

Rule-Following and Externalism*

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John McDowell has suggested recently that there is a route from his favoured solution to Kripke's Wittgenstein's "sceptical paradox" about rule-following to a particular form of cognitive externalism. In this paper, I argue that this is not the case: even granting McDowell his solution to the rule-following paradox, his preferred version of cognitive externalism does not follow.

1. Does the correct response to the "sceptical paradox" about rule-following adumbrated by Kripke's Wittgenstein entail, or make more palatable, any interesting form of cognitive externalism?¹ In particular, does the correct response to the rule-following paradox entail, or make more palatable, any form of cognitive externalism suggested by Putnam's famous Twin-Earth argument, that the physical and social environments in which we actually live at least partly constitute the fact that we mean what we mean by at least some of our words?² John McDowell has recently suggested that this question can be answered affirmatively. In this paper I want to question this suggestion. I do not want to take issue either with McDowell's response to Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox about rule-following, or the version of Putnam's cognitive externalism which McDowell favours. I want to suggest merely that there is no direct route from the dissolution of the rule-following paradox to McDowell's version of cognitive externalism.

2. I will begin with a brief recap of the Twin-Earth argument (Putnam 1975). Imagine that Earth and Twin-Earth are very distant parts of the same possible world. There is only one difference between Earth and Twin-Earth: whereas on Earth, water—the clear, odourless, thirst-quenching liquid that fills rivers and lakes etc.—has underlying molecular structure H₂O, on Twin-Earth the super-

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¹ For the rule-following paradox, see Kripke (1982) and Miller and Wright (2002).

² See Putnam (1975). The Twin-Earth style argument is restricted to words standing for natural kinds (see n. 3 below). I won't be concerned in this paper with externalist arguments, such as Burge's, which attempt to generalise beyond the case of natural kind terms.

ficially indistinguishable clear, odourless, thirst-quenching liquid that fills rivers and lakes etc. has underlying structure XYZ. Suppose that Oscar is an Earthian speaker, while Toscar is a Twin-Earthian speaker, where Oscar and Toscar are atom-for-atom doppelgängers. If Oscar were transported to Twin-Earth, his application of 'water' to the clear, odourless liquid in the glass would be false, since only things with the molecular structure H₂O count as water in his language; likewise if Toscar were transported to Earth, his application of 'water' to the clear, odourless liquid in the glass would be false, since only things with the molecular structure XYZ count as water in his language.³ Thus, 'water' as used by Oscar has a different extension from 'water' as used by Toscar. So, the thought expressed by Oscar's utterance of 'The river Taff is full of water' is different from the thought expressed by Toscar's utterance of 'The river Taff is full of water'. Since Oscar and Toscar are atom-for-atom doppelgängers, it follows that "meanings ain't in the head".

Since McDowell and Putnam both discuss the implications of this argument using (broadly) Fregean notions such as 'sense' and 'extension', and since—as we'll see—Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical argument can easily be framed in the same terms, it will be useful to spell out the implications of the Twin-Earth argument explicitly in terms of *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. The extension of 'water' as used by Oscar is different from the extension of 'water' as used by Toscar. Since the *Bedeutung* of a predicate is determined by its extension, 'water' as used by Oscar has a different *Bedeutung* from 'water' as used by Toscar. So, 'The river Taff is full of water' as uttered by Oscar expresses a different thought (*Sinn*) from that expressed by 'The river Taff is full of water' as uttered by Toscar. Thus, the nature of Oscar's environment constrains the extension of his term, the extension of the term constrains its *Bedeutung*, and its *Bedeutung* constrains its *Sinn*. So the nature of Oscar's environment constrains the *Sinn* of his term 'water'. Likewise for Toscar.

What are the implications of this argument for views on the nature of psychological states? In order to see where Putnam and McDowell diverge, consider:

- (A) The sense of '... is water' determines its extension.
- (B) Grasping the sense of '... is water' is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state.

³ In other words, 'water' as used by Oscar and Toscar is a natural kind term. This argument is not by itself intended to extend to cases of predicates which stand for kinds which are not natural kinds.

- (C) Psychological states are “psychological states in the narrow sense” (“states whose attribution to a subject entails nothing about her environment”).⁴
- (D) As far as psychological states in the narrow sense are concerned, Oscar and Toscar are identical.
- (E) Given (A), (B), (C), and (D), the extensions of ‘... is water’, as used by Oscar and Toscar, are identical.

But from the Twin-Earth argument rehearsed above:

- (F) The extensions of ‘... is water’, as used by Oscar and Toscar, differ.
- (G) Contradiction, from (E) and (F).

Thus

- (H) We must give up either (A), (B), (C), or (D).

At this point, Putnam and McDowell appear to disagree about how we ought to proceed.⁵ Putnam accepts (C), and on this basis argues that since we cannot accept both (A) and (B), we ought to jettison (B). McDowell on the other hand thinks we ought to reject (C), thereby opening up the possibility of a conception of psychological states which will allow us to embrace *both* (A) and (B):

What is to be learned from [the Twin-Earth] reflections is not, as Putnam himself argues, that it cannot be true both that “knowing the meaning of a term is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state” and that “the meaning of a term determines its extension”; so that if we retain the second of these assumptions, we must renounce the first. This presupposes that anyone who embraces the first assumption must be restricting psychological states to “narrow” states. Rather, the moral of Putnam’s considerations is that the idea of a psychological state, as it figures in the first assumption, cannot be the idea of a “narrow” state. That is: we should not leave in place an idea of the mind that is shaped by the tenets of “methodological solipsism”, and conclude that meanings are not in the mind, since they are not in the head. Rather, we should read the two assumptions in such a way that they can be true together and exploit such a reading to force us into explicit consideration of a different conception of the mind.⁶

⁴ McDowell (1992a), p.36.

⁵ An anonymous referee has helpfully pointed out to me that in more recent work, Putnam appears to accept McDowell’s critique of his earlier position. See Putnam (1994). So in what follows, ‘Putnam’ refers to the Putnam of (1975). If what I argue in the paper is correct, the later Putnam may have been overhasty in accepting McDowell’s critique of his earlier self.

⁶ McDowell (1992a), p.40.

But why opt for McDowell's reading of the Twin-Earth argument rather than Putnam's? As we'll see, McDowell argues that the conception of mind underpinning Putnam's reading is exploded by the correct response to Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox, so that once we have dissolved the sceptical paradox, McDowell's reading emerges as the more plausible interpretation of the Twin-Earth argument. Before looking at this claim, some remarks about Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox, and McDowell's response to it, are in order.

3. Let's begin by setting up Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical challenge within the broadly Fregean framework we used in §2. Recall that according to Frege, an expression like the addition sign '+' has a function as its *Bedeutung*. For example, we would normally take '+' to have the *addition* function as its *Bedeutung*, the extension of which would include the ordered triples $\langle 1, 1, 2 \rangle$, $\langle 1, 2, 3 \rangle$, $\langle 68, 57, 125 \rangle$. (An ordered triple belongs to the extension of a function if and only if the first two members yield the third when presented to the function). But of course, '+' could conceivably have some other *Bedeutung*. For example, it could stand for the *quaddition* function, the extension of which would include $\langle 1, 1, 2 \rangle$, $\langle 1, 2, 3 \rangle$, and $\langle 68, 57, 5 \rangle$. So we can ask: what determines which of these functions is the *Bedeutung* of '+', as used by an individual or a group of speakers? And the intuitive answer is: the meaning of '+'; how the speakers understand '+'; or the *Sinn* the speakers associate with '+'. So the question now becomes: what constitutes the fact that speakers associate one rather than another *Sinn* with '+'? Given the Fregean thesis that *Sinn* determines *Bedeutung*, any fact cited as constitutive of meaning, understanding, or *Sinn*, must determine *Bedeutung*. In effect, Kripke's Wittgenstein argues as follows. No fact is capable of determining the *Bedeutung* of a linguistic expression; therefore, no fact can be constitutive of *Sinn*. So, sentences such as 'Jones means addition by '+' are not truth-apt; they do not express beliefs; they do not purport to represent facts; they do not have truth-conditions.

Now the precise details of Kripke's Wittgenstein's negative arguments, their shortcomings, and the "sceptical solution" which Kripke's Wittgenstein suggests in order to ameliorate their "paradoxical" conclusion, needn't concern us here.⁷ But three points are worth noting:

Note 1: Kripke's Wittgenstein's argument is perfectly general in the sense that it applies to all of the classical Fregean syntactic categories if it applies to any, so that proper names, predicates, sentences, and quantifiers all fall within its scope. So any results about how the solution to Kripke's Wittgen-

⁷ For an account of the details, see Miller (1998), Chapters 5 and 6.

stein's paradox impacts on issues about externalism should generalise quite straightforwardly to all of these cases.⁸

Note 2: Kripke's Wittgenstein's argument is also general along a different dimension. It applies to all sorts of predicates: natural kind predicates such as 'gold' and 'water', and non natural kind predicates (such as, perhaps, 'red').

Note 3: Kripke's Wittgenstein's argument is also general along a further, third, dimension. The argument applies to linguistic meaning, but also to mental content.⁹ So any results about how the solution to KW's paradox impacts on issues about externalism should apply equally well to semantic externalism or cognitive externalism.

4. How does McDowell respond to Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox? Intuitively, the fact that someone grasps a certain sense or *Sinn* is a fact about that person's mind. Suppose that one accepted a conception of the mind (call it the *Master-Thesis*) according to which

[The mind] is populated exclusively with items that, considered in themselves, do not sort things outside the mind, including specifically bits of behaviour, into those that are correct or incorrect in the light of those items.¹⁰

The *Master-Thesis* has it that, considered in themselves, mental states and acts just "stand there like a signpost".¹¹ A sign-post, considered in itself, does not sort episodes of behaviour into those that constitute following the signpost correctly or incorrectly. So, if you accepted this conception of the mind, you would have to give some account of what *does* sort episodes of behaviour into those that constitute following the signpost correctly, or as acting in accord with the meaning which is grasped. A tempting answer would be that

What does sort behaviour into what counts as following the sign-post and what does not is not an inscribed board fixed to a post, considered in itself, but such an object *under a certain interpretation*—such an object interpreted as a sign-post pointing the way to a certain destination.¹²

But according to Wittgenstein this idea is hopeless. Recall the passage from *Philosophical Investigations* §198:

Any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning.

⁸ For an excellent explanation of why Kripke's Wittgenstein's challenge is general in the senses specified in notes 1 and 2, see chapter 4 of McGinn (1984).

⁹ For the reasons why, see Miller (1998), §6.1.

¹⁰ McDowell (1992b), p.41.

¹¹ See Wittgenstein (1974), §85.

¹² McDowell (1992b), p.41.

Suppose that meaning such and such by an expression was a matter of putting a certain interpretation on it. Then what is required for competence is that the *correct* interpretation is put on it. But, according to the Master-Thesis, acts of mind—such as putting an interpretation on an expression—just “stand there like a sign-post”. So, we require that the interpretation of the expression *itself* be interpreted. And now we are off on a regress: the interpretation of the interpretation in its turn just “stands there like a sign-post”, and so will require interpretation, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Now according to Kripke, at this point Wittgenstein accepts that there is no such thing as a fact about what anyone means and intends, and attempts to develop a sceptical solution to preserve meaning and intention in the light of this conclusion:

This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict.¹³

But as many commentators have pointed out, the paragraph in *Philosophical Investigations* which follows this one shows that contrary to what Kripke claims, Wittgenstein does *not* accept the sceptical paradox that there is no such thing as a fact about meaning:

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shows is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call “obeying the rule” and “going against it” in actual cases.¹⁴

¹³ Wittgenstein (1974), §201.

¹⁴ Ibid. Note that although most commentators agree that Kripke misinterprets Wittgenstein on this point, George Wilson, Alex Byrne, and David Davies are exceptions. See e.g. Wilson (1994), Wilson (1998), Byrne (1996), Davies (1998). Wilson’s interesting papers deserve a closer examination than I can give them here, but I think his interpretation of Kripke’s Wittgenstein is dubious for at least the following reason. According to Wilson, *Kripke’s Sceptic* argues as follows:

(NS) If X means something by a term $\wedge A \wedge$, then there is a set of properties, P_1, \dots, P_n , that govern the correct application of $\wedge A \wedge$ for X.

(G) If there is a set of properties, P_1, \dots, P_n , that govern the correct application of $\wedge A \wedge$ for X, then there are facts about X that constitute P_1, \dots, P_n as the conditions that govern X’s use of $\wedge A \wedge$.

(BSC) There are no facts about X that constitute any set of properties as conditions that govern X’s use of $\wedge A \wedge$.

So, (RSC) No-one ever means anything by a term.

According to Wilson, *Kripke’s Wittgenstein* emphatically does *not* accept the “radical sceptical conclusion” (RSC), but rather denies this, and uses this as a lever to reject the

McDowell suggests that what this shows is that Wittgenstein does not accept the Master-Thesis plus the consequent need for interpretation, and then proceed to draw the conclusion that since interpretations do not determine meaning, there is no such thing as meaning an expression in one way rather than another; rather, *Wittgenstein blocks the route to the sceptical paradox by refusing to accept the Master-Thesis in the first place.*

Is Wittgenstein's refusal to accept the Master-Thesis justified? According to McDowell, the Master-Thesis is an extremely unintuitive piece of philosophical theory, and as such the onus is on its defenders to justify their adherence to it. Consider a mental occurrence, like the having of the thought *that people are talking about me in the next room.* Only a state of affairs in which people are talking about me in the next room will be in accord with this thought; if another state of affairs obtains, such as a state of affairs in which the next room is empty, this will not be in accord with that thought. The Master-Thesis then implies

that whatever I have in my mind on this occasion, it cannot be something to whose very identity that normative link to the objective world is essential ... that what a person has in mind, strictly

"classical realist" conception of meaning embodied in (NS). Thus, Kripke's Wittgenstein, according to Wilson, argues as follows:

(G), (BSC), not (RSC); so, not (NS).

But this sits ill with Kripke's remarks about the distinction between "straight" and "sceptical" solutions to the sceptical paradox about meaning. Recall that according to Kripke "[A] proposed solution to a sceptical philosophical problem [is] a *straight* solution if it shows that on closer examination the scepticism proves to be unwarranted"(1982, p.66). That is, a straight solution is one which finds fault with the sceptic's reasoning or by denying one of the premises in the sceptic's argument. In contrast "A *sceptical* solution of a sceptical philosophical problem begins on the contrary by conceding that the sceptic's negative assertions are unanswerable"(1982, p.66). That is, a sceptical solution begins by accepting the negative *conclusion* of the sceptical argument. The problem for Wilson's interpretation of Kripke's Wittgenstein should now be clear. According to Wilson, Kripke's Wittgenstein blocks the inference to (RSC) by denying (NS): (NS) is false, so although the inference from (G), (NS), and (BSC) to (RSC) is valid, the sceptic has no *cogent* route to the conclusion (RSC). But this means that, by Kripke's lights, Kripke's Wittgenstein is proposing a *straight* solution to the sceptical solution: one which finds fault with the sceptic's reasoning or with one of his premises. But of course, Kripke clearly intends his Wittgenstein to be proposing a *sceptical* solution to the sceptical paradox. It seems to me, then, that Wilson's interpretation, interesting as it may be as a piece of *Wittgenstein* exegesis, does not sit well with *Kripke's Wittgenstein's* take on these matters. I do not claim that this point is decisive against Wilson's interpretation of *Kripke's Wittgenstein*, but I will not pursue the matter further here, since the main argument in the text is independent of these subtle exegetical questions. I hope to take up the issue more fully in a later paper. For useful criticism of Wilson's interpretation, see Soames (1998), pp.337-339. Similar remarks apply to the interesting discussions of the issue in Byrne (1996) and Davies (1998).

speaking, is never, say, *that people are talking about her in the next room* but at most something that *can* be interpreted as having that content, although it need not.¹⁵

And McDowell finds this at worst an extraordinary idea, and at best highly counterintuitive and unmotivated:

Once we realise that, the Master-Thesis should stand revealed as quite counterintuitive, not something on which a supposed need for constructive philosophy could be convincingly based.¹⁶

5. For the sake of argument, let's grant McDowell this response to the sceptical paradox about following a rule. Our question is whether making this concession gives us a reason to read the *Twin-Earth* argument in the manner suggested by McDowell: that is, to reject (C) and hold on to (A) and (B), rather than follow Putnam in rejecting (B) whilst retaining (A) and (C). McDowell clearly thinks this is the case. McDowell writes

What Putnam never seems to consider is the possibility of a position that holds that command of a meaning is wholly a matter of how it is with someone's mind, and combines that with the determination of extension by meaning so as to force a radically non-solipsistic conception of the mind to come to explicit expression. Instead, he assumes that anyone who wants to conceive knowledge of a meaning as wholly a matter of how it is with someone's mind must be already committed to a theoretical conception of the mind ... which, in conjunction with Putnam's reflections about meaning, guarantees that the wish cannot be fulfilled.¹⁷

The "theoretical conception of the mind" alluded to in this passage is one according to which the mind is the "organ of psychological activity". McDowell writes further

Putnam, without demur, lets "mentalism" be commandeered for the view that the topic of mental discourse can appropriately be specified as "the mind/brain". Talk of the mind/brain embodies the assumption that the mind is appropriately conceived as an organ, of course, with the idea—which is in itself perfectly sensible—that if the mind is an organ, the brain is the only organ it can sensibly be supposed to be. The assumption that the mind is an organ is one that Putnam does not challenge... In fact much of his own thinking seems to presuppose just such a conception of the mind.¹⁸

And it emerges that the conception of the mind as an organ of psychological activity is equivalent to the Master-Thesis:

Putnam's governing assumption here is that a mental state or occurrence that is representational ... must in itself consist in the presence in the mind of an item with an intrinsic nature

¹⁵ McDowell (1992b), p.46.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ McDowell (1992a), pp.40-41.

¹⁸ McDowell (1992a), pp.42-43.

characterizable independently of considering what it represents. (*Such a state of affairs would be what an internal arrangement in an organ of thought would have to amount to*).¹⁹

That is to say, in the terminology of McDowell's introduced in §4 above, an organ of thought is something whose states "just stand there like a signpost". To conceive of the mind as an organ of thought is thus to embrace, precisely, the Master-Thesis.²⁰ So does rejecting the conception of the mind as an organ of thought, in other words the Master-Thesis, give us a reason for rejecting (C) rather than (B) in the argument of §2?

6. Go back to the argument in §2, and suppose we write (C) out as follows:

(C) All psychological states are "psychological states in the narrow sense" ("states whose attribution to a subject entails nothing about her environment").

We've seen that McDowell wants to reject (C). But there are two ways in which (C), thus read, can be rejected:

Weak Rejection of (C): Some psychological states—such as grasping the sense of 'water'—are not "psychological states in the narrow sense".

Strong Rejection of (C): No psychological states are "psychological states in the narrow sense".

Given that there is a whole range of linguistic terms—those which don't denote natural kinds—on which the argument is simply silent, it seems likely that the most that we can establish via Twin-Earth style arguments is Weak Rejection of (C). So for our present purposes we'll take McDowell to be aiming at Weak Rejection of (C) (in any case, if he can't reach Weak Rejection of (C) via rejecting the Master-Thesis, it follows trivially that he can't reach Strong Rejection of (C) via that route either).

7. So can we justify Weak Rejection of (C) by invoking the rule-following considerations? As noted above, McDowell seems to think we can. Since Kripke's Wittgenstein's rule-following sceptical paradox is generated by the

¹⁹ McDowell (1992a), p.43, emphasis added.

²⁰ Note that McDowell sometimes gives a slightly different explanation of the idea that the mind is an organ. For example, he writes "the cash value of this talk of organs is the idea that states and occurrences 'in' the mind have an intrinsic nature that is independent of how the mind's possessor is placed in the environment"(1992a, p.39). But note that on this definition, "the mind is an organ of thought" is simply another *label* for the view that there is, in the relevant sense, no such thing as wide content. And you can't make more palatable the idea that there is such a thing as wide content simply by *relabeling* its opposite. So I suggest that the definition of "organ of thought" given in the text must be the more fundamental. This at least gives McDowell an argumentative strategy which might *possibly* work (though as I go on to suggest in what follows, it doesn't *actually* do so).

Master-Thesis, we need to reject the Master-Thesis in order to avoid the paradox. And McDowell suggests that once we have seen our way to rejecting the Master-Thesis (the conception of the mind as an organ of thought), it should be easier for us to see how we can reject (C) rather than follow Putnam in rejecting (B).

We need to think about the precise content of the Master-Thesis. Cashed out slightly, what McDowell's formulation of the Master-Thesis (p.5 above) comes to is this:

Every mental state, considered in itself, does not sort things outside the mind, including specifically bits of behaviour, into those that are correct or incorrect in the light of those states.

Now this means that there are two ways of rejecting the Master-Thesis just as there are two ways of rejecting (C) in Putnam's argument of §2:

Weak Rejection of the Master-Thesis: Some mental states (with representational content), considered in themselves, do sort things outside the mind, including specifically bits of behaviour, into those that are correct or incorrect in the light of those states.

Strong Rejection of the Master-Thesis: All mental states (with representational content), considered in themselves, do sort things outside the mind, including specifically bits of behaviour, into those that are correct or incorrect in the light of those states.

Now plausibly McDowell requires the Strong Rejection of the Master-Thesis in order to convincingly undercut Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical challenge. Since Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical challenge is perfectly general (see notes 1-3 in §3 above), given only Weak Rejection, KW's paradox will still be in the field for those mental states which don't, considered in themselves, sort things outside the mind, including specifically bits of behaviour, into those that are correct or incorrect in the light of those states. So we shall assume that Strong Rejection of the Master-Thesis is justifiably required in order to ward off Kripke's Wittgenstein's sceptical paradox. Then we can ask: can we move from SRMT to the Weak Rejection of (C)?

8. So let's grant McDowell the thought that we need to accept Strong Rejection of the Master-Thesis (SRMT) in order to stave off the rule-following paradox with the requisite generality. Does it follow from SRMT that we ought to embrace the Weak Rejection of (C) as defined in §6? One thing that is clear is that SRMT does not *entail* the Weak Rejection of (C). Let's focus on a particular example. Consider my grasp of the sense or *Sinn* of the predicate 'water'. The glass on the desk in front of me contains a sample of H₂O. Call this sample *a*. According to SRMT, it could not be the case that this

sample *a* (as it actually is) fails to satisfy the predicate ‘water’ as I understand it and yet the state of mind which consists in my grasping the sense or *Sinn* of ‘water’ remains unaltered. If I change the extension of ‘water’ without at the same time changing the world, I thereby also change the state of mind which consists in my attaching a sense or *Sinn* to it. Now if this is true it seems not to entail the Weak Rejection of (C): it seems not to entail that if I had been taught the use of ‘water’ in an environment different from that on Earth (i.e. if I had been taught the use of ‘water’ on Twin-Earth), the sense or *Sinn* I attach to ‘water’ would have been different from that I actually attach to it.

To put the point another way. Consider again what McDowell says about the thought that someone is talking about me in the next room (see the quote on p.7 above), and let’s make it instead the thought that someone is drinking water in the next room. According to McDowell, what the rejection of the Master-Thesis comes to in this case is this: the thought can be conceived of as something to whose identity it is essential *that its representational content is that someone is drinking water in the next room* (my emphasis). But what rejection of (C) comes to is this: it is essential to my thinking the thought that someone is drinking water in the next room *that there is (or has been) some water in my environment* (my emphasis). And there is certainly no straightforward entailment from

- (*) The psychological state which constitutes my thought that someone is drinking water in the next room has its representational content essentially²¹

to

²¹ Note that this is not obviously a trivial claim, amounting to something like “You think someone is drinking water in the next room only if you think someone is drinking water in the next room”. McDowell would claim that (*) would be rejected by someone who held to a “duplex” conception of representational states (such as that discussed in McGinn 1982); according to the duplex conception “the concept of command of a meaning ... is the concept of something that is, in itself, in the head, but conceived in terms of its relations to what is outside the head” (1992b: 37). Thus the state which constitutes the “in-the-head” component of my thought that P could be possessed by someone else, where, because of its sustaining some different relation to what is outside the head, it constitutes an “in-the-head” component of an entirely different thought. If the “in-the-head” state is taken to be the psychological state *itself*, then we have a violation of (*). I won’t consider here whether McDowell is fair to the “duplex” conception or whether there is a version of the “duplex” conception which can respect (*), since my aim is only to see what follows if we *grant* McDowell his solution to the rule-following paradox and the associated critique of the “duplex” conception. But there is no doubt that there is some tension in McDowell’s position here; the less trivial (*) is, the less likely it is that the Master-Thesis can be dispatched simply by calling it “quite counterintuitive”, while the more trivial (*) is, the less plausible it is to claim that it is violated by defenders of the “duplex” conception.

(**) It is essential to my thinking the thought that someone is drinking water in the next room that there is (or has been) some water in my environment.

Or at least, if McDowell thinks that there is such an entailment, we are still very much in need of an argument to justify this thought.

Or to put the point a third way. What SRMT gets you is the thought that changing the extension of a predicate *whilst keeping the state of the world fixed* necessarily goes with changing its sense or *Sinn*. But this claim is simply silent on whether the sense or *Sinn* can stay constant if we change the extension *but also change the state of the world*.

In general, then, the internal relationship between sense and extension which is at the heart of SRMT is logically independent of the internal relationship between environment and sense which is at the heart of Weak Rejection of (C). But this undercuts McDowell's appeal to the Strong Rejection of the Master-Thesis as a way of explaining how (C) can plausibly be rejected. The picture of the mind—the rejection of the idea of the mind as an organ or as populated only by states allowed by the Master-Thesis—might be plausible, but the invocation of that picture in no way helps us get a grip on how there can be states of mind—like grasping the sense of 'water'—which are not "psychological states in the narrow sense".

This point can be pressed home by considering how matters look from the standpoint of Putnam.²² Putnam runs the Twin-Earth argument and at the final stage he rejects (B) rather than (C). McDowell rejoins: "you've only rejected (B) rather than (C) because you don't accept SRMT. If you accepted SRMT you would thereby be entitled to give up (C) via accepting Weak Rejection of (C)". But now why should Putnam not issue the following counter-reply: "nothing you have said convinces me that accepting SRMT entails Weak Rejection of (C). So even if I accept SRMT, I can still refuse to accept the Weak Rejection of (C). Thus, nothing you've said yet convinces me that I ought to give up (C) rather than (B)".

9. However, perhaps, there is a response available to McDowell here. Perhaps McDowell can argue that what *prevents* Putnam from rejecting (C) rather than (B) is his refusal to accept SRMT. That is to say, maybe the Master-Thesis entails the denial of the Weak Rejection of (C), so that unless Putnam accepts SRMT he will not see the opportunity of reading the *Twin-Earth* argument in such a way as to preserve (B) at the expense of (C). Is it plausible to suppose that if we accept that there are no mental states of grasping senses which considered in themselves do impose a normatively characterisable shape on things outside the mind we must reject Weak Rejection of (C)

²² Again, I am referring here to the Putnam of (1975).

i.e. we must conclude that “all psychological states are psychological states in the narrow sense”. Take any such state: my grasping the sense of ‘water’ for example. Then it would follow that I could be in that very same state of mind even though the world hadn’t changed but the extension of the term had. Does it follow from this that I could have been in that very same state of mind even if I had been educated in the use of ‘water’ in a *Twin-Earth* style environment? It seems not: this is, at best, extremely unclear. Again, if this is the point McDowell intends to press, we are badly in need of an argument to back it up.²³

10. My conclusion is thus that even if we grant McDowell his favoured way of undercutting Kripke’s Wittgenstein’s sceptical paradox about rule-following, it is at best very unclear how that is supposed to legitimate a reading of Putnamian Twin-Earth style arguments which conclude, inter alia, that at least some states of mind—such as grasping the sense of a natural kind term like ‘water’—are not “psychological states in the narrow sense”. I therefore end with a challenge to those philosophers who think that there is a route from the rule-following considerations to McDowell-style cognitive externalism: explain how we can move from SRMT, either with or without auxiliary premises, to the Weak Rejection of (C), or find a better route from rule-following to externalism.²⁴

²³ And even if McDowell had such an argument, it’s not clear that it would be enough. That which prevents Putnam from rejecting (B) rather than (C) would have been removed. But this hardly amounts to a *reason* to reject (C) rather than (B), which is surely what Putnam will rightly demand of McDowell.

²⁴ The avoidance of metaphor is important here: it is perhaps easy to slide from the thought that a state of mind does not “just stand there like a signpost” to the thought that that state of mind is, in the familiar sense, “wide”. Once we think seriously about what underlies the “signpost” metaphor, it is less easy to make the slide. It seems to me that a similar problem vitiates much of McDowell’s (1986). Just as in the papers under consideration above he confuses SRMT with the Weak Rejection of (C), in his (1986) he appears to confuse something like SRMT with allowing the possibility of object-dependent thoughts. This confusion seems to me to be no better than the one I criticise in the text, but I cannot justify this suspicion here.

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