's perception is still satisfied, but if she has been switched just before the perception in question and replaced with her twin then the perception is not satisfied.

One potential problem brought up by Kent Bach in *Searle Against the World: How Can Experiences Find Their Objects?* is that Searle has really not solved the problem of particularity here; he has only solved the problem for cases of re-identification. The appeal to the Network and Background does solve the particularity problem for cases of re-identification only, but the appeal to Intentional causation I believe does solve the particularity problem for other cases, e.g., the reason Jones takes himself to perceive Sally and not someone qualitatively identical to her (even on the first meeting) is because, on Searle's naïve realist view, Jones's perception has the actual Sally built into its conditions of satisfaction.

Another problem with Searle's account so far are cases like the Sally/Jane case. For example, suppose that throughout his ten years of knowing Sally, every second time that he thought he met her it was in fact her twin Jane. When Jones has a perception of Sally, is it satisfied only every second time that he takes himself to be meeting her, even though at this point a reference to Jane is taking place as well? When Jones has a perception of someone who he takes to be Sally, is he really referring to two women or is

⁷⁷Searle, *Intentionality*, 66.

he referring only to the first “Sally” that he met? Searle could probably solve this problem by claiming that Jones’s Network of Intentional states indicate both women so that when he refers to Sally he is referring to the united Sally and Jane or the disjunctive Sally or Jane. Dretske claims that the causal theory of perception solves the particularity problem and that an appeal to Intentionality is not necessary. Dretske argues that the concerns with the causal theory that Searle brought up (that it only solves the problem of particularity in a third-person way) is not a concern for the causal theory of perception but that it is merely Searle’s own problem. Searle’s response to this is that Dretske’s “alleged solution fails to answer the question as to how this fact gets into the Intentional content”,⁷⁸ the fact being that the experience is caused by the very person and not someone that looks exactly like her. Searle argues that

the conditions of satisfaction of each experience and each memory after the initial encounter with Sally are not just that the experience should be satisfied by a woman satisfying Sally’s description in general terms but that it should be caused by the same woman who caused Jones’s other experiences and memories.⁷⁹

In “Perception and Reference without Causality”⁸⁰ Jaegwon Kim points out some problems with the causal theory’s attempt to solve the particularity problem that undermine Dretske’s claim that Intentionality is not needed. Kim claims that the problem with the causal theory of perception is that there are many factors concerning the perception of a given object. For example, is it really the tree causing my perception of a tree, or is it light waves, or is it the gardener who planted the tree? If we accept the

⁷⁸Searle, *Intentionality*, 63.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 67.

⁸⁰Kim, “Perception and Reference without Causality”.

representationalist view of the mind and of our Intentional states being similar to the object that they are about, then our visual experience can be said to be “of” the tree. Kim’s argument is that resemblance and causal connection even together may not be enough to assume that our visual experiences are “of” a particular object.

He claims that a causal connection does not solve the problem of fortuitous satisfaction, e.g., we have a visual experience which is more like the parent tree than it is of the tree in front of us and the parent tree obviously was causally responsible for our perception – yet, clearly, we are not having a perception of the parent tree.

Therefore, the main benefit of the theory of Intentional perception (that it solves the problem of particularity) does appear to be a reason to accept this theory over the causal account of perception. Furthermore, as shown above, the arguments that Dretske poses against the theory that perceptions have Intentional content are all based upon a misunderstanding of Searle’s theory. It is not necessary for our perceptions to always be correct in order for those perceptions to have the object causing them as part of the Intentional content. All that is necessary is that when we take ourselves to be seeing a particular object this seeing is always “seeing that”.

Chapter Four – Intentional Causation

By showing that our perceptions are Intentional Searle has taken the first step toward naturalizing Intentionality. Searle completes this process through his theory of Intentional causation, which logically connects Intentionality to natural objects. He uses this connection in order to disprove the transcendentalist's thesis that Intentionality is something above and beyond the natural world. An important argument for the theory of Intentional causation is Searle's claim that a characteristic of the content of our Intentional states is that they are caused by the objects outlined in the conditions of satisfaction. One possible problem with this theory, brought up by David Thompson, is that the content of the Intentional state determines the conditions of satisfaction and this means that the "actual cause" of the Intentional state, at least in some cases, must be the same as the "cause as requirement", i.e., we have to assume that what we take ourselves to be seeing, at least in some cases, is what we are actually seeing.⁸¹ This criticism is very similar to Dretske's criticism of Searle's theory of perception seen in the previous chapter, and Thompson also appeals to cases of mistaken perception in order to prove his point. Thompson argues that Searle's theory is incorrect since we never know that the actual cause and the cause as requirement are truly the same. Thompson also claims that even if Searle is correct about causation being able to link Intentionality to natural

⁸¹Thompson, "Intentionality and Causality in John Searle".

objects, he has to put forth an entirely new sense of causation in order to do so. He argues that Searle's theory of Intentional causation is less clear about what causation actually is than the standard regularity theory was and, therefore, is not a reasonable substitute for it. Searle, however, is not proposing an alternative to the standard regularity account of causation; he is merely offering an amendment to that theory. The theory of Intentional causation is not intended to take the place of the standard regularity theory; it is intended as a sort of postscript to that theory which accounts for a different sense of the term "causation". Thompson's claims will be examined in greater detail throughout this chapter.

4.1 Description of Intentional Causation

It is the self-referential quality of conditions of satisfaction that leads to Searle's development of the theory of Intentional causation. This self-reference means that part of the content of the Intentional state is that it be caused by the actual object and this means that there is a causal relation as part of the content of the Intentional state. It is this connection between causation and Intentionality which Searle calls Intentional causation. Searle claims that Intentional causation is merely a subset of regular causation but differs from the standard regularity theory in three ways. That is, he believes that we can directly observe the relation of causation between events (and that we do observe this relation all of the time), he believes that causation is not based upon universal regularities or laws but that it is an actual relation in the world, and he believes that natural objects are logically related to the Intentional content.

Searle attempts to show why his theory of Intentional causation is necessary by describing uses of the term “causation” which are not compatible with the regularity account. His first example is of when someone takes a drink of water and claims that the cause of their drinking was thirst. Searle explains that when this person says that they “took a drink of water because they were thirsty” this claim does not rely upon further observation in order to show that it is true. It would be foolish to ask the person “how do you know that you took the drink of water because you were thirsty?” because this knowledge is immediate. Searle also claims that we know the counterfactual without further observation as well, i.e., this person knows that if they were not thirsty then they would not have taken a drink of water, without having to appeal to anything outside of themselves in order to justify this.

