
Epistemic semblance in Metaphysics

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Abstract: Simon Blackburn, in *Truth A Guide for the Perplexed* (Blackburn 2006), deploys the relation of thought with the facts and says, 'We met the argument that theorizing involves an impossible activity of stepping outside our own skins and pretending to a 'transcendental' point of view, a standpoint from which we can survey the relationship between our thoughts and facts, without using the very forms of thought whose relation to the facts we are hoping to describe.' (Blackburn, 2006, 109). My philosophical reflections on this claim appreciate the view and turn towards the epistemic semblance in the metaphysical purview. A few challenges of the theory take up a side-effect of the 'knowing procedures' and its subsequent notion of the rigid concomitance of realism without a human face. My endeavor would be to slightly bypassing the account of objective realism and debut into the sphere of the old-fashioned query, 'what do we know about the conceptualized world where concepts steadily *contaminate* objects?' We may appreciate beliefs and concepts, which are human creations, as these impart to the human-experienced world where concepts are the objective features of the subject's conceptual scheme.

Keywords: Epistemic, Realism, Anti-realism, conceptual schemata, Concept, intensional, supervenience, Ontology.

On what there is

The world is the totality of the physical and non-physical (mind, time, universal, causality, etc.) objects. The epistemic venture of the world is indubitably a subjective pursuit of knowing the world and being engaged in the world. The query circulates, 'does the objective world depend on the conceptual schemata, or the sense of reality seems mind-independent?' The whole discourse is an attempt to see the external world in general (realism1) and the external world seeing through conceptual schemata (anti-realism2). The question about the paradigm of reality or how do we know 'on what there is' set off a qualm between the knowledge of *de re* and *de dicto*. One of the most prominent relativist accounts is *global relativism*, an approach to sorting out the different objects by their uses. It looks closer to anti-realism since the prospect of *global relativism* upholds the global conceptual schemata as a model of categorizing the objects or carving them up through conceptualizing the world in different ways. We may favor a global relativist approach to indulge the representational mode of multifaceted mind-independent realities. All these outlooks are monitored through the patterns in language (*language is the mirror of the world*), I

mean, whether language represents the world or we conceptualize the world by the medium of language to know what is there outside the physical boundary of the subject. In particular, for realists, the reality in principle extends beyond the subject's conceptualization. The key novelty of this argument, apart from the objective world, is the contention that the external properties of the objects are not limited in the access to our knowing. Besides, anti-realism, an opponent, proclaims that reality relies on the human-face or is constructed by conceptual operators. Internal realism is also a formidable account of anti-realism that depends on the 'verifiability semantic'; here, the conception of 'truth' blends with the process of verification under certain 'epistemic ideal conditions'. Later in his *Gifford lectures* at St. Andrews (1990), Hilary Putnam digs up his 'epistemic ideal situation' that is allied to the 'Cartesian Predicament'. Chakraborty says,

For Putnam 'internal realism' just is not a mere interface between us and world but an interface that is related to 'conceptual schemes' controlled by 'operational constraints' which can be reduced in sense data. One can be pointed out that the world that we know and can refer to, the internalist holds: is language relative and so relative to our conceptual scheme. So many interpreters of Putnam make a mistake to think that Putnam is an internal realist as he adopted the idea of "conceptual scheme" as the feature of his works. But Putnam himself claims that he already gave up the theory of internal realism which he also called 'scientific realism' as "the realism internal to science" because he later (*Reading Putnam*, edited by Bob Hale, 1990) rejected the "verificationist semantics" which was the fundamental idea of so-called "internal realism". (Chakraborty, 2016, 180).

It is well known that the theory of concept is the content of our thought. The pattern of 'concept' has two dimensions that trigger the philosophical sequences in epistemology and metaphysics simultaneously. The classical view lays out an *intensional* part of the concept that stands for semantics or meanings, while the *extensional* part of the concept denotes its referent. So the conceptual part of a concept holds a *background enabling proviso* that has lineage to an intrinsic property of the mind. It is well feasible that in the case of using language, some concepts occurred in the brain, i.e., it has some 'internal organ' system. As we know, mental states are in nature representational, and the occurrences of the minds are intrinsically characterizable (narrow content); there, it seems independent of its representational properties. We catch some feelings, images, and sensations in these situations. Hence, it follows that introspective shreds of evidence set up the contents of the mind. Whenever we have anything recognizable as mental representation, we have something recognizable as mental contents, and meaning

