

## 概念論與現象特性

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### 摘要

當代心智哲學有兩個重要爭議：一是關於意識之現象特性（phenomenal character）的表徵論（representationalism）與反表徵論（anti-representationalism）之爭；另一是關於經驗內容的概念論（conceptualism）與非概念論（nonconceptualism）之爭。第一個論爭，可稱為感質之爭（the qualia debate），討論意識的現象特性是否能完全被表徵內容所窮盡。第二個論爭的焦點在於，知覺經驗的內容是否由我們的概念能力（conceptual capacities）所參與構成，以致於完全是概念性的內容（conceptual content）。大部分哲學家認為這兩個爭論互不相干，或認為應該分開處理。在本文中，我指出這兩個爭議其實有一明顯且重要的關連。那就是：在第二個論爭中若採取概念論的立場，那麼在第一個論爭中就非得採取表徵論不可。更進一步說，本文要論證兩件事：第一，概念論可以視為是一種特殊版本的表徵論。一旦釐清這點，持概念論者就需要提出理由來反對非意向性感質（nonintentional qualia）的存在。原因是：如果知覺經驗除了意向性內容之外，還具有非意向性的感質為其成分的話，那麼知覺經驗的內容就無法完全是概念性的。第二，雖然 McDowell 的概念論將知覺經驗

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的內容理解為一種 Fregean sense，而非理解為某種心理表徵（mental representation），這樣的立場仍然得面對「顛倒地球論證」（the Inverted Earth argument）的攻擊。概念論並不一定因此失敗，但任何為概念論的辯護都必須設法回應這項攻擊。

**關鍵詞：**概念論、表徵論、現象特性、經驗內容

# Conceptualism and Phenomenal Character

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## Abstract

Consider two of the central debates in the contemporary philosophy of mind: the debate between representationalism and anti-representationalism about phenomenal character, and the debate between conceptualism and nonconceptualism about the content of experience. The former, the qualia debate, centers on whether the phenomenal character of conscious experience is exhausted by its representational content. The latter is about whether conceptual capacities are constitutive of the representational content of perceptual experience such that the only kind of content that perceptual experience possesses is conceptual content. Most philosophers consider these two debates as unrelated, or at least should be treated separately. In this paper, I argue that there is an obvious and important sense in which the two issues are related. More specifically, if one accepts conceptualism, it would impose a significant constraint on what position one is allowed to take in the qualia debate. First, I suggest that once it is made clear that conceptualism can be considered as a particular version of representationalism, the conceptualist would have to take a certain stance on whether there are nonintentional qualia. The reason why the conceptualist needs to worry about the qualia issue is that if in addition to intentional content perceptual experiences also contain nonintentional qualia as constituents, then perceptual experiences cannot be fully conceptual. Second, I argue that although in McDowellian conceptualism the content of perceptual experience is construed in terms of Fregean sense rather than internal mental representation, it still faces challenges from the Inverted Earth argument against representationalism. My goal is not to show that conceptualism fails, but to

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show that it is a serious issue that the defenders of conceptualism have to take into consideration.

**Keywords:** conceptualism, representationalism, phenomenal character, the content of experience

# Conceptualism and Phenomenal Character

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What is the nature of perceptual experience? It is a common view that perceptual experience essentially possesses both a representational aspect and a sensory aspect. On the one hand, perception seems to represent things in a certain way. In this regard, perceptual experience is like thought in having *intentional* or *representational content*. On the other hand, perceptual experience also has *phenomenal character*, that is, there is *something it is like* to undergo a particular experience, which makes it subjectively and experientially different from merely thinking about the world.

Philosophical investigations of these features have generated two central debates. One is between representationalism and anti-representationalism about qualia. In Ned Block's terms, it is the greatest chasm in the philosophy of mind. It centers on whether the phenomenal character of experience is exhausted by its representational content (Block, 1996). On one side of the division, there are *antirepresentationalists* who believe in the existence of qualia, where qualia are considered to be nonrepresentational. For the antirepresentationalists, the idea of qualia is required in order to capture the subjective experiential aspect of experience. On the other side, there are *representationalists* who claim that representational content is all

there is to phenomenal character. The main stream representationalism, i.e. reductive representationalism, intends to show that phenomenal character is identical with, and hence can be reduced to, a kind of representational content (Tye, 1995; Dretske, 1995).<sup>1</sup>

Another central debate related to perceptual experience is that between conceptualism and nonconceptualism. One way to describe it is as follows.<sup>2</sup> According to conceptualism, our conceptual capacities are constitutive of the representational content of experience. Experience has its content in virtue of the involvement of the subject's conceptual capacities.<sup>3</sup> The only kind of content that experience possesses is conceptual content—the content of experience is exclusively conceptual. Conceptual content constitutes both perceptual intentionality and empirical justification. It is because the content of experience is conceptual that we are entitled to say that our experience is about the empirical world, and that experience can justify empirical beliefs (McDowell, 1994; Brewer, 1999). To have an experience that represents how things are in a certain way and that provides justification for empirical beliefs, the subject must possess the relevant concepts that are required to specify the content of the experience. On the contrary, according to nonconceptualism, to consider the content of experience as representational does not imply that it is conceptual. Although our abilities to use concepts are required in order to describe what

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I use “intentional content” and “representational content” interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> For various formulations of the debate, Cf. Heck (2000); Byrne (2005); Tye (2006).

<sup>3</sup> Conceptual capacities are capacities of using concepts. McDowell suggests that they are passively involved in the content of experience. cf. McDowell (1994, especially 9-13, 24-34, 66). The qualification ‘partly’ here is to leave room for the idea that, besides conceptual capacities, the external world also makes an essential contribution to the content of experience.

we experience, it is a serious mistake to think that experience is thereby constituted by conceptual capacities (Peacocke, 1992; Crane, 1992; Alston, 1999, 2002; Heck, 2000). According to this view, the content of experience is not exclusively conceptual. Perceptual experience has nonconceptual content that is different in kind from conceptual content.<sup>4</sup> It is nonconceptual content that ultimately explains perceptual intentionality and empirical justification (Peacocke, 2001; Heck, 2000). To undergo an experience with a particular representational content, the subject does not have to possess the relevant concepts.

Are there any connections between these two debates? Most of the discussions in the debate between conceptualism and nonconceptualism formulate the issue as exclusively about the nature of the representational content of perceptual experience. Participants in this debate are mainly concerned with issues such as: What sorts of components constitute the content of experience? Can only conceptual content provide empirical justification? Can infants and animals possess the same kinds of perceptual content as mature adults? Can our conceptual capacities ever be as finely grained as the content of perceptual experience? Most philosophers consider the debate between conceptualism and nonconceptualism, on the one hand, and the debate between representationalism and anti-representationalism, on the other, as unrelated issues, or at least as issues that should be treated separately.

