

CHAPTER-03

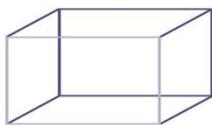
Nature of Phenomenal Unity and the Unity thesis

In the previous chapter, we have seen that there are multiple unity relations within consciousness. So in order to answer the question ‘how our consciousness is unified?’ we should discuss every unity relation.

Tim Bayne presents a particular theory in connection with the unity of consciousness. According to Bayne’s theory, simultaneous experiences of a single subject must bear some kind of a unity relation with each-other. He calls such thesis as ‘the unity thesis.’ He suggests that any account of the unity should satisfy three essential criteria –i) it must be substantive; that is, if true, it is not true trivially, ii) It must be plausible and iii) it must be interesting in the sense that it enriches our understanding of consciousness. Bayne first considers some other accounts of the unity of consciousness in light of the said desiderata.

3.1 Conception of Unity desiderata:

Some philosophers, like B.J. Baars, try to explain the unity of consciousness within the context of the integration of the representational content. According to Baars, the main idea of the unity thesis related to consciousness is that –‘the flow of conscious experience -----is limited to a single internally consistent content at any given moment.’¹ For instances, he consider the Nacker Cube²(below) which we can only be seen in one way at a time.



Nacker Cube

Figure -1

Even each of these conscious explanations is internally consistent with each other. We do not see any combination of the two conscious explanations. For example, we do not see a corner in the front plane of a different depth than another corner in that plane because it would break the consistency restriction of a rigid, square cube.

Though these phenomena are well-known in perception, they are not restricted to it. The same is true in the conceptual level. Many social psychologists have investigated about cognitive consistency in value judgements and in perception. In that case, they found that internal consistency is maintained strictly. We cannot think of two different ideas at the similar instant, though we can consider two opposite ideas one after another. It is because when we consider any words which have ambiguity, we find that most of them have at least two separate abstract and conceptual interpretations. We find a clear conception of representational structure of consciousness in Shoemaker's explanation of the said unity. He holds that the unity of consciousness is in part a matter of one's various beliefs forming, collectively leading to a unified conception of the world. According to Shoemaker,

'Unity of consciousness is in part a matter of one's various beliefs forming, collectively, a unified conception of the world.' Again, he continues: 'Perfect' unity of consciousness 'would consist of a unified representation of the world accompanied by a unified representation of that representation'.³

Obviously, it can be said that Baar's & Shoemaker's conception of the unity in consciousness does not provide us an adequate account because perceptual experience may exhibit some kind of consistency towards the unity of consciousness but it is not sufficient. A single subject of experience can have experiences that are not consistent with each-other. For example, experience one gathers by looking at the two lines of Muller –Lyre illusion (picture below) might be inconsistent with one's judgment concerning their lengths.

Muller – Lyre illusion



Figure-2

Moreover, it is difficult to accept Shoemaker's suggestion that the unity of consciousness can be thought in terms of representational integration. It is clear that Bayne's conception of the unity of phenomenal consciousness is different from Shoemaker's epistemic approach to the notion. There is an intimate connection between the phenomenal and epistemic conceptions of the unity of consciousness. It seems true that a set of experiences could be co-conscious without being unified in Shoemaker's sense. So our conscious state of some objects of experiences may be more representationally unified than other states. But it does not mean that those simultaneous experiences will be necessarily unified.

Another explanation, based on the representational approach to the unity of consciousness, has been preferred by David Rosenthal. According to him, 'so-called unity of consciousness consists in the compelling sense we have that all our conscious mental states belong to a single conscious subject'⁴It says that all our conscious mental states belong to the single conscious subject. Some thinkers maintain that Rosenthal's account is most important for the explanation of the unity of consciousness. A question may arise: can it provide us an explanation concerning the unity of consciousness which will be able to show that consciousness must be necessarily unified.

There are different opinions. Some theorists hold that conscious states involve some kind of self-consciousness. From this view-point, it seems that consciousness must be unified. Other theorists hold that no form of self-consciousness is generally involved in consciousness. They also say that the conception of explanation of the concept of the unity to consciousness does not provide any account of the basal phenomenon. Bayne writes: 'We

want a conception of the unity of consciousness that might be endorsed even by those who deny that subjects of experiences are invariably aware of their conscious states as their conscious states.’⁵ Similarly, Kant’s view of the soul or ‘self’ is the most subtle part of his philosophy. He begins his argument by recognizing the peculiar reality of self - consciousness. Suppose, someone has a privileged awareness of his states of mind, and this is an ‘original’ or ‘transcendental’ act of understanding. The rationalist tries to deduce a specific theory of its object from this privileged knowledge. They think that, the self must be a genuine object of consciousness because it has self-awareness. In the act of self-awareness such person presents himself as ‘I’ who is self-aware. He maintains this self-awareness even while doubting every other thing. Moreover, he is necessarily aware of his own unity. Finally, he has an intuitive sense of his continuity through time: this cannot be derived from the observation of his body, or from any other external source. He concludes that he knows him-self to be substantial, indivisible, enduring, and perhaps even immortal, on the basis of the fact of self-awareness alone. Now let us consider Kant’s discussion of Descartes’ argument. Kant maintains that Cartesian conclusion is not an eccentric conclusion. Similar to all other illusions of reason, it also is such that to which we are tempted from the very beginnings of our reflection on the datum before us. Every rational being necessarily thinks that the peculiar immediacy and in-violability of self-awareness guarantees its content. Amidst all doubts, I do know this thing which is me. This also leads us to reason from this intimate acquaintance with my own nature to the immateriality of the soul.

Kant considers this reasoning to be erroneous. It moves from the pure forms unity of the unity of apperception to the substantial unity affirmed in the doctrine of the soul. Kant says: ‘The unity of consciousness, which underlies the categories, is here mistaken for an intuition of the subject as object, and the category of substance is then applied to it.’⁶ The transcendental unity of apperception shows me that there is a unity in my present

consciousness; but it says nothing else about the kind of thing which bears it. It does not say that I am a substance as an independently existing object rather than an 'accident' or property. For example it does not repudiate the thesis that the mind is a complex property of the body. Kant says, - '....I think myself, is in no way given to me in inner intuition, it is quite impossible, by means of this simple self-consciousness, to determine the manner in which I exist, whether it be as substance or as accident.'⁷ If it cannot infer that I am a substance, then it cannot infer that I *am* indivisible, indestructible or immortal. The unity of consciousness does not assure that there is something in the empirical world to which the term 'I' applies. The particular features of self-consciousness under the idea of a transcendental unity of apperception are simply features of a 'point of view' on the world. Here the 'I' is a perspective of the world (a way thing seems). 'For the 'I' is not a concept but only a designation of the object of inner sense in so far as we know it through no further predicate'.⁸ To study the peculiarities of our self-awareness is, then, to study no item in the world. It is rather to explore that limiting point of empirical knowledge. 'The subject of the categories cannot by thinking the categories acquire a concept of itself as an object of the categories.'⁹ It is not possible for person to identify as 'I' into the object of consciousness. 'I' is the expression of my own perspective, but denotes no item within it.

Kant concludes that there is a gap between the premise of 'transcendental psychology' – the transcendental unity of apperception –and its conclusion –the substantiality of the soul. On the hand, he first describes a point of view on the world. On the other hand, the second is an item in the world. It is not possible to deduce the one from the other. Sometimes Kant maintains that the 'I' of self-awareness refers to a transcendental object because 'I' is not part of the empirical world. Kant identifies it as the world of the thing-in-itself which lies beyond experience. This is not a proper conclusion from his argument. He

always provides a positive doctrine of the soul, not through pure reason, but through practical reason.¹⁰

We find an alternative account of phenomenal unity in Barry Dainton's View. According to him, generally we find the unity in our stream of consciousness both at a time and over time. Our experience divides into various parts. These parts are co-conscious. Since these given experience can be divided into different parts anyhow and those parts are showing themselves as whole consisting of further parts. This unifying feature of co-consciousness is wide or all extended feature, at least within the certain limitation of the phenomenal present. He thinks, there is no matter how a total experience is separated into different parts, each and every part is connected with each and every other part by co-consciousness. In his own words: 'A typical stream of experience thus exhibits a deep and far reaching unity; and in so far as consciousness has characteristic features, this mode of unity is as distinctive and remarkable as any.'¹¹. He continues: '.....the unity within our experience is an affair that is at once simpler and more involved than it has sometimes been thought to be.' Again he says, '.....experience is self - unifying in that to understand the unity we find within experience, we do not need to look to anything above, beyond or external to experience itself.'¹²

Now we enter into the different world where philosophers provide different unity thesis and these thesis are not adequate to explain the phenomenal unity of consciousness.

3.2 The unity thesis:

One of the leading philosophers in contemporary era, Michael Lockwood draws our attention to a unique feature of phenomenal unity in consciousness. According to him, 'phenomenal qualities' are not only perceptual phenomenal qualities such as colours and

tastes, but also 'include under this head the (qualities involved in the) subjective impressions associated with all feelings and sensations, such as itches, feelings of giddiness, drowsiness, light-headedness and nausea, and the phenomenal core that remains when one has mentally subtracted from an emotion those aspects that consist in our having certain conscious thoughts and desires'.¹³ He characterizes an experience which is not a part of any larger experience as a *phenomenal perspective or a maximal experience*. Arguably, a phenomenal perspective or maximal experience includes the total contents of a given state of awareness. According to him, 'it will also be useful to have a term for the relation in which two experiences stand, when there is an experience of which they are both parts.'¹⁴ It is called as 'co-consciousness.' Common sense view claims that such experiences may always be divided into two classes – namely, mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive collections of co-conscious experiences. Lockwood writes: 'each experience belongs to one, and only one, collection. Since, co-consciousness is undeniably reflexive and symmetric; the only contestable assumption upon which this conception rests is the transitivity principle. If one rejects that assumption, a remarkable possibility immediately opens up; that of simultaneous, *overlapping* phenomenal perspectives.'¹⁵ According to Hurley, we cannot give any account of co-consciousness in subjective terms depending upon the contents of the states involved. She also reminds us that we should be wary about the account of the unity of consciousness which requires a unitary locus of consciousness in the brain.

