

Dennis Bonnette PhD Four Quotes Regarding Mind vs Abstraction vs Representation vs Extension In Spacetime and One Thomistic Realism Item

Rational Responses To Skepticism: A Catholic Philosopher Defends Intellectual Foundations For Traditional Belief—by Dennis Bonnette Ph.D. <https://www.amazon.com/Rational-Responses-Skepticism-Philosopher-Intellectual-ebook/dp/B0BR2B6M4B>

Regarding extension into Space (Space-Time) as it relates to Mind, all of that converges with the following four comments from Dr. Bonnette. They are taken from a discussion in which that very question presents a problem for this or that attempt at [QM-Full-Stop] by any Non-Theism/Non-Theistic map of Consciousness.

The four comments are copy/pasted in full below but for reference they are as follows:

1. https://disqus.com/home/discussion/strangenotions/materialism8217s_failures_hyle_morphism8217s_vindication/#comment-4592707811
2. https://disqus.com/home/discussion/strangenotions/materialism8217s_failures_hyle_morphism8217s_vindication/#comment-4593756623
3. https://disqus.com/home/discussion/strangenotions/materialism8217s_failures_hyle_morphism8217s_vindication/#comment-4596561815
4. https://disqus.com/home/discussion/strangenotions/materialism8217s_failures_hyle_morphism8217s_vindication/#comment-4596779684

Here's excerpt 1 of 4:

You are absolutely right. This is about a perception, not a mere representation (which here we call an “image”). The problem is that as long as what is experiencing the whole is claimed to be purely physical, the logic of the problem remains — for the same reason even you said that interacting physical parts cannot “perceive anything.” Making the perceiver do what no physical thing can do is the problem. Of course, there is a perceiver — but it cannot be physical, for the same reasoning I have given multiple times.

Physical things are extended in space and thus must “assign” different functions to different parts. But to perceive a whole all at once is precisely what a material entity cannot do, since the different functions, exactly as different and separate, defy unification by purely physical means. Think of the water example above.

But perception does occur. Therefore it is not just a matter that we cannot conceive how it does it. We can conceive precisely how a physical thing works — with different parts doing different

things. But the logic I gave above shows that the one thing a physical thing cannot do is to unify the whole.

There is no “reasoning of the gaps here.” Physical things simply cannot do what is entailed in sense experience, namely the unifying of the whole.

You are finally grasping that perception is not an image, but what you understandably are resisting is the realization that perceiving is radically different than a physical image, since in its immateriality it can do what no physical thing extended in space can do, namely, embrace its wholeness at the same moment it is merely a bunch of distinct and separate parts in space. This is the same reason that materialists cannot see that some immaterial principle of unity must make them one being, when a total *purely physical* analysis of our being would indicate that all we are is a bunch of discrete atomic parts.

Although materialists resist it, the much more reasonable position is to accept that the macroscopic things of the world around us do exist as independent, whole beings, and that they are unified by some real, non-material, principle which is not explained by the atoms alone. And, if that is true, it is far more reasonable to believe that some central principle of the same type, or some aspect of that central principle, enables us to perceive the world around us in an immaterial way — since it is evident that perception is radically difficult to understand if you insist it is merely some function of a bunch of material parts. In a word, materialism is not only metaphysically impossible, but it is also unlikely.

Here’s Excerpt 2 of 4:

I think we are hung up on the following point of yours where you say: “Again, I see that as a call to intuition. The perception is of a unified whole, that does not imply that the whole itself had to actually be unified in a singularity-type way for being perceived as such....”

It is not the whole itself is actually unified, since the whole — say, an image of a triangle or an actual triangle — is NOT unified, precisely because as an object under the conditions of matter, it is itself extended in space, and hence, has parts outside of parts. (The angles are exterior to each other.) What *is* unified is the act of perception itself, NOT what is perceived. That is the entire point of the insight. Were not the perception itself unified, we could never perceive the whole that is being perceived as a whole. Solely by apprehending all the parts of the whole at once can we know them both as distinct parts in themselves and as parts of a whole. Thus, the unification is in the act of perception, NOT in the whole which is being perceived. This is not an intuition in the sense of a guess about reality. It is rather a careful description of what we are experiencing, which is the proper role of epistemology.

Here's Excerpt 3 of 4:

The problem is not avoided. A unified set of particles is still extended in space-time and either its parts do something toward “representing” the apprehended whole, or they do not. If they do, then you have the same problem I have described many times, with discrete parts representing discrete parts of the whole, but with nothing representing the whole in a single act — or else, you have a single part on which all the data converges altogether, producing unintelligibility. I think you are thinking that somehow material reality MUST be able to do precisely what a close analysis of the facts reveals it cannot do.

Here's Excerpt 4 of 4:

You have to decide whether a perception, then, can be extended in space. If it is, then it falls victim to the same objection that a representation does. My whole point is that an act of perception does what it does precisely because it is NOT extended in space. Saying that an extended representation somehow produces a perception, and then, that the rules of extension do not apply to that perception is to grant that the perception is NOT extended in space, which is exactly my point.