Searle also uses the thirst example to show that causal descriptions do not necessarily invoke universal regularities or laws. According to Searle, when we claim that we took a drink because of our thirst, this claim does not entail any causal laws or regularities. Even though the speaker may admit that there could be some laws relating their drinking to their thirst the statement “my thirst caused my drinking” does not entail a statement like “there is some law L such that there is some description ψ of my thirst and some description λ of my drinking, and L asserts a universal correlation of events of type ψ and events of type λ ”.⁸² Searle claims that the only justification for describing causation in terms of regularities would be if “cause” did not name a relation in the actual

⁸²Searle, *Intentionality*, 120.

world. Since Searle is a realist about causation then, according to him, he doesn't need to rely upon regularities as explanations.

4.2 Thompson's argument

Thompson finds fault with the thirst example for a couple of reasons, one of which is that Searle never discusses the distinction between reasons and causes. Thompson claims that if thirst were just a reason for drinking and not a cause of it, then Searle's claim that there are some accounts of causation which are not explained within the regularity account of causation is incorrect. This is because the thirst example would only be showing that there are some cases where people use the term "cause" incorrectly. Thompson also claims that even if we grant that thirst is a cause of someone drinking it is certainly not a sufficient cause because there are more things which are connected to our taking a drink than merely thirst.

In the situation outlined above, and in other situations like it, when we claim that our thirst caused us to drink we do mean that it was a cause and not just a reason. Perhaps we would agree that it is not a sufficient cause, because most people would agree that there are other causes involved as well, but we are still using the term here to mean cause and nothing else. Thompson claims that in the scientific use of the word "cause", regularity is implied, thus the other uses of "cause" are merely incorrect. Here Thompson seems actually to be agreeing with Searle, he agrees that our regular, everyday use of the word "cause" deviates from the scientific use of the term which the regularity account describes. Searle's point is that there are some cases of causation that are not

taken account of in the regularity account. If we take all of our uses of the word “cause” to be cases of causation then Searle is correct, even according to Thompson. Calling all uses of the term “cause” which differ from the scientific or regularity account incorrect would mean that a lot, if not most of the time, our use of the word is wrong. We still need to explain what is meant when we use the term in these ways. The only real difference between Searle's position and that of Thompson seems to be that Thompson is satisfied in ignoring all uses of “cause” which are not scientific while Searle believes that we need to account for these common-place uses in our theory of causation.

4.3 Logical Connection between Objects and Intentional Content

Searle's last deviation from the standard theory of causation is not shown in the third example but is part of the structure of Intentional causation itself. He claims that there is a logical or internal connection between natural objects and Intentional contents. This is the part of Searle's theory that defeats the transcendentalist's thesis and, therefore, naturalizes Intentionality because this difference is the one that connects natural objects and Intentional states. Searle claims that the connection between Intentional states and their objects is something beyond mere descriptions of causes and descriptions of effects. The Intentional content is causally related to actual objects through the conditions of satisfaction. This is because part of the conditions of satisfaction of the Intentional content is that the Intentional state be caused by the actual object. So, if you have the Intentional state of “perceiving a cup of tea”, that state is logically connected to the cup of tea in the world, because you have as conditions of

satisfaction that there is a cup of tea there and that the cup of tea is causing your perception, and these conditions are built right into your Intentional state.

One of Thompson's objections so far is that Searle's position seems to be dangerously similar to a priori causation, a position which Searle explicitly rejects. This is because causation is now a logical feature of perception and action, as opposed to being discovered empirically. In Searle's view, however, it is through perception that we recognize causation, not prior to perception. Searle claims that we don't need an a priori sense of causation in order to experience it "any more than we have to have an a priori concept of red to experience redness".⁸³ Our perceptions, Intentionality, and sense of causation all evolve together according to Searle.

Searle's amendment to the standard regularity account of causation is based upon two things: He claims, first, that the standard regularity account fails to acknowledge the Intentionality of perception and action and, secondly, that it doesn't account "for the fact that conditions of satisfaction are determined by the experience".⁸⁴ Searle does reject the notion of an a priori sense of causation, but his amendment to the standard regularity account is not based upon this rejection. Also, Thompson is incorrect in assuming that Searle is positing an a priori sense of causation merely by linking causation to perception and Intentionality.

4.4 Actual Cause vs. Cause as Requirement

⁸³Searle, *Intentionality*, 132.

⁸⁴Ibid.

The other problem with Searle's theory of Intentional causation, Thompson claims, is that in Searle's theory there is no connection between the "actual cause" and the "cause as requirement". Thompson argues, we have mistaken cases of perception all of the time; we can hallucinate or just be completely wrong about what we are seeing. Thompson claims that since we can never be sure that our perceptions are being caused by what we think they are, then there is no logical connection between our Intentional state and the natural world. This is because the Intentional content cannot determine the object referred to if there is no object there at all. Searle claims, however, that we only have a real case of perception when the "actual cause" and the "cause as requirement" are the same. In cases of actual perception we can always be sure that there is a logical connection between our Intentional state and the actual object. One problem with this, according to Thompson, is that we cannot ever be certain that we have any cases of actual perception at all. As I said before, due to Searle's direct realism, he doesn't consider this to be a coherent concern at all. The far more serious concern with the lack of connection between actual cause and cause as requirement is a purely epistemic one. Even if we do not doubt that we do have cases of actual perception it is obvious that not all cases of perception are actual. The problem with Searle's theory is that it doesn't allow us to distinguish between cases of actual perception and cases of mistaken perception since that the conditions of satisfaction obtain is built into every perception.

Searle does address this concern briefly by claiming that there is a phenomenal difference between cases of mistaken vs. actual perception. The fact that schizophrenic patients often claim that they can tell the difference between hallucinations and real

perceptions would help to justify this view. However, this wouldn't help to account for "run of the mill" cases of mistaken perception in which we are seeing what is actually there but are misinterpreting it due to a deficiency of information. Searle could address this concern by claiming that we discover mistaken perceptions only when they fail us in some way. In most normal cases of perception it truly is the case that we have no ability to tell the difference between an actual perception and a mistaken one. In these cases the ability to tell that what we are seeing is not real relies upon that particular perception's failure to fit into the Network of our other Intentional states. If a pink elephant came barreling into my office right now I would assume that such a perception is false, based upon certain other Intentional states in my Network – namely, that pink elephants don't exist, that there are no elephants in the university, etc. For other cases of mistaken perception we discover our error by getting more information – either the object moves closer, the lighting is increased, or we ask someone with better eyesight what they are seeing.