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<sup>4</sup> This is what Richard Heck calls “the content view” in (2000, 485). Alex Byrne calls it “content nonconceptualism” in (2005, 233-234).

In this paper, I argue that there is an obvious and important sense in which the two central debates are related. More specifically, if one accepts conceptualism, it would impose a significant constraint on what position one is allowed to take in the qualia debate. First, I suggest that once the relation between the two debates is clarified, the conceptualist would have to take a certain stance on the qualia debate. The reason why the conceptualist needs to worry about the qualia issue is that if, in addition to intentional content, perceptual experiences also contain nonintentional qualia as constituents, then perceptual experiences cannot be fully conceptual. Second, I argue that there is an argument against representationalism that poses a problem for McDowell's conceptualism. My goal is not to show that conceptualism fails, but to show that it is a serious issue that the defenders of conceptualism have to take into consideration. I will focus on the version of conceptualism proposed by John McDowell. Section 1 briefly presents McDowell's conceptualism. Section 2 suggests that McDowell's view is a version of representationalism, and that his account does not allow for a nonrepresentational element. Section 3 argues that Block's Inverted Earth thought experiment can be used against McDowell's conceptualism. Section 4 examines some possible responses, and Section 5 concludes with a remark.

## I.

According to McDowell, an account of empirical thought or judgment is unacceptable if it fails to accommodate two commonsensical claims: (1) Empirical judgments have contents—they purport to tell us something about

the world. If empirical judgments fail to connect with the world, they don't have genuine content. (2) Experience provides justification for empirical judgments. This is just to register the ordinary view that a natural way to justify claims like "A rabbit is jumping on the grass" is to appeal to perceptual experience, e.g. I see that a rabbit is jumping on the grass.

McDowell thinks that these two commonsensical claims imply important lessons. First, to think or to make a judgment about the world is to exercise conceptual capacities in a certain way. According to McDowell, the exercises of our conceptual capacities must be constrained *externally*; that is, there has to be constraint from outside our thinking activities. This external constraint comes from experience. Second, concerning the nature of justification, McDowell thinks it is essentially a rational relation. Here McDowell draws heavily on Wilfrid Sellars's "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" (*EPM*):

[I]n characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says. (Sellars, 1997, §36)

McDowell accepts Sellars's view that justification is fundamentally different from mere causal interactions between physical states of affairs; justification is a rational relation, causal relation is not. The second lesson, according to McDowell, is this: since experience provides justification for empirical thought, the relation between experience and empirical thought must be *rational*.

So here are two lessons from common sense: To have genuine content, our empirical thought must receive an external constraint from experience; and in order to provide justification the relation experience bears with empirical thought must be rational. Putting the two lessons together, McDowell's view is that the external constraint on empirical thought must *also* be rational, that is, our empirical thinking must be rationally answerable to the external world. McDowell contends that only conceptualism satisfactorily respects these lessons.<sup>5</sup>

What does it mean to say that the content of experience is conceptual? McDowell takes his view to be Kantian. Kant asserts that "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A51/B75)." Experience is a product of the cooperation of spontaneity and receptivity. Here is McDowell's reading of Kant:

The relevant conceptual capacities are drawn on *in* receptivity ...  
It is not that they are exercised *on* an extra-conceptual deliverance  
of receptivity. We should understand what Kant calls "intuition"

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<sup>5</sup> McDowell motivates his position by criticizing the Myth of the Given and Davidson's coherentism. His contention is that the Myth of the Given considers experience to be both nonconceptual and capable of providing justification for beliefs, which is incoherent. Davidson's coherentism confines the source of rational constraint within the belief system. As Davidson famously claims, "nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief (Davidson, 1986)." McDowell argues that this view fails to recognize that for there to be content the rational constraint also needs to be external. These two positions fail to accommodate the above two lessons about empirical content and justification. According to McDowell's diagnosis, both positions presuppose a notion of experience that is nonconceptual. Since experience is taken to be nonconceptual, it can bear only causal relations with our mind, not rational relations. He thinks that as long as we keep this notion of experience in place, the oscillation between the two unsatisfactory positions will be inescapable. What we need, according to him, is a conception of experience that allows experience to bear not only causal but also rational relations to our thought, such that our conceptual capacities to think and make judgments are both externally and rationally constrained by experience.

—experiential intake—not as a bare getting of an extra-conceptual Given, but as a kind of occurrence or state that already has conceptual content. (McDowell, 1994, 9)

McDowell thinks Kant's remark embodies the view that the only way for empirical thoughts and judgments to have genuine representational content is that they are externally and rationally constrained by the world. Through receptivity, our mind passively takes in the impact of the world, i.e., experience. Through spontaneity, conceptual capacities are drawn into play in experience. This enables experience to bear rational relations with empirical thoughts. The exercises of conceptual capacities are externally constrained by experience, so as to ensure that our thoughts are related to reality. The contributions or operations of spontaneity and receptivity are, at least partly, constitutive of each other. McDowell thinks that this reading of Kant leads to the thesis that the content of experience is conceptual.

McDowell's view is that whenever we have experience, conceptual capacities are already involved in it. Those capacities can be recognized as conceptual only because they are *integrated into* a larger conceptual repertoire of spontaneity (McDowell, 1994, 11, 29). The typical application of this conceptual repertoire is to make judgments, which according to McDowell is an exercise of our freedom to responsibly adjust our worldview based on how things are. The very same conceptual capacities implemented in experience can also be used to make judgments. The difference is that the way conceptual capacities are involved in making judgments is *active*; in the case of experience, it is *passive*, i.e., under the control of how things are.

As I read him, McDowell holds that since experience obtains its content in virtue of concepts, and concepts are integrated into a larger conceptual network, one can say that it is because of the *conceptual integration* of spontaneity that the content of experience is conceptual.

The idea of conceptual integration plays two crucial roles in McDowell's account of experience. First, as shown above, it helps to explain why the content of experience should be thought of as conceptual in nature. Second, it helps to explain perceptual intentionality—it explains why we can say that the content of perceptual experience is *about* the external world. McDowell says: "It is this integration that makes it possible for us to conceive experience as awareness, or at least seeming awareness, of a reality independent of experience (McDowell, 1994, 31)." McDowell is suggesting that it is because of the conceptual integration of spontaneity that the notion of mind-independent reality can be considered as built into the very idea of experience. This is how he interprets Kant's remark that "intuitions without concepts are blind." This is a difficult point; my reading of McDowell is as follows.