In our above discussion we have seen that Dainton's method is fully phenomenological where he is interested about the structure of consciousness as it appears in experience. He is particularly interested about the phenomenal structure of consciousness rather than non-phenomenal structure of consciousness. To explain the features of the unity of phenomenal consciousness, he emphasizes on the notion of co-consciousness. The term 'co-consciousness' refers to the relation that experiences have when they are experienced

together. Dainton maintains that 'the fact that v_1 is *co-conscious with* a_1 is a clearly a phenomenological characteristic, something manifest in consciousness.'¹⁶ He also thinks that we cannot deny that our stream of consciousness presents to us various characteristics of unity. Also, this unity is not only consisted of a relation between certain experiences, but it also consists in a relationship between experiences which itself is experienced. To him, co-consciousness is unanalyzable, primitive relation.

Generally, we find two different accounts of the unity of consciousness, namely, 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' accounts. Objectivists claim that co-consciousness can be partially explained in terms of factors that are not understood from the first-person perspective. By contrast, subjectivists maintain that co-consciousness can be accounted in terms of first person perspectives. Dainton is more interested in the subjectivist accounts of co-consciousness rather than in the objectivist accounts. Astonishingly, we have seen that the more prominent discussion of co-consciousness is found in objectivist account. Both S. Hurley and S. Shoemaker hold that co-consciousness can be partially explained in functional term. Bayne claims that Dainton has failed to provide a viable account of co-consciousness as a primitive. His approach to the unity of consciousness can be characterized as 'bottom-up' approach where he constructs fully unified stream of consciousness out of particular experiences and relation of co-consciousness. By contrast, one can take total experiences and relation of subsumption as 'primitive'. Tim Bayne and David Chalmers, both contemporary thinkers, are the proponents of such a view. They call such subsumption model as a 'top-down' approach to the unity of consciousness or co-consciousness. These two models are entirely different.

Unity of consciousness is manifest in the unity of simultaneous experience, that is, unity of experience at a point in time and the unity of consciousness as manifest over time.

The first type of unity is dubbed as synchronic unity and the second one as diachronic unity. Philosophers usually employ different metaphors for these two sorts of unity. In Tim Bayne's account of unity between experiences at a point in time we find the 'field' metaphor (phenomenal field). However, for an account of unity over time Barry Dainton uses the stream metaphor (stream of Consciousness).

We shall now see how Tim Bayne elaborates his unity thesis. We have already mentioned that unity of consciousness means unity of phenomenal consciousness. Now what do we mean by the term 'unity of phenomenal consciousness?' ---Consider an example: I am walking in a garden with my friends. We find some simultaneous perceptual experiences there. We are seeing various beautiful and colorful flowers. We are hearing also songs of colorful birds. Some children are playing there. Also we are seeing beautiful lighting in the garden. All these experiences come to me as different sense experiences. However, all these experiences are phenomenally unified with each-other into my overall phenomenal field. Yet this unity is not something I reflect upon or have any separate experience of unity. Nonetheless, this unity is an important feature of our experience. Our every experience is phenomenally unified in a particular moment. If every conscious state of any creature is phenomenally unified with his or her other states at a particular moment, then we can say that those creatures' consciousness have unity. We also identify such subject as fully unified. When a subject is fully unified, he or she enjoys a single overall conscious state. Now a total conscious state is a state in which other states are subsumed. Also when a conscious state includes as a part or properties of second state, then we can say that a conscious state has subsumed another state. This whole conscious state is revealed as what it is like to be the subject or to be in that state at that point of time. On the other hand, if anyone single conscious state does not subsume their every specific conscious state, then we can say such consciousness is dis-unified.

Now the question arises as to whether man's unified consciousness is a regular feature? We can explain it with an example. I see everything in the world recently. I have emotion, bodily sensation. Even I have self-conscious thoughts. Now if these sets of conscious states of various sense-experiences are representationally unified with each-others, then they will be mutually phenomenally unified with each-other. In this case, until someone attracts my attention, by that time, I am not aware about that unity. The moment someone's attention is attracted to this unity he/she will identify this unity.

Tim Bayne considers this unity as a 'deep' characteristic of normal walking experience. He also maintains that this type of unity is also characteristic of other background states viz REM dreaming, hypnosis, and various pathologies of consciousness. Searle admits that such unity is the necessary feature of consciousness. He also writes: - 'all of the conscious experiences at any given point in an agent's life come as part of one unified conscious field'.¹⁷In support of his thesis, Bayne also quotes from Kant's magnum opus, - 'one single experience in which all perceptions are represented'.¹⁸All of these characterizations are taken into account in the unity thesis proposed by Tim Bayne and David Chalmers:

'Unity thesis: Necessarily, for any conscious subject of experience(S) and any time (t), the simultaneous conscious states that S has at t will be subsumed by a single conscious state –the subject's total conscious state.'¹⁹

On the basis of certain features of the above mentioned definition of the unity thesis, Tim Bayne claims that this thesis satisfies the desiderata for our acceptable unity thesis. First this unity thesis is necessarily unique and true. Secondly, this thesis is also very interesting and hopefully guides us to construct a proper theory of consciousness. Thirdly, though this thesis faces some criticisms yet there is no obviously decisive counter example. So it is plausible.

However, Bayne claims that the above mentioned unity thesis is more acceptable because it can explain more satisfactorily the unity of consciousness than the representational approach. Yet there are some difficulties which the unity thesis faces. These are as follows: the first problem is concerned with subjects of experiences. It is clear that the plausibility of unity thesis does depend on how we conceive of subjects of experience. However, according to the Organismic conception of subject, subject of experience means, human beings. So, it indicates only to human's experience.

Secondly, there is the problem concerning the determination of the types of necessity required for the unity thesis to be true. In other words, in what sense do we consider the unity of consciousness as a necessary feature of human experience? We obtain unity in consciousness not only in our daily life, but also in the states of several impairment of consciousness. All our conscious states come to me as a unified component into a single phenomenal field being generated in a particular moment of conscious act. Bayne contends that we never have dis-unified experiences. Bayne admits that he does not prefer any conceptual or metaphysical truth by this unity thesis. He even does not imply that the unity is grounded on the truth of nature.

Thirdly, there is the issue of the temporal structure of consciousness. Unity thesis asserts that subject's simultaneous conscious states will be phenomenally unified with each other. In other words, full unity will be revealed into instantaneous snapshots of any subject's experiences.

Some objections may be raised against this claim. First, how we should understand the snapshots of stream of consciousness? Secondly, is it possible to say that we can apply static structure to that which is fundamentally dynamic and temporally extended? Tim Bayne thinks that such objections are not very important because we can 'take a time-slice' of the

stream of stream of consciousness for our study though consciousness is temporally extended.

Now a question arises as to what kind of time slice should be considered? Bayne identifies two aspects of the structure of temporal consciousness. First, conscious events are located in objective time. Indeed, when some conscious event happens, then we ask about when that particular event occurred. This Bayne terms it as the temporal structure of the vehicle of consciousness. However, Bayne points out, conscious events also represent events as occurring at particular time. He identifies as temporal structure of the contents of consciousness. Dennett and Kinsbourne opine that, temporal relations between the vehicles of conscious events may dissociate from their temporal relations between their contents. In the context of conscious thought such dissociation may be manifested. The temporal content of a thought may dissociate from the temporal location of the thought itself. Similarly, in perceptual experience, the difference between vehicle and content is also very important. Consider the example of two perceptual events like e_1 and e_2 , e_1 may happen before e_2 though the intentional object of e_2 represent. Bayne points out that there is no a priori requirement that the brain use space to represent space. The same is true in the case of 'time'. So the question arises as to whether unity thesis should be understood in terms of temporal structure of its content or in terms of the temporal structure of the vehicles of consciousness.

Bayne shows that the motivation behind the unity thesis cannot be appreciated by an appeal to the contents of consciousness. Conscious events occurring at different points of time may have identical content. Yet the conscious events occurring at different points of time are not phenomenally unified with each other. Thus, the self-same content may be found in several cases of conscious events and these states may or may not occur within the same temporally extended stream of consciousness. Yet, it is clear that there was no single

phenomenal state that subsumed them. Hence, Bayne contends that the temporal framework in question is that of clock-time.

Bayne mentions three important concepts of unity, viz, subject unity, representational unity and phenomenal unity. Subject unity does not provide us with a conception of consciousness that Bayne tries to capture because two conscious states are simultaneously unified with each other in a subject in trivial sense. Again, many thinkers hold that various form of representational unity may be employed to explain the unity of consciousness. However, Bayne opines that, subject unity and phenomenal unity, when put together, can explain the unity of consciousness than the representational unity can. In his words:

‘What it is for a subject’s consciousness to be unified is for each of their simultaneous conscious states to be phenomenally unified with each –other.’²⁰

In our above discussion, we have seen that phenomenal unity is a type of conjoint phenomenality relation. We find the concept of unity in consciousness through the discussion of such relation. We already say that unity of consciousness ‘mean’ the phenomenal unity of consciousness. Sometimes it is termed as ‘co-consciousness’. Tim Bayne considers two accounts of the phenomenal unity of consciousness –the mereological account of phenomenal unity and the closure account of phenomenal unity. We first discuss about the mereological account of phenomenal unity then we consider the closure account of phenomenal unity.