4.5 Billiard Ball Causation

Thompson claims that another problem with Searle's account is that it is incompatible with the idea of "billiard ball causation". Searle, however, does explain how his sense of causation is compatible with causation among billiard balls or other material objects. Searle's causation is described by him as a sense of "making something happen" which may seem to limit this form of causation to human agents, but Searle claims that we can discover causation in the external world because of the similarities between our

personally causing things and causal relations that do not involve us as agents. Searle attempts to explain how we can be justified in believing that things other than personal experiences can still be causes by giving an example of how a child could come to discover causation.

Searle claims that manipulation is closely connected to causation, and in this sense, agrees with the standard regularity theory. He claims that a child discovers the relation of causation through manipulation of objects. When a child uses a hard object to smash a vase she learns that manipulation can be used in order to cause changes in the environment. Every step beyond the hard object leaving the child's hand is causal. When the child perceives that a hard object falling onto the vase has the same effect as when they intentionally throw the object this allows them to discover causation beyond human agents.

The child is actually discovering causation according to Searle; she is not merely projecting her sense of Intentional causation onto the world. Searle claims that this is because the relation between the objects when the child smashes the vase and when something unintentionally falls onto the vase are exactly the same. Searle agrees that these two cases of causation are not observable in exactly the same way but he claims that we still see causal relations outside of ourselves as causation and not merely as one event followed by another event. So Searle's account of causation can be extended to account for cases of causation that do not involve human agents.

Our ability to discover causation outside of ourselves is dependent on the notion of regularity. While Searle claims that causation does not rely upon regularities he does

admit that these two concepts are closely connected. He states that "neither statements asserting the existence of causation nor the existence of instances of causation entails that there are general causal laws".⁸⁵ Causal laws do exist however, and we need a background assumption of regularity in the world in order to recognize individual instances of causation. To explain this reliance upon regularity Searle provides an example of someone sitting in a hospital bed who discovers that every time they move their arm up the window beside them opens. This person is going to start to wonder whether the movement of their arm is causing the window to open. In order to test this hypothesis they continue to lift up their arm and see if the window responds. If the window opens every time that they move their arm up then they are going to assume that there is something connected to their arm which is causing the window to open. The only way they are able to come to this assumption is through testing their hypothesis against an assumption of regularity in the world. Searle claims that this assumption of regularity is part of the Background.

4.6 New Causation

Thompson's last argument against Searle's theory is that he only succeeds in connecting Intentionality to causation by putting forth an entirely new sense of causation. Searle, however, does not attempt to put forth an entirely new sense of causation; his reason for amending the standard regularity account of causation (an amendment which can be considered as remaining friendly to that account) was to solve some problems that

⁸⁵Searle, *Intentionality*, 134.

he saw with this account. One of these problems is that the standard account does not explain why we have the intuitive sense of perceiving causation all of the time.

Thompson could argue that we are merely seeing regularities and projecting the concept of causation onto them. Searle responds to this position by claiming that “the experience of perceiving one event following another event is really quite different from the experience of perceiving the second event as caused by the first”.⁸⁶ He attempts to justify this statement by appealing to the researches of A. Michotte and J. Piaget which have shown that our common sense view (that we can tell the difference between causation and mere regularity) is correct. Piaget studies the development of the notion of causation among children. He argues that children at first don’t seem to have a line drawn between causation and regularity. Piaget outlines a type of causation seen in young children which he calls “phenomenistic causation”. This is where a child believes that one thing causes another because of a spatial or temporal connection alone. Piaget argues that, early on in childhood development, “anything can produce anything; so long as two facts are given together in raw observation, the one may be considered the cause of the other”.⁸⁷ By the time children reach the age of six or seven they have the ability to distinguish between actual causation and cases where there is just regularity, which justifies Searle’s claims that there must be a phenomenal difference between the two cases.

Searle’s second problem is that the traditional account does not distinguish between causal regularities and contingent regularities. We don’t claim that night causes

⁸⁶Searle, *Intentionality*, 115.

⁸⁷Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality*, 253.

day and, therefore, we must be able to distinguish between causation and other forms of regularity. This is a bad example because someone could argue that we know enough now about night and day to see that it would be foolish to think that one causes the other, but it is not inconceivable to think that someone not knowing things about the Sun could be led to the mistaken assumption that night causes day. Although Searle is correct in claiming that this is a problem with the standard account, his theory does not solve this problem either. If we use our notion of “making something happen” and our background assumption of regularities in order to discover causal relations outside of ourselves, then there is little about the external world to enable us to distinguish between causal regularities and regularities of another sort. Searle claims that we can tell the difference between causal regularities and other regularities but he never explains how the experience of the two is different, other than just claiming that they are phenomenally different.

According to Searle, the traditional account of causation also fails to distinguish between causings and other causal relations, for example, between the billiard ball type of causation where something is changed, and causings such as gravity where nothing is altered. Searle’s largest problem with the traditional account of causation is that it does not tell us whether there are causes in the world or not. In fact, Searle seems to worry that the traditional account could lead one to a form of anti-realism about causation.

Thompson condemns Searle’s theory of causation as being less clear about what causation means than the traditional theory. However, Thompson’s problem here appears to be based on a misreading of Searle’s intentions. Searle claims quite clearly

that he is only offering an amendment to the traditional account of causation, not a theory of causation that is intended to replace it. There are still a few unresolved problems with Searle's theory of Intentional causation, however. Searle's argument that we can tell the difference between veridical perceptions and incorrect perceptions, between causation and causings, and between causation and mere regularity relies upon the phenomenal quality of these different cases. Searle briefly mentions the work of Michotte and Piaget but doesn't go into a detailed study of results in experimental psychology that may back up his account. While these results are irrelevant to Searle's theory of childhood development of causation (since Searle claims that he is not making any empirical claims but merely showing how causation could develop) the research of many psychologists seems to support the account that Searle gives. Piaget's notion of precausality can be used to show that Searle's theory of Intentional causation is at least a feasible theory of the human view of causation, since it accords with the data that has been gathered.