Because experience involves conceptual capacities that are integrated into a larger repertoire of spontaneity, which is a "rationally organized network of capacities for active adjustment of one's thinking to the deliverances of experience", we can place what we receive from experience into a tentative worldview provided by the conceptual network (McDowell, 1994, 29). On the one hand, the tentative worldview is rationally and externally constrained by how things are. On the other hand, since the idea of conceptual integration is partly constitutive of the content of experience,

genuine experience is not separable from a wider worldview. That is, a worldview is always in place whenever we enjoy an experience. It helps us to see how experiences in different locations and times are connected rather than fragmentary, and tells us how things in the world fit together. Hence, “the subject of experience understands what the experience takes in (or at least seems to take in) as part of a wider reality (McDowell, 1994, 32).” Therefore, it is the conceptual integration that entitles us to say that the content of our experience is about the world.

According to McDowell, this account allows us to construe experience as *openness to reality*. He says that although the world is external to our *thinking activities* and independent of experience, it is not outside *thinkable contents* (McDowell, 1994, 28). What McDowell means is this: *That things are thus and so* can be the content of our experience and, if we endorse it, the content of judgment. Moreover, if the judgment is true, the same content is also a fact about the world. To say that the world is thinkable is to say that the conceptual content of experience and the layout of the world can have the same shape, i.e., *that things are thus and so*. Both are propositional, and hence can bear rational relations with each other. This allows us to say that the world bears a rational relation with our mind. The world as an independent reality can serve as the ultimate source of the rational external constraint. It provides content and justifications for empirical judgments through experience, and experience enables us to have direct contact with the world. In this sense, experience is openness to reality (McDowell, 1994, 26, 32).

Now we have McDowell's conceptualism in view, in the next section I consider whether McDowell's view is a version of representationalism.

## II.

In order to see the connection between the debate between representationalism and anti-representationalism about qualia, on the one hand, and the debate between conceptualism and nonconceptualism on the other, it is important to clarify the differences and similarities between McDowell's conceptualism and the main stream representationalism. McDowell's notion of concepts is to be understood in terms of Fregean sense, not mental representation in one's head. Nonetheless, the main stream representationalists and McDowell share two important points: first, perception has intentional content; second, perception does not contain a nonintentional component. That McDowell holds the first point should be clear from the previous section. To see that McDowell also maintains the second point, it would be useful to look at how he comments on Sellars's *EPM* concerning the nature of perceptual experience.

In *EPM*, Sellars tries to undermine the idea of the Given, and gives an alternative account. According to him, what is essential to perceptual experience is its propositional content and whether the subject endorses it.<sup>6</sup> The similarity between the three kinds of experiential situations—(1) I see that there is a red flower in front of me, (2) it looks to me that the flower in front of me is red, and (3) it looks to me as if there is a red flower in front of me—is that they all involve the same propositional content that *there is a red*

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<sup>6</sup> In this paper I focus on the case of visual experience.

*flower in front of me.* Their differences lie in the degrees of the subject's endorsement.<sup>7</sup> For Sellars, experience is propositionally structured. In this respect, Sellars's account in *EPM* is very much agreeable to McDowell's conceptualism.

However, Sellars also thinks that there is more to perceptual experience than its propositional content. In §16 of *EPM*, Sellars says,

It is clear that the experience of seeing that something is green is not *merely* the occurrence of the propositional claim 'this is green'— not even if we add, as we must, that this claim is, so to speak, evoked or wrung from the perceiver by the object perceived. The something more is clearly what philosophers have in mind when they speak of "visual impressions" or "immediate visual experiences." (*EPM*, §16)

Sellars here claims that representational content (as he takes it to be propositional) does not exhaust the nature of perceptual experience. Sellars also speaks of "descriptive content" in §22 and "impressions", "sensory impressions", and "immediate experience" in §45~§62 of *EPM*.<sup>8</sup> In the later part of *EPM*, Sellars is concerned with reconstructing the notion of

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<sup>7</sup> For example, in (1), I both ascribe the propositional content to my experience and endorse the whole content; in (2), I ascribe the content to me but endorse only part of it, i.e., the existence of the flower but not its color; in (3), I ascribe the same content to me but endorse neither the existence of the flower nor its color (*EPM*, §16).

<sup>8</sup> In §22 Sellars says that the similarity among the three kinds of experience mentioned above includes not only a common propositional content but also a descriptive content, i.e., sensory impression. What goes on in an individual's mind when she takes herself to be seeing that there is a red flower in front of her when in fact the flower is not red or when there is nothing in front of her at all? According to Sellars, the answer is that certain inner episodes, that is, sensory impressions of a red flower, postulated as an end product of a particular causal chain, take place in the individual and are responsible for nonveridical perceptions.

sensory impressions in a nontraditional and anti-Cartesian manner such that the Myth of the Given can be avoided. His strategy is to consider sensory impressions as theoretical entities postulated for explanatory purposes. He presents the Myth of Jones to give a story about how sensory impressions, as genuine inner episodes, can be grounded in public, intersubjective interaction, rather than simply given to us (*EPM*, §48~§49).<sup>9</sup>

As described above, Sellars's view in *EPM* is that besides representational content that accounts for the intentionality of perception, perceptual experience also contains a nonrepresentational component. McDowell opposes this view. Here is how McDowell reads Sellars in *the Woodbridge Lectures*:

Sellars says it is “clear” that there is more to visual experience than conceptual episodes of that distinctive kind; and, specifically, that a full picture must also include non-concept-involving episodes of the kind exemplified ... by sensations of red. But why is this supposed to be clear? (McDowell, 1998c, 441)

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<sup>9</sup> On Sellars's construal, sensory impressions are understood on the model of pictures or replicas that share perceptible characteristics of physical objects (*EPM*, §61). Sellars's idea of sensory impressions is not the Given of any sort because it is not semantically or epistemically primitive as in traditional empiricism. It obtains its meaning primarily through theoretical reasoning from premises about one's overt verbal behaviors. In the Myth of Jones, the community members take themselves to have sensory impressions not because those impressions are, so to speak, given to them as in traditional empiricism. Rather, they learn from other members how to use the idea of sensory impressions to talk about their mental life and explain their behaviors. It is through Jones' training that his fellows learn how to make first-person reports on having sensory impressions. And the privacy and first-person privilege that Sellars approves here are not absolute (*EPM*, §62). So Sellars says, sensory impressions “can be primarily and essentially intersubjective (*EPM*, §62).”

