

Phenomenology of Embodiment and Perception: The Debate on Perceptual Conceptualism

Manoj Kumar Panda

Abstract

My aim in this paper is to understand the notion of embodied mind or embodied subject in the phenomenological tradition with reference to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. In this context, we shall discuss Merleau-Ponty's and Heidegger's view about the nature of our basic engagement with the world in relation to their understanding of the notions like perception, body and the world. We shall first discuss very briefly the traditional picture i.e., dualism between mind and body, more specifically, as it leads to, the dualism between conceptuality and embodiment. We shall also try to understand, in the above context, why in the history the supporters of dualism and other counterparts of dualism have not been able to address or understand the true nature of our engagement with the world. We shall, then, reflect on the ways in which phenomenologists have given us a different picture of embodied coping in particular and a picture of human subject in general and thereby have tried to convince us that dualism is not the accurate way to describe the true nature of our *being-in-the-world*. Our aim in this paper is to understand, in the context of the debate between Dreyfus and McDowell on perceptual conceptualism, how Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have attempted to address or radically overcome the problem of dualism. We will also discuss in particular how Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have understood the interrelated notions such as perception, embodiment and world.

Keywords- Perception, Embodiment, Phenomenology, Concept, Conceptualism, Body, world

Introduction

Hubert Dreyfus while attacking one of the widely discussed conceptualist account of our engagement with the world and particularly of perception proposed by John McDowell, asks “Can philosophers successfully describe the conceptual upper floors of the edifice of knowledge while ignoring the embodied coping going on in the ground floor; in effect, declaring that human experience is upper stories all the way down?”ⁱ (H. L. Dreyfus, 2005) This eventually turns into one of the significant debates in contemporary philosophy between McDowell and Dreyfusⁱⁱ on the relationship between conceptuality and embodiment in our basic engagement with the world which not only touches upon various key issues in philosophy of mind and phenomenology but also historically significant as it highlights how phenomenologists and Anglo-American philosophers can work together to understand human engagement with the world starting from perception to action. Dreyfus’ claim against McDowell is that the latter falls in to the dualism between conceptuality and embodiment which he calls “the myth of the mental”.ⁱⁱⁱ In his opinion the ground floor of human experience is pervasively determined by the embodied coping without any involvement of our conceptual capacities. The mindedness or conceptuality in Dreyfus’ account turns out to be the enemy of embodied coping. The old dualism between mind and body surfaces, according to Dreyfus, in the form of the dualism between conceptuality and embodiment in McDowell’s work if more emphasis is given on conceptuality over and above embodiment. McDowell replies to Dreyfus claiming that in latter’s account the notion of embodiment is problematic as it does not incorporate conceptuality in embodiment and hence it is a case of “myth of the disembodied intellect”^{iv} (J. McDowell, 2007) or ‘myth of the mind as detached’^v (J. McDowell, 2013). McDowell argues that it is Dreyfus who thinks that mind or self is necessarily detached and thereby cannot be present in our embodiment.

Dualism and its Counterparts

Rene Descartes proposed a notion of mind which is considered as disembodied and disengaged from the external world. Following Cartesian dualism, many philosophers at one point of time in the history of philosophy understood mind or subject as pure “I” which is metaphysical, transcendental^{vi} and non-empirical. Since then, philosophers across different philosophical traditions have struggled to place mind and consciousness in the natural world. Various alternatives have been proposed to overcome the problems that arise from Cartesian notion of mind. Phenomenological tradition (namely that of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty) proposes a radical alternative to overcome problems of Cartesian dualism by adhering to the notion of embodied mind or broadly construed embodied subject.

The dualism between mind and the world has been consistently part of our general perspective on the nature of the mental world, the physical world and the relation between them. Dualistic modes of understanding the mind and world and their interrelation still influence or shape our understanding of mind and its relation to nature. Starting from Descartes to the contemporary philosophical scenario, one can say, we have been very much a part of dualism in our reflection on the relation between mind and the world in the sense of either we are dualist or we have tried to overcome various denizens of dualism in different ways. There have been many manifestations of dualism in the history of philosophy. After Descartes, though various philosophers have argued against dualism but the question that has always remained is: have they been successful in breaking the framework of the tradition of dualism altogether? It seems that although philosophers have contributed a lot to the understanding of our mind and experience in resisting the dualistic mode of thinking, we are still in the grip of that traditional picture. In trying to solve the problem of dualism, we have somehow accepted the basic assumptions of it and therefore, have not been able to attack the fundamental constitutions of that traditional mode or framework of thinking about the

relation between mind and the world. Basic assumptions are those on which the pillars of dualism stand, one of which is that mind and body are ontologically distinct entities and through philosophical theories we can bring them together. While trying to get rid of one version of dualism, we very often have acknowledged another version of it in the background without being aware of doing so. It is, in the backdrop of dualism, very difficult to explain our perception, action or more generally human engagement with the world. If the reality is divided into two realms, it is not clear that our perception, thinking and action belong to which ontological realm.

The problem with dualism is that it provides only two ways of how we understand the human engagement with the world and these two ways are mutually exclusive from each other. According to the picture it offers, one should understand our perception and action either by a mentalist or by a physicalist explanation. But then it leads to the question, what is the relation between the mental and physical realm? To answer this question, we have overemphasized either on the mental aspect of reality or on the physical aspect of reality. We have emphasized one over the other in such a way that it leads to the problem of dualism or to fall into the trap of dualism in our thinking of the nature of the relationship between mind and the world. There are two ways in which our relation to the world have been described traditionally.