3.3 The mereological account:

Consciousness abounds with objects and relations. Amidst these relations and objects, consciousness remains unified. In order to provide a viable account of this unified consciousness, Tim Bayne distinguishes phenomenal unity relation from some other relations of unity that are found within consciousness, such as representational unity, subject unity and

others. He presents a mereological account of the phenomenal unity. Before discussing this account, we shall briefly restate his characterization of phenomenal consciousness and phenomenal unity.

Following T. Nagel, he says that phenomenal consciousness is a sort of consciousness that ‘a creature enjoys when there is something it is like for that creature to be the creature that it is’.²¹ This kind of consciousness alone is accompanied by an experiential perspective or point of view. I cannot deny that there is something that it is like for me to be me. Similarly, there is something it is like for you to be you. For Bayne, Consciousness is phenomenal consciousness and the terms ‘conscious’, ‘experiential’, ‘phenomenal’ are synonymous. Specific conscious states are distinguished from each other by virtue of their phenomenal character or content. What it is like to hear a bird singing is different from what it is like to smell the fragrance of a rose. Each of these experiences has a distinctive feel. Thus a state is said to possess phenomenal character when there is something it is like to enjoy that state.

A stream of consciousness is a segment of experience that is unified both at a time and over time; that is to say, they are unified synchronically and diachronically. Bayne notes that the stream metaphor aptly captures the flowing aspect of consciousness and it is employed in the account of the unity of consciousness through time. Since Bayne’s focus is on the unity of consciousness at a time he chooses the field metaphor in order to capture the structure of consciousness at a time. Bayne points out that the notions of subject unity and representational unity fail to reach at the heart of the unity of consciousness. He invites us to reflect on ‘what it is like to hear a rumba playing on a stereo whilst a bartender mixes a mojito’. Obviously these two experiences are subject unified as they are had by the same subject. They can also be viewed as representationally unified when one hears the rumba

coming from behind the bartender. Bayne maintains that such characterizations do not capture the deeper and the primitive unity involving the fact that these two experiences possess a *conjoint experiential character*. In order to capture this depth of phenomenal unity, Bayne wants us to begin with the description of one's overall state of consciousness. He points out that any description of such a state that omits the fact that those experiences are had as parts or components of a single, total (overall) conscious state is incomplete. He calls this sort of unity as phenomenal unity, which is sometimes termed as co-consciousness. Here is Bayne describing phenomenal unity,

‘We can say that what it is for a pair of experiences to occur within a single phenomenal field *just* is for them to enjoy a conjoint phenomenality – for there to be something it is like for the subject in question not only to have both experiences but to have them together’.²²

Bayne thinks that such a conception of the unity of consciousness can explain why it is possible to hold ‘that the simultaneous experiences of a single subject are necessarily unified’.

Before discussing Bayne's mereological account of the unity of consciousness few words regarding a distinction between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom – up’ accounts of synchronic unity is in order. On the other hand, top-down accounts claim subject's ‘overall’ experience as primitive and want to give account of the unity of consciousness by explaining the relationship between the ‘overall’ experience and the parts of that experience or component experiences that compose the overall experience. Bayne is a ‘top-down’ theorist. He considers the ‘conjoint experiential character’ or (subsumption of component experiences by the overall experience) as primitive, where two or more experiences are had at a time by a subject. Thus, it tries to explain how the experience of conjunction is related to these

‘conjunction of experiences’. By way of explanation, he employs the notion of subsumption and suggests that ‘overall’ experiences subsume the experiences that compose the former. Two or more experiences of a subject at a time are subsumed by the single ‘overall’ experience. The bottom –up approach to the unity of consciousness, on the other hands, treats phenomenal unity as primitive. However, Bayne’s account of the unity of consciousness espouses top-down approach since it starts with the multiplicity of consciousness and treats subsumption as primitive. This account begins with ‘the unity that subsumes multiplicity.’

Bayne explains this notion of subsumption in terms of parts and wholes, i. e., in mereological terms. When one experience subsumes another experience, we can say that the former contains the latter. A subject’s total experiential state is a whole that includes other experiential parts. These experiential parts may be subject’s overall perceptual experiences, her overall auditory experiences as well as the experience of a car parking in front of her house. These total phenomenal states are characterized as ‘homeomerous’. In a sense, experiential parts are ‘like – parted’. In other words, all the parts that compose the total state share their experiential nature. Bayne notes that even thinkers who account for the unity of consciousness in terms of co-consciousness often do so in mereological language. By way of example, he presents Lockwood saying that experiences are co-conscious when they are parts of a complex experience’.²³

According to the mereological account, phenomenal unity is the relation between token experiences. Token experiences such as my backache and my visual experiences of a galloping horse are parts of a single composite experience, and, so, phenomenally unified with each other. However, my experience of a galloping horse and another person’s experience of the same are not phenomenally unified because there is no experience which can be said to contain both these experiences. This view is known as experiential parts view,

which is opposed to another view known as ‘no –experiential part view’ or ‘one –experience view’ developed by M. Tye. Suppose we have two experiences. We can call them experiential part-1 and experiential part-2. These two parts are phenomenally unified as it is subsumed by an overall experience. The entire scenario may be diagrammatically presented in the following:

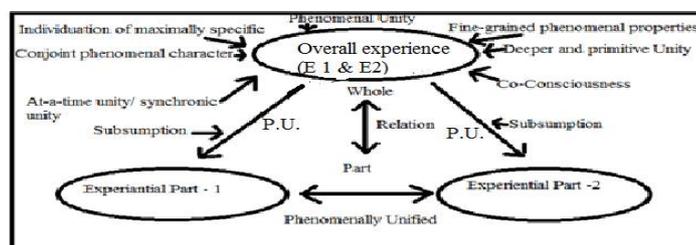


Figure -3: Mereological Account of Phenomenal Unity

For Tye, human experiences are always entire streams of consciousness. For him, a stream of consciousness is an unbroken period of consciousness, that is, ‘the period, of consciousness between one state of unconsciousness and the next.’²⁴ He claims that subjects cannot have multiplicity of experiences and can never have a conjunction of experiences. By denying multiplicity of experiences, he claims to have dissolved the problem of synchronic unity as because there are no two experiences to be unified with each-other phenomenally.

Tye presents both ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ arguments for his view. He provides ‘negative arguments’ for rejecting subsumptive account of phenomenal unity and in his ‘positive argument’ he presents justifications for identifying experiences with total streams of consciousness. At the outset, Bayne notes that Tye’s conception of experience or consciousness is revisionary. For his conception does not capture the ordinary pre-theoretical

notion of consciousness which admits of experiential parts both at a time and through time. So the acceptability of the identification of experience with the streams of consciousness hangs on how good his reasons are. In support of his one experience view, Tye introduces the analogy of clouds and statue. Clouds include undetached collections of water molecules as its parts, but such parts are not themselves clouds. Similarly, a clay statue has undetached parts of clay but those are not any statues themselves. Similarly, Tye argues, any arbitrary parts of a stream of consciousness cannot be regarded as experiences themselves. In response to such analysis, Bayne points out that he does not claim that *every part* of a stream of experience is an experience itself. However, Bayne also reminds us that his main focus is on the states that can be enjoyed '*all-at-once*'. He also brings to our notice the fact that though my present conscious state is an experience, the fine-grained conscious states that are contained in it, such as, my backache, my olfactory experience of the scent of a rose, and my auditory experience of the doorbell ringing – are to be considered as experiences in their own right.

Bayne argues that clouds and statues are physical object but experiences are events. He admits that it is generally true that an object of kind 'K' has its proper parts. He contends that those parts do not constitute objects of kind 'K' in their own right. Phenomenal states or events may contain proper parts that are events of the same kind. Bayne writes, 'Arguments contain as proper parts other arguments, battles contain as proper parts other battles, traffic jams contain as proper parts other traffic jams, and stories can contain as proper parts other stories.'²⁵ Moreover, a single stream of consciousness can contain several instances of a particular experiential type such as one instance of backache in the morning and another in the evening in a` single stream of consciousness. Tye contends that there are only experiential stages that include backache phenomenology. Bayne has rightly pointed out that 'experience stages' are really experiences. Moreover, as Bayne says, 'the typical stream of consciousness does not constitute an experience in its own right.'²⁶

One experience argument:

Bayne claims that the notion of a token experience should be flexible so that different contexts can avail different approaches to the individuation of experiences. He considers the tripartite conception of experience as appropriate for addressing issues concerning the unity of consciousness. According to this conception, individuation of experiences should be made in terms of subjects of experience, times and phenomenal properties or events.