And it is not clear why it should seem necessary to describe these suitably similar impacts in terms of nonconceptual impingements *on consciousness* (sensations), as opposed to saying that consciousness comes into play only with conceptual episodes, triggered by nonmentalistically described impacts on sensory equipment. It seems that what Sellars here introduces as proximate causes of sensations can themselves meet the explanatory need ... The sensations look like idle wheels. (McDowell, 1998c, 443-444)

For our purposes, it is not necessary to get into the details of these passages, but the gist is clear. McDowell considers Sellars' view to be that the extra component in experience is nonconceptual. His criticism is that since the explanatory role that Sellars attributes to the nonconceptual element is not well motivated, Sellars's view that experience contains sensations as a nonconceptual component is not sustained.<sup>10</sup>

Two observations are important regarding McDowell's position. First, as shown in section 1, McDowell thinks that the only way to account for the intentionality of perception and empirical justification is to consider the content of experience as fully conceptual. According to this view, the only kind of representational content that can serve such an explanation is conceptual content. For McDowell, intentionality and conceptuality are

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<sup>10</sup> In *Science and Metaphysics*, Sellars again claims that experience contains sensory impressions as nonrepresentational and nonconceptual constituents. There, Sellars argues that the nonconceptual component of experience plays a certain transcendental role. McDowell criticizes Sellars by implicating that his view commits to the Myth of the Given. He says: "Any faithful student of 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind' must be made uneasy by finding Sellars, in *Science and Metaphysics*, saying that states or episodes below his line *guide* states or episodes above it. This seems dangerously close to a lapse into the Myth of the Given, by Sellars of all people. (McDowell, 1998c, 467)."

inextricably linked together. Any sort of nonconceptual component will be regarded in McDowell's account as nonintentional and nonrepresentational. Since there is no room for a nonconceptual component in McDowell's account of perceptual experience, this amounts to the fact that for McDowell there is no nonintentional or nonrepresentational element in perceptual experience. In this regard, McDowell's view is similar to reductive representationalism in the qualia debate. Since McDowell holds that perception has representational content and contains no nonrepresentational element, I suggest, his position can be considered as a version of representationalism. I will say more about this in the next section.

Second, as I read McDowell, besides arguing for justification requiring conceptual content, he is mainly concerned with securing the *intentionality* of perceptual experience and empirical thought, rather than with accommodating or specifying the *phenomenal character* of perceptual experience. When McDowell draws on Kant's remark that "intuitions with concepts are blind," his interpretation is that the intentionality of experience requires the passive involvement of conceptual capacities. It is because conceptual capacities are already implemented in experience that we are entitled to say that our perceptual experience is about the external world. Similarly, when McDowell draws on Kant's remark that "concepts without content are empty," his interpretation is that conceptual capacities must be rationally and externally constrained by experience in order for empirical thought to be answerable to reality. This is also about intentionality, i.e., the intentionality of empirical thought. Therefore, *if* it turns out that a full account of perceptual experience must not only explain the intentional or

representational aspect, but also the phenomenal or sensory aspect, and *if* phenomenal character cannot be reduced to representational content, then McDowell's account would leave out something important. This conditional claim is what I intend to argue in the rest of this paper. In the next section, I argue that although McDowell's conceptualism is in many ways different from reductive representationalism, the Inverted Earth argument against reductive representationalism may apply to it.

### III.

In this section I argue that Ned Block's Inverted Earth thought experiment poses a potential threat to McDowell's conceptualism. In the next section I discuss some possible responses against this point. When Block first proposed this thought experiment, his main target was some versions of functionalism (Block, 1990), but many agree that it applies to reductive representational theories of qualia in general. In order to see how it may be used against conceptualism, recall that in so far as McDowell holds that perception has representational content and contains no nonrepresentational element, his view is a version of representationalism. We shall now further consider what sort of representationalism it is.

At the minimum, concerning certain kinds of mental states, representationalism asserts that the mental states in question have representational content. In this view, versions of representationalism can be classified in different ways.<sup>11</sup> For our purposes, we can distinguish the

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<sup>11</sup> In classifying different versions of representationalism, I am partly following Chalmers (2004) and Lycan (2004).

following positions: *Strong Representationalism* is the thesis that the phenomenal character of experience is nothing over and above its representational content; the former is exhausted by the latter. Reductive representationalism is a kind of Strong Representationalism. It aims to identify phenomenal character with some sort of representational content. *Weak Representationalism* does not go so far as to reduce phenomenal character to representational content. It only contends that the phenomenal character of experience supervenes on its representational content. If two conscious states have the same representational content, then necessarily their phenomenal character will be the same as well. Notice that Weak Representationalism is consistent with the existence of nonrepresentational qualia, as long as the sameness and differences of qualia supervenes on the representational content of the conscious state. Since McDowell's view does not allow a nonrepresentational component, I classify his conceptualism as a version of Strong Representationalism.

Regarding the structure and constituents of content, *Russellian Representationalism* is the view that the representational content of experience is constituted and individuated by objects and properties in the world. *Fregean Representationalism*, on the other hand, claims that representational content is constituted and individuated by Fregean sense. McDowell's view belongs to the latter. He says: "If we want to identify the conceptual realm with the realm of thought, the right gloss on "conceptual" is not "predicative" but "belonging to the realm of Fregean sense". (McDowell, 1994, 107) For McDowell, the content of experience is

constituted by capacities of using concepts, which in turn is to be understood in terms of Fregean sense.

*Externalist Representationalism* is the thesis that the representational content of experience is wide content; it is determined not by the subject's internal states, but by external factors. When Oscar drinks H<sub>2</sub>O on Earth and his *Doppelgänger* drinks XYZ on Twin Earth, the contents of their experiences are different. On the contrary, *Internalist Representationalism* maintains that the representational content of experience is narrow content. Microphysical duplicates would necessarily share the same representational content no matter where they are located. McDowell's view belongs to the former. Besides in *Mind and World*, in "Singular Thought and the Extent of Inner Space," he argues that in order to secure the idea of perception having "a representational directedness towards external reality," the Fregean sense that is involved in perception must be regarded as *object-dependent* (McDowell, 1998b, 228-259). In his view, the very idea of Fregean content of perception depends on things in the world—it requires an object as its constituent. Without connections with the world, perception does not have content at all. In order to account for the intentionality of perception, the constituents of the representational content of experience must be considered as determined by the external world. Therefore McDowell's view is a version of Externalist Representationalism.

In section 2, I suggested that although McDowell's account of perception is in many aspects different from representational theories of qualia, both accounts agree that perceptions have representational contents and do not contain a nonrepresentational component. So I think it is

justifiable to say that, when it comes to the issue of phenomenal character, McDowell's view is a kind of representationalism. We have seen that McDowell's notion of representational content is Fregean. Now if the notion of Fregean sense were to be interpreted as object-independent or conforming to semantic internalism, then there might be worries concerning whether McDowell can consistently hold the idea of experience as openness to reality. Also, if the content of experience does not essentially involve external objects as constituents and can be fully determined independently of the external world, then my reading of McDowell's position as a version of Externalism would be incorrect.