In this context, Merleau-Ponty says,

“One treats man as the result of the physical, physiological, and sociological influences which shapes him from outside and make him one thing among many; the other consists of recognizing a cosmic freedom in him, in so far as he is spirit and represents to himself the very causes which supposedly act upon him.”^{vii} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

In the traditional philosophy human beings have been seen either as purely external, physical on the one hand or as purely internal, rational and mental on the other. Human beings have been described in so

mentalistic a way that the bodily facet of its being becomes contradictory to it. On the other side, it has been described in so much physicalist way that, the rational, conceptual or reflective facet of its being becomes contradictory to it. These modes of understanding our relation to the external world give us a misguided picture of both our conscious experience of the world and objects of our experience and its relation to our thought. They treat the objects as completely physical objects and our consciousness as fully reflexive, self-evident and immaterial. Following Heidegger, one can in this context say that the notion of subject and her practical engagement with the world can be described properly neither in purely mentalistic way nor in purely physicalistic way, but in relation to the notion of *being-in-the-world*. Here one can also stress on the point that *being-in-the-world* cannot be comprehended with the help of the terminologies of traditional philosophy because these terminologies are conceived in relation to dualism. There are various denizens of dualism present in contemporary philosophy in the form of dualism between reason and nature, between conceptuality and embodiment. Some philosophers might think that if while avoiding cartesian dualism we try to describe a subject as embodied, then concepts and rationality must be kept away from this account. This again seems to be a trap we fall into while trying to explain the human engagement with the world.

The Picture of Mediational Epistemology and the Way Out

Following Wittgenstein, one can say that the above picture of dualism has kept us captive for long.^{viii} (L. Wittgenstein, 1953) We have time and again failed to demolish the picture because the trap of the dualism is multifaceted and culturally so deeply rooted that it is very difficult to get rid of this trap. Dualism is so deeply rooted in our culture that it is difficult to find its root. McDowell, in a similar vein as proposed by phenomenologists, says that instead of building a positive metaphysics in order to solve the problems of dualism, we need to attack the underlying assumptions of that philosophical problem. According to

him, if we question the basic assumptions of the philosophical problems, we will be in a position to free ourselves from asking the question: “how the relationship between mind and world is established?” In the pretext of solving the problem of dualism, the question arises: what is the picture of dualism? One can, in this context, say that maybe we have not been able to map the picture of dualism entirely or maybe we have not been able to dive deep into the problem. Charles Taylor, influenced by the works of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, in this context, suggests that, “the picture that held us captive was that of a mediational epistemology.”^x (C. Taylor, 2005) We can very well take it to be the basic structure of dualism and in Taylor’s opinion, “mediational epistemology is an understanding of the place of mind in a world such that our knowledge of reality comes through the representations we have formed of it within ourselves.”^x (C. Taylor, 2005). Through structure^{xi} (C. Taylor, 2005) is quintessential to “mediational epistemology,” says Charles Taylor. In the context of perception, this “through structure” would be the view that we can experience the world only through inner objects or beliefs or ideas, sense-data, images, concepts, etc. Our mind is related to world through the medium of inner representation, which is inside our mind and the world is external to it. That means we can never experience the world and act on it directly but always through a medium. The inner-outer distinction is made in such a way that no matter what kind of medium we introduce in the epistemological picture in terms of which we are connected to the reality, we are never able to merge the gap between two separate ontological realms. We can see the implications of this “through structure” in many areas of philosophy like philosophy of mind, ethics, epistemology, to name a few. Even in many contemporary theories of mind, the basics of dualism are present. We have developed various accounts of our critique of Descartes. But we have not been able to come out of the structure which we inherit from Descartes be it in the context of epistemology or about the very way of philosophizing in general.

Descartes, according to Taylor, was the founding father of this mediational epistemology as he laid the foundation of the ontological distinction between inside and outside, between inner and outer. According to him, there is no knowledge of the external world that is possible without taking ideas as a medium, which we possess inside our mind or within ourselves. In his opinion, we are essentially thinking beings, which have innate ideas and innate experiences without the need of the world. We are rational subjects, who seem to be standing over and against objects. Explaining this further on Cartesian interpretation, Charles Taylor says, we are disengaged subjects who are standing apart from society, tradition and culture.

According to Taylor, it is impossible to escape the imprisonment of mediational epistemology just by declaring that we have altered our point of view on it. The mediational picture continues to influence our thoughts that we have about the world without us really being aware of its actions. According to this picture, our grasp of the world is distinct from the object of which it is a grasp of. One has to take a drastic stance which must be different from the traditional approach. The question that should be asked is: how to completely get rid of “through structure” of mediational epistemology? It is also not right to claim that all contemporary philosophers fall into the trap of mediational epistemology. The specific question that can be asked here is, does McDowell’s conceptualist account fall into the trap of “through structure” of “mediational epistemology” which is quintessential to the mind-world dualism. I think Taylor’s allegation is not correct when he claims that McDowell’s account of perceptual experience is also similar to the picture of “mediational epistemology.” According to McDowell, when we are experiencing and acting in the world, we are directly open to the world. We are experiencing various properties of the objects but not the sense-data of the objects. For McDowell, concepts are not the medium through which we can have experience of the world. Concepts are transcendently operative in our perceptual experience as part of a

distinctive capacity of human being. We do not experience the world through the lenses of various concepts forming some kind of inner representations as if we can never be in direct touch with the external world. Moreover, McDowell's notion of space of reasons is not an interiorized notion of space of reasons. Concepts, in certain sense, are also required to be operative in experience, if we are to be directly in touch with the world. It is not introducing concepts in our experience in such a way that as a result it would lead to a picture of meditational epistemology. Taylor is not right in claiming that, for McDowell, "beliefs" and "concepts" are only valid part of the space of reasons. On the contrary, McDowell claims that concepts are pervasive in the space of reasons, but it is not the only element of space of reasons. The world itself is the reason for our thoughts about the world. For McDowell, without concepts, we cannot make space of reasons intelligible because space of reasons is a conceptual relation. But that does not lead to the supposition that concepts are the only element in the space of reasons. Concepts are a persistent element of the space of reasons in the sense that when our perceptions of the world justify the world, concepts are present in the perception. If we hold that concepts are the only elements of space of reasons and it is only through concepts, we are open to the world, then it opens up a way by which we would fall into the picture of mediational epistemology. The "through structure" of mediational epistemology is not like McDowell's conception of the way concepts mediate the relation between mind and world.