4.7 Precausality

Piaget claims that in the early stages of childhood development the child makes no distinction between the inner and the outer. He argues that "the world and the self are one; neither term is distinguished from the other".⁸⁸ Piaget claims that the child's world view is characterized by the notion that "things make efforts, and their powers imply an internal and substantial energy analogous to our own muscular force".⁸⁹ This early world

⁸⁸ Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality*, 244.

⁸⁹ Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality*, 245.

view colours the child's view of causation. The types of causal thinking found in children that are significant for Searle's theory of the development of causation in humans are: (i) psychological causation, which is a "tendency to take psychological motive as the cause of everything",⁹⁰ e.g., the clouds move because they want to move; (ii) magical causation, where "the subject regards his gestures, his thoughts, or the objects he handles, as charged with efficacy, thanks to the very participations which he establishes between those gestures, etc., and the things around him";⁹¹ and, (iii) artificialist causality, where "a given event is explained straight away by the intention or motive at the back of it, but the child does not ask himself how the intention has worked itself out in action".⁹² Piaget also claims that the final stage of development is where the child throws away the notion of inanimate intentions, animism, etc., and develops a notion of causation whereby there is "explanation by reaction of the surrounding medium".⁹³ Piaget continues:

causality, like the whole of reality, is at first teeming with subjective elements. No distinction is drawn between motivation and physical causality . . . , or between muscular and manual activity and mechanical action . . . , or again between the influence of mind on body or of the body on itself, and the influences of external objects on each other.⁹⁴

Piaget's conclusions seem to support the description that Searle gives of the development of causation in humans. That early on children make no distinction between causation in the external world and their causing things intentionally would seem to support Searle's view that the two notions develop simultaneously. Piaget even seems to

⁹⁰Ibid., 259.

⁹¹Ibid., 261.

⁹²Ibid., 262.

⁹³Ibid., 263.

⁹⁴Ibid., 267.

mirror Searle's claims when he says that 'the world is interpreted by the very young child in terms of his own "I", the "I" in its turn is explained in terms of external experience'.⁹⁵

Piaget argues that

we do not therefore . . . begin by discovering internal causality and then proceed to transfer it into objects. Causality is the result of a sort of bodily contact between organism and the world, which is prior to consciousness and the self.⁹⁶

While Piaget's conclusions seem to support Searle's theory of Intentional causation, Piaget's notion of pre-causation is itself extremely controversial. Pinard and Laurendeau claim that Piaget's systematization of the stages of a child's development of causation "has no existence in the mind of children. On the contrary, the child's thinking is disconcertingly incoherent. Even when faced with a group of similar problems, the child will not respond consistently".⁹⁷ They claim the fact that "the child's answers seem to spring from a rigorous system is largely due to the questioning itself, which forces the child to formulate explicit beliefs heretofore unexpressed and still relatively uncommunicable".⁹⁸ This is only a marginal criticism of Piaget since he himself claims that

the important thing to realize is that [children] have nothing with which to replace this artificialism, whether they make up the details or not they can only explain things by having recourse to human activity and not to things themselves.⁹⁹

A far greater problem with Piaget's account is that "the replication of Piaget's

⁹⁵Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality*, 272.

⁹⁶Ibid., 272.

⁹⁷Pinard and Laurendeau, *Causal Thinking in the Child*, 13.

⁹⁸Ibid., 14.

⁹⁹Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Reality*, 313.

experiments, or the examination of children through comparable methods, does not always elicit the primitive answers characteristic of precausal thinking”.¹⁰⁰ Piaget’s methods are openly criticized by researchers who arrived at either little or no evidence of precausation in children. Isaacs claims that the

children examined by Piaget were subjected to conditions detrimental to the manifestation of their real ability. In [Isaac’s] opinion, Piaget’s clinical method is inadequate, the questions being too difficult or too suggestive.¹⁰¹

However, it seems that asking children only questions geared toward types of causation that they already understand will not tell us how the notion of causation is developed since the child is only mimicking back what they have learned rather than what we are truly looking for, viz., a child’s intuitions about causation.

Most likely the real cause of differences in observed theories of causation among children is that the samples of children taken in the studies that confirm precausal thinking are much broader than those that don’t. Pinard and Laurendeau claim that

it is worth noting that the great majority of investigators, undoubtedly for the sake of convenience, restrict their sample to school children, thus using subjects of at least six years of chronological age. Moreover since the questionnaires are frequently administered to groups, the examiners must wait until children can read and write, which further raises the minimal age of examination to eight or nine.¹⁰²

Piaget studied a group of children from age three to eleven and concluded that by age seven or eight the existence of precausal thinking had tapered off. Pinard and Laurendeau note that “a certain relationship seems to exist between the presence of

¹⁰⁰Pinard and Laurendeau, *Causal Thinking in the Child*, 16.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 23.

¹⁰²Pinard and Laurendeau, *Causal Thinking in the Child*, 28.

precausal thinking and the age of subjects: the more negative the results, the older the children submitted to the experiment".¹⁰³ Pinard and Laurendeau conclude that

the examination of the various factors capable of explaining these conflicting data leads to hypotheses which cast some doubt mostly on the negative conclusions. When no instance of precausal thinking is observed among children, the reason is frequently that the subjects examined are too old; or else that the concept of precausality does not have the same connotation for different investigators; or, finally, that the techniques of analysis cunningly do away with indications of primitive thinking.¹⁰⁴

Thus it is only Piaget's systematization of the child's notion of causality that is called into question, not the actual existence of the precausal theories that support Searle's description of the development of causation. Piaget's description of the development of causation, beginning with the child's failure to distinguish between herself and the world which results in her interpreting causality as a case of something making something happen, provides good evidence for Searle's proposed theory of the development of causation. Also, the number of different distinctions that children make between different types of causation seems to support Searle's view that there is a phenomenal difference between regularity, causation, and "causings".

4.8 Emotions

Another pressing concern for Searle's theory of Intentional causation is that Searle appears to be studying only those cases of Intentionality that have a connection between cause and object. Since emotions do not appear to have the same direct

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 35.

connection between cause and object they provide a possible counter to Searle's theory. That we can have a particular Intentional state of anger toward a person when the cause of our anger is really that we have skipped lunch seems to imply that emotions, while they are Intentional, have an entirely different structure from other Intentional states.