But fortunately, according to McDowell, the representational content of experience is understood in terms of *object-dependent* Fregean sense. This is why his version of representationalism is special. In his view, the very idea of Fregean content of perception depends on things in the world—it requires a particular object as its constituent. Without connections with the world, perception does not have content at all. In order to account for the intentionality of perception, the constituents of the representational content of experience must be considered as determined by the external world. This is a version of Externalism, which clearly rejects the semantic internalist's view that the content of experience can be fully determined by the subject's internal states or by what goes on inside the subject's head. Therefore, based on all the above classifications, I suggest that McDowell's conceptualism is a version of *Strong Externalist Fregean Representationalism*.

Now consider the Inverted Earth thought experiment. Inverted Earth is very much like Earth except for two things: first, all things on Inverted Earth

have the complementary colors with respect to the colors that things have on Earth. For example, on Inverted Earth the sky is yellow rather than blue, and cucumbers are red instead of green, etc.<sup>12</sup> Second, the language spoken on Inverted Earth is also inverted to the language spoken on Earth with respect to color words. So when the residents of Inverted Earth see a cucumber, they appropriately call it ‘green,’ and when they look at their yellow sky, they correctly say ‘it is blue.’

Let us focus on the intrasubjective case of the thought experiment. Suppose you were drugged and kidnapped to Inverted Earth by some wicked neuroscientists. During the time you were passed out, they inserted color inverting lenses in your eyes. Now you wake up and have no idea what has happened to you. Because the effect of the inverted lenses and the complementarity of the colors cancel each other out, you do not notice any difference in your visual experience. The red cucumbers look green to you, and the yellow sky appears blue to you as well. The *what-it-is-like* aspect of your experiences on Inverted Earth remains exactly the same as when you were on Earth before being kidnapped. Also, since the residents of Inverted Earth call red things ‘green’ and yellow things ‘blue,’ etc., you do not find any behavioral or linguistic differences between you and the people around you at all.

According to Block, the Inverted Earth scenario shows that the phenomenal character of your visual experiences on Inverted Earth is exactly the same as your former visual experiences on Earth. If it can be argued that your visual experiences now and before change with respect to

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<sup>12</sup> Here, it is assumed that colors are objective properties instantiated in the physical world.

representational contents, this will be sufficient to show that the phenomenal character of experience cannot be exhausted by its representational content, which will refute representational theories of qualia.

What are the reasons for thinking that there is a change in the representational contents of your experiences after kidnapping? The first thing to notice is that this thought experiment is meant to undermine Externalist Representationalism, both Strong and Weak versions. According to Content Externalism, the meaning of your words and the content of your mental states, including thoughts and perceptions, are essentially dependent on your environmental and social contexts. Before kidnapping, in this view, your color words and color thoughts were all causally grounded on Earth. So, as Block describes the scenario, when you first arrive on Inverted Earth, your intentional contents stay the same as before. When you look at the yellow sky and say that ‘the sky is blue,’ you use ‘blue’ to refer to the color blue, and the content of your thought is that the sky is blue, which is false. All your color thoughts and uses of color words are mistaken in a similar way. However, as you stay on Inverted Earth for long enough, say, 30 years, it seems not reasonable to attribute massive errors to your mental states and language use. Rather, it is more plausible to say that your color words and color thoughts are now re-grounded on Inverted Earth. You now use ‘blue’ to refer to the color yellow, and ‘the sky is blue’ correctly expresses your thought that the sky is yellow. That is, your language use and thoughts are now in accord with the native Inverted Earth inhabitants. You no longer believe that the sky is blue, but yellow. The same point applies to the representational content of

perceptions. When you first arrive on Inverted Earth, your visual experiences of the sky (falsely) represent it as blue. But after you dwell on Inverted Earth for long enough, according to Content Externalism, your visual experiences of the sky now (correctly) represent it as yellow—the content of your experiences change from blue-representing to yellow-representing.

This is a case where phenomenal character remains constant, yet representational content varies. Your color experiences before kidnapping and after living on Inverted Earth for a long time share the same phenomenal character but have different representational contents. This shows that the phenomenal character of an experience cannot be identified with its wide representational content. If so, Strong Externalist Representationalism is false. One can easily adjust the thought experiment to generate a reverse case where the representational content stays the same but the phenomenal character changes, for example, the experience of seeing a red wall on Earth before kidnapping and the experience of seeing a red wall (which is called ‘yellow’) after dwelling on Inverted Earth. It shows the phenomenal character does not supervene on representational content. So Weak Externalist Representationalism fails as well.

I have suggested that McDowell’s conceptualism is a version of Strong Externalist Fregean Representationalism, and that if the Inverted Earth argument works it refutes Strong Externalist Representationalism. So now the question is: does this argument apply to the Fregean version, and hence to conceptualism? I think the answer is yes. Two reasons: first, Fregean Representationalism states that representational content is constituted and

individuated by Fregean sense. This is a thesis about the structure and constituents of representational content, not about the relation between representational content and phenomenal character. Although when Block first formulated the Inverted Earth argument he understood representational content in functional terms, the way I present the argument above is not so restricted. Block's later formulation shows that the notion of representational content as it figures in the Inverted Earth argument can be construed in a more general way (Block, 1996, 2003, 2004). Other representationalists also suggest that representational theories need not commit to any particular view of the nature of content (Byrne, 2001, 203; Tye, 2003, xiv). So if the Inverted Earth scenario argues against Strong Externalist Representationalism, it applies to all versions of the view, whether Fregean or not. In this sense, a defender of McDowellian conceptualism would have to respond to the Inverted Earth argument.

Second, one can try to describe an Inverted Earth scenario in terms of the conceptualist account of perception to see if the argument applies to conceptualism. Recall that, according to McDowell, the content of perception is conceptual in that conceptual capacities are passively implemented in the subject's experience, and concepts are understood in terms of Fregean sense, which is object-dependent. Also, it is the world as an independent reality that serves as the ultimate source of the rational external constraint on our conceptual capacities. So the representational content of experience is constituted by conceptual capacities, and conceptual capacities are in turn constrained by external reality. This is why McDowell's account is a version of Content Externalism.