According to Charles Taylor, the basic assumption of mediational epistemology is:

"There are many versions of this theory, but the central idea in this picture, as we have seen, is that all our understanding of the world is ultimately mediated knowledge. That is, it is knowledge that comes through something "inner", within ourselves or produced by the mind. This means we can understand our grasp of the world as something that is in principle, separable from what it is a grasp of."^{xii} (C. Taylor, 2005)

This above allegation could also not be made against McDowell's position because in his opinion, external world itself is rationally responsible for giving us the content for our knowledge. It is not something radically "inner" in McDowell's account which creates knowledge about the external world as he gives importance to the independence of the world. The world, for McDowell, itself gives us the rational constraint for our thought in which our concepts are transcendently drawn into operation. Hence, it is not, as Dreyfus points out the upper floor of our knowledge consists only of concepts in McDowell's account. Moreover, the space of reasons, in McDowell's account, is not "an interiorized conception of the space of reasons" because for him, the external world is an important part of the space of reasons.

Critique of Intellectualism and Empiricism

We have discussed various aspects of the dualistic mode of thinking about the relation between mind and world and how in many ways it has been a part of our overall understanding of the mind-world relationship.^{xiii} We will now reflect on how Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have dealt with the problem of dualism in the way of trying to overcome it and how they have given us a different picture of the relation between mind and the world. We shall also look into how they have radically broken down the essence of the picture of mediational epistemology. According to Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, we have to completely reform our understanding of mind and its relation to the world in order to capture the true essence of our experience and engagement in the world. Merleau-Ponty calls for "leaving behind us, once for all, the traditional subject-object dichotomy."^{xiv} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) The origin of this dichotomy is a product of the framework under which dualism operates. One can say here that though we tried to leave behind us the dualism but the framework is still operating in our

thinking about the subject-world relationship. Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty reject traditional notion of both mind and body, subject and object. Not only that, they also reject, as I said, the framework in which we think about these notions. According to them, the traditional picture gets the nuanced picture of the relationship between mind and world in a completely wrong way. The relationship between self and other is not the relation of subject to object. The notion of subject is not to be seen as pure consciousness and as the not-body and the body is not to be seen as purely causal or material. The relationship of self and other is rather grounded in a holistic understanding of Being-in-the-world. The nature of being-in-the world must be a unified relation and even in principle we won't be able to split the unified structure of being-in-the-world. Our perception and embodied coping in the world cannot be described successfully either in exclusively causal way or in exclusively rational way. For Merleau-Ponty, neither the physiological point of view nor the logical or rational point of view are satisfactory in understanding the nature of our being-in-the-world. On the one hand, the inferential, logical and justificatory relation of our thoughts will not be able to capture the true essence of human beings' relation to the external world. On the other hand, the blind mechanistic, causal and corporeal ways fail to do justice in describing the human beings' engagement with the external world. Merleau-Ponty is a critic of both empiricism and intellectualism. His unhappiness with traditional notion of sensations and judgements can be seen in his critique of empiricism and intellectualism.

In this context, Mark Wrathall, while interpreting Merleau-Ponty, says, "What the phenomenology of lived experience teaches us, Merleau-Ponty believes, is that our primary way of being in the world is a bodily existence that, for its part, is experienced neither as a mental mode of comportment, with determinate conceptual contents, nor as a merely physical interaction with physical objects."^{xv} (M. A. Wrathall, 2005)

According to Merleau-Ponty, the basic way in which we relate to things in the world is neither sensory or reflexive, nor cognitive or intentional; instead, we should call it bodily or skillful. In his words, it is called “motor intentionality.”^{xvi} It can be described as that which when we grasp an object, neither do we get sensations of it nor do we think or rationalize about it, rather we take hold of it in our embodied coping with that object. Both our mental states and events and physical objects bear on our body in a way that are meaningful but not rational. It is not necessary that something, in order to be meaningful, has to be either exclusively rational or causal.

Now let us discuss why according to Merleau-Ponty experience is not mental or intellectual. We shall be able to reject dualism in showing that our experience is not conceptually articulated. According to him, our conceptually articulated experiential states are exceptional or uncommon in our mental life and experiential life. As he claimed, “just as we do not see the eyes of a familiar face but its look and its expression, so we perceive hardly any object.”^{xvii} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

When we experience a face or engage in talking to a human being, according to Merleau-Ponty, we do not experience the face as an object; rather, we experience its expressions, looks and other features.

In an extraordinary way, Merleau-Ponty says,

“In the natural attitude, I do not have perceptions, I do not posit this object as besides that one, along with their objective relationships, I have a flow of experiences which imply and explain each other both simultaneously and successively.”^{xviii} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

Intellectualism is the view that our perception is nothing but an active conceptual and rational reconstruction, just a form of judgement. It can be called, following Merleau-Ponty, as the antithesis of empiricism. This view is essential part of Cartesian and Kantian epistemology^{xix} and in modern times, it supports the “cognitivist theories of perception.” Intellectualism neglects the embodied feature of our experience and

situatedness of the subject's experience in the world. Intellectualism and empiricism constitute two different features of the same problem. Talking about how intellectualism blurs the distinction between sense experience and judgement, Merleau-Ponty writes,

“Ordinary experience draws a perfectly clear distinction between sense experience and judgment. It sees judgment as the taking of a stand, as an effort to know something valid for me at every moment of my life, and for other minds, actual or possible; sense experience on the contrary, is taking appearance at its face value... This distinction disappears in intellectualism, because judgment is everywhere pure sensation is not, which is to say everywhere. The testimony of phenomena will therefore everywhere be impugned.”^{xx} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

Intellectualism takes perception to be a form of judgement which is fixed and explicit. According to this view there is no difference between perception and judgement. It says that only judgement is everywhere from top to bottom in human engagements with the external world.