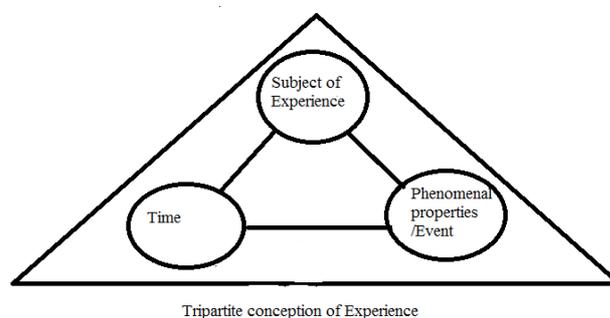


Figure-04

One motivating reason for the mereological account of phenomenal unity is, Bayne says, its natural fit with the tripartite conception of experience. Thus, a range of distinct phenomenal properties get involved in an experience produced by tasting an orange. These properties are ‘sweetness’, ‘tanginess’, and ‘orangeness’. Each of these phenomenal properties get associated with distinct experiences that are parts of the more complex experience of tasting the orange. Again, this experience will be a part of more complex experiences. Complex experiences of the last part may be modality specific or it may involve contributions from multiple modalities, such as experience associated with one’s total perceptual phenomenology. Bayne writes: ‘indeed, one’s overall phenomenal field – what it is like to be

you right now – is, in my view, a very complex phenomenal event that contains within it the rest of one’s experiential states.’ In order to clarify the tripartite conception, Bayne points out that whatever involves experiences as part is not itself an experience. For, the so called stream of consciousness is not a phenomenal event because no single phenomenal property is to be found corresponding to this stream of consciousness. We do not deny that some sort of ‘what it’s likeness’ is associated with this typical stream of consciousness but that is spread out and also distributed throughout number of distinct conscious states. It does not possess the sort of unity that the phenomenal field possess. For Bayne, only that stream of consciousness can be called a phenomenal event which endures during a single specious present. In response to the objection that the ordinary ways of counting experiences clashes with the tripartite conception, Bayne wants to restrict the latter to the individuation of maximally specific or fine-grained phenomenal properties.

Thus, while experiencing several objects and regions of space as blue, at a single point of time, the phenomenal property of blue occurring in a specific regions of space is maximally specific and as determinates, do not have determinates. Once restricted to fine-grained maximally determinate, phenomenal properties the tripartite conception will be able to account for multiple experiences of blue at a single point in time and will not clash with the common sense approach to individuation of experience.

Another problem for the tripartite conception concerns common sensible, such as motion etc which are discerned through more than one modality. According to the tripartite account, the representation of motion involves only one ‘phenomenal property’. Yet, when I watch an ant crawl across my skin I am aware of the ants’ movement through visual experience of motion and tactile experience of motion, thus involving two experiences of motion. One conception of phenomenal properties – dubbed as ‘Fregean’ – responds by

claiming that phenomenal properties are, unlike the worldly properties that they represent, maximally specific or fine – grained. Hence, the same property is represented by different senses in different ways. The ‘Fregean’ conception acknowledges the grouping of phenomenal properties on the basis of modality and thereby saves the tripartite account.

However, Bayne prefers a ‘Russellian’ approach in that he considers visual and tactile experiences of the ant’s motion involve the representation of one and the same property of external world: the motion itself. Bayne writes: ‘On this view, the experience of the ant’s motion is ‘amodal’ when considered in and of itself.’²⁷ He likes to describe the situation as involving single experience of the ant’s motion and that experience is supported by two perceptual processing.

Bayne thinks that the tripartite approach is better than the vehicular approach, which tries to individuate experiences in terms of their vehicles, i.e. by appealing to the physical – functional basis of experience. Bayne has rightly pointed out that in dealing with the unity of consciousness we must not forget that experiential states are states of organism – they are not states of the parts of brains. Since the unity of consciousness is an experiential aspect of consciousness, we should not allow any sub-personal features of consciousness in their identity condition.

Bayne’s concept of experience (the tripartite conception) can get further clarification from his rebuttal of some objections to his mereological account of phenomenal unity. First, he discusses M. Tye’s two objections to the mereological account of phenomenal unity. In his first argument Tye notes that the overall subsuming state is a maximal phenomenal state (e_m) in that it is not subsumed by any other state. Now, suppose e_m includes experiences e_1 and e_2 one visual and the other auditory experience. In addition to the unity between e_1 and e_2 there will be unity between e_1 and e_m as well as unity between e_2 and e_m . Thus, the unity between

e_1 (e_2) and e_m demand ‘bigger’ experience of the subject which can subsume e_1 (e_2) and e_m and so on. Hence, if phenomenal unity is considered as a relation between experiences, the notion of maximal phenomenal will become incoherent. However, the notion of maximal phenomenal state is coherent. Thus, Tye concludes that phenomenal unity cannot be a relation between experiences.

In reply to this argument Bayne points out that the argument hangs on the assumption that the unity between e_1 and e_m demands, according to the subsumptive account, a ‘bigger’ experience than e_m which contains more phenomenal content. Bayne shows that the assumption is false because the state that unifies e_1 and e_m is e_m itself. This becomes clear if we consider that part-hood is a reflexive relation and so any event or state is an improper part of itself. Bayne writes: ‘we can think of a total phenomenal state as a state that subsumes each of the phenomenal states that the subject has at the time in question without being subsumed by any state other than itself.’²⁸

Tye’s second objection to the mereological account is known as ‘phenomenal bloat’ argument which is a reductio argument. The reductio argument begins by assuming (1) a situation where the phenomenal unity is a relation between experiences $e_1 - e_5$. (2) The unity relation R_1 needs to be experienced in order to be there something it is like for $e_1 - e_5$ to be unified. Again, (3) on being experienced R itself must have a phenomenology. Now, (4) R ’s own phenomenology required to be unified with that of $e_1 - e_5$. So, (5) any account of R_1 ’s unity with $e_1 - e_5$ will involve the admission of another unity relation R_2 . The same line of argument will ensue concerning the unity relation R_2 and so on with the result of embarking on a vicious infinite regress. From this Tye concludes that the assumption (1) is false. Thus, Tye claims that phenomenal unity is not a relation between experiences.²⁹ In order to identify the flaw in Tye’s argument Bayne highlights the difference between phenomenal unity and

experiences. To begin with, phenomenal unity lacks the sort of positive character that would make it available for identification through introspection. That is why we cannot attend to phenomenal unity as such. Yet, one can attend to phenomenally unified experiences and also the conjoint experience that subsume other experiences but one cannot attend to relations of phenomenal unity or subsumption themselves. This shows, according to Bayne, why relations of phenomenal unity cannot themselves be phenomenally unified. Hence, relations of phenomenal unity are not experiences because any experience is the kind of things that can be phenomenally unified.

Drawing on this characterization of the difference between phenomenal unity and experiences, Bayne points out that the flaw in Tye's argument lies in the premise (2). Here Tye claims 'that in order to make a phenomenal difference phenomenal unity must itself be experiences. In opposition to such claims, Bayne writes: phenomenal unity is a phenomenal relation in the sense that it makes a phenomenal difference but not in the sense that it has its own phenomenal character that makes an additional contribution to what it is like to be the subject in question. We can think of this in terms of the different ways of undergoing experiences e_1 e_5 . Unity then is not an object of experience but a manner of experiencing.³⁰

For Bayne, the tripartite conception of experience provides the epistemic basis of the mereological account. It is natural that the opponents of the mereological account will attack that basis by characterizing consciousness or experience differently. Tye has mounted such an attack by characterizing consciousness or experience as transparent. Tye holds that introspection gives us access only to the contents of experiences and not experiences themselves. Taking the case of visual experience as an example, he points out that in any attempt to focus on such experiences we only see right through them to the external world.

Thus, he claims, we are not aware of such experiences as unified since we are not aware of these experiences through introspection. He writes: “The unity relation is not given to us introspectively as a relation connecting experiences.”³¹ On the basis of such observation he comes to the conclusion that there is no such relation at all.

In response to this argument, Bayne begins his reply by considering first the bold claim made in the transparency doctrine of consciousness that we are not aware of any conscious states with the help of introspection and that we are aware of the contents of those states only via introspection. Bayne points out that this claim can be shown to be implausible if we take ‘conscious states’ to include thoughts. This becomes apparent when we note that there surely is an introspectible difference between consciously judging that it is cloudy and consciously hoping that it is cloudy. Bayne argues that if it is possible for introspection to distinguish thoughts that differ only on the basis of the moods or attitudes associated with those thoughts then we must admit that introspection has access to more than the contents of thoughts. Considering Tye’s example of visual experience, Bayne tries to show that introspection can also distinguish between perceptual experiences with the same content. Bayne claims that we can introspectively distinguish between visual experiences having the same content. He invites us to contrast visual perception of an apple with the visual imagery of an apple. It can be argued that one can distinguish these two states via introspection though both of these states have the same content. Bayne notes that transparency theorists might retort that there must be content based difference between perceptual states and imagery state in order to be introspectively distinguishable. Bayne’s answer is that the plausibility of such response is still an open question.

However, Bayne admits that there is a sense in the transparency claim which is grounded on a particular conception of experience. If the nature of consciousness is identified

as simply neuro-functional states which are known as the sub-personal basis of conscious states, then one can claim that we do not have access to such sub-personal states. According to this view, experiences are neural states which carry contents. Therefore, on this view, introspective access to experience would require our awareness of neural events as such. However, our introspection does not involve such awareness and, so, we are not introspectively aware of our experiences.

In reply to this claim Bayne shows that the view that phenomenal unity is a relation between experiences can very well be motivated with the help of the resources available within the framework of the above mentioned vehicular approach (where experiences are identified with the neural states). Bayne distinguishes between introspective access to a state and introspective access to a fact. It is obvious that the vehicular approach denies the introspective access to experiential states but it does not deny the introspective access to certain facts about our experiences. There is no doubt that 'one might have introspective access to the fact that one is conscious, to the fact that one is visually conscious and to the fact that one has a visual experience (as) of there being an apple in front of one.'³² Again, Bayne claims, introspection gives us access to some facts concerning the relations between one's experiences. This claim is grounded on the evidence provided by the introspective access to facts about the contents of one's conscious. These facts constrain the relations between one's experiences themselves. One does not have an experience of testing coffee, the sound of the flute and a backache; instead one experiences the taste of coffee, the sound of flute and the backache together within a single phenomenal field. Bayne writes: 'In order for these contents to be unified the experiences that underlie them must also be unified; no unity in content (or phenomenal character) without unity between the experiences that carry those contents.'³³ Here Bayne finds introspective reasons for the claim that there is a unity relation

connecting experiences. However, he reminds us that this unity relation is not directly accessible via introspection.