will be relevant (as one might think of meanings as a part of what determines contents), we can think of meanings without language by thinking of non-linguistic mental representations as mental metaphors or images come into consideration. It sounds bizarre to proclaim that thinking is only mental manipulation of representation that hardly bears any referential directness to reality! The extensional part of the concept hinges on the content of the thought that hooks up reality or external objects. Hence cognitive capacities inflict the causal relation in perception, but the agent's conceptual capacity escorts towards the referential world. So, one's conceptual capacity has some 'background statuses' that preserve its liaison with objectivity. Let us, therefore, turn attention to numbers, abstract entities, or empty terms, but it is not that the understanding of the terms can only be possible when we attempt to know how people know the terms. However, we have to see that 'what the term is', a sort of description that somehow intermingles to the external world. Can we value conceptual capacity (knowing that) as an indispensable part of linguistic capacity (knowing how)? One major shift of this discussion is to think about the concept from the periphery of 'knowing that' where the 'background statuses' of conceptual capacity rely on its innate hypothesis, similarly the 'background statuses' of linguistic capacity depend on its socio-linguistic inputs or *knowing how* process.

We still need further analysis, and Chomsky did it by refuting the Rylean understanding of putting the knowledge of the language into the domains of *knowing how* and *knowing that*. Language competence for Chomsky does not fit with any process that may be doable in the sense of generative grammar or experience since there is something similar found in every cognitive realm, even not as a competency (knowing-how) but as a biological nature. Chakraborty writes,

"Linguistic competence is combined with the processing competence and the conceptual competence of thought. The conceptual development is also required for language development. Conceptual development is ontologically prior to language development. Second, this ontological priority escorts to an innate hypothesis that talks about the capability to acquire a competence in our natural language as developed by Chomsky." (Chakraborty, 2020, 67).

A requirement for that can scaffold a satisfactory predicative existence of the concepts in their actual (concrete entities like table, book, etc.) and potential (abstract entities like time, truth etc.) forms. Russell urges the same and finds the meaningful existence of the predicative in its articulated mentioned properties. The connotation part of the verbal format of 'to exist' considers the predicative form only if it has propositional functions. A description imposes on a symbolic form where the expression of the particular symbolic form has to cater to the value of a variable as Quine argued in his celebrated paper 'On What There Is' (Quine, 1961, 1-20). With this weapon, we can wrap out a meaningless metaphysical corollary of non-existence concepts. A traditional probabilistic view of the concept emphasizes two different versions –the *prototype version* (Rosch, 1975) and the *exemplar view* (Smith & Medin, 1981). And that is why the considerable account of the prototype version synchronizes first an abridgment

mental representation of an example, and secondly, it upholds the fundamental characteristics of the concept. Moreover, the exemplar view rejects the account of the summary representation of concepts by putting the jargon of representing examples where we cannot identify concepts as a mental representation of the prototype, but it assists us to remember similar examples that we interacted with earlier. Despite this lucrative presentation, the prototype view or the exemplar view is not beyond any criticism. Jerry Fodor articulates a seminal compositional argument (conceptual combination) against the prototype theory, while Chomsky runs a referential doctrine problem of the exemplar view. I would not like to bring these accounts here. However, an approach of directing the objective exposition of linguistic expressions underlines the observers' conceptual scheme. Here we may curve the reality that seems conserved in concepts through which we conceptualize about categorizing objects.

Connecting knowledge

Experience casts a considerable foundation on our beliefs and knowing procedures. In our practical purports, we try to overlook many possibilities, but in the speculative venture, these possibilities look promising. Blackburn writes, 'Once an epistemology has given us some sense of our footing in experience, it would be nice if there were a unique, authoritative, truth-delivery system enabling us to erect more ambitious generalizations and theories, explanations, and predictions on its basis.' (Blackburn, 2009, 49) A plausible distinction could draw between objects of belief and objects of knowledge, but this sophisticated analysis tends to an interface where knowledge precedes beliefs. To be more précised, if we claim that we know 'X is true' in a particular statement, we have to admit the existence of the particular 'X is true'. Here the objective evidence of the term X presupposes your object of belief as true or false. From Plato onwards, many philosophers advocate that without being attached to the logical indubitability of the truth of a statement, one could not claim for its objective knowledge (an object should cause the subject's belief). It sounds a controversial opinion that later highly criticized by Cartesian, who thinks that facts are reflected in the objects to the subject's conceptual schemata instead of affecting these only through the logical indubitability of sentential truth. The method of causal efficacy is not always applicable for future knowledge and conceptual apparatus.