According to Merleau-Ponty, both intellectualism and empiricism do not give importance to indeterminate aspect of perception and world. Thus, he writes,

“Empiricism cannot see that we need to know what we are looking for, otherwise we would not be looking for it, and intellectualism fails to see that we need to be ignorant of what we are looking for, or equally again we should not be searching. In both empiricism and intellectualism, the indeterminate does not enter into the definition of the mind.”^{xxi} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

Intellectualism also holds a certain incorrigibility thesis of Cartesian variety. Merleau-Ponty asks, “if we see what we judge, how can we distinguish between true and false perception? How will we then be able to say that the *hallucine* or the mad man ‘think they see what they do not see’?”^{xxii} What will be the difference between ‘seeing’ and ‘thinking one sees’?” The problem with intellectualism is that it sees no difference

between these. It takes all kinds of perceptions to be true. Sense experience cannot be false because it involves a kind of judgement. Taylor Carman, thus, claims, “Intellectualism is not just a phenomenological distortion, then, but an incoherent doctrine pretending to explain perceptual appearances the very accessibility or even existence of which the doctrine cannot consistently admit.”^{xxiii} (T. Carman, 2005)

The other side of the problem is the claim that our perception or experience is causally constituted. According to Merleau-Ponty, this is not an accurate way of describing the real phenomena. Our experience is not constituted causally. Our basic comportment^{xxiv} in the world, which is accompanied by our experience of the world, cannot be described in causal terms. The causal account cannot capture the way that we experience ourselves as always already drawn into a situation that is meaningfully articulated. The way we articulate or grasp our situation is meaningful but neither causally meaningful nor rationally meaningful. A refutation of “sensation” or “sense-data” has been proposed by Merleau-Ponty which is central to various forms of traditional empiricism. What we have, in the content of perception, is not sense-data or sensations, it is rather the content of the external world, various properties of the objects. There is no such thing as sensation that we come across in our perceptual experience. Our perceptual experiences are very much intentional in the sense that these are directed towards the various objects in the external world. Perceptual experience is not something internal to the subject who perceives the world as traditional empiricists thought about. Hence Merleau-Ponty says, “the pure impression is therefore not just undiscoverable, but imperceptible and thus inconceivable as a moment of perception.”^{xxv} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

Sean D. Kelly in the following way has explained the normative aspect of our perception.

“It is part of my visual experience that my body is drawn to move, or, at any rate, that the context should change, in a certain way. These are

inherently normative, rather than descriptive, features of visual experience. They do not represent in some objective, determinate fashion the way the world is, and they say something about how the world ought to be for me to see it better.”^{xxvi} (S. D. Kelly, 2005)

For Merleau-Ponty, the “lived body” which one can say is the locus of the relation between mind and body, is neither fully mental nor purely physical. He is a critic of traditional notion of both judgements and sensations. Merleau-Ponty invented a new term which is called “motives”^{xxvii}. “Motives” are neither causally structured nor reason-based in order to understand this lived body. Motives, as a non-causal and non-rational means, provide the ground for coping in the world. The phenomenology of “lived body” is non-mental and non-material. So, the space of causes which natural sciences adhere to and space of reasons which philosophers like Kant, Sellars and McDowell hold on to are not the only alternatives where we can place our experiential life. Our experiential life is based on phenomenology of lived body which operates in the “space of motives.” Mark Wrathall says,

“...the fundamental workings of motivations are found in the way our environment and body work together to dispose us to particular ways of acting and experiencing. The world works by drawing on our skillful bodily dispositions.”^{xxviii} (M. A. Wrathall, 2005)

A phenomenological account of motives is very much outside of the Cartesian picture of mind-world dualism and also outside of the dualism of space of reasons and space of causes. The question arises: what precisely is the nature of “motive” and how does it differ from reason or cause? The way Merleau-Ponty uses the term is different from its ordinary use. He follows the Husserlian tradition of phenomenology in bringing that term into the forefront. He was also taking note of Edith Stein in this respect. Edith Stein defines a relationship of motivation as a connection between experiences and their antecedents in which there is “an arising of the one from the other, an effecting or being effected of

one on the basis of the other, for the sake of the other.”^{xxix} (M. A. Wrathall, 2005) Merleau-Ponty says that “motives” need not have to be always intentional states having propositional content. Objects, events and states of affairs are also taken as motives in his opinion. This characterization encompasses not just cases in which one is moved to act, but also cases where something simply gives rise to an experiential state, or events or dispositions. Phenomenological understanding of “motives” cannot be reduced to the traditional understanding of both “reason” and “cause.” It is altogether a different tool to grasp the way we are engaged with the world.

To come out from the dialectics of empiricism and intellectualism, Merleau-Ponty developed new conceptual tools to understand the relation between mind and world, relation between perception and the world, relation between rationality and embodiment, etc. According to him, intentionality should be understood as the mutual interconnection between perception and fabrics of the world. Intentionality should be understood neither as a conceptual and rational constructions of thoughts about the objects nor as purely sensations. Intentionality of our thought is neither by pure receptivity nor by pure spontaneity. The phenomenal field is the seat of intentionality. According to Taylor Carman, “What Merleau-Ponty calls the “phenomenal field” is neither a representation nor a locus of representations, but a dimension of our bodily embeddedness in a perceptually coherent environment, a primitive aspect of our openness to the world.”^{xxx} (T. Carman, 2005) Merleau-Ponty calls for a “intertwining” or “chiasm” of body and mind. This can create a radical alternative to understanding the intentionality of our mind and mental phenomena. It makes a radical departure from the pure and abstract notions of spontaneity and receptivity which was much prevalent in traditional philosophy of mind and epistemology. Merleau-Ponty’s and Heidegger’s phenomenology opens up a new path towards understanding the given in experience and rationality of our thought and the relation between them.

The question that arises in relation to the above discussion is: does McDowell's position fall prey to these above intellectualism and empiricism? Though McDowell himself claims to be an empiricist in a minimal sense, his view is radically different from traditional empiricism. It is evident from the fact that he is a critic of nonconceptualism of perception. In his opinion, we should not reject empiricism in total; rather we should retain some form of reformed empiricism where we can have a rational connection between mind and world. But while rejecting some form of empiricism or nonconceptualism, does he again become a victim of intellectualism? I think McDowell does create a distinction between experience and judgement unlike intellectualism, though he maintains that they all share some content i.e., conceptual. Introducing some form of conceptual content at the level of perception is not necessarily embracing a form of intellectualism. It does not make perception a form of judgement. Some of the comments he made in *Mind and World*, seems to be suggesting that perception is a nothing but just a form of judgement. But he, in his later writings, claims that the term conceptual should not be associated only with the content of judgements. The content of perception is both intuitional and conceptual. The lesson we can get from McDowell's later writings in this context is that experience is not a form of judgement if we are to believe that it is conceptual. By saying that it is conceptual, it does not lead us to fall in to a bad form of intellectualism.