As to whether an extended in space representation (or neural pattern) can generate a perception that is not extended in space is a distinct question. The answer to that is “no,” for the simple reason that the perception is doing something that no physical thing can do (as per the argument), and hence, does not have the quality of “existence without extension” needed to give it to the perception. This pertains to a secondary issue, known as emergent materialism. That is, can material bodies make things that do not have physical characteristics. But, by definition, things that lack physical characteristics do not belong in the space-time continuum, and hence, materialism is defeated again.

End 4/Four Excerpts.

Those four are all from Dennis Bonnette PhD and he has an essay which overlaps some of that (in part) titled *How Metaphysical Certitudes Anchor Proofs for God* at <https://www.hprweb.com/2021/09/how-metaphysical-certitudes-anchor-proofs-for-god>

Related and/or Perhaps of interest:

Thomistic Realism: Being, Non-Being, Knowing, and Contradiction as per the following:

Note: Items in quotes are from *Thomist Realism and The Critique of Knowledge* by Etienne Gilson <https://www.amazon.com/Thomist-Realism-Critique-Knowledge-Etienne-ebook/dp/B0090PVDH0>

“In all our psychological states we grasp, beyond any possibility of doubt and by means of a concrete, concomitant reflection, the existing self and the fact of its self-consciousness. This immediate knowledge of the self is not of the purely empirical order but is absolute. It is an experience that reveals to us the very reality of the self, not just its appearance, and at the same time it assures us of the essential reliability of our mind.” Introspection’s “i” or the First Person Experience thereby houses “a reflection of the thinking self upon itself, but it is a concrete reflection because it bears upon an observable fact: the reality of the thinking subject, not some abstract concept like “thought in general” or even “the self”. This reflection, therefore, leads to the apprehension of the existing self in its concrete reality which forms, with its actual conscious activity, “a living, objective ‘something’, positing itself absolutely, grasped as such”. And again all First Person Data is “more like touching than seeing, it is not simply an abstraction because it grasps an actual being directly. Such a knowledge is sufficient to overcome the universal doubt and assure us of the objective value of our knowledge.” It is in this sense that The Self thusly Known “puts us in possession of the absolute, justifies the evidence of the first principles and assures us of the essential trustworthiness of our minds.”

This irreducible Realism vis-à-vis i-am / I-AM has no intermediate such that “the identity of being with being and its nonidentity with nonbeing immediately yields the principles of identity and contradiction. The dynamic self-sufficiency of being yields the principle of sufficient reason, not only as a fact but as a necessary law of being. Finally, whatever applies to the self, insofar as it exists, must also apply universally to whatever else exists.... For the historically minded, what is most striking in an undertaking of this sort is its composite nature. What is actually taking place is a justification of the value of being, the first principle of Aristotle’s philosophy, by means of the famous “I think, therefore I am”, Descartes’ first principle.”

We needn’t worry about the sorted affairs of Descartes “simple natures” and Berkeley’s Spirits which were both forever relocating “Reality” as In-Here and Out-There as each failed to ever achieve unicity. We eventually discover that it is error “to maintain that a whole series of intermediaries intervene between the object and the intellect and that sensibility separates the intellect from beings” as we find that “since the actus essendi has no opposite except nothing, there is no middle course between knowing existence and knowing nothing. The intellect is able to abstract from the known object one or the other of its constitutive elements in order to consider that element separately, or to separately consider what is left of the object after abstracting that element. We can, for example, conceive of the form of a substance apart from its matter or even define its matter apart from its form. In both instances we obtain a distinct and intelligible concept; but how can we think about all or part of a substance apart from being? If it

is not being, it is nothing, and we will have nothing left to think about. Thus, we must necessarily conclude that, if knowledge of existence is abstractive, it is an abstraction inseparable from the existence from which it is abstracted.” In all of this we find that the Act of Existence vis-à-vis Being Itself in the Contingent Conscious Observer leaves behind the sorted affairs of Descartes “simple natures” and Berkeley’s Spirits which are both forever relocating “Reality” as In-Here and Out-There as each fails to ever achieve unicity.

End.

Related:

The Transcendental Certitude of Metaphysical First Principles <https://strangenotions.com/the-transcendental-certitude-of-metaphysical-first-principles>

Genesis, Quantum Worlds, Allegory, Metaphor, Divine Communique, Transposition, And The Heavy-Meta-Bible <https://metachristianity.com/genesis-quantum-worlds-allegory-metaphor-divine-communique-transposition/>

Consciousness In Unity, Irreducibility, Indivisibility, And In Being <https://metachristianity.com/consciousness-in-unity-irreducibility-indivisibility-and-in-being/>

The Unity Of Mind Is The Unity Of Being Even As The Irreducibility Of Mind Is The Irreducibility Of Being – by David Bentley Hart <https://metachristianity.com/the-unity-of-mind-is-the-unity-of-being-even-as-the-irreducibility-of-mind-is-the-irreducibility-of-being-by-david-bentley-hart/>

Consciousness, Emergence, Intentionality, Searle, Reason Atop The Irrational, And Naturalism’s Egregious Deficiency <https://metachristianity.com/consciousness-emergence-intentionality-searle-reason-atop-the-irrational/>

See ~ www.Mind.Bible ~