This concern comes from mistaking Searle's theory in the same way that Dretske and Thompson have, however. Searle's theory of Intentionality does not rely upon a direct connection between the cause of an Intentional state and the object of that Intentional state (although in most cases this does appear to obtain) since the object of almost every Intentional state can be mistaken. All Searle's theory of Intentional causation, and subsequently Searle's attempt to naturalize Intentionality, requires is that there be a direct connection between the object and the world. Since this connection does not need to be a causal one, in the sense of the standard regularity theory of causation, but can be a case of Intentional causation (meaning that the "actual cause" need not be the same as the "cause as requirement"), emotions don't actually provide a counter to Searle's theory. This is because our emotions do still have a connection to the object that they are about in the same way that other Intentional states do.

Chapter Five – Biological Naturalism

The greatest significance for Searle's theory of Intentionality is how it relates to Searle's theory of the mind as a whole. Most philosophers argue that Searle's theory of Biological Naturalism is incoherent in that it relies upon property dualism as well as reductionism while simultaneously claiming to reject both of these theories. Code, Dretske, Kim, and others claim that Searle cannot both attribute conscious states to the brain and claim that those conscious states are irreducible. I will argue that, not only is Searle's theory of Biological Naturalism coherent, but that it is actually the best option philosophers have for solving the mind-body problem. While Searle has been criticized for trying to "have his cake and eat it too" I believe that, with certain amendments, his theory actually succeeds at giving us a thoroughly naturalistic theory of the mind that doesn't result in our losing certain elements of the mind that appear to be fundamentally linked to the concept.

Searle succeeds at this task by separating the ontological question of the mind from the logical question of the mind. The ontological question of the mind can be answered quite simply by saying that the mind arises from brain states and is itself a product of those brain states. The claim that this story results in the loss of certain essential characteristics of the mind, by which I mean qualia or Intentionality, confuses questions about the content and logical function of mental states with the ontological

question of mental states.

I believe that Searle's theory is redeemable, if we amend his theory so that consciousness is irreducible, because mental states are different from other emergent phenomena in that mental states have a logical structure. This structure interests us as much as, if not more than, questions about their instantiation. Therefore, a description of consciousness will ultimately require a description of the logical structure of mental states as well as a description of their neurobiological instantiation. Searle's theory of Intentionality is such a description and, together with Searle's theory of Biological Naturalism, results in a theory of the mind which solves the mind-body problem, naturalizes the mind, and solves the problems of qualia and Intentionality.

5.1 Searle's Definition of Biological Naturalism

In the very beginning of *The Mystery of Consciousness* Searle asks "how exactly do neurobiological processes in the brain cause consciousness?"¹⁰⁵ It is already obvious at this point that Searle is operating with a number of tacit assumptions. Firstly, it is obviously taken for granted that an account of consciousness should be a naturalistic account. By this I mean, rather trivially, that consciousness is a phenomenon that can, and must, be explained by an appeal to the natural sciences. Secondly, it is obvious that consciousness is seen as a real property or phenomenon in need of explanation. And lastly, it is assumed that there is a link between consciousness and the brain and that this link will be a causal one. For the sake of brevity I will take these assumptions for granted

¹⁰⁵Searle, *The Mystery of Consciousness*, 3.

in the same way that Searle does. Thus it is assumed that consciousness is real, that any connection between the mind and brain needs to be a causal one, and that naturalism is a worthy goal. What I will be examining is whether the account Searle offers is truly a naturalistic one and, if not, whether it can be amended in such a way as to turn it into a naturalistic account, in the process hopefully correcting some of the ambiguities seen in Searle's theory of consciousness.

Before examining these ambiguities I will briefly outline Searle's theory of consciousness. Searle's short definition is that

‘consciousness’ refers to those states of sentience and awareness that typically begin when we awake from a dreamless sleep and continue until we go to sleep again, or fall into a coma or otherwise become ‘unconscious’.¹⁰⁶

This definition is trivial in the sense that it basically amounts to saying “consciousness refers to all of those states that aren't unconscious”; however, there is a non-trivial aspect to this definition as well. The non-trivial aspect would be that Searle is deviating from some others in the field in claiming that “consciousness” doesn't refer to every aspect of our mental lives but only those that we are aware of. He claims later that, while consciousness implies awareness, it isn't merely a synonym for awareness since consciousness does not imply self-consciousness and we can be conscious, according to Searle, without overt knowledge of what we are conscious of.

There are three other characteristics of Searle's definition of consciousness that serve to differentiate his theory. The first is that he rejects the notion that we have a

¹⁰⁶Searle, *The Mystery of Consciousness*, 5.

privileged epistemic status regarding our mental states, arguing that, in many cases, other people are far better equipped to determine what our present state is than we are. (In defense of this he gives the oft used example of jealousy.) The second is that Searle claims that the notion of introspection is problematic in that it is really nothing more than an extended metaphor that is philosophically useless. He argues that introspection implies that we have some form of perception that can be turned inward, which is not only blatantly false, but also results in some “wrong-headedness” about the mind. The main reason for Searle’s rejection here is probably that the internal perception metaphor perpetuates the outer/inner dichotomy between mind and the world that Searle wants to reject. The third characteristic of Searle’s conception of consciousness is that he describes it as “an on/off switch; a system is either conscious or not. But once conscious, the system is a rheostat: there are different degrees of consciousness”.¹⁰⁷ This is important because it ultimately leads to his rejection of panpsychism or the idea that the realization of consciousness doesn’t depend upon the manner of realization.

Once Searle has gotten rid of what, he believes, are the problematic assumptions that certain philosophers of mind and laymen make about consciousness, he outlines the positive claims that he wants to make about consciousness. Searle’s definition of consciousness can be condensed into his claim that “consciousness . . . is an inner, first-person, qualitative phenomenon”.¹⁰⁸ Searle means a couple of different things by “inner” here. The first is the widely held belief that our conscious states are caused by

¹⁰⁷Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, 83.

¹⁰⁸Searle, *The Mystery of Consciousness*, 5.

something inside of ourselves (namely, our brain) and the second is that every conscious state takes place within a set of other conscious states so that the identity of that state is dependent upon its relation to other conscious states. For example, my perception of a book in front of me requires previous perceptions of other books in order for me to identify this object as a “book” and may require previous perceptions of this very book in order to identify it as “the copy of Searle’s *Intentionality* that I have been studying from”.