Now consider how this view fits into the Inverted Earth scenario. Before kidnapping, when you looked at the blue sky on Earth, your conceptual capacity related to the concept BLUE was constitutive of the representational content of your experience. What about the experience on Inverted Earth long after kidnapping? By then, your word 'blue' expresses your concept YELLOW, and you no longer believe that the sky is blue, but yellow. Since the sky is yellow, the conceptualist cannot say that it is still your conceptual capacity related to the concept BLUE that enters into the content of experience, on pain of violating Content Externalism. The conceptualist would have to say that it is your conceptual capacity related to the concept YELLOW that plays a constitutive role in your representational content. This representational content is then distinct from the content of your former experience on Earth by having at least one different constituent. Since, according to the thought experiment, both experiences share the same phenomenal character, we again see that phenomenal character cannot be identical with wide representational content, where the wide content is understood in terms of Fregean sense. Thus, as a version of Strong Externalist Fregean Representationalism, McDowellian conceptualism faces the criticism of the Inverted Earth argument. Any defender of the view must take this argument seriously.

#### IV.

The Inverted Earth thought experiment is meant to argue that phenomenal character cannot be identical with, and does not supervene on, representational content. How may a McDowellian conceptualist respond

to this argument? McDowell himself does not address this issue. In fact, the main contention of this paper is that this is a real issue for conceptualism about perception. My goal is not to argue for the stronger claim that conceptualism is false because it is incapable of accommodating the distinct nature of phenomenal character in terms of representational content. Rather, I intend only to establish that, as a version of representationalism, the task of accounting for phenomenal character is neglected by the defenders of conceptualism, but it is important for the position. For this purpose, it is not necessary to look into all the representationalist responses in the literature. In this section, I examine three possible responses on behalf of McDowell's view. Most of the representationalists who try to reply to Inverted Earth are not conceptualists (Tye, 2000; Lycan, 2004). We will see how some of their considerations may bear on the conceptualist position here. We will also consider whether a possible response can be found in McDowell's own writings.

First, since Inverted Earth is a case where two experiences with the same phenomenal character have different representational contents, one way to reply to it is to argue that if two experiences differ in representational content, their phenomenal characters will alter as well. According to the Inverted Earth scenario, after sufficient time has passed, your color experiences on Inverted Earth have representational contents different from your corresponding experiences on Earth before, but the phenomenal character of the two experiences may nevertheless remain the same. Your former experiences of the sky on Earth represented it as blue and your experiences of the sky on Inverted Earth now represent it as yellow, but *what*

*it is like for you* now to see the color of the sky is the same as before. The first representationalist response intends to challenge the claim that the phenomenal characters of the two experiences remain the same. For example, some representationalists argue that in order for this claim to hold, the subject has to draw on memory to compare current experiences on Inverted Earth with former experiences on Earth. This hinges on the first-person memory reports. Since such reports are mistakable, the general reliability of this is questionable.<sup>13</sup>

One might think that the conceptualist can adopt this sort of strategy in responding to the Inverted Earth objection. It is well known that besides conceptualism McDowell also holds a disjunctivist view of perceptual experience (McDowell, 1998a, 1998b). In “Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge,” he says:

An appearance that such-and-such is the case can be *either* a mere appearance *or* the fact that such-and-such is the case making itself perceptually manifest to someone. As before, the object of experience in the deceptive cases is a mere appearance. But we are not to accept that in the non-deceptive cases too the object of experience is a mere appearance, and hence something that falls short of the fact itself. On the contrary, the appearance that is presented to one in those cases is a matter of the fact itself being disclosed to the experiencer. So appearances are no longer conceived as in

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<sup>13</sup> For discussions on this part of the debate, see Block (1996), Tye (2000) and Macpherson (2005).

general intervening between the experiencing subject and the world.  
(McDowell, 1998a, 386-387)

The purpose of this view is to resist the Argument from Hallucination. For our purpose, there is no need to go into the details here. The basic idea is that the only sense in which hallucination and genuine perception can be said to share anything in common is that both are called “appearances” (or “experience”), and the only thing this name indicates is that an appearance is *either* a genuine perception *or* a mere subjectively indistinguishable hallucination. Construed in this way, what is common between genuine perception and hallucination bears no significance with regard to the metaphysical nature of perception.

Now the conceptualist might try to apply this view to the Inverted Earth scenario. According to McDowell’s disjunctivism, subjective indistinguishability is perfectly compatible with the metaphysical distinction between hallucination, which does not have any worldly thing as its object, and genuine perception, which is object-dependent, i.e., it constitutively refers to an object. One can mistake a hallucination for a matching genuine perception. This amounts to saying that the first-person knowledge about one’s mental states is not infallible. This may serve for the conceptualist’s purpose here because it may be claimed that if one fails to notice the differences between two experiences with respect to their phenomenal characters, it does not imply that the two experiences really share the same phenomenal characters. The conceptualist can claim that the first-person knowledge about phenomenal character is fallible. So if you cannot tell that

what it was like for you to see the color of the blue sky (on Earth) is any different from what it is like for you to see the color of the yellow sky (on Inverted Earth), it does *not* follow that the phenomenal characters *are* the same. Hence, the Inverted Earth objection is resisted.

I think it is doubtful whether this response can help defend conceptualism from the Inverted Earth argument. Is disjunctivism correct? This is a controversial issue, and I will not address it here. Assuming that McDowell's disjunctivism is plausible, the main worry is whether it can be suitably applied to the case of phenomenal character, which is the focus of Inverted Earth.

Suppose that phenomenal characters are properties of experiences. And suppose that both genuine perceptions and hallucinations can share the same phenomenal characters, which is partly why genuine perceptions and hallucinations can sometimes be subjectively indistinguishable. Originally, McDowell's disjunctivism was about the metaphysics of perception. It is about whether hallucinations and genuine perceptions belong to the same mental kinds and have the same sorts of things as their objects. It asserts that if one fails to tell whether one's current experience is a genuine perception or a hallucination on the basis of perceptual phenomenology, it does not imply that the two sorts of bearers of phenomenal character, i.e. genuine perceptions and hallucinations are of the same kind. Proponents of the Argument from Hallucination, on the other hand, disagree. They contend that phenomenological indistinguishability does carry the metaphysical implication that genuine perceptions and hallucinations belong to the same kind. So understood, the focus of the dispute is not at the level

of phenomenology, hence not at the level of phenomenal character. The dispute is about the metaphysics of experience that underlies the phenomenology of perception.