If we view causal efficacy in a restricted manner, the concept experience and the causal scientific conjecture in Karl Popper's (Popper, 1972) word can lead up more justification in our propositions and beliefs. However, the interesting point is that the method of testing itself is a theory-laden process that needs a reliable instrument to get rid of the conception of falsifiability. The epistemic resemblance to metaphysics pivots an objective exposition of the linguistic expression where the margin of existence cannot go beyond the efficacy of observer's knowledge. I am not provoked to believe in the Rortyan enterprise of analytical past of metaphysical controversies against *realism anti-realism* since I would not like to fall

into the entrap of philosophical revisionist. Here my thoughts are closer to Putnam, who says,

'I hope that philosophical reflection may be of some real cultural value, but I do not think our reaction to the failure of a philosophical project – even a project as central as “metaphysics” – should be abandon ways of talking and thinking which have practical and spiritual weight. I am not, in that sense, a philosophical revisionist. And I think that what is important in philosophy is not just to say, “I reject the realist anti-realist controversy,” but to show that (and how) both sides *misrepresent* the lives we live with our concepts.' (Putnam 1998, 389-390).

In these contexts, Wittgenstein depicts thought as a proposition with a sense and a proposition to him is a picture of reality, subsequently, Wittgenstein therapy delves thought in the scopes of sense and reference as prescribed by Frege. But he brings the idea of logical scaffolding to describe the state of affairs in a realistic sense. The abyss of empirical discoverable versus nonsensical metaphysical proposition defies the pattern of epistemic knowledge and metaphysical zenith together. It looks decisive to trace an *ad hoc* criticism of promoting subjective adherence in metaphysics or epistemic indulgences. To revive the path of metaphysics that was almost buried in Kant's philosophy, philosophers in our age want to extend beyond the scopes of metaphysics collaborating with epistemology; an enterprise that advances the periphery of existence relied on the observer's knowledge. Chomsky argues,

The slit experiment shows that at some level, the objective world depends on our actions as observers. At a very different level, Heraclitus shows that whether some configuration is a river depends on our conceptual schemes – in ways far more intricate than he considered. And Nelson Goodman pressed the matter far further in his *Starmaking*, including an interesting colloquy with Israel Scheffler. There's good evidence that we have an innately determined conception of how the world works, probably much like the mechanical philosophy that guided early modern science, undermined by Newton.³

This outline may predate Hume and collide with a persisting opinion of objective science to renew an innate infusion for knowing ontological epicycles of conceptual schemata. One could be a good anti-realist about the physical world but serves as a realist about conceptual schemata or in general, the mental states. Whatever may be the straining position, curving the reality of the world or the mind, resulting in the ontological prudence is indeed correlated with language and its essential repercussions. In the latter half of twentieth century, analytical philosophy takes a semantic turn in metaphysics, like entailing the state of mind as the *mental content* or replacing objects as the *state of affairs*, etc. This appeal to semantics underlies anti-realism and its modest stance on realism with a human face by narrowing the spinning mode of objectivity. The tranquility of mind, world, and its juxtaposition foster the startling outset of supervenience in the twentieth-century philosophy, and Martin and Heil remarkably inscribe:

The appeal to supervenience is a game for the ontologically uncurious and uncandid. The most basic domain over which su-

pervenience floats is that of the supposed supervenience of wholes on their parts. The world, considered as a whole, owes its character to the nature and arrangement of elementary items that make it up. This is sometimes put in terms of supervenience: all the facts supervene on the elementary physical facts. (Martin & Heil 1999, 37)

A pleasing account of deflecting ontology in linguistics jots down dispositionality and qualitativity, a diverse mode of description of the properties. The notion of an intrinsic or innate hypothesis is an amalgam of dispositional and qualitative manifestation. It is problematic to turn aside the nature of innate properties and its qualitative manifestation, like in grammar, here to resolve the dispositional and qualitative quality may covary and balancing.