Further objection to the mereological accounts of phenomenal unity has been made by A. Brook and P. Raymont, on the basis of some arguments given by William James. The main point of this argument is that mere combination of experiences will not provide us with the experiences of combination. In other words, mere conjunction of experience does not generate any experiences of conjunction. Bayne respond: 'The mereological account is intended only as an account of what it is for experiences to be phenomenally unified, it is not intended as an account of what it is for consciousness to be representationally integrated.' Bayne cautions us about the conflation of representational unity with phenomenal unity. Likewise, he distinguishes between representational binding problem and the phenomenal binding. The representational binding problem, on the one hand, concerns how the perceptual features are integrated into unified percepts of objects. Since we experience multiple objects at a time, the brain performs the task of finding which perceptual features (color, shape, texture etc) pertains to which objects. Phenomenal binding problem, on the other hand, is concerned to make certain 'that each of the phenomenal features that one enjoys at a certain point in time occurs within a single conscious state.'³⁴ In this context, Bayne shows why it is important to distinguish phenomenal unity from representational unity. For in visual agnosia features are not bound together as the features of a single object, yet they are experienced together within a single conscious state. Thus, Bayne concedes James argument that by simply sticking features in a single representation will not make certain that they will be experienced as the features of a single object, but can be shown how it makes certain that they will enjoy conjoint phenomenal character.

Responding to Searle's, reading of the mereological account as a 'building block' model, Bayne points out that such a model suggests that conscious states, as parts of consciousness, are 'independent of their location in the particular phenomenal field in which they occur.' Bayne contends that the view that the phenomenal field contains experiential parts does not, in itself, make any claims regarding the relationship between the parts and the whole which contains them. However, Bayne is much sympathetic to Searle's 'unified field model', according to which the multiplicity within consciousness is better understood as modifications of an underlying basal field (unified field of consciousness). However, there are some important criticisms of this mereological account. We shall discuss those criticisms in chapter six.

3.4 Partial Unity:

The mereological account of phenomenal unity raises the central question regarding the possibility of partial unity but leaves it open. A full analysis of the unity of consciousness should answer the question whether it is possible for two or more simultaneous experiences to be merely partially unified. Phenomenal unity is claimed to be both transitive and symmetrical. The question has been raised as to its transitivity. If experiences e_1 , e_2 and e_3 are such that e_1 and e_2 are each phenomenally unified with e_3 then can we also infer that e_1 and e_2 are both unified with each other? Advocates of partial unity maintain that it is possible for each of e_1 and e_2 to be unified with e_3 without being unified with each other. They admit the possibility of failures of transitivity in the context of the sets of simultaneous experiences. It can easily be shown that the phenomenal unity is not necessarily transitive where the states involved are not simultaneous. However, it is also strongly claimed that transitivity cannot fail for sets of simultaneous experiences. This claim is grounded on the supposition that the phenomenal field cannot fragment in such a way that can make the possibility for the failure

of transitivity. Thus, the *transitivity thesis* claims that phenomenal unity is transitive with respect to simultaneous states. That is to say, for any three simultaneous experiences, e_1 , e_2 and e_3 , if e_1 and e_2 are each phenomenally unified with e_3 then they must also be unified with each other.

Bayne distinguishes his notion of partial unity from Tye's notion. Tye understands partial unity in terms of relations between the contents of consciousness. For Bayne partial unity occurs if and only if e_1 and e_2 share an experiential part. Bayne further points out that some kind of 'partial unity' may be found in cases involving unconscious mental states, such as belief states, which are merely dispositional states. However, Bayne maintains that when we consider the possibility of partial unity we must focus on relations between conscious states. Bayne admits that we cannot call the idea of partial unity as incoherent on the basis of the theory that no consistent assignment of partially unified states to subject of experience is available. For to do so would involve the assumption that simultaneous experiences, belonging to the same subject, must be phenomenally unified – which is the central idea of the unity thesis. We cannot assume the unity thesis, which is yet to be established. The main point is that the unity thesis is not a conceptual truth and this is particularly important for Bayne because he begins his explorations with conceptions of subjects of experience in biological terms. Moreover, he acknowledges that on another view of subjects as 'networks of functionally defined mental states' it is possible for a subject to have experiences that are not phenomenally unified. Thus, simultaneous but disunified experiences can be assigned to such a subject.

One important argument for rejecting partial unity is based on the difficulty in projecting oneself into the perspective of a partially unified subject. This argument is known as the projectability argument.³⁵ Bayne presents this argument in the following manner:

‘(1) If partial unity were possible then there would be something distinctive it is like to be a partially unified subject – there would be such a thing as a partially unified phenomenal perspective.

(2) We are unable to project ourselves into a partially unified phenomenal perspective.

(3) If there were such a thing as a partially unified phenomenal perspective then we should be able to project ourselves into it.

(C) Thus, partial unity is impossible.’

Hurley maintains that the first premise of the above argument is problematic. She thinks that it is not possible to see the difference between full unity and partial unity in subjective terms. For Hurley the difference between full unity and partial unity concerns the relation between token experiences and the subjective perspective can have access only to the content of experience (phenomenal character). In order to make her point she considers two subjects of experience S_1 and S_2 . S_1 is said to have two unified experiences, an experience of red at a definite location in her visual field (V_1) and of an experience of hearing a violin (a_1). By contrast, S_2 has a partially unified consciousness in that she experiences such as an experience of red (V_1) and two experiences of hearing a violin (a_1 and a_2). Both the auditory experiences are unified with her visual experience but they are not unified with each other. This is so because a_1 and a_2 have exactly the same phenomenal character, they are phenomenal duplicates. This is why there is no subjective contrast between S_1 and S_2 . Hence, there will be nothing like distinctively partially unified phenomenal perspective. This is why ‘what it is like’ tests fail to capture the structure of consciousness. This also shows why projectability cannot succeed.

Bayne contends that Hurley's argument against projectability argument rests on the possibility of phenomenal duplicates. Bayne has already shown that his tripartite conception of experience rejects the possibility of phenomenal duplicates. However, Bayne admits that on other views of consciousness Hurley can make her point. Bayne maintains that those views are 'unattractive' and, thus, the first premise of the projectability argument is secure. The first premise claims that 'there would be such a thing as a distinctive partially unified subjective perspective.'³⁶

The second premise of the projectability argument claims that we are unable to project ourselves into a partially unified perspective. Lockwood counters this claim by suggesting that it is not difficult to project oneself into a partially unified perspective by imagining each of subjects overlapping experiences ($e_1 \& e_3$ and $e_2 \& e_3$) successively. He acknowledges that such successive acts of imagination may not generate that sort of experience of $e_1 \& e_2$ which would be possible if we could imagine $e_1 \& e_3$ and $e_2 \& e_3$ all at once. Yet, he maintains that this will not deter us from projecting ourselves into a partially unified perspective.

Following Nagel, Bayne gives a different reason for admitting the tenability of the second premise. In order to make his point Bayne considers some objections to Lockwood's proposal. He mentions Peacocke's contention that the successive acts of imagination would not capture the phenomenon of imagining the simultaneous experiences of a single subject. Dainton's objection to Lockwood's proposal highlights the fact that in those successive acts of imagination the e_3 type of experience in $e_1 \& e_3$ will not be numerically identical with the e_3 type of experience in $e_2 \& e_3$. Bayne thinks that such objections do not show why one cannot 'stipulate that one is imagining the simultaneous experiences of a single subject'.³⁷ He considers a notion of 'projective imagination' to show why such a stipulation is not possible. According to Bayne such projection is possible when one imagines something 'from the

inside'. Following Nagel he calls the state as 'sympathetic imagination'. By putting oneself, in 'a conscious state resembling the thing', one imagines sympathetically that thing. Thus, 'one can sympathetically imagine only' what it is like to be in a certain type of conscious state.³⁸ Since sympathetic imagination involves replication of the state being imagined it must possess the same structure as their targets. This distinguishes sympathetic imagination from perceptual and propositional imagination. For this reason, Nagel thinks, we cannot sympathetically imagine what it would be like to echolocate – we do not possess the ability to echolocate like bats. Thus, from the successive acts of projection we can at best imagine being a subject will one sort of phenomenal state followed by another. It is not possible to stipulate that one is imagining the simultaneous experiences of a single subject for it does not extend to sympathetic imagination. On this ground Bayne concludes that the second premise of the projectability argument remains secure.

However, Bayne justifiably claims that the third premise of the argument is not secure. He argues that neither imaginability in general nor sympathetic unimaginability proves impossibility. On the basis of the fact that we are not capable to imagine what it is like to be a bat we cannot conclude that there is nothing it is like to be a bat. The third premise could be defended only if there were grounds to hold that our projective abilities exhaust the space of phenomenal possibilities which is not at all the case. Being unable to project oneself into the perspective of a disunified subject does not prove that such subjects are impossible. These considerations lead Bayne to maintain that the third premise of the argument is not secure.