The case of Inverted Earth is different. The considerations in the Inverted Earth scenario are not about the metaphysical bearers of phenomenal character, but about phenomenal character itself.<sup>14</sup> If we apply disjunctivism to phenomenal character, this amounts to saying that if one fails to tell that two phenomenal characters are different it does not imply that they are the same. This seems to conflict with the intuitive conception of phenomenal character, according to which phenomenal character is essentially within the scope of the subject's awareness. The *what-it-is-like* aspect of an experience is something that is fully manifest to the subject. This makes the above response problematic because the issue here *is* at the level of phenomenology, not the underlying metaphysics. If one fails to notice any phenomenal difference between two experiences, it is a good reason to say that they have the same phenomenal characters. In criticizing the conceptualist response, I am not arguing for the infallibility of the first-person knowledge about one's mental states. It is perfectly consistent to hold that regarding the phenomenal character of experience, one's first-person knowledge is fallible yet still significantly authoritative. The first-person reports regarding phenomenal character are generally reliable.

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<sup>14</sup> As I use it in this paper, the notion of phenomenal character refers to the *what-it-is-like* aspect of an experience. It is not my view that phenomenal character has representational content or can be identified with some sort of content. The notion is intended to capture the subjective or experiential aspect of an experience. Whether it has content, or whether it can be fully explained in terms of representational content, is the dispute between representationalism and anti-representationalism mentioned earlier. Here, I do not take any stand on this dispute. What I try to do is to cast doubt on a possible strategy of defending McDowell's conceptualism.

Now, one might respond to me on McDowell's behalf by asking: why subjective indistinguishability provides a good reason for thinking that the two phenomenal characters in question are the same? Even if one concedes that the two phenomenal characters are subjectively indistinguishable at the phenomenological level, why this point by itself gives a sufficient reason for considering the two phenomenal characters to be the same?

In reply to this possible objection, I would like to make two points. First, the notion of phenomenal character, as I use it in the paper, is to capture the subjective or experiential aspect of an experience. The phenomenal character of an experience is fully determined by *how it is felt* by the subject, or what it is like *for* the subject to undergo the experience. So understood, phenomenal character is a phenomenological notion in the sense that its entire nature is fully manifest to the subject from the first-person point of view. Unlike the dispute between direct realism and the sense-datum theory, phenomenal character has no underlying nature that goes beyond what can be grasped or experienced by the subject. It is on this ground that I maintain that if one fails to notice any phenomenal difference between two experiences, it is a good reason to say that they have the same phenomenal characters.

Second, my point is only that subjective indistinguishability provides *a good reason* for thinking that the two phenomenal characters in question are the same. I do not intend to say that the reason is indefeasible. It is commonly held in the epistemology of self-knowledge that, generally, one

has first-person authority regarding one's own current mental states.<sup>15</sup> As mentioned above, I do not consider the first-person knowledge about one's mental states to be infallible. It is consistent that one's first-person knowledge is fallible yet still significantly authoritative. Therefore, if a subject cannot notice any phenomenal difference between two of his experiences, which justifies him to judge that the phenomenal characters of his experiences are the same, then it does seem to be a good epistemological reason to say that the two experiences have the same phenomenal characters. My point here does not by itself refute McDowell's conceptualism. But at least it shows that the burden is now on the defender of McDowell's view to address the issue of phenomenal character raised by the Inverted Earth thought experiment.

There is another problem for the current response to Inverted Earth on the conceptualist's behalf. It leaves room for an unreasonable consequence, that is, one can be not only fallible but also massively mistaken about the phenomenal character of one's own experiences. Consider a scenario where someone frequently travels between Earth and Inverted Earth.<sup>16</sup> The color inverting lenses are not inserted in the traveler; rather the traveler wears the inverting lenses when and only when he is on Inverted Earth. By flying from Earth to Inverted Earth, the content of the traveler's visual experiences of the sky changes from blue-representing to yellow-representing. To save

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Knowing Our Own Minds*, C. Wright, B. Smith, C. Macdonald. (eds.) Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Fiona Macpherson describes such a case to criticize Michael Tye's reply to Inverted Earth which is based on the causal covariance theory of mental representation (Macpherson, 2005, 133; Tye, 2000, 136). I think this case can be adopted and used against the conceptualist response under discussion here as well.

representationalism, the conceptualist would have to say that the phenomenal characters of the experiences change as well. That is to say, the traveler would not notice any change in his experiences; he would not detect any phenomenal difference. Now suppose that the traveling period is extremely short and the person keeps his eyes on the sky with full attention during the flight. It is then possible that sudden and major changes may occur in phenomenal character, say, from *blue-feeling* to *yellow-feeling*, yet the subject fails to notice. In fact, to save representationalism, the conceptualist would have to say that the traveler *cannot* notice such a phenomenal difference at all, on pain of allowing the possibility that phenomenal character does not supervene on representational content. Given the salient nature of phenomenal character, such an outcome seems unacceptable.

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The second response says that while after moving to Inverted Earth the phenomenal character does not change, the representational content does not alter, either. When you compare your current experiences on Inverted Earth with your former experiences on Earth and notice no difference, the representationalist can agree that the phenomenal characters stay the same. If the representationalist can argue that the representational contents of the two experiences also remain constant, then the identity between phenomenal character and representational content, and the supervenient relation between the two, have not been shown to be broken. Michael Tye, a prominent Strong Representationalist, endorses this response. He proposes a counterfactual version of the causal covariance theory of mental

representation and argues that even after you live on Inverted Earth for many years your visual experiences of the sky still represent it as blue (Tye, 2000, 136-137).<sup>17</sup>

The goal of the causal covariance theories of representation is to naturalize mental content and, eventually, naturalize phenomenal consciousness. This is not the path that McDowell would take. According to conceptualism, ultimately, the exercises or implementation of our conceptual capacities in empirical thought or in perception are rationally and externally constrained by external reality. To use this second response, the conceptualist will have to give an account of how such a rational and external constraint actually works, so as to explain why the representational content does not change. This will be a difficult task for the conceptualist, but I will not press this point here.

Even if such an account is offered, I think, it will not help the conceptualist dealing with the Inverted Earth objection. Suppose after being an inhabitant on Inverted Earth for a long time your experiences of the sky still represent it as blue, your experiences of cucumbers still represent them as green, etc. The problem is this: Given that in reality things are of different colors on Inverted Earth, the representational content of your experiences are *massively wrong* about the world, and will remain so as long as you stay on Inverted Earth. This conflicts with McDowell's idea of experience as openness to reality (McDowell, 1994, 26, 32). Recall that it is McDowell's view that *that things are thus and so* can be the content of our experience and, if we endorse it, the content of our judgment, and that if the

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<sup>17</sup> For criticisms of Tye's view, cf. (Macpherson, 2005).

judgment is true, the same content is also a fact about the world. The content of experience can sometimes be wrong, but it is essentially something that can be right about the world. This view will be seriously compromised if the conceptualist argues for the claim that the representational content does not change after moving to Inverted Earth. Thus, even if the second response works for other versions of representationalism, it will not be available for McDowellian conceptualism.<sup>18</sup>

At this point, one might try to defend conceptualism by saying that what causes the inconsonance of representational content is the insertion of inverted lenses. It is the effects of such lenses that are responsible for the fact that it is your conceptual capacity related to the concept BLUE, rather than your conceptual capacity related to the concept YELLOW, that enters into the representational content of your experiences of the sky on Inverted Earth. So why not say that the inverted lenses and their effects are also part of the external reality? If so, your experiences continuing to represent the sky as blue are just what is expected from conceptualism. The conceptual capacities involved in your experiences are still rationally and externally constrained by external reality, and the idea of openness remains intact.