Searle claims that conscious states are “qualitative” in the sense that there is a specific qualitative character or feeling to every conscious state. Here he explicitly rejects the term “qualia” claiming that he does not want the “baggage” associated with this term (by which I can only assume he means Dennett’s annihilation of this term in “Quining Qualia”¹⁰⁹), but is referring to the common sense notion à la Nagel that there is something it is like to have a certain mental state. By “subjective” Searle claims that he means merely that conscious states are “always experienced by a human or animal subject”.¹¹⁰ This he calls the first-person mode of existence or ontology which I will speak about at length later.

5.2 Emergentism

The motivation behind Searle’s biological naturalism is revealed when he says, “In my view we need to abandon dualism and start with the assumption that consciousness is

¹⁰⁹Dennett, “Quining Qualia”.

¹¹⁰Searle, *Mind, Language and Society*, 42.

an ordinary biological phenomenon comparable with growth, digestion, or the secretion of bile."¹¹¹ Searle attempts to describe consciousness as a biological phenomenon yet claims that consciousness cannot be reduced to neurobiological states. In doing so, he appeals to the concept of emergence. Searle claims that

consciousness is caused by lower-level neuronal processes in the brain and is itself a feature of the brain. Because it is a feature that emerges from certain neuronal activities we can think of it as an "emergent property" of the brain.¹¹²

An emergent property, according to Searle,

is a property that can be causally explained by the elements of a system, but which is not itself a property of any of the individual elements of the system and which cannot be explained simply as a summation of the properties of those elements.¹¹³

So mental properties are caused by brains, and can be causally explained by an appeal to neurons etc., but mental properties cannot be reduced to properties of brains since mental properties are not themselves a property of brains. Searle attempts to explain emergence by using the liquidity of water as an example. The liquidity of water may be a bad choice for an analogy here since the liquidity of water can be causally explained by studying the underlying molecular makeup whereas mental properties, according to Searle, cannot be exhaustively explained by appealing to the underlying molecular makeup of brains.

The problem is that the emergent property of the mind cannot properly be analogized to anything in the physical world, if this emergent property is characterized in the way that Searle describes. In asking us to imagine that the mind is a property that

¹¹¹Searle, *The Mystery of Consciousness*, 6.

¹¹²Ibid., 17 – 18.

¹¹³Ibid., 18.

emerges from the neurons in the brain but yet cannot be reductively explained by those neurons, we are required to assume that the mind is unlike any other physical phenomenon. Therein lies the problem. Searle wants the mind to have a causal connection to the brain since there is overwhelming evidence in favour of this view (i.e. changes in the brain cause changes in the mind); however, Searle also seems to want to say that the mind is something above and beyond these brain states.

In an attempt to clarify his position Searle distinguishes between emergence₁ and emergence₂. The former is explained by the causal interactions of the elements that make it up and the latter is where something is emergent₁ but has causal powers that can't be explained by the causal interactions of the micro-elements. Searle claims that consciousness is emergent₁ but not emergent₂. The properties that emerge from a system Searle calls "higher level properties". He claims that atomic theory gave us the idea of macro and micro; "that big systems are made up of little systems, but that many features of the big ones can be causally explained by the behavior of the little ones".¹¹⁴ As an example Searle uses the description of a car engine. He claims that there are two levels of explanation when describing how the engine works. On the one level we have descriptions of molecules and on the other level we have the movement of pistons etc.

Again Searle is making use of an analogy that doesn't quite hold. The macro-workings of a car engine are explained by the micro-elements. The reason why there are two levels of explanation for how a car engine works is simply because it is easier to speak of the workings of the engine in terms of pistons rather than molecules.

¹¹⁴ Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, 87.

This seems to support the view that descriptions of the mind are useful folk-psychological shortcuts but that they are not truly necessary for our description of the world. Once again it becomes obvious that the real problem with Searle's position is that he tries to have his cake and eat it too. If Searle committed to either property dualism or to the view that the mind can be reduced but that folk-psychological "talk" is still useful, his theory would be more viable.

5.3 Subjective Consciousness

The most obvious roadblock to Searle's providing a successful naturalistic theory of the mind is that in his definition of consciousness he claims that mental states are inherently subjective, arguing that consciousness has "first-person" ontology. This is problematic since it leads to the verdicts of Kim, Code, et al. that Searle is really trying to sneak a form of property dualism past the reader. The most blatant problem with characterizing consciousness as subjective is the argument that science, which is by nature or definition objective, couldn't possibly study something that is by nature or definition subjective. Searle attempts to get past this problem by claiming that this argument rests on a bad syllogism. He argues that the terms "objective" and "subjective" here have different senses (ontological vs. epistemic). Epistemic objectivity or subjectivity relates to propositions and ontological subjectivity or objectivity relates to "modes of existence".

One serious problem would be that "mode of existence" is never properly defined (all Searle does is equate first-person mode of existence with subjectivity). The second

problem is that, even if we accept that Searle has defeated the argument that a subjective consciousness can't be studied by an objective science, he still hasn't given us any reason to believe that science could study a subjective (ontological or epistemic) phenomenon. Another problem is that Searle's later claim that the first-person ontology of consciousness is why consciousness is irreducible seems to contradict his claim that consciousness can be explained using the scientific method. In claiming that mental states have a first-person mode of existence or ontology Searle seems to be arguing not only that mental states are ontologically subjective, but also that they are epistemically subjective in that there is information or knowledge about a mental state that can only be known by the person experiencing that state – basically Nagel's "what it is like" quality.

Searle's claim that consciousness is causally explainable yet still irreducible seems, at best, property dualism and, at worst, blatant contradiction. Jaegwon Kim articulates this problem clearly by arguing that merely describing consciousness as a higher-level feature of the brain doesn't do all the work required in order to claim that the mental is physical. Kim argues that in order for consciousness to be physical you have to also hold that higher-level properties are reducible to lower-level properties. Since Searle doesn't believe that higher-level properties are reducible, his position must then be a form of property dualism.