Truly Understood

The question of certainty in the procedure of knowledge is nothing but the primordial part of logic that advocates the truth of the tautological proposition as certain. The thesis holds two diversified constituents:

- a) The statements of our beliefs or thoughts are either false or true. This seems a representational account where the truth value of a statement or assertion relies on the true representation of the world against the beliefs or assertions. Here, the reality is comprehensively related to the tripartite structural part of the world, mind, and language.
- b) The mind-independent existence of the objective truth is a realistic doctrine of what exists. The fixed totality of objects consists of the configurations of matters that imply something, everything, and nothing.

My point is that presupposing a metaphysical harmony between the mind and the world, Austin, in his notable writing 'Truth' (Austin, 1964), exposes a correspondence relation between the truth values of a sentence with its corresponding referent. It promotes the idea of 'immanent truth', where truth is a part of the total corpus that a subject accepts. An anti-descriptive perspective rules out the theory of reference and its manifest relation to reality that undermined the conceptual schemata of mind and world entanglement. The way to fixing reference through language is nothing but a causal collaboration with the world that secures a causal efficacy between the word and the object.

In *The Bound of Sense* (Strawson, 1966, 15), Peter Strawson tempts to explore a probable non-actual world by reallocating truth-value over the sentences in different semantical molds, while Davidson ceases the prospect of global relativism by charging that a conceptual linkage interplays between the truth and translatability where the principle of translation in our language system surges the truth-value of an intelligible sentence. For Donald Davidson, an uninterpreted reality does not make any sense. Davidson argues, 'In giving up dependence on the concept of an uninterpreted reality, something outside all schemes and science, we do not relinquish the notion of objective truth – quite the contrary...Of course truth of sentences remains relative to language, but that is as ob-

jective as can be.' (Davidson, 1973, 20). A realistic presumption spins when Nagel's denial of anti-realism tends to account for spreading out the world beyond the subjective conceptualization. Many things are there in the world that we are yet to conceive of or structure in our minds. Treating a conceptual scheme as an edge of objectivity seems pretty idealistic. Nagel anticipates Davidson's thought on conceptual relativism as a weaker version of realism. Hence, in the event analysis, a default version of realism adheres to a non-representational world of objectivity where epistemology does not conceptualize the metaphysical reality in a weird sense. A problem arises when we prop up a Berkeleyan way out of being conceivable in our mental state as an inseparable criterion to befall in the objective category. Nagel says, 'In other words, I want to resist the natural tendency to identify the idea of the world as it really is with the idea of what can be revealed, at the limit, by an indefinite increase in objectivity of standpoint... That is one way in which objectivity does not correspond to reality: it is not always the best mode of understanding. But human objectivity may fail to exhaust reality for another reason: there may be aspects of reality beyond its reach because they are altogether beyond our capacity to form conceptions of the world.' (Nagel, 1989, 91).

The significance of this thought is hard to overestimate. Let us imagine a logical priority of concept, where to become a concept sounds a theoretical mental representation that is parasitic on the concept's individuation and having the possession of the concept simultaneously. Fodor urges, '...philosophers take a strong line on methodological issue there's almost sure to be a metaphysical subtext.' (Fodor, 1998, 2-3). My understanding articulates this thought in a different direction. What looks interesting here is thinking about a mental particular (a la concept) by having to do with an epistemic ability (*knowing how*). We barely doubt its pragmatic stand and epistemic semblance because it renders the concepts as a mental particular; its methodological possession copes with knowing the particular concept that manifested a logical preference on the ontological disposition. Here, this generalization categorizes an empiricist version of reductionism, which takes a significant role as an ontological entity, for instance, a tiger, and being a concept of tiger plausibly contain an epistemic semblance in metaphysics. The reductionism of concept turns towards the semantic import of epistemic nuance to understand a particular entity in our language. Empiricists endow causal efficacy on the mental particulars and conjoin it to propositional attitudes by bringing the notion of content I discussed earlier. A journey from ontology towards semantic oscillating on epistemology sets up the metaphysical possibility of knowing a particular concept to integrate semantics with the representation of one's thought. An object or the concept that represents the object to us is epistemically accessible; in short, our experiences are epistemically accessible to the agents. Let's continue to assume, therefore, experience and epistemic accessibility are naturally allies, as John Perry claims,

Having an experience, that is, merely being in a state that has a subjective character, makes the experience epistemically accessible to us. But this is not because it is causally upstream from

our sensations or causally downstream from our intentions. (Perry, 2001, 48).