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<sup>18</sup> McDowell does not, and need not, require that experience is always openness to reality. That is, he does not have to insist that our perceptions are always veridical. Nevertheless, I do think that for his view to sustain, the possibility for a subject to have veridical perception must be firmly secured. This is surely consistent with the concession that perceptual errors happen sometimes. What I am suggesting here is that the Inverted Earth thought experiment raises the possibility that the content of one's experiences might be *massively wrong* about the world. This is much more serious than just admitting that sometimes our perceptions are not veridical. It supports, though not exactly amounts to, the idea that the very notion of experience allows the possibility that the content of experience might turn out to be *always wrong* about the world. This line of thought, I think, is in conflict with McDowell's idea of experience as openness to reality. At the very least, it would be unwelcome to McDowell's position. Hence, it calls for a response from the defender of McDowell's view.

However, this defense is inflicted by another problem. According to McDowell, our empirical judgments involve active exercises of conceptual capacities that are rationally and externally grounded in experiences. Since the insertion of inverted lenses is unknown to you, you continue to believe that the sky is blue and that cucumbers are green, etc. Consequently, your empirical judgments are massively mistaken about the world. This result will be unwelcome to conceptualism. Empirical judgments form an important part of our general worldview about the empirical world, and recall that it is McDowell's view that a worldview plays an explanatory role regarding how the content of experience relates to the world. The above result is unwelcome because it implies the possibility that our general worldview might be largely erroneous, which in turns impairs the intentionality of perception. If so, the idea of openness is not well secured yet.

What if you are informed about the insertion of inverted lenses? I am skeptical whether this will assist conceptualism significantly. Suppose you finally come to know what had happened to you many years ago, including the insertion of inverted lenses and the transportation to Inverted Earth, and now you know that things have complementary colors here. Thus, although your experiences continue to represent the sky as blue and cucumbers as green, you no longer believe that these are their true colors. Although you express your beliefs by saying "the sky is blue" and "cucumbers are green," what you really believe is that the sky is yellow and cucumbers are red, etc.

Again, this gives rise to an unhappy situation for conceptualism. Recall that it is McDowell's view that *that things are thus and so* can be the content of our experience and, if we endorse it, the content of our judgment,



are moved to Inverted Earth, the phenomenal character of your experiences does not change. On Inverted Earth, the factual contents of your visual experiences of the sky represent it as yellow. Although you say “the sky is blue,” your word ‘blue’ actually expresses the concept YELLOW. The phenomenal contents, on the other hand, continue to represent it as blue, which fixes the reference of the demonstrative concept, say, THIS COLOR. If this strategy works, it allows the conceptualist to say that, although the phenomenal character of experience is at odds with factual content, it can still be identified with, or supervenient on, phenomenal content.

What makes this response initially promising is that, on the one hand, factual content is determined externally, and hence conceptualism remains a version of Externalist Representationalism. From the McDowellian standpoint, this helps to secure the intentionality of perception and the idea of experience as openness to reality. On the other hand, phenomenal content is determined internally and hence can stay the same after moving from Earth to Inverted Earth. This allows room for saying that there is a sense in which your experiences of the sky on Inverted Earth remain the same as on Earth. The sameness of phenomenal character can be captured by the sameness of phenomenal content. By appealing to two levels of content, the conceptualist can claim that there is a sense in which representational content continues to co-vary with phenomenal character. This is just what is needed to answer to the Inverted Earth argument.

However, if the demonstrative concepts involved in phenomenal content refer to the ways things or properties appear to the subject in experiences, rather than referring to things or properties of the external world, the

reference of the demonstrative concepts would then be determined by the phenomenal content of experience, not by external reality. This will cause a problem for conceptualism. According to conceptualism, the phenomenal content of experience is constituted by conceptual capacities associated with demonstrative concepts. But now, according to the above response, the references of these very same demonstrative concepts are in turn determined by the phenomenal content of experience. There is an obvious danger of vicious circularity. As Richard Heck points out,

If the content of my perceptual experience is to *fix* the content of my demonstrative concept of the color experience presents to me, my concept of the color cannot also be *part of* the content of that experience. If it were, the content of the demonstrative concept would be fixed by the content of the same concept. (Heck, 2000, 496)

To avoid this problem, it seems that the conceptualist would have to manage to argue that the reference of demonstrative concepts can always be fixed by the external world. I think this can be done. But such an account of demonstrative reference will also make phenomenal content externally individuated. Then the phenomenal content of your experiences will not remain constant on Inverted Earth. Thus, the third possible response will not be open to the conceptualist.

## V.

I have argued that as an account of the nature of perception, conceptualism has not satisfactorily accommodated the phenomenal aspect of

experience. Once we grant the Inverted Earth thought experiment a certain degree of initial plausibility, it becomes a burden for all varieties of representationalism, including McDowell's Strong Externalist Fregean Representationalism, to give an account of the relation between phenomenal character and representational content. Whether the Inverted Earth argument is a crushing objection against representationalism is still controversial. I have argued in section 3 for a conditional claim that if the Inverted Earth scenario is coherent and initially plausible, then it is a potential threat to McDowellian conceptualism. In the last section, I argued that some of the possible responses on behalf of conceptualism do not succeed. There might be other responses not considered here, but I hope that enough has been said to establish that the Inverted Earth objection poses a significant problem for McDowellian conceptualism, and that the dialectical burden is on the defenders of this position.

Notice that if my conditional claim is correct, it will not necessarily affect McDowell's Wittgensteinian project of defending commonsensical views against the Myth of the Given and Davidsonian coherentism, since it is still possible that the only sort of content that experience possesses is conceptual. Rather, my point is that in so far as conceptualism disallows any nonrepresentational element, the defenders of this position would need to take those arguments against Strong Externalist Representationalism seriously, such as Inverted Earth. In this sense, whether conceptualism is correct is closely related to the qualia debate.

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