Neil Manson goes even further to claim that describing consciousness as a higher level property is not enough to naturalize it. He argues that "surely consciousness is unlike liquidity? Consciousness is subjective. Searle illustrates his conception of

consciousness by citing objective higher-level properties".¹¹⁵ By arguing that Searle has not succeeded in naturalizing consciousness here, Manson probably means that in order for consciousness to be explainable in terms of the natural sciences Searle needs to connect consciousness with the natural world more effectively than he has, rather than that Searle has not succeeded in showing that consciousness is epistemically open (i.e., that consciousness cannot be explained or known at all). Searle's response would presumably be along the lines that consciousness does not have to be emergent in exactly the same way as other natural phenomenon in order for us to consider it a part of, or explainable in terms of, the natural world. Manson also appears to agree with Kim that Searle's position is contradictory in some way. He argues that

surely [Searle] has to either (a) give up his claim about the irreducibility of consciousness (and this would allow the analogy with liquidity and digestion to hold) or (b) accept a dualist conception of mind, where consciousness is an ontologically distinct feature of the world.¹¹⁶

Alan Code, in my opinion, comes closer to describing Searle's actual position yet still gives a description of Searle's theory that would result in its appearing to be property dualism. Code argues that what Searle is saying is that a neurobiological causal account of consciousness is possible but that this causal account can't explain what makes a belief a belief and what gives it the content that it has. Code claims that Searle, in claiming that the mind is inherently biological, is committed to the claim that all beliefs are realized in the brain and that these beliefs take place in the brain. Thus a belief is a property of the brain which can be explained by appealing to neuroscience etc.; however, the properties

¹¹⁵Manson, "Consciousness", 145.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

of this property cannot be reduced or explained by appealing to the brain. Thus Code claims that what Searle is arguing is that mental states are a property of brain states but that they are not reducible because of the fact that there are specific properties of these mental states (their having truth value, propositional content etc.) which are not reducible to brain states. If Searle were arguing along the lines Code is suggesting, then clearly he would be positing mental properties as well as physical properties. However, this does not appear to be what Searle is arguing. Searle's position seems to be, not that there are both physical and mental properties, but that mental states form their own logical category rather than their own ontological category. Therefore, belief cannot be reduced to neuron X firing because talk about beliefs involves talk about logical properties.

According to Searle's critics, Biological Naturalism is contradictory since it involves accepting the claim that mental states are caused by brain states and yet rejects the idea that mental states can be reduced to brain states. Initially this seems to be equivalent to the claim that there is an objective aspect to mental states that can be reduced by science and there is a subjective aspect that cannot. Criticisms of ambiguity, or outright contradiction, are the biggest problem that Searle's account of consciousness has to face. Searle's claim that questions about what mental states are, are not ontological questions at all – and thus cannot be reduced ontologically to other physical things – successfully dodges this problem.

5.4 Ontological vs. Causal Reduction

Searle attempts to solve his problems here by first distinguishing between

ontological and causal reduction. He argues that his view is causally reductive (the causal powers of one thing are explainable in terms of those of another) but not ontologically reductive (where one thing is seen as nothing but a collection of other things). Searle claims that while causal reductions lead to ontological reductions this can't be done in the case of consciousness because "a perfect science of the brain would still not lead to ontological reduction of consciousness in the way that our present science can reduce heat, solidity, color and sound".¹¹⁷ This he claims is because the first-person mode of existence is essential to what we are referring to with the term "conscious". Searle argues that heat, colour etc. are fundamentally different from consciousness because "what interests us about heat is not the subjective appearance but the underlying physical causes".¹¹⁸ He argues that reduction of heat relies also upon an ability to distinguish appearance from reality that can't be done with consciousness because the appearance is the reality.

This argument fails for a number of reasons. First, I would argue that the story science gives us of the world does not have to do with an appearance/reality distinction at all, but that the real problem here is that the subjective or first-person nature of all phenomena is always what is considered most important when we first begin to study a phenomenon. Surely what "heat" seemed to refer to before we got a story about the movement of molecules was entirely the subjective phenomenon. Thus the problem is that the reductive explanation of heat led to a shift in the referent for that term where

¹¹⁷Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, 116.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 120.

what we refer to by “heat” is now entirely objective and the subjective quality that was previously referred to is moved to the realm of the mental. One concern might be that if we reduce consciousness in like manner then there will be nowhere else for feeling to go. This concern seems to rely upon a very deep misunderstanding of the notion of reduction, however. Mistaking reduction for elimination seems to be a common error among non-reductionists. I question whether Searle is mistaken in this same way, however, since in his reply to Kim he states that “the failure of reduction of consciousness is not so much a problem about consciousness as it is about the ambiguities in the notion of reduction”.¹¹⁹ In customary Searlean manner the ambiguities he is referring to are never pointed out and this statement is never clarified. This causes me to suspect that when Searle says that “consciousness is not reducible” he really means that “consciousness is not reducible, if you assume that reduction carries along with it certain baggage – basically that high level properties would no longer be a correct way to speak of the phenomenon”. This may seem to be an overly charitable interpretation of Searle’s position. In fact, Searle claims in later papers that this is an incorrect interpretation of his position on reduction. Whether this actually expresses his position, however, is irrelevant for me in the sense that my point is merely that the only way Searle’s position could be interpreted in a non-property-dualist sense would be if he did mean that “consciousness is not reducible if you assume that reduction carries along with it certain baggage – basically that high level properties would no longer be a correct way to speak of the phenomenon”.

¹¹⁹Searle, “Consciousness, the Brain and the Connection Principle”, 220.

The next problem with Searle's Biological Naturalism is that, according to Kim, it results in overdetermination when mental events are caused by other mental events since they have both a mental and a biological cause. The problem with this, according to Searle, is that it relies upon a naïve view of causation that only takes into account event causation, i.e., it assumes that, since there are two different levels of description, both cannot be causal descriptions because then mental events would suffer from over-causation. Searle claims that if we look at causation in a different sense, then it is possible that the neurobiological processes in the brain cause consciousness and also possible that consciousness causes other mental states because these are not different events happening after a time lapse. He goes back to the example of a car engine, claiming that we don't say that there are extra causes here simply because we say that the energy output of the engine is caused by the movement of pistons as well as the conversion of gases. Searle claims that Kim "thinks that the model of different levels or layers of description of a system (call it 'levelism' for short) is generated by the relation 'being a part,' that levelism is an instance of the part-whole relation. But this is at best misleading".¹²⁰ Searle argues that "it is precisely because there are higher level features of the system that we need levelism in the first place".¹²¹ He claims that Kim's argument for overdetermination is a consequence of the fact that "Kim is in the grip of the traditional philosopher's Humean billiard ball conception of causation whereby causation is always a relation among discrete events, and causes must temporally precede

¹²⁰Searle, "Consciousness, the Brain and the Connection Principle", 217.