In a bid to salvage something from the wreck of the projectability argument Bayne explains the reason why we think that there are possible phenomenal perspectives which we cannot access imaginatively. One reason for admitting the possibility of such phenomenal perspectives is that we can conceive them. Hence, Bayne thinks that arguments against partial

unity must explore, first, whether there might be the possibility of any incoherence in the notion of partial unity. Thus, he constructs a conceivability based argument against partial unity. Bayne distinguishes between strong inconceivability and weak inconceivability after Van Cleve (1983). Something is strongly inconceivable for S when S seems to see that it is impossible, whereas something is weakly inconceivable for S if S cannot see that it is possible. Weak inconceivability follows from strong inconceivability but not vice versa. Bayne notes that ‘strength’ here rests upon the content of the inconceivability intuition and not upon any feeling of constitude. Bayne thinks that partial unity is not strongly inconceivable. For he doubts that first person acquaintance with consciousness manifest any substantive features of consciousness as its necessary features. He does not think that first person reflection on consciousness can provide grounds for thinking that certain features of consciousness derives from the essential nature of consciousness. However, Bayne thinks that it is a prudent position to ‘retain partial unity as a potential model of consciousness’ though the possibility is surrounded with an air of suspicion. We shall discuss the possibility of partial unity in later chapter.

3.5 The Closure account:

Now we turn to Bayne’s treatment of an alternative account of phenomenal unity. According to this alternative view, we should understand the unity of phenomenal consciousness in terms of representational content of phenomenal state. This alternative view is known as closure concept of phenomenal unity, in short – closure.

Consciousness manifests itself with teeming multiplicity of objects and relations. Among these relations we find many unity relations such as subject unity, representational unity, phenomenal unity relations and other relations. By way of an example we can consider what it is like to hear a bird singing in my garden whilst seeing my dog play with a ball.

Since these two experiences are had by me they can be viewed as subjects unified. They can also be viewed as representationally unified as my dog is just below the tree where the birds are singing. However, a more primitive and deeper unity can be discerned in the fact that these two experiences have a conjoint phenomenal character. There is something it is like to hear the birds singing, there is something it is like to see the dog playing with a ball, and there is something it is like to hear the bird singing while seeing the dog play. There is something it is like to have both the experience together as components of a single conscious state. Thus, the multiplicity of objects and relations that any subject experiences at any one point in time are not experienced in isolation from each other. In fact, our experiences of them take place as elements, parts or components of more inclusive states of consciousness. This sort of unity is called phenomenal unity, which is sometimes termed as ‘co-consciousness’. Explanation of phenomenal unity in terms of such whole-part relation is dubbed as mereological account.

In mereological account, phenomenal unity is understood in terms of part-whole relation between token experiences. However, experiences have phenomenal character or ‘what it is likeness’ as well as representational contents, and they are intimately related. So, one might try to understand phenomenal unity in terms of relations between the representational contents of unified states. In this approach it is claimed that phenomenal unity can be understood in terms of the conjunctive closure of phenomenal content. This is known as the closure account of phenomenal unity. In order to make a distinction between these two accounts let us consider two phenomenally unified states such as two visual experiences –V1 and V2. These two states are phenomenally unified with each other by occurring as parts of a more complex visual state V3. This is the central claim of the mereological account. The closure account tries to understand phenomenal unity in terms of relations between the contents of the unified states. According to this account all three states

are phenomenally unified in virtue of a particular feature of the relation between the contents of V3 on the one hand and the contents of V1 and V2 on the other. This feature is explicated in terms of the closure of the phenomenal content under conjunction. Thus, if $\langle p \rangle$ and $\langle q \rangle$ are contents of V1 and V2 respectively then $\langle p \ \& \ q \rangle$ will be the content of V3. Bayne presents closure in the following way:

‘If closure holds, V1 and V2 will be phenomenally unified if , and only if, the subject in question has a state (V3) that has as its content the conjunction of the contents of V1 and V2.’³⁹

Obviously, if the concerned subject does not enjoy an experience with the content $\langle p \ \& \ q \rangle$ then V1 and V2 cannot be said to be phenomenally unified with each other. Hence, if closure holds then subjects who enjoy a fully unified consciousness will have a single phenomenal state (that is, subject’s total phenomenal state) whose content corresponds to the content of the conjunction of each of their phenomenal states. This is understood as closure of phenomenal content under conjunction. Thus, the parts of a single phenomenal field will be unified on account of the fact that the contents of the parts are included within the content of the subjects’ total phenomenal state.

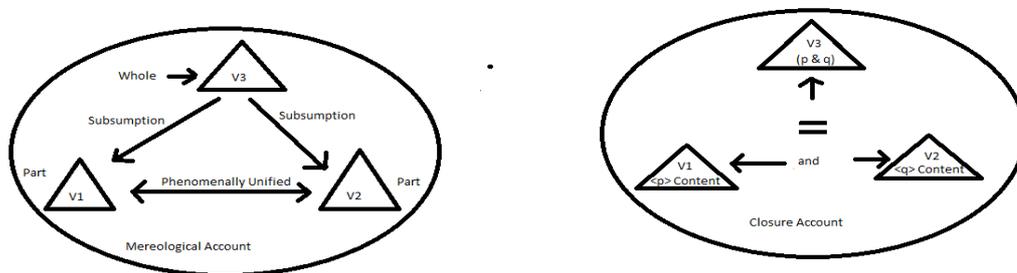


Figure -05: Compare between Mereological Account and Closure Account

Bayne identifies three reasons for being sympathetic to closure account.

First, Phenomenal unity very often goes together with closure. If we consider the mereological conception of phenomenal unity we shall see how closure naturally follows from this conception. That is to say, if the content of V3 entails the contents of V1 and V2 then we can find a reason why any subject who had a V3 type experience must enjoy V1 type and V2 type experiences.

Secondly, closure follows from the representational conception of experience. In this conception phenomenal character is fixed by representational content and, so, conjoint phenomenal character should be explained in terms of conjunctive content.

Thirdly, the closure account shows clearly the intuitive contrast between unity of consciousness and other forms of mental unity. It is possible to believe both $\langle p \rangle$ and $\langle q \rangle$ without believing $\langle p \ \& \ q \rangle$, where belief is taken as a dispositional state. Same is in the case with desire. Bayne, as a liberalist, points out that it is not possible for anyone to consciously judge $\langle p \rangle$ and $\langle q \rangle$ without at the same time judging $\langle p \ \& \ q \rangle$ unless this subject has disunified consciousness. As to the question which forms of consciousness are forms of phenomenal consciousness thinkers are divided into two groups. First, the conservatives hold that perceptual experiences, bodily sensations and affective experiences are modes of phenomenal consciousness and deny that thoughts are phenomenally conscious as such. Liberals, however, maintain that conscious thoughts possess a 'what its likeness' ...akin to the sense in which perceptual states and bodily sensations possess 'what its likeness.'

In order to clarify the closure account, Bayne compares how S. Hurley and M. Tye present the core idea of such account. Hurley presents closure as agglomeration principle. She proposes that whatever determines whether two conscious states are unified or not we can adopt 'I' as a placeholder index for it. Now, she claims: 'Contents of consciousness

agglomerate just when the values taken by I for different contents match.’⁴⁰ Tye says, ‘phenomenal unity is a relation between qualities represented in experience Phenomenal unity is a matter of simultaneously experienced perceptual qualities entering into the same phenomenal content..... phenomenal unity goes with the closure of perceptual experience under conjunction with respect to the unified properties.’⁴¹ Bayne points out that Hurley embraces closure as an unrestricted account of the unity of consciousness whereas Tye restricts his discussion to perceptual experiences. Bayne also points out that Tye does not explicitly deny the closure account of the unity between conscious thoughts. However, following Hurley, Bayne espouses a liberal account of the reach of phenomenal consciousness. The second point of contrast between these two accounts is that whereas Hurley regards these two accounts as complements Tye considers them to be inconsistent. Bayne accepts Hurley’s approach.

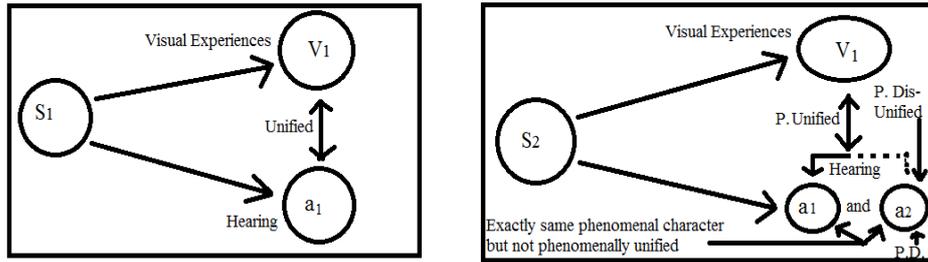
The third point of contrast between Hurley and Tye concerns the nature of the entities that are conjoined within consciousness. For Hurley, closure should be defined over propositional contents but Tye talks of only perceptual qualities which enter into the same phenomenal content. There is an obvious difference between these two, for propositions have truth values but qualities do not. However, Bayne maintains that Tye’s reference to perceptual qualities can be glossed in propositional terms and, so, assumes that closure is to be understood in propositional terms.

Bayne thinks that the account of closure in propositional terms faces a serious challenge. Phenomenal states such as emotions (pains) and some other undirected moods do not have propositional contents. He claims that phenomenal character of many phenomenal states outruns its (propositional) contents. He terms these as ‘phenomenological danglers.’ He even claims that the representational contents of many phenomenal states are not propositional. Thus, any analysis of phenomenal unity only in terms of representational

content fails to capture 'phenomenological danglers'. The phenomenal unity between emotions and other conscious states cannot be captured in propositional terms.

In response to this problem, Bayne makes a distinction between strong representationalism and weak representationalism and claims that closure requires weak representationalism. According to the strong version, phenomenal states just are representational states. The weak version claims that phenomenal character of consciousness can be captured by the propositional content of representational states. Since, according to this version, phenomenal character is not fixed by propositional content the phenomenal character will not be fixed by it.