Embodied Coping

Let us now reflect on Merleau-Ponty's view on embodied coping. There are many factors which are involved in embodied coping- our perception (the way we experience the world), our body, and the world and their mutual interrelations in the phenomenal field. When we say that in embodied coping, we respond to various situations in the world, the important question that arises is: what is that to which we respond? One can say that we respond to various objects as we see them or maybe we respond to various objects related to each other in a particular state of

affair. In this context, the question that has to be further asked is: do we see the objects in our embodied coping merely as the physical objects or as something else? Or do we respond to the objects only as an object? Is the object merely consisting of physical properties as we see them in our perception? There are many responses to these questions given from the phenomenological tradition- some of which we shall discuss here.

Now let us go through Merleau-Ponty's notion of "bodily subject" which is core of subject's embodied coping in the world.

Merleau-Ponty explicitly rejects the explanatory gap between the body as one has subjectively lived it and body as one subjectively living it. This is called "body-body problem" which arises due to the inconsistency or incoherence between one's subjectively lived body and one's body as an organism in the world, says Evan Thompson.^{xxx} (E. Thompson, 2010) Merleau-Ponty rejects this version of dualism by saying that self is not to be considered as merely embodied but bodily.^{xxxii} (E. Thompson, 2010) According to him, "I am not in front of my body, I am in my body or rather I am my body."^{xxxiii} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) He emphasized on describing us as bodily subjects which means that we should not understand the sentence, "I am my body" in a materialistic way. Our body is rather different from being a mere complex physical and corporeal object. According to him,

"The body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art... A novel, poem, picture, or musical works are individuals that is, being in which the expression is indistinguishable from the expressed, and their meaning, accessible only through direct contact, being radiated with no change of their temporal and spatial situation. It is a nexus of lived meanings, not the law for a certain number of covariant terms."^{xxxiv} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

Our body plays a more substantial role in our life rather than just being a complex physical entity. Merleau-Ponty has compared our body to a novel, because, for him, our body has a "nexus of lived meanings," the

grasping of which is not possible if we take it only as a physical object. In a novel, what is being expressed cannot be separated from the expression. In the case of body as well, we cannot distinguish it from our meanings, relevancies and richness of our experience and life. Our body is far more than just a physical entity and it refers to a living organism which is richer in meaning. There are two ways in which our body is constituted in our experience- a material body (corpus), and a living subject of experience or lived body. According to phenomenologists, it is wrong to suggest that body has two mutually irreducible, metaphysical properties and aspects.

Merleau-Ponty while discussing how our body is related to the world, says,

“... my body is geared on to the world when my perception presents me with a spectacle as varied and as clearly articulated as possible, and when my motor intentions as they unfold, receive the responses they expect from the world. This maximum sharpness of perception and action points clearly to a perceptual ground... a general setting in which my body can co-exist with the world.”^{xxxv} (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

Our bodily subject, our perceptual experience and the world are involved in the way we engage with various objects and situations in the world. The nature of basic engagements with the world depends on the above factors related to each other in a holistic way. We have already discussed briefly the way Merleau-Ponty sees our bodily existence. Now our task is to discuss how our body copes with the world. When we say that we engage with the world, the scope and the methods of our engagement are neither fixed, nor predictable prior to our engagements. Do we know all the possibilities associated with the object before we engage with it? The answer should be clearly “no.” Since we do not know all the possibilities of how the world or a particular situation will show up, so the question of whether we already have all the ways to deal with it does not arise. Here the point is, in our engagement with the world, we always face new

situations, new possibilities, and new challenges on our way. These new horizons throw up for us new motivations for coping. There are two kinds of coping, one can broadly say. One is skillful coping and the other is ordinary or everyday coping. An expert sportsperson or an expert musician has developed a skill of dealing with their respective things or circumstance which demands a much higher level of accuracy and expertise. But in the case of ordinary engagements like eating, talking, walking, etc. for example, it does not demand a high level of accuracy to perform that task or maybe we are not bothered so much about that. However, in both the cases of expert coping and ordinary coping, the new possibilities and new challenges are always present. Now the question arises: what is it to deal with new challenges and possibilities?

In Heidegger's opinion, the way we get around the world, the way we find ourselves in the world, the way we encounter the world, are associated with a certain sort of "understanding." In his opinion, "My being in the world is nothing other than this already-operating-with-understanding."^{xxxvi} (M. Heidegger, 1976) Then, the question is: What is the nature of this understanding and what is its relation to other capacities? There are so many ways in which the term "understanding" is understood by philosophers. Many philosophers these days call it "pre-reflective self-awareness." Our coping with the various things incorporates varieties of different abilities which are possible due to a holistic sense of us and our world. According to Merleau-Ponty, both intellectualism, on the one hand, and empiricism on the other hand, have made these senses and abilities seem to be different and opposite to each other. It is very difficult for Heidegger to draw a dividing line between our implicit grasp of things and explicit understanding of the things. Our implicit grasp and explicit understanding are separable from each other as well as related to each other in a holistic way. The ontological difference between our grasp of things and the things as has been traditionally seen is not possible to construct. It is not possible to actualize our ability to get around the city or campus without having the

city or campus. Our beliefs and dispositions and engagements in the world are not like moon-beliefs which I can achieve without the presence of objects. One can say that the ability to run and the ability to ride bicycles do not exist in our mind like our theoretical beliefs. It exists rather in our whole body. But this is not correct according to Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger. One should rather say that the ability exists in moving-in-this-environment. The locus of this environment is not my body or mind, but my “body-walking-the-streets.” It is a holistic engagement and is an embedding knowledge where our particular engagement with the world blends our “explicit knowledge” of the situation and our “unarticulated know-how” together in a coherent manner.^{xxxvii} (C. Taylor, 2005)

We may quote Charles Taylor to make clear what is being said here:

“As I navigate my way along the path of the hill, my mind totally absorbed in anticipating the difficult conversation I am going to have at my destination, I treat the different features of the terrain as obstacles, supports, openings, invitations to tread more warily, or run freely, and so on. Even when I am not thinking of them these things have those relevancies for me.”^{xxxviii} (C. Taylor, 2005)

Our engagement with the things and to be with the things, according to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, is possible due to a kind of “understanding” which is also called “pre-understanding.” The way things show themselves to us or figure for us is in accordance with their meaning. Objects show themselves to us not as mere objects. But they show themselves to us in their meaning or relevancies for our purposes, desires and activities. Objects are related to each other in the “nexus of their lived meanings.” Now the question arises, what is the nature of this “understanding” or “preunderstanding?”