¹²¹Ibid.

effects".¹²² Searle argues that with consciousness this type of causation is not what is occurring. Instead, causation in the realm of consciousness can be likened more to something like gravity. Searle claims that "in short, the same system admits of different causal descriptions at different levels all of which are consistent and none of which implies either over-determination or failure of causal closure".¹²³

The last, and most serious, problem with Searle's account of consciousness is his description of "first-person modes of existence or ontology". Searle's position here would be clearer if he spoke of logical vs. ontological levels of description as he does in *Intentionality* rather than speaking of first-person vs. second-person ontology. This is because the latter terminology implies that Searle is claiming that mental states have their own ontological category (which he explicitly denies in later writings). In fact, Searle argues that questions about what mental states are are not ontological questions at all. He argues that it is the logical properties of beliefs that are important, not the ontological category. The problem, according to Searle, is that we can ask two questions about mental states. The first is "what is a belief qua belief?" to which we get an answer about logical structure and the second is "what is the mode of existence of beliefs?" to which we get a neurobiological answer. To me Searle's position seems to be that talk about the logical structure of mental states can't be reduced to biological talk, a position which implies neither property dualism nor non-naturalism. Therefore, an explanation of what mental states are will not rely upon physical descriptions at all but will require a

¹²²Searle, "Consciousness, the Brain and the Connection Principle", 218.

¹²³Ibid., 219.

description of the logical structure of mental states.

In *Intentionality* this is precisely what Searle provides. Thus I take the arguments in *Intentionality* to be doing far more work than Searle claims that they do. Not only are these arguments attempting to naturalize Intentionality, but they also give us a conclusive answer to the questions “what are mental states?” and “what is the mind?”

Chapter Six - Conclusion

While my characterization of Searle's theory of the mind is possibly overly charitable to the point where it can no longer be considered his theory, I believe that this interpretation results in a clearer position that does not suffer from the apparent contradictions implicit in Searle's articulated theory. The claim that qualia and Intentionality can both be explained by studying the logical structure of mental states rather than by studying their instantiation or ontological character results in a theory of mind that can be studied by the natural sciences yet still accounts for the characteristics of the mind that common sense tells us need to be accounted for.

My proposal here may still be thought to be subject to one of the criticisms of Searle's theory, in that the claim that mental states have a logical structure that cannot be reduced to any other phenomenon may imply property dualism, or worse, some form of supernaturalism. My claims here, however, are not that this logical structure can't be explained by appeals to other natural phenomenon, just that it can't be reduced to other phenomenon. This is not due to the nature of consciousness itself but rather to our interests in studying the mind. So to say that this logical structure is irreducible is merely a rejection of certain baggage that comes with the notion of reduction: namely, that reductive accounts tend to lead to elimination, which we do not want for the mind, and that reductionist explanations imply a hierarchy of explanations. Reductive explanations

in science tend to be seen as “the right” explanation, whereas higher-level descriptions are seen as wrong in some sense. Thus when we talk of the colour red what we are “really” talking about is a wavelength of 650 nm. To speak of the colour red is not seen as “correct” or as “accurate” a description as speaking of the wavelength would be.

Saying that consciousness is different from other natural phenomenon in that it has a logical structure that interests us as much, if not more, than the ontological structure, still does not solve the problem of the mind. A cohesive and complete account of what this logical structure is would still be necessary. Searle’s theory of Intentionality is a good first step toward developing such a theory. Searle’s theory of Intentionality has described the logical structure of conscious states, naturalized Intentionality, and shown how this characteristic could develop in human beings. Searle has also answered all of the questions outlined in the introduction: what it would mean for an Intentional state to be true, how Intentional states can refer to non-existent objects, what the connection is between Intentionality, mental states, and consciousness, and whether the content of an Intentional state is determined internally to the agent having the Intentional state or externally. Searle’s theory of Intentionality is also appealing in that it solves the problem of particularity, the problem of fortuitous satisfaction, and Putnam’s underdetermination problem, and results in a naturalized account.

However, it could be argued that the theories that Searle proposes for dealing with all of these problems are ad hoc. Many of the characteristics of Intentionality that Searle outlines (the Background, the Network, and intrinsic Intentionality) seem to have been contrived for the purpose of solving these problems rather than for describing actual

characteristics of Intentionality. The Background and the Network are proposed in order to solve the underdetermination problem, the particularity problem, and to halt a possible regress of Intentionality. The only explanation that Searle offers for positing the Background and the Network that is not ad hoc appears to be his description of rules that are internalized to the point where they are no longer Intentional, which explanation we have already seen to fail. Searle claims, however, that the existence of the Background is experientially verifiable, which would mean that his positing a Background is based upon something other than the need to solve the particularity and underdetermination problems. He describes a visiting colleague who becomes convinced of the Background when he experiences an earthquake for the first time and realizes that, while the fact that the earth doesn't move was something that was behind the formulation of many of his Intentional states, this belief had never really been Intentional itself.

Searle's motivation for the distinction between intrinsic and derived Intentionality was justified merely by the fact that without this distinction everything becomes potentially mental. Obviously, philosophers who reject this distinction and appeal to non-mental Intentional objects in order to naturalize Intentionality do not feel that this loss of contrast is a problem. Searle's distinction here is justifiable since he could argue that conflating the mental with the non-mental results in a definition of Intentionality that no longer differentiates anything and thus merely dodges the problem of Intentionality rather than truly solving it.

In order for Searle's theory of Intentionality and the mind to be truly justified, a more extended examination of the Background and Searle's distinction between intrinsic

and derived Intentionality is needed. Certain assumptions underlying my entire treatment of this topic, namely, internalism and Intentional realism, would obviously also need to be justified. Also required is a more extended discussion of the nature of reduction and further justification of Searle's use of "common sense" as justification. Despite the fact that I have not yet been able to deal with all of these topics, I believe that I have nonetheless shown that, at the very least, Searle's theory of Intentionality and the mind offers far more promise than it is usually given credit for, and, at the most, that it is a serious contender for the beginnings of a solution to the problem of consciousness.

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