What is the direction in which the activity could be explained? As philosophers consider, experience explicates different types of properties, which help us classify a particular concept and categorize the same with other similar concepts. It is a venture to understand a subjective way of representing concepts, i.e. recognizing the properties of the concept, memorizing the properties of the concept, causal property of the object, effect of the object, etc. A subjective milieu pins down mental representations that articulate their contents from the source of their constituents of thought. The way to confirm an epistemic entry (relies on the psychological aptitude) could shun the antecedent of a physical entity or its phenomenal parts.

Bypassing objective realism and the purview of precursor physicalism incline the knowledge of a particular object in relation to the subjective matter. The subjective matter abides the objects that they are words for. The aspect of type/token relation of a particular concept could publicly share the same concept *type* with several *tokens* in literally. To see this point, we may consider the level of our mental capacities as virtually analogous. But it seems true that some individual differences (conceptual presentation and language use) may delineate in several cases, but there are no known collective differences accessible in our long biological evolution. An external input affects our conceptual system, and the differentiation of our conceptual structures and languages has originated because of the different external inputs accessible in our community and the objective world.

We can generate new concepts like new visual systems (cameras, satellites), calculus systems and computational language, and so on. Wittgensteinian adhere that there is a new part of language compared to a new city. If some people in a group or society intend to construct some new concepts like 'bug', 'android' etc, one point is articulated here that the meaning of their new concepts, which they have promised to use are in no way located in their heads. The meaning of the word that fixes the reference links to the external world and the shared understanding. The meaning of words for the community is interconnected because of the public shareability and its referential directness to reality. Of course, this causal directness is not the last word for the reference fixation of a concept. A normative theory of interpretation sets a conceptual dimension beyond the picture of an innate algorithm. My understanding of this jargon looks closer to Hilary Putnam, who valued entanglement of facts about the reference of our terms with norms of interpretation as an example of the irreducibility and ubiquity of the normative. Remembering the architecture of Wittgenstein, we could turn out positing objects (e.g., 'concepts') that interpret the terms for agents, but conserving that the concepts did not entail further interpretation is nothing but a mistake. To predict whether a concept brings normativity, one needs to know whether it expresses a subjective point of view (qualia of the agent) and the pertinent fact about its subjective points of view in the plural (qualia of other people). A way towards the *subjective principle of belief* stresses the sufficient reasons attained by the believers

in favor of their constructed beliefs. The process of attributing the *subjective principle* to others relies on good reasons for the belief hypothesis. In fact, an assertion is a sort of expression analog based on good reasons. The truth of a particular belief reveals the justified beliefs that correspond to adequate reasoning. Here the reason that one should ponder gives a status on the rationalizing epistemic reason, not misled by any general beliefs whose causes or motives are quite vague to the subject. A critic can argue that there are many unconscious beliefs (depending on lack of reason and truth) in our day-to-day life, and these are not justified purely by any epistemic reasons. A gap that constantly haunted the agent's outlook towards the world and what the world is (ontological existence) can be fulfilled by adequate evidence and conclusive reasons.

In conclusion, the objects-as-interpreted are not abrupt materialization from nowhere. A constructivist rejoinder accounts for a considerable resilience lineage, a type of materialization that cannot set aside imputation scope where objects are represented through the conceptual schemata. Roughly, what we find out is not an intensification of monotonous interpretation-independent objectivity that relies on the interpretative framework of the conceptual schemata. In the process of believing or interpreting a particular concept or the object's properties, no realistic explanation diminishes this process considering it as merely a projection of the subjective mind (knower's projection). Any ontological properties that a subject or knower conceives or interprets engrossed a justifiable epistemic temperament - an immediate retort of this semblance between metaphysics and epistemology which drifts contaminated conceptual objectivity.

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Notes

¹ The world is the fixed totality of objects given independently of the human mind. Here the truth only deploys a correspondence relation between the sentence and objects of the world.

² The realist world is a conception of a ready-made world that sounds like a realist myth. The reality of the world is relative to our conceptual scheme, where the concepts are the particular way objects are represented in the human mind. The world is considered a conceptualized world, and objects are nothing but *contaminated* by concepts. For internal-realist like Putnam, the concepts are human creations, so it captives human experience, and internal realism ponders that concepts become objectively true in the world and so should be taken as the objective facet of the subject's conceptual schemata. (Putnam, 2015, 83)

³ I am highly grateful to Noam Chomsky for bringing this thought-provoking idea to my mind.