According to Heidegger,

“Every act of having something in front of oneself and perceiving it, is in and of itself, a “having” something as something.However, this as-

structure is not necessarily related to predication. In dealing with something, I do not perform any thematically predicative assertions.”^{xxxix} (M. Heidegger, 1982)

“In German we say that someone can verstehen something- literally stand in front of or ahead of it, that is, stand as its head, administer, manage, preside over it. This is equivalent to saying that he *versteht sich darauf*, understands in the sense of being skilled or expert at it, has the know-how of it.”^{xl} (M. Heidegger, 1976)

Our ordinary coping which involves “pre-understanding” is non-conceptual in nature. It does not incorporate language in its locus. The explicit information which we constantly get from the environment draws us to act on that on the basis of lived meanings and relevancies in the level of “pre-understanding” without drawing any concepts. But, on the other hand, it must not be understood in purely causal terms and mechanic terms which are supposed to give a reductive and quasi-reductive explanation of our engagements.

In Merleau-Ponty’s opinion,

“We understand the thing as we understand a new kind of behaviour, not that is, through any intellectual operation of subsumption, but by taking up on our account the mode of existence that the observable signs adumbrate before us.”^{xli} (M. Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

According to Charles Taylor, coping is prior and pervasive in our life and it is necessary support to the episodes of our thought with conceptual content. In his opinion, “more fundamentally, the background understanding we need to make the sense we do of the pieces of thinking we engage in resides in our ordinary coping.”^{xlii} (C. Taylor, 2005) Taylor says that in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, we find that our conceptual thinking is “embedded in everyday coping,” but in Dreyfus we find a different interpretation of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. In Dreyfus’ account, our embodied coping is totally devoid of concepts and

rationality. Charles Taylor, while differentiating McDowell from phenomenological writers on the issue of coping, says,

“The phenomenological writers go beyond McDowell, however, in holding that we are only able to form conceptual beliefs guided by our surroundings because we live in a preconceptual engagement with these surroundings, which involves understanding. Transactions in this space are not causal processes among neutral elements, but the sensing of and response of relevance. The very idea of inner zone with an external boundary can’t get started here, because our living things in certain relevance cannot be situated “within” the agent; it is in the interaction itself. The understanding and know-how by which I climb the path and continue to know where I am is not “within” me in a kind of picture.”^{xliii} (C. Taylor, 2005)

According to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, when we are immersed in embodied coping or absorbed coping, we are pervaded by “a line of force or field of forces”^{xliiv} instead of concepts and rationality. We are in need of graspable world in order to access the independent thinkable world or objects in the independent world. Very different to McDowell’s thinkable world, we have graspable world. The graspable world works for us as background and as field of forces that enable us to be involved in our perception and action. Merleau-Ponty says if we think about the world in terms of concepts during our absorbed coping, then, that graspable world disappears from the picture. In absorbed coping, the subject is not distanced from the “field of forces”; rather she becomes one with it.

Explaining the non-conceptual world of absorbed coping Merleau-Ponty says,

“For the player in action the soccer field is not an ‘object’. It is pervaded by lines of forces... and is articulated into sectors (for example, the ‘openings ’between the adversaries), which call for a certain mode of action. The field itself is not given; ... the player becomes one with it...

At the moment consciousness is nothing but the dialectic of milieu and action, each maneuver undertaken by the player modifies the character of the field and establishes new lines of force in which the action in turn unfolds and is accomplished, again altering the phenomenal field.”^{xlv} (M. Merleau-Ponty, 1963)

According to Dreyfus, McDowell is adhering to a different and contradictory view about our involved and absorbed coping. On the one hand, McDowell says, human being is embodied and immersed while engaging with the world. On the other hand, while contradicting this view, he says, “We are always nonetheless distanced in the sense that we are never merged with the world.” Do we get this kind of impression from McDowell’s account? Or does McDowell say so? According to Dreyfus’ interpretation, for McDowell, we are distanced from the world or we are never merged in the world because in our perception and action we are essentially conceptual beings. In Dreyfus’ opinion, if we are essentially conceptual beings in our perception and action, then, we are detached and we cannot be immersed in the world. According to him, to be involved in the world and immerse oneself in the world, we have to set aside our conceptual and rational ability from our bodily life. Dreyfus claims that, according to McDowell, concepts and rationality play a mediational role in all forms of our involvement in the world. In McDowell’s picture, there has to be a correspondence between the propositional structure of mind and propositional structure of the world in order for knowledge and thought to be possible. According to Dreyfus, the phenomenological analysis of our immersed coping in the world cannot allow the concepts to be a part of the embodied coping. Concepts are not in use in our embodied coping, in his opinion.

Instead of conceptual and linguistic content, motor intentional content is available in our embodied coping. Motor intentional content of our absorbed coping together with interrelated solicitations of the world which draw us to act on that or respond to that prepares the background for us to cope. For our mind to think and act with the conceptual content

on a categorically unified world becomes possible because we already have a background preunderstanding working for us. Our conceptual content, according to Dreyfus, is based on our motor intentional content which works as the background in order to make possible our thought about the world. But if according to Dreyfus, conceptual content is the “enemy of embodiment,” then the questions arises: how conceptual content is based on the embodied coping? How can a smooth transition from the world of preunderstanding to the world of conceptual rationality be possible? Is it possible to have embedding knowledge, about which Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty talk, if we accept Dreyfus’ interpretation of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger in this specific context of embodiment in his critique of McDowell?

According to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, propositions cannot capture the kind of world into which we are drawn into when we become involved in absorbed coping. We respond to various relevant affordances in the phenomenal field in our embodied coping. The world is directly lived by the absorbed subject as a shifting field of attractions and repulsions.

According to Heidegger, “human being (*Dasein*) is nothing but concerned absorption in the world.”^{xlvi} In his opinion “circumspection”^{xxxvii} (M. Heidegger, 1962) is the mode or way in which we became immersed in the world. Heidegger says,

“What is first of all “given”... is the “for writing,” the “for going in and out,” ... “for sitting.” That is, writing, going in and out, sitting and the like are what we are a priori involved with. What we know when we “know our way around.” ”^{xlvi} (M. Heidegger, 1976).

Further, according to Heidegger,

“The view, in which the equipmental structure stands at first, completely unobstructive and unthought, is the view... of our practical everyday orientation. “Unthought” means that it is not thematically apprehended for deliberate thinking about things instead, in circumspection, we find

our bearings in regard to them. When we enter here through the doors, we do not apprehend the seats, and the same holds for the doorknob.”^{xlix} (M. Heidegger, 1982)

From Heidegger's point of view when we go out of the room opening the door, we need not attend to the doorknob. We do not experience the doorknob as a doorknob. We just respond to the affordances it shows up to act on the basis of relevancies and meanings. Various affordances draw us to act on those at the opening the door. We do not apprehend the door at all. In Heidegger's opinion, we do not respond to or experience the door as affording to go out. The affording object, according to him, “withdraws”¹ (M. Heidegger, 1985) and we just act on that. Explaining that further, Dreyfus says, “The absorbed coper is directly drawn by each solicitation in an appropriate way: the chairs draw him to sit on that, the floor boards to walk on them, the walls may draw him to hand pictures on them, the windows to open them, and the door to go out.”^{li} Merleau-Ponty says, when we get nearer to the door with the intention of going out our hand simply begins to take the shape of the door and when we reach door, my hand just turns the doorknob.

Heidegger explains this with the example of hammering.

“When hammering is going well, the hammer is not what I focus on. The hammer simply affords hammering; the less I perceive it the better. If, however, the hammering is usually difficult, I may experience the hammer as having the situational aspect of being too heavy under these conditions. And should things go even more badly so that I have to abandon my activity; the hammer may appear as an object that was the context free property of weighing five ponds.”^{lii} (M. Heidegger, 1962)

The most important thing, according to Heidegger, about us is not the ability to sit back and think rationally and logically about any entity and any set of situations in the world. The most important thing about us is rather the capability to become involved in the worlds and develop the skills for acting in those worlds. Those skills at origin may not be the

intellectual kind of skills but practical kind of skills. If we look at that hammer in a common sensical way, we see the properties of hammer, shape, color, etc. Heidegger says, if we want to see what the hammer is, we do not have to think about the properties, we do not have to describe it, we do not have to explain it. We just pick it up and start hammering. We can know or see what hammer is only if we have the skills of hammering. Without those the hammer never really shows up to us. The required ability of hammering may need some thought but when we are involved in the activity of hammering, we get the skill of hammering, the last thing we want is to be thinking and rationally analyzing the various aspects of the hammer. It is true that when we are deeply immersed in our action, we do not think about the act that we are performing. We just do it. But thinking is not only root in terms which self-consciousness is present in action. When some is hammering a minimal form of self-awareness of what he is doing must be present in him while performing the action. How can this be the case without having some concepts operating in our action?

In Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, we find that our engagement with the world at the basic level is based on the “pre-understanding” which is non-conceptual, non-linguistic and non-mental. But then we need to ask, is this “pre-understanding,” according to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, completely devoid of concepts? Now let us discuss, what happens to our rationality and concepts in our expert coping or skillful coping. What happens to our concepts and rationality when one becomes an expert? What is it to become an expert? According to McDowell, even in our expert coping, our concepts and rationality are drawn into operations. For McDowell, our concepts and rationality are employed at the level of expert coping by responding to which we perform our actions. Dreyfus, contradicting this view, says that the concepts, rationality and rules that are associated with a particular action are unnecessary for the present purpose of expert coping. Here Dreyfus is arguing against two kinds of views. One is cognitivist view of expert coping and another is

McDowell's view of expert coping. Cognitivists claim that the rules which we follow for the guidance of our actions and other forms of engagements become unconscious but nevertheless they operate in our coping. But according to McDowell, the reasons which the subject has for a particular action are not implicitly present in the subconscious mind of her. When a particular coper, an expert player, for example, plays a particular game, she follows some set of rules which are essential to the game. But here the questions are, when she plays the game, is she conscious of those rules? Does she think about the rules while performing the task? Does she think about herself at that moment? Does she have self-awareness at the stage of the fact that she is performing this action?

The activity of rule-following, for Dreyfus, is a very detached form of activity and it cannot help us in our expert coping. It is not right to claim that our rationality or rules which guide our actions are unconscious. Rather the real phenomenon is that we should respond to situation specificity of the action, instead of following rule in a detached way.

According to Dreyfus, the claim made by McDowell is not true with regard to real happening. Phenomenological analysis of our everyday skillful perception and action shows that the so-called conceptual rationality stands as an enemy or is incompatible with our primary bodily coping. Our everyday embodied coping need not be thinkable. When children are trained to acquire skills of riding bicycle, initially they start with rules and instructions, by imitations and trial and error method. At this stage, sometimes they step back and reflect on "how to ride?" But in the process of becoming a skilled cyclist, they, in due course, keep the rules aside and just move on without them. In the process of becoming an expert in perception and action, we switch from detached rule following and concepts to a more involved and situation-specific way of coping.

Dreyfus gave an interesting example of Chuck Knoblauch in order to prove that the enemy of our skillful coping is the ability to think rationally.^{liii} Chuck Knoblauch was a baseball player, playing for the New York Yankees, he was very successful and once became the best infielder of the year. What happened once is that Knoblauch because of some reason started reflecting with a distanced orientation on how he is throwing the ball, instead of letting himself being involved in throwing the ball and fielding the hit of the opponent. He could not return again to the absorption and was not able to play the baseball in a skillful way as he was playing earlier. He once even threw the ball at the face of the spectator. Even after he started reflecting on the situation, he was able to play well when he was trying to catch a hard-hit ground ball and throw it to the first base faster than thought. But he was not able to throw the ball directly to the second base because when he was doing that he had the time to reflect or think before throwing to first base. He was looking at the ball with puzzlement while thinking about throwing the ball. Knoblauch was sent to the outfield but still he could not recover that absorption coping. He could not stop thinking while he was playing. Dreyfus, describing this situation of Knoblauch says, “He became such a full-time rational animal that he had to be dropped from the team, and he never returned to the baseball.”^{liv} (H. L. Dreyfus, 2007) From this Dreyfus concludes that “thinking is the enemy of doing.”

Extending this argument further Dreyfus says,

“According to Merleau-Ponty, in absorbed, skillful coping, I do not need a mental representation of my goal. Rather, acting is experienced as a steady flow of skillful activity in response to one’s sense of the situation. Part of that experience is a sense that when one’s situation deviates from some optimal body-environment relationship, one’s activity takes closer to that optimum and thereby relieves the “tension” of the deviation. One does not need to know, nor can one normally express, what that optimum is.”^{lv} (H. L. Dreyfus, 2002)

We require a holistic mode of experience and an engaged world at the time of performing the particular skillful action. We do not need the reasons or rationality which will guide our action because our rationality and the propositional content cannot capture the specificity of the particular action. In Dreyfus's opinion, our rules are hindrances and obstacles in performing the skillful action. If we think about the performance while doing the performance, then we will not be able to perform in a skillful way. An expert copier or subject can perform the particular task without requiring any form of rationality. According to Dreyfus, when we start acquiring any particular skill, we may need rules to guide our action but by the time we become an expert, we do not need those rules at all. These rules go to the background and whenever there is an obstruction we start deliberating on the situation and these rules come again to the forefront. Dreyfus claims that, "expert coping is not even implicitly rational in the sense of being responsive to reasons that have become habitual but could be reconstructed."^{1vi} (H. L. Dreyfus, 2005)

Like the case of hammering, one starts thinking about the situation or deliberate on the situation, when one is not able to respond to the concrete situation because of the fact that she is not left with any options regarding how to respond the situation. The space of embodied coping is based on "the space of motivations" which is between space of causes and space of reasons. But in the case of expert performing a skillful action, she does not have to deliberate on the situation, because she has many options available with her to respond to the concrete situation. The subject is full of a rich perceptual repertoire and other forms of coping abilities.

The difference between Merleau-Ponty and McDowell on the Openness to the World and Embodied Coping

According to Dreyfus, though McDowell talks about our openness to the world, his concept of openness cannot be the basic sort of openness to the world. If we think that concepts are involved at the moment when we

are open to the world in our perception and action, then, it cannot be the basic sort of openness to the world. McDowell's understanding of our "openness" is seen as very different from that of the way Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty would take it to be. The way McDowell understands the nature of the "world" as it is given to us in our experience is also very different from Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the same. In Dreyfus' interpretation, according to McDowell, the world is the totality of facts, objects, events and state of affairs. In McDowell's picture, what we are open to is facts and states of affair or maybe we are open to various affordances of things and states of affairs. When we are open to affordances, it draws our concepts and rationality into operation. According to Dreyfus, this is not the way Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty understood our concepts and rationality. What we are open to, for Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, is not the rational and conceptual structure of the world. But McDowell would not concede to the view that we are open to conceptual structure of the world but not to the world as such. Without any incorporation of our beliefs and rational justifications for our action, we, in a direct way, perceive affordances and respond to them without any deliberations and active control. Responding to affordances which can be characterized as conceptual is not due to reflective deliberations or active control. Dreyfus points out that when we respond to a particular situation, we respond to various interrelated affordances. It is in our acquaintance with all the interrelated affordances that we orient ourselves to the world and find our way in the world. Later on, he modifies his position and says, we do not respond to affordances, rather we respond to affordances 'solicitations. There is a "network of solicitations"^{lvii} (H. L. Dreyfus, 2007) which shows up the world to us and on the basis of the ways it shows the world to us, we are drawn to act on them. According to Dreyfus, "solicitations and the world they make up are inseparable from our ability to be directly solicited."^{lviii} (H. L. Dreyfus, 2007) In responding to concrete situation of the world, we have only solicitations. Dreyfus argues that, though solicitations to which we respond are systematic and they, by working on the

background, make our rationality possible, they themselves are not rational. However, it is not from Dreyfus' account how solicitations devoid of anything conceptual give rise to conceptual and rational. According to Dreyfus, the following figure^{lix} (H. L. Dreyfus, 2007) represents the major differences between Merleau-Ponty and McDowell.

	World	Characteristics of our openness to the world	Level of skills
Descriptive (McDowell)	Totality of affordance/facts, what is the case. Propositional structures.	Entertaining propositions that such and such is the case. "I do" (Subjects acting on objects). Capacity to step back and criticize any particular proposition about what is the case and any reasons for one's action.	Competent: Responding to the general type of situation, while monitoring what I am doing.
Normative (Merleau-Ponty)	A web of attractions and repulsions. Solicitations to act (not propositional structures).	Responding to solicitations to act in such and such a way. Capacity to let ourselves be absorbed in the world and let ourselves respond to some particular constellation of attractions and repulsions.	Expert: In flow, totally absorbed in responding to the unique shifting situation.

The above divergence between McDowell and Merleau-Ponty is not correct for the above representation of McDowell's position is not true. For McDowell, the world does not have a propositional structure. McDowell also puts emphasis on the point that even the experience of the world is not propositional, though in *Mind and World*, he claimed that the content of perception is propositional. But, nevertheless, the content of