The closure account faces some further challenges. This account of phenomenal unity will fail if it can be shown either that a creature's conscious states are conjunctively unified without their being phenomenally unified or that phenomenal unity is possible without conjunctive unity. Bayne first considers whether phenomenal unity can fail in the presence of conjunctive unity. In other words, we have to consider whether it is possible for a subject to have conscious states with contents $\langle p \rangle$, $\langle q \rangle$ and $\langle p \& q \rangle$ yet those states are not phenomenally unified. Such a situation might arise if it were possible for a subject to have simultaneous states with the same phenomenal character, or, in other words, to have phenomenal duplicates. In such a situation the subject would have two token $\langle p \rangle$ experiences; one phenomenally unified while the other one left alone. However, Bayne's tripartite conception of experiences does not admit the possibility of phenomenal duplicates (Diagram below). Hence, if any two or more states are conjunctively unified then they must also be phenomenally unified.



Partial Unity based on the idea of Phenomenal Duplicate (P.D.)

Figure -06

Bayne, next, consider those objections to closure that try to show why inference from phenomenal unity to conjunctive unity might not be possible. The first objection attempts to show that a subject may have phenomenally unified states with inconsistent contents. However, it is usually claimed that no state can have inconsistent content. Hence, either we have to admit that the consistency constraint precludes states to have inconsistent contents or we have to admit that closure is false. One such example originally presented by Aristotle is the waterfall illusion (picture below).

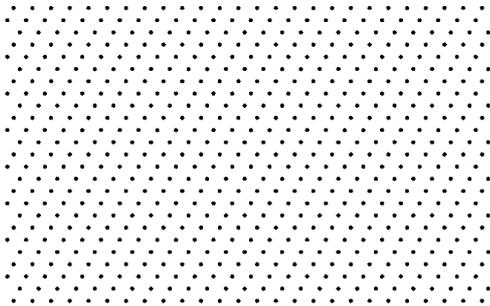
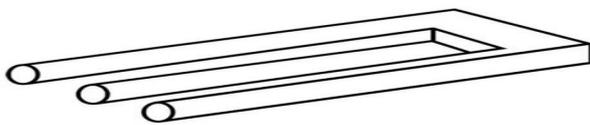


Figure – 07 : Waterfall illusion

This illusion is generated by looking at a waterfall for certain stretch of time and then shifting one's gaze to a stationary object. The after effect produces an illusion of movement in that we

are still aware of the features in their ‘proper’ locations although they are seen as moving. Some thinkers claim that here we are conscious of the object as both moving and not-moving which is logically impossible. The Devil’s pitchfork (picture below) and the Brentano version of the Muller-Lyer illusion are examples which provide cases where we have visual experiences whose contents are mutually inconsistent, resulting in the absence of conjunctive unity.



Devil’s pitch fork

Figure - 08

In reply to it Bayne points out that the inconsistency present in these experiences is not contained in a single experiential state. He also admits that in a sense one can say that one’s overall representation of these objects involves impossible content. Bayne quickly points out that such overall representation is best viewed as judgment about the object that would have to exist rather than an experience as such. Bayne thinks that these examples, at least, fail to convince him about the possibility of inconsistency so far single experiential modality is concerned.

Inter-model inconsistency presents another threat to the closure account. Bayne maintains that studies on the effects of wearing inverting goggles which do not report instantaneous adaptations and some studies even report the absence of adaptation. Here we find inconsistency between the contents of vision and the contents of proprioception. Bayne admits that a formidable example of inconsistency within consciousness is Zollner illusion.

Zollner illusion presents us with a situation when the contents of our perception are not consistent with the contents of judgment. Despite our judgment that the diagonal lines of the illusion are parallel they do not look to be parallel. Thus, Bayne concedes the possibility of inconsistency both between simultaneous experiences in the context of different perceptual modalities and between perceptual states and conscious judgments. Hence, the advocates of closure is faced with the unwelcome dilemma in that either they have to admit that the consistency constraint precludes states with inconsistent content from being unified or admit that closure is false.

However, Bayne thinks that the closure account can be sound if we eschew the assumptions of consistency constrains. He identifies the main motivations for the said assumption with its possible world approach to the contents of consciousness. Bayne adopts structured approaches to the contents of consciousness. He admits that necessary falsehoods cannot be believed but can be entertained. Every student of logic will admit that we are able to realize that certain claims must be false as they entail a contradiction. Hence, the argument from inconsistency fails.

Another objection to closure comes on the basis of everyday visual experience. Let us imagine a scenario where one sees a speckled hen (say, 12 speckles.) in bright light in a glance. In such a situation it would not be possible to enumerate the experienced speckles accurately. Contents of your visual experience would not, in this case, be closed under conjunction though the contents would be unified. This shows that phenomenal unity could hold without the conjunctive content. In other words, one would lack a conjunctive experience of all 12 speckles. In response to the speckled hen objection Bayne distinguish between a notion 'seeing' that is constitutively related to 'saying' and 'sorting' and the notion of visual experience where the contents of visual experience outruns, due to processing bottlenecks, 'what is available to the mechanisms of saying and sorting'.

In order to criticize closure the visual phenomenon of apperceptive agnosia has been brought in. In apperceptive agnosia the patient can see the parts of an object but finds it difficult to see the object as a whole. Here we find an example of visual experiences where contents are not conjoined. It is claimed that in such cases we find the breakdown of the unity of consciousness and, so, closure fails. Bayne admits that in apperceptive agnosia some kind of break down in the unity of consciousness is present but he denies any breakdown of phenomenal unity. He admits that the contents of agnosic experiences are not representationally integrated but, at the same time, he claims that they (contents) are phenomenally unified as they are embedded in a single overall visual state. It is true that the agnosic does not perceive the object as a whole but he ‘does have visual experiences whose contents conjunctively represent their parts.’ Thus, Bayne writes: ‘there is a difference between seeing the parts of an object conjunctively and seeing the parts of an object *as* the parts of a single object. Closure demands only that when conscious states are unified their contents are embedded in a representation with conjunctive content’.⁴²

Another question is raised regarding the success of closure in accounting for the unity that holds between multimodal experiences. If a visual experience and a tactual experience are phenomenally unified then we have to admit, following the closure account, that there is a conscious mental state, say P, whose content corresponds to the conjunction of the contents of visual and tactual experiences. Now, we cannot characterize this state (P) either as visual or as tactual since no one will capture the content of the other. How can we characterize P? Many thinkers have responded by admitting that P is an amodal or multimodal experience. This state is neither wholly visual nor wholly tactual, but visuo-tactual. Such response generalizes to experiences drawn from different modalities where the generation of amodal experience accounts for the inter-sensory unity. However, the above proposal faces some difficulties. It has been suggested that the talk of amodal experience fails to do justice to the

phenomenal difference between the perceptual modalities. Bayne considers an objection in the context of common sensible. These are properties such as motion and shape which are discernible through more than one sensory modality. Bayne invites us to consider two possible situations, A and B, where in each situation one experiences one coin larger than the other. In A, the subject S is aware of the large coin by sight and the small coin by touch. In B the subject S is aware of the larger coin by touch and the small coin by sight. It is obvious that the phenomenology of A and B will differ. Now, it is argued that if our account of these two situations involves a multimodal representation of the one coin as larger than the other then the phenomenal difference between A and B will not be captured. Hence, the problem is how to do justice to the phenomenal difference between A and B without rejecting the proposal that the unity between visual and tactile experience can be fully explained with the help of the contents of an amodal perception. Bayne mentions two approaches in this connection. In one approach the experiences of the coins are understood in Fregean terms. Thus, vision and touch can represent the same property (the size of the coin) but they do so through different phenomenal characters. Fregeans will maintain that visual and tactile experiences may represent exactly the same properties but they will not have the same content for they involve different modes of presentation. The modes of presentation make the difference in the ways in which those properties are revealed to the subject. Many representationalist reject the Fregean treatment of perceptual content and embrace the Russellian approach. The Russellian approach views phenomenal content and those properties, represented by perceptual experience, as identical. Lacking the resource like modality specific modes of presentation the Russellian is apparently unable to account for the phenomenal difference between A and B. However, Bayne shows how the Russellians can account for the difference. First, perceptual awareness of the coins reveal many features other than their size to the subject. Touch reveals the representation of the texture and temperature

while vision reveals the colour. By appealing to these differences we can account for the difference between A and B. Secondly, vision is usually thought to represent the size of the coins with higher degree of specificity than touch does. Thirdly, different perceptual modalities may be associated with self-representational content that differentiates them from other modalities. The overall visual experience is mediated by the orientation of the eyes and head; similarly the tactile experience is usually mediated by the movements of the hand. These relational contents contribute to the phenomenal differences between A and B. Thus, the closure account survives the two coins objection.

An inventory of phenomenally conscious states must include various kinds of perceptual states, bodily sensation, emotional and mood states, states of imagination and imagery, memory and agentic experiences. Liberalists also include cognitive states such as judgments, intentions and desires. States drawn from any two or more of these categories may co-occur within consciousness and may also be unified with each other. Imagery experiences can be unified with conscious judgments and bodily sensations can be unified with affective experiences. Bayne points out that closure faces serious difficulty in accounting for such unified states. Let us take an example of a subject(s) who has a conscious judgment with content $\langle p \rangle$ and a desire with content $\langle q \rangle$. If closure holds then S is sure to have a conscious state with content $\langle p \& q \rangle$. What sort of state could it be? This state could not be judgment because in that case it would fail to accommodate the fact that the subject desire $\langle q \rangle$. This state could not be desire for them. It would not capture the fact that the subject judges $\langle p \rangle$. Again, if it is neither a judgment nor a desire then it would fail to capture the fact that the subject judges $\langle p \rangle$ and desire $\langle q \rangle$. No plausible account of the nature of this state is available from the closure account. This objection is dubbed as the distinct kind objection. The problem faced by the closure account in explaining the unity between different kinds of perceptual states is different from the problem faced in accounting for the unity

between different kinds of states. In the former case the problem of intermodal unity has been solved by 'positing' amodal states. This maneuver is successful because all perceptual states being perceptual possess a uniform fundamental structure. However, the distinct kind's objection is concerned with states that do not have the underlying intentional structure in common. Thus, the problem before the closure account is to explain 'what it would be for different kinds of mental states to be unified with each other.'

Bayne thinks that one strategy for answering such objection might be to find a single fundamental state kind to which two phenomenally unified, but superficially distinct, states could be assigned. The experiential difference between different kinds of conscious states could then, be accounted for by appealing to the contents of that single mental state kind. The important question in this context would be how to characterize such a mental state which could admit memories, imaginative experience, bodily sensations, emotional and affective states, agentic experiences and 'cognitive feelings' as determinates?

Bayne considers an answer to this question on the basis of J. Prinz' claim that all consciousness is perceptual.⁴³ Bayne explores the possibility of developing a broad notion of perceptual experience on the basis of which all forms of consciousness can be viewed as modes of perception. Prinz's doctrine is dubbed as Perceptualism. Bayne notes that the perceptualist claim is in accord with the Representationalist proposal for perceptual treatments of bodily sensations. For example, they argue that pains are perceptions of bodily damage of sorts. Similarly, itches are perceptions of skin irritation. Following James-Lange theory of emotions, Prinz views emotional and affective experiences as perceptions of 'patterned changes in the body'. We are also aware of the perceptualist accounts of 'cognitive feeling' and recollective memory.

The perceptualist treatment of consciousness is faced with several challenges. The first challenge comes from the experiences of acting, i.e, agentic experience. Let us reflect on what it is like to experience oneself as (say) reaching for a walking stick. A ‘feeling of doing’ usually accompanies such action. The contents of such experience represent oneself as an agent, one’s goals and the means for attaining that goal. With regard to the structure of agentic experiences Bayne mentions two approaches. In one approach it is maintained that experiences of acting are better identified with actions themselves rather than representations of willing or actions. Following this thought, Searle⁴⁴ contrasts the structure of experiences of acting with that of perceptual experiences. According to Searle, perceptual experience is concerned with ‘saying’ how the world is (world-directed) whereas in the case of acting one is engaged in ‘making it the case that the world is a certain way’. Thus, the structure of former experience is descriptive whereas the structure of latter experiences is directive.

There are ‘perceptual’ treatments of agentic experience. However, in his book entitled ‘The Unity of Consciousness’ Tim Bayne repudiates his earlier ‘perceptual’ approach to agentic experience. In this book he admits that experience of trying to do something is simply a kind of trying and so, not to be viewed as a perception of trying. Agentic experience has a directive structure rather than a descriptive structure. This creates problems for the perceptualists.⁴⁵The second problem before the perceptualists is how to account for those conscious states that are neither directive nor descriptive. Bayne invites us to reflect on ‘what it is like to idly imagine that there is a tiger in one’s kitchen’. This mental episode will possess sensory character and so can be viewed as quasi-perceptual. Despite the fact that this imagining has intentional content it is hard to find any world –directed structure of perception in this state of imagination. Moreover, states of imagination are seldom evaluated for their accuracy in representing the way the world is. Similarly we do not evaluate such mental

states in terms of its success in bringing it about that the world is a particular way. Thus, the state of imagining cannot be considered as a species of perception.

According to Bayne, conscious thought possess the most serious problem for the perceptualists. Perceptualists are bound to opt for a conservative standpoint with regard to cognitive phenomenology. They present a deflationary treatment of the phenomenal character of thought. In their account of the phenomenal character of thought they claim that there are sensory accompaniments of thought in the form of visual, auditory and motor imagery. They maintain that the phenomenal character of these sensory accompaniments exhaust the phenomenology of thought. However, Bayne favors the liberal view and, so, rejects this deflationary treatment. For Bayne, thoughts possess phenomenal character in their own right. Bayne's claim seems plausible because it is not true that all consciousness is perceptual. Terence Horgan and John Tienson writes: 'Intentional states have a phenomenal character, and this phenomenal character is precisely the what-it-is-like of experiencing a specific propositional-attitude type vis-à-vis specific intentional content. Change either the attitude type (believing, desiring, wondering, hoping etc.) or the particular intentional content, and the phenomenal character thereby changes too.'⁴⁶

Some arguments for the view that all conscious states are basically forms of a single kind of state derive from the monitoring account of consciousness. According to this account a mental states is a conscious state just in case it is the intentional object of one of the subjects' mental representations. A mental state M is a conscious state if it is a mental state whose subject is aware of being in that state.⁴⁷ On this view, the fact that various kinds of mental states can be phenomenally unified is explained by the fact that each of these states becomes conscious in virtue of their being monitored by a certain type of mental state. This distinction between mental states that are consciously monitored and the mental states that consciously monitor dissolves the problem of different kinds. The unity between a desire and

a judgment is not to be sought in a state that might 'inherit' the contents of both the states. What is required, on this account, is a state that represents the contents of both the states conjunctively. The unity between a judgment with content <p> and a desire with content <q> is to be sought in the subjects monitoring thought with the content <I am judging that p and desiring that q>. The monitoring account looks for an explanation of the unity in the structure of the states one is conscious with (higher-order unity) rather than in the structure of states that one is conscious of (first order unity). However, Bayne doubts the plausibility of the monitoring account. He presents his arguments against this account in terms of the following: if the monitoring view of consciousness is true then it must be either a conceptual truth or an empirical truth. Some proponents of this account consider it as a conceptual truth. They think that a mental state is conscious just in case one is conscious of that mental state. On the basis of this supposition W.G.Lycan has offered a deductive argument. The argument runs like this: if I am aware of being in mental state M, then tautologically, my awareness is an awareness of and my state of awareness has M as its representation. Hence, for M to be a conscious state is for M to be represented by one of my mental states.⁴⁸ However, Bayne rightly points out that the 'of' in question need not be understood as the 'of' of intentional directedness. Bayne writes: 'The only uncontroversial sense in which conscious thoughts are thoughts of which one is conscious is the sense in which conscious thoughts make an impact on one's overall conscious state, but there is nothing in that claim to encourage the monitoring theorist.'⁴⁹ We think Bayne's idea is coherent. Next he considers the availability of empirical evidence in favour of the monitoring approach. One such proposal⁵⁰ refers to the fact that neural activity in perceptual cortex gives rise to conscious states if it is processed by downstream systems. But he points out that the processing in the higher cortical areas should not be 'conceived of as representing certain stages of neural activity'. Bayne's claim is justified. The upshot of these considerations is that there are fundamentally different kinds of

conscious states and that closure is false, for it fails to account for the unity of conscious states of different kinds. However, Bayne maintains that the failure of closure does no harm to weak representationalism but becomes problematic for strong representationalism for strong representationalist identifies phenomenal states with representational states.

In his earlier discussion Bayne mentioned the suggestion that the mereological account might entail closure. He presents one reason for maintaining that closure follows from the mereological account. According to the mereological account, if experiences e_1 and e_2 are phenomenally unified with each other, then the concerned subject will have a 'conscious state e_3 that subsumes both e_1 and e_2 . It is sometimes thought that the subsumption of e_1 and e_2 by e_3 must guarantee that the content of e_3 entails the contents of e_1 and e_2 . Bayne points out that such a thought leads one to admit that the content of e_3 must correspond to the conjunction of the contents of e_1 and e_2 . For any other account of the content of e_3 would attract attribution of additional complexity. The passage from mereological account to the closure account might be built in this way.

In order to show the mistake in this argument Bayne highlights the most important distinction (in his account of phenomenal unity) between phenomenal states as such and phenomenally conscious intentional states⁵¹ in the following way. Phenomenal states, for Bayne, are states that instantiate phenomenal properties. Phenomenal properties are individuated in terms of what it is like to have them. Intentional states are, however, individuated in terms of their attitude/modes (belief, desire, perception etc.) and content and not in terms of what it is like to have them. Intentional states involve two components (attitude and content) whereas phenomenal states do not have such components. However Gulick writes: 'According to Bayne, there must be something that it-is-like for S to experience A and B *together* at t. Not just a conjunction of what-it-is-like-ness, but a what-it-is-likeness of experienced conjunction.'⁵² It is possible for some intentional states to 'be'

phenomenally conscious. In such cases the phenomenal state associated with the intentional is to be viewed as a function of the components of that intentional state. Despite the occurrence of intimate relationship between phenomenal states and phenomenally conscious intentional states Bayne does not want to identify them. He points out that these two states possess structures that are different from each other. Owing to this difference between their structures it will not always be possible to capture the mereological relations between the phenomenal states in terms of entailment relations between the contents of phenomenally conscious mental states. A subject's total phenomenal state is required to capture the phenomenal character of the states which that total phenomenal state subsumes. Some phenomenal states of a subject may be associated with particular intentional states but the states that possess complex phenomenology cannot be paired with any intentional state in that manner. Such a complex state is the subject's total phenomenal state, which captures what it is like to be the subject at the time in question. The phenomenal character of such complex state can be determined by the subject's various intentional states, but we shall hardly find a single intentional state with which it can be paired. Bayne claims that the fundamental difference between the notion of a phenomenal state and the notion of phenomenally conscious intentional state helps the mereological model of phenomenal unity to survive the failure of closure.

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