

Art and Externalism

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'What is a well-chosen collection of pictures, but walls hung round with thoughts?' Joshua Reynolds

'If the lines on your hand are wrinkles, it must mean your hands worry a lot'
Andy Warhol

Abstract

How have artists understood the relationship between the mind and the world? This paper presents statements by a number of artists that speak of how subjective experience is constituted by the unity of inner self and outer reality, or how objects in the world can acquire mental properties. I will discuss some reasons why artists hold these views and how they might contribute to the ongoing debate between internalist and externalist theories of mind. Drawing on the conception of mind-world relations attributed to artists, a way of understanding perceptual experience will be outlined that stresses the reciprocity between head-bound and world-bound processes. This approach allows the opposing, and seemingly incompatible, views of internalists and externalists to be embraced within a more inclusive schema.

Introduction

This paper considers the views of several artists concerning the nature of the relationship between the mind and the world. When statements by these artists are understood in the context of their artistic practice they reveal a strong tendency towards, what I will call, an 'externalist-like' view of mental processes and properties. Despite having a propensity towards externalist-like views, however, artists sometimes make statements that are 'internalist-like'. Artists, it seems, can hold both internalist-like and externalist-like views without fear of contradiction. Rather than taking this as evidence of naïve inconsistency on the part of artists I want to suggest that some of the views discussed here point to a way of accommodating both internalism and externalism within a more inclusive explanatory schema, and that this may contribute to resolving some of the current disputes around these issues.

Internalism and externalism

There are two broadly opposing views about how the mind-world relationship is constituted. One view, sometimes called internalism, is that the mind is entirely the result of brain processes inside the head. The brain-centred mind is essentially separate from the world (including the body) because it is conscious while the world is not. The world is never perceived directly but is available to the subject only as an internal representation generated by neural activity. Internalism is frequently taken as the default starting point for scientific investigations into the conscious mind. The psychologist William James was direct in his assertion: 'The fact that the brain is the one immediate bodily condition of the mental operations is indeed so universally admitted nowadays that I need spend no more time in illustrating it, but will

simply postulate it and pass on' (James 1890, p. 4). The biologist Francis Crick, more recently, insisted on what he called the 'astonishing hypothesis' that all our mental activity is attributable to '...no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules' (Crick 1994, p. 3). Chris Frith, an eminent neuropsychologist, has presented a clear and authoritative account of the internalist view in a book subtitled 'How the brain creates our mental world' (Frith 2007). Citing evidence from numerous experimental studies he sets out to show it is through the activity of the brain alone we acquire our sense of self-awareness and within which we generate a model of the external world that is quite distinct from the world itself. A few brief quotes from the book illustrate this position: 'The physical world is utterly different from the mental world.' (p. 16); '...our brain creates the illusion that we have direct contact with objects in the physical world.' (p. 17); '...I am firmly convinced that I am a product of my brain, as is the awareness that accompanies me.' (p. 23n); 'So what we actually perceive are our brain's models of the world. They are not the world itself...' (p. 34).¹

In contrast to internalism are the various flavours of externalism to be found in the current literature. Briefly, externalists prefer to think of the mind as in some way extending out of the head through the body into the world. Among recent examples from philosophy of mind are the 'radical externalism' of Ted Honderich (Freeman 2006), Susan Hurley's 'shared circuits' model (Hurley 2008), Alva Noë's 'enactive' externalism (2005/2009), and Andy Clark and David Chalmers' 'active externalism' (Clark 2008). From a psychological perspective, Stephen Cowley (2003) has applied a distributed cognition approach to early language development; Raymond Gibbs (2006) offers a model of cognition that depends on interactions between brain, body and environment, while Max Velmans (2008) has proposed a form of externalism he calls 'reflexive monism' to account for perceptual experience. Whatever their stripes, all externalists stress the interdependence between mind and world when accounting for mental properties, highlighting the contribution of bodily, social and environmental factors. As Alva Noë puts it: 'You are not your brain. We are not locked up in a prison of our own ideas and sensations. The phenomenon of consciousness, like that of life itself, is a world-involving dynamic process. We are already at home in the environment. We are out of our heads' (Noë 2009, p. xiii). For Andy Clark, a prominent advocate of the extended mind thesis: 'the local mechanisms of mind...are not all in the head. Cognition leaks out into body and world' (Clark 2008, p. xxviii). The philosopher Gregory McCulloch notes that externalism of various kinds has attracted growing support in the last few decades within cognitive science and philosophy of mind (McCulloch 2003, p. 11). In fact, a 2009 survey conducted among the philosophical community showed those inclined to the view that

¹ Although commonly advocated by scientists, internalism of various kinds is also supported by philosophers: In a famous paper, U. T. Place (1956) asserted the identity between brain processes and our 'inner' mental experiences; John Searle (1991, p. 18) has proposed '...all mental phenomena...are caused by processes going on in the brain'; Jerry Fodor (1991) has defended a 'narrow content' approach and, as we will see below, objected to recent theories of extended cognition.

mental contents are external held a substantial majority over those who regarded them as internal (Philpapers.org 2010).²

Over the last decade a number of critics of externalism have come forward, including Robert Rupert, Frederick Adams and Kenneth Aizawa. These 'anti-externalists' accuse advocates of the extended mind of flouting common sense. Adams and Aizawa have referred to the 'crazy hypothesis of extended cognition' (2010a, p. viii), and Rupert has talked of the way such theories imply 'highly counterintuitive attributions of belief' to inanimate objects (2004, p. 390). In their seminal paper on the extended mind, Clark and Chalmers use the fictional example of Otto, a person suffering memory loss, who uses a pencil and a notebook to remind him how to get to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. They argue the pencil and notebook become constituents of the overall cognitive processes going on in Otto's mind, such that his mind extends from his head to the objects in question (Clark 2008, p. 227). For critics, this carries the absurd implication that the pencil in itself has mental properties of the kind enjoyed by a thinking person (Adams and Aizawa 2010b, p. 67).³

This paper will consider some of the similarities between the externalist ideas being debated among scientists and philosophers and certain views espoused by artists. While there are significant overlaps in these two sets of views, they should also be distinguished. As we will see, the externalist tendencies expressed by artists reflect a general way of understanding mind-world relations that is conditioned by the nature of their practice and the traditions of their discipline. Externalism of the kind advocated by scientists and philosophers is more systematic and focused specifically on countering internalism. For the purposes of this paper I refer to the generalized views attributed to artists as 'externalist-like' to distinguish them from the more specialized form of externalism to be found in the scientific and philosophical

² There is a diverse and growing literature on externalism, the extended mind, and subject-world integration. Examples include the ecological approach of Gregory Bateson (1972); Hilary Putnam's (1975) arguments for semantic externalism and the related work of Tyler Burge (1988); the anthropological studies of Alfred Gell (1998) who developed his own theory of the extended mind; the biologically inspired extended mind of Rupert Sheldrake (2003, and Freeman 2005); the anti-dualism of Teed Rockwell (2005); the 'spread mind' view advocated by Riccardo Manzotti (2006); and the phenomenological approach of Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, which stresses the 'co-emergence of mind and world' (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008, p. 125). Among these I would include my own work on the posthuman conception of mind-body-technology integration (Pepperell 1995/2003).

³ Key arguments and figures in this debate are represented in the volume *The Extended Mind*, edited by Richard Menary (2010). Andy Clark addresses many of the objections to the thesis of extended mind at length in Clark (2008).

literature. However, later in the paper some of these externalist-like ideas will be applied to the debate between internalists and externalists to show how they can make a contribution.

The externalist-like views of artists

When artists discuss the relationship between the mind and the world they frequently do so in ways that stress the continuity or interdependence between what's in the head and what's in the world. Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) sought to transcribe his visual experience into paint as directly as he could. There are numerous accounts of the meticulous working process through which he sought to capture the nuances of form and colour in the world he saw (Kendall 1988). The poet Joachim Gasquet transcribed many of the conversations he had with the artist while out walking in the Provençal landscape, which Cézanne painted obsessively. During one discussion Cézanne described the necessity of conjoining with the landscape in order to effectively depict it, talking of: '...two parallel texts: nature seen and nature felt, the nature which is out there (he indicates the blue and green plain) and the nature which is in here...(he taps himself on his forehead) both of which must unite in order to endure...' He went on: 'The landscape is reflected, becomes human, and becomes conscious in me...it seems to me I'll become the subjective conscience of this landscape, just as my painting will be the objective conscience' (In Doran 2001, p. 111). Cézanne believed his experience of nature transcended the internal-external distinction, being constituted through the unity of both. As he observed the external world it acquired mental properties — it became conscious 'in' him as a subjectively felt experience. At the same time, this experience became embodied in the material form of his paintings — his 'objective conscience'. Looking then at what the art critic Roger Fry regarded as one of his finest landscapes, *The François Zola Dam* (Figure 1) we are presented with not just a painted representation of a landscape, according to Cézanne, but a tangible extension of the artist's felt experience.⁴

⁴ In this and subsequent discussions about artists' ideas it is crucial to consider their verbal statements in relation to their artworks, which inevitably are the key vehicles for their ideas. I would strongly encourage readers to study the works of the artists discussed here in good quality colour reproductions either in print or online (or better still to study the originals). It is only in the context of this direct experience of the artwork that the ideas and intentions of the artists can be fully appreciated.



Figure 1. Paul Cézanne, *The François Zola Dam*, 1877-78, Oil on canvas, 54 x 74 cm, Gwendoline Davies Bequest, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

The poverty of Cézanne's artistic reputation throughout much of his life contrasts with the wealth of influence he exerted on subsequent generations, in particular one of the originators of cubism, Georges Braque (1882-1963). Braque, who consistently pledged his debt to Cézanne, followed his predecessor's example by applying himself to deep contemplative study of nature both in landscape and still life. In a text elicited by the art critic John Richardson, and published in *The Observer* in 1957, Braque expounded his approach in a way that carries metaphysical, even mystical, overtones: 'You see, I have made a great discovery: I no longer believe in anything. Objects don't exist for me except in so far as a rapport exists between them, and between them and myself' (Richardson 1964, no pagination). For Braque, the world revealed through intense artistic contemplation is not populated by independently existing objects. Objects come into existence only through the relation — the 'rapport' — between perceiver and perceived and between object and object. On such a view there is a necessary interdependence between internal subjectivity and external objectivity, wherein one acts upon the other in order to produce the experience as a whole. Consider a work from the 'Atelier' or 'Studio' series of the early 1950s, which relies for its fullest appreciation on the very 'rapport' about which Braque spoke (Figure 2). In *Studio V* of 1949-50 we are not presented with a clearly defined array of recognisable things but instead a pattern of ambiguous forms and textures. These evoke rather than precisely delineate objects, each of which gains its identity in part through its relation to others. The outline of the bird is relatively clear, but elsewhere it requires time and effort to discern things like a palette, an easel, shafts of light, curtains, and a depiction of a painting, which could be the very work we are looking at itself. Grasping these objects, and the organisation of the space in which they sit, requires an active negotiation

between the viewer's imagination and the fabric of the work; neither of which exclusively determines what is present.



Figure 2. Georges Braque, *Studio V*, 1949-50, Oil on canvas, 147 x 176 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Braque and Picasso's pre-World War I cubism, in turn, decisively influenced Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), who followed its methods by reducing the organic complexity of natural scenes to their linear essence in his work during the period around 1912. This led ultimately to the 'block' style of the 1920s with which he is most associated where the picture is constructed from perpendicular black lines and rectangles in various combinations of primary colours and greys. Philosophical thinking lay at the core of Mondrian's practice, to the extent that he has been called an 'artist-metaphysician' (Lipsey 1988, p. 66). The numerous dense, almost hermetic, texts he wrote expounded the rationale behind his austere paintings — paintings that few others appreciated throughout much of his life. Mondrian's metaphysical position is not simple, or even necessarily consistent. But it is full of enormous intellectual ambition and the expectation that art could develop human consciousness towards what he saw as the next stage in its evolution. Mondrian held art to be an intermediary between the 'inward' and 'outward', that is, between individual consciousness and 'universal' reality. He developed the notion of the 'abstract' to describe a condition in which art unifies the internal subject with reality beyond: 'Thus painting *demonstrated* the meaning of the "abstract" in art and that this is established *by the most profound interiorization of the outward and by the purest (...) exteriorization of the inward.*' (Holtzman and James 1986, p. 151, emphasis in original) The perpendicular lines that appear in his work from the 1920s present us with the

co-existence of 'extreme opposites' on a single plane (ibid, p. 30). This deliberate compounding of oppositions was intended to manifest what he saw as the duality underlying all natural processes and at the same time their ultimate equilibrium, what he called '...unity in a single outwardness.' The purpose of his art was to achieve through 'plastic' form '...a *reconciliation* of the mind-matter duality' leading to a '...new consciousness: individual-universal equilibrium' (ibid, p.30).



Figure 3. A view of some works in the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, St. Ives, Cornwall. Photograph by the author, 2010.

In contrast with Mondrian's somewhat austere approach we find a more sensuous involvement with the world in the work of British sculptor Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975). Her pieces are often voluptuous and sinuous in form, delicately balancing piercings and hollows with solidity and mass. The sculpture visible on the right of Figure 3 is *Four Square (Walk Through)* of 1966, which invites the viewer to enter and be enveloped by the massive bronze forms. The viewer then becomes part of the work, which itself is part of the environment. Hepworth attributed her artistic temperament to childhood experiences of the landscape:

All my early memories are of forms and shapes and textures. Moving through and over the West Riding landscape with my father in his car, the hills were sculptures; the roads defined the form. Above all, there was the sensation of moving physically over the contours of fulnesses and concavities, through hollows and over peaks — feeling, touching, seeing, through mind and hand and eye. This sensation has never left me. I, the sculptor, am the landscape. I am the form and I am the hollow, the thrust and the contour. (in Bowness 1993, p. 9)

Such statements, sampled from among many to be found in the literature, show how artists have understood the external world to be part of what constitutes their subjective experience. This stress on the integration of subject and world in the constitution of mind is common to some externalist philosophers, such as Alva Noë, and prompts the claim that such artistic views are 'externalist-like'. At the same time, in common with other externalists, like Andy Clark and David Chalmers, artists have shown a willingness to accept that mental properties of the kind internalists confine to the head can extend to objects in the world, as we will see below. In the case of artists, these convictions are based not on logical argument, as it might with philosophers, or on metaphysical speculation, as it might in the case of spiritualists and mystics who have also espoused externalist-like ideas (e.g. Steiner 1991). Rather, the artistic tendency to assign mental properties to material objects stems from the practical necessities of their discipline and the artistic tradition in which they work.

The motivation of artists' externalist-like views

Why should artists frequently express externalist-like ideas? Internalism, to remind us, denies the world beyond the body is part of what constitutes the mind, and is the most widely accepted view in science about how the mind relates to the world. Is the externalist-like tone of artists' ideas merely a consequence of their ignorance about the relevant science? I think not. The artist James Turrell (1943-) is widely renowned for his exploration of colour and light. He has a degree in experimental psychology and has studied human perception and its role in constructing our experience of reality. Nevertheless, he claims: '...the most interesting thing to find is that light is aware that we are looking at it, so that it behaves differently when we are watching it and when we're not, which imbues it with consciousness' (Turrell 2002). To better understand why many artists profess externalist-like ideas we need to consider certain practical aspects of the art making process and traditions of the artistic culture.

In order to carry out their work artists are constantly manipulating paint, wood, plaster, light sources, computer code or whatever materials they employ in order to arrange them in a way that is meaningful in terms of their intentions as artists. They do this in order to invest the materials with properties they would not otherwise have, properties generally regarded as mental such as meaning, ideas, emotion, feelings, or associations. It is not surprising then that someone whose daily practice consists in investing inanimate matter with mental properties would come to regard those properties as embodied within the fabric of the work. Barbara Hepworth, whose sculptural methods brought her intimately into contact with her materials, felt it necessary that the work become a repository of the artist's thoughts. She remarked: 'It is the sculptor's work fully to comprehend the world of space and form, to project his individual understanding of his own life and time as it is related universally in this particular plastic extension of thought, and to keep alive this special side of existence.' (in Harrison and Wood 2003, p. 394). Elsewhere she says: 'My left hand is my thinking hand...the rhythms of thought pass through the fingers and grip of this hand into the stone' (in Bowness 1993, p. 10). Artists can become so adept at handling certain materials that they cease to regard them

something 'outside' or separate from them; they become 'extensions of thought', to use Hepworth's phrase. 'I think best in wire,' said the sculptor Alexander Calder, who produced countless works in that medium (in Lipman 1977, p. 238).

One of the jobs of an artist (as art students are often advised) is to cultivate a high degree of visual sensitivity to the world and relay this through their work to those who have neither the time nor inclination to see so acutely for themselves. Georgia O'Keeffe, who made many large studies of flowers, said 'I will make even busy New Yorkers take time to see what I see of flowers' (in Benke 1994, p. 31). Achieving this heightened acuity may require studying a particular object or scene for hours or days on end, which produces a close affinity with the subject that is then reflected in the work. This process of intensive study can gradually erode, in the mind of the artist at least, the supposed separation between perceiver and perceived. In a widely referenced book on drawing the artist Frederick Franck offers this advice: 'In order to draw a horse, draw horses until you practically become a horse — not "horses in general", but always that particular horse you are drawing at a given moment. Until you feel the tense curving of its neck in your own neck!' (Franck 1973, p. 55). The lesson is that by integrating ones' self with the object studied one is better able to depict it. Talking about trying to capture his experience of the open air, Cézanne said: 'To paint it in its reality! And to forget everything else. To become reality itself.' (In Doran 2001, p. 115)⁵ Mentally integrating oneself with one's subject matter may not be sufficient for making great art, but it may be necessary. The degree of sensitivity to the environment entailed is conducive to the difficult task of translating a subject convincingly into material form. It is probably no accident that artists who adopt this approach, several cited here, are deemed highly successful at conveying their experience of the world through artful manipulation of materials.

Artists also have a strong incentive to imbue their images with perceptible mental properties since the more compellingly they do this the more affective the work will be for their audience. As Leonardo da Vinci advised painters: 'You must depict your figures with gestures which show what the figure has in his mind, otherwise your art will not be praiseworthy' (in Baring 1906, 117). For centuries, it has been part of their professional culture that artists should aspire to affect their audiences through the palpable display of mental qualities in their work. The eminent art critic Kenneth Clark spoke about the way portraits by Velasquez (one of the most praiseworthy painters of all) can capture and vividly evoke the sitters' personalities: 'As I stand in the big Velasquez room of the Prado I am almost oppressed by his uncanny

⁵ The phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, writing with great perceptiveness about art and the process of looking, also recognised the way in which the intensified perceptual awareness displayed by artists can dissolve the boundary between the self and the world. He spoke of '...action and passion so slightly discernible that it becomes impossible to distinguish between who sees and who is seen, who paints and what is painted.' (Merleau-Ponty 1964, p. 167)

awareness of human character. It makes me feel like those spiritualistic mediums who complain that they are being disturbed by “presences” (Clark 1972, p. 38). For professional reasons, then, artists are encouraged to 'bring matter to life' by arranging it in such a way that viewers are persuaded of the presence of mental properties within the work. There is no suggestion here that art objects are independent thinking agents, or that Clark believes that Velasquez has literally implanted spirits into his portraits. But neither is it the case that, to judge by the statements of artists and critics, works of art are perceived as devoid of mental properties. Such properties are attributed to the work, but not in any delusional way.

The idea that works of art can carry or convey mental properties might smack, for some, of animism — what Sigmund Freud saw as the ‘primitive’ belief in ghostly forces that give physical objects a ‘soul’. Freud held art to be the last remaining place in civilized culture where belief persists in the ‘omnipotence of thoughts’ (Freud 1991, p. 90). In this vestige of early human development, as he saw it, the person projects his or her mind into objects in the world, such as works of art. The objects then become physical manifestations of those thoughts, to be manipulated for magical or other purposes. If Freud was right it would explain the tradition of belief among artists (and art critics) in what he called the ‘magic of art’, that is, its capacity to imbue in animate matter with mental properties.⁶ The persistence of this belief, as seen in the previous quote from Hepworth, demonstrates how for artists mental properties are present in both material artifacts and living beings.

The fact, then, that artists and art critics espouse externalist-like beliefs can be attributed to certain practical necessities of their profession and traditions within their culture. It is why artists feel it necessary to immerse themselves in their subject in order to best depict it, and why they strive to impart mental properties to matter. The value of these beliefs for artists lies not only in better understanding how one makes art but how it will be better received by audiences. Artists' reputations and careers depend on the reception given to their work by peers, critics, art historians and the public. The fact that artists work hard to imbue their works with mental properties (emotions, feelings, ideas), and in the case of successful works that critics and public are able to reliably appreciate such properties in the works, provides some verification for the externalist-like beliefs that inform their practice. Of course, the fact that we can appreciate the mental properties invested in works of art does not validate the externalist-like beliefs discussed here in any formal, philosophical sense.⁷

⁶ Alfred Gell developed a related thesis in his anthropological study of art, *Art and Agency* (Gell 1998).

⁷ Some might argue the fact that properties can be detected in works of art does not mean they are ‘there’ in any objective sense. It could be they only appear within the work as projections of the imagination, or that the works merely signify certain mental properties rather than having such properties in themselves. Space doesn’t permit a detailed discussion, but the argument made below, which proposes a reciprocal understanding of mind-world relations, addresses the general point by ascribing mental properties to

But it shows what motivates them and why they are plausible in the context of artistic discourse.

A reciprocal approach to mind-world relations

The general view of mind-world relations espoused by many artists is one in which subjective experience is constituted by the integration between the self and the external world and where mental properties can be imparted to physical objects through the practice of art. Stressing the interdependence between self and world in the constitution of experience and holding that mental properties can exist beyond the head are ways of conceiving mind-world relations that some artists and externalist-minded philosophers broadly share. Given the imperatives that drive artists' externalist-like views, do those engaged in the more formal debates about externalism have anything to learn from artists' thoughts on these matters? In what follows I will offer an approach to understanding mind-world relations that is consistent with these views held by artists, and other art-related thinkers. I will then show how this understanding can be applied to the dispute between internalists and externalists in a way that may ultimately allow these two opposing views to be reconciled.

We have seen how artists are deeply committed to externalist-like beliefs. But there are also examples in the literature, though less common, of artists making distinctly internalist-like remarks as well. Despite ascribing consciousness to light, as noted above, James Turrell also said: 'We like to think that this is the rational world we're receiving through our senses, but that isn't the way it works. It's what's behind the eye that forms the reality that we create' (Turrell 2002). If artists share the same professional imperatives and culture that leads them to espouse externalist-like views then why should they sometimes express internalist-like ones as well? One immediate response is that they are merely being inconsistent. But another, perhaps more interesting, response is that they are indicating the possibility of some more inclusive conception of mind-world relations that takes us beyond the internalist-externalist dichotomy, and it is this latter option I want to explore.

For the artists who espouse externalist-like beliefs internalism, of the kind attributed to many scientists, would be inadequate as a way of accounting for the place of the mind in the world. The idea that our experience of the world is a construction of the brain may have some merit, but the idea that it is *only* a construction of the brain may be deeply suspect. To remind us of what internalists claim: 'When I look at a tree in the garden, I don't have the tree in my mind. What I have in my mind is a model (or representation) of the tree constructed by my brain' (Frith 2007, p. 170).⁸ For many artists such a view

neither the subject or the world alone but only to the mutual bond between them.

⁸ Some opponents of extended cognition rely heavily on the supposition, disputed by some, that mental content is composed of representations created by the brain, even though they acknowledge no evidence of such representations has yet been found (Adams and Aizawa 2010a, p. 36).

would be untenable, on both logical and intuitive grounds. As we saw in the case of Braque, the purpose of painting is not to represent objects in themselves (which anyway for him do not exist independently of his perception) but to evoke his *experience* of perceiving them. Artists frequently stress the importance of direct experience as the central concern of art rather than the indirect representation of objects or ideas. To the painter Rothko, for example, 'a painting is not a picture of an experience; it is an experience' (in Seiberling 1959, p. 82). Appealing to direct experience bypasses one of the logically messy implications of the internalist position: that all objects we perceive must exist in two places at once. In the case just mentioned by Chris Frith, for instance, internalism requires there to be two separate trees: a 'real' one in the world made of atoms and a 'representational' one in the brain composed of interacting neurons. But according to the view attributed to many artists here, in which our experience of a tree *is part of* what constitutes the tree as a whole, there is only one tree, the one directly experienced — a position Braque explicitly endorsed when he said: 'A thing cannot be in two places at once. You can't have it in your head and before your eyes' (Braque 1971, p. 114). Granted, Frith and Braque are not motivated by identical aims; the former is declaring what he takes to be a scientific fact while the latter is making a conceptual point. But they bear comparison. The view endorsed by Braque, in which the tree we experience in the mind is as one with the tree in the world, has the advantage of being intuitively more compelling than the internalist alternative, which denies us any means of verifying what is beyond the head.⁹

But artists needn't deny that what's 'behind the eye' plays a crucial role in the construction of experience, that it 'forms the reality that we create', as Turrell put it. For while he rejects the duplication of objects between the world and the head, Braque also highlights the 'rapprochement' that binds him to the objects he contemplates, which situates his experience neither solely in himself or the world alone but in the reciprocal relationship between them. In other words, what's going on in the head still counts, but it's not all that counts. Referring back to Kenneth Clark's comments on Velasquez, we do not take him to mean either that the paintings in themselves are independent sentient agents or that the 'presences' he detects are solely inside him and nowhere else. Rather it is through his relationship with the properties Velasquez invested in

⁹ On an internalist account of perception, not only does the artist who paints a tree in the world not paint the tree itself but only the internally generated model tree in his or her head, we also find the viewer of the consequent painting has no access to the 'real' tree the artist painted, or even the depiction of the internally generated tree the artist painted, but only the model in the viewer's head of the depiction of the model tree from the artist's head. A defender of internalism would need to show how this unlikely formulation can better account for the veridical sense we have in the presence of say, Constable's *Study of the Trunk of an Elm Tree* (1821, Victoria & Albert Museum, London) than the direct experiential approach favoured by artists.

the paintings that Kenneth Clark has the experience he describes, an experience that cannot be attributed to him or the paintings alone.¹⁰

Applying the same argument in the famous case from philosophical externalism, it is the relationship between Otto's head and his notebook that facilitates the overall cognitive task of locating the Museum of Modern Art in the example described by Clark and Chalmers; neither his head nor the notebook achieve that cognitive task alone. Of course, internalists would dispute that experience, cognitive processing, or mental activity of any kind is constituted by anything going on outside the head. But the view attributed to artists here (which again I stress is neither scientifically nor philosophically derived) need not deny the role of the brain in allowing us to think and feel, to carry out cognitive tasks, to perceive, to store memories and thoughts, to dream and to hallucinate. It seems unnecessarily chauvinistic, however, to insist as internalists do that the brain produces all the diversity of our mental life in splendid isolation. It is more plausible from an artistic perspective to hold that when we attend to the world our experience is situated in the reciprocal bond between the innards of the head and breadth of the world, 'both of which must unite in order to endure,' as Cézanne put it.

Reconciling internalism and externalism

Internalism and externalism are both plausible and widely held positions within science and philosophy, each being underpinned by arguments and evidence; this is despite the fact that they are apparently poles apart. Chris Frith, as noted above, insists from an internalist perspective that mind and world are separate domains. Meanwhile, the phenomenologist Dan Zahavi, following Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, has recently argued there is no separation between the 'inner' or 'outer' domains at all (Zahavi 2008). It seems that to be an internalist is to deny externalism, and vice versa. So how could this dispute be resolved? There are several options: one is to let both sides continue to fight it out until the best argument wins, at the risk of prolonged stalemate. Another is to suspend judgment pending the arrival of overwhelming empirical evidence that tips the balance either way; both sides might argue such evidence already exists yet will continue to interpret it in different ways. Another is to compromise and accept a limited form of externalism in which some parts of the mind exist externally and others internally. This is effectively the stance taken by Andy Clark and David Chalmers in their paper *The Extended Mind*, though I admit to finding it rather

¹⁰ One of the major objections to the thesis of extended cognition is that coupling between a cognitive process in the perceiver's brain and artefacts in the world is erroneously construed by advocates of the thesis as being constitutive of the cognitive process as a whole (Adams and Aizawa 2010a, p. 88). The position outlined here is that it is precisely because of the reciprocal coupling between perceiver and artefact that the overall experience has the character it does. In the case of art, it is the reciprocal coupling between viewer and artwork that constitutes the aesthetic experience as a whole.

ungainly.¹¹ Another option, and the one I will consider in closing this paper, is to conceive of internalism and externalism as being subsumed within a larger, more inclusive, schema.

It seems reasonable to say that in order to have experience of the world we require a functioning brain (let's call what goes on in the brain 'head-bound processes') appropriately situated within a wider environment ('world-bound processes').¹² On this, internalists and externalists would probably agree. Where they would disagree is on the constitution of the mental properties associated with that experience, with internalists insisting, as we have seen, these properties are constituted entirely from head-bound processes and externalists insisting they are partly constituted by world-bound processes. The alternative proposed here is derived from the externalist-like beliefs attributed to the artists above. It is that our experiences of the world and their associated mental properties are constituted by the reciprocal relationship between head-bound and world-bound processes. Head-bound and world-bound processes, in this proposal, are quite distinct. Because of its unique and highly specialised structure (which is becoming increasingly well understood by neuroscientists) we know special things are happening in the brain that don't happen in trees, or even in bodies. We also know these head-bound processes are profoundly linked to our states of mind, whatever view one might take about the causal or correlational nature of that link. At the same time, these head-bound processes, were they to be entirely divorced from any world-bound processes, would be insufficient to account for our experience on the grounds of the rather uncontroversial claim made above, that normal experience of the world requires a functioning brain situated in a wider environment. We avoid the impending internalists-externalist impasse by accepting the distinction between head-bound and world-bound processes and, at the same time, their unity.

¹¹ David Chalmers (in Clark 2008) is clear in his view that while the aspects of the mind such as memories or beliefs may extend beyond the head, consciousness itself is probably confined to the brain: Andy Clark concurs by excluding experience from being part of the extended mind (Clark 2008, p. xv, pp. 223-224, p. 226). In other words, they regard the unconscious mind as extending into the world but not the conscious mind. To my mind, neither is clear on why cognitive processes like memories or beliefs are not part of the experience of the person who has them. It seems reasonable to hold that in the normal course of things when we access memories or have beliefs about the world and act upon them they count as part of our conscious minds, that is, as part of our experience.

¹² For the sake of argument I refer generally to head-bound and world-bound processes to avoid getting entangled in the more technical problem of deciding where the brain ends and the body or world starts, which is a fascinating question requiring too much space to address here. The role played by the body in the generation of experience, although important, will not be considered in detail since the distinction being discussed is that between intra- and extra-cranial theories of mind, which is the crux of the internalist-externalist dispute.

It's helpful to think of this relationship by analogy to marriage. For a marriage to exist there must be two discrete entities bound together in a single union; a marriage is one entity composed of two separate people. Each person has the property of being married but neither has it alone. By this analogy, our experience of the world comprises two distinct but unified sets of processes — head-bound and world-bound — both of which have the property associated with the experience but neither of which can constitute it in its entirety. The property in question is constituted only through the reciprocal relationship between both people in the case of marriage, or both head-bound and world-bound processes in the case of perceptual experience. In the case of perceptual experience, this proposal has the advantage of preserving the properties unique to both perceiver and perceived without negating their union.

To take a specific case: Jerry Fodor (2009), in his critical review of Andy Clark's *Supersizing the Mind*, says the 'internal model of the world contains stuff that the world itself does not' (p. 15). He gives the instance of a hypothetical belief, like 'if there are clouds, there will be rain', which can be true even if there aren't any clouds. But our experience of clouds and rain does not derive from head-bound processes alone; it derives from clouds and rain, which are world-bound processes. It is valid to separate what goes on in the brain from things around it: brains are not clouds and clouds have no beliefs. But it is also valid to say our experiences of the world, including our beliefs about the world, require the integration of the brain and the environment. In the case raised by Fodor, the beliefs in question and the mind that holds them are confined neither to the brain nor the world; they are a function of the reciprocity between brain and world, to be found in both and neither alone.

Why is this view different from the other forms of externalism discussed here, which also insist on the role of the extra-cranial processes in the constitution of the mind? For Andy Clark the mind *extends* out from the head into the environment; it 'leaks out into body and world' (Clark 2008, p. xxviii) in such a way that objects normally thought to be non-mental, like notebooks and computers, become co-opted as constituents of the mind. A problem with this approach is that redrawing the boundary of the mind around some object outside the head does not itself resolve the question of what distinguishes the mental from the non-mental, as critics have pointed out (Adams and Aizawa 2010b, p. 11). Nor is it clear why the brain retains sole responsibility for some mental functions, like consciousness, and not others, like cognition.

Externalism as advocated by Alva Noë, meanwhile, lays great stress on the way experience is enacted through the exercise of sensorimotor skills, to the point where, arguably, the role of the brain in constituting the mind is excessively underplayed; Noë provocatively titled an article 'Experience without the head' (Noë 2006). Giving the body and environment too much responsibility for generating experience is as problematic as giving it too little. The approach offered here, suggested by the externalist-like claims of artists, can avoid these difficulties. The mind (including the conscious mind) is not regarded as something centered in the head and (partially) extending outwards; nor is it something that relies predominantly on the way we exercise our sensorimotor skills at the expense of the role performed by the brain.

Rather, the nature of perceptual experience, and the conscious mind we associate with it, is constituted by the reciprocal action of quite distinct sets of processes: head-bound and world-bound. Hence, the kinds of mental properties we associate with our experience, and which artists commonly invest in artworks or the environment, are to be found both in the head and the world and in neither alone.

On this account, internalism and externalism, as we have described them, are both plausible because they are both partially right. Highly specialized activity is occurring inside our heads, just as internalists claim, which cannot be inflated or diminished in the way some externalists would prefer. Yet at the same time the intuitive and logical barriers to maintaining a purely internalist position, as we saw above, are considerable; our experience of the world must be exactly that — ‘of the world’ not ‘of our brain’. Externalists, therefore, are right to insist on the crucial contribution made by that which lies beyond the brain to the overall constitution of perceptual experience, and our minds in general. The reciprocal approach outlined here allows both internalism and externalism to co-exist, albeit in slightly modified form, within a more inclusive schema.

Conclusion

Mondrian's metaphysical intuition, summarized earlier, embraced what he called ‘extreme opposites’ within a single reality without negating either. This resulted for him in the highest state of human consciousness — the ‘individual-universal equilibrium’ — which he strove to manifest in his art. The fact that we feel ourselves to be distinct from the world and at the same time part of the world is just the kind of equilibrium of opposing states that for Mondrian gives form to reality and consciousness. It also echoes the formulation offered by Cézanne in which his experience of the landscape is composed of two parallel texts, which must ‘unite in order to endure’, and Braque's characterisation of the ‘rapport’ between himself and the world through which objects come into existence.

The approach to understanding the relationship between mind and world offered here is one rooted in artists' investigations into the nature of perceptual experience and how it can be recorded through their art. It is a way of thinking about the place of the mind in the world that has parallels with recent work in philosophy of mind, albeit expressed through the making and discussion of artworks rather than through formal logical argument. Indeed, it is not a view that sits easily with conventional logic, accepting as it does two apparently contradictory positions — internalism and externalism — within the same schema. But if internalism and externalism are both plausible and partially correct views about how the relationship between the mind and the world is constituted then we should not be surprised to find people who think deeply about the nature of that relationship reaching one or other of these conclusions if it turns out they are each describing the same phenomenon, but from opposite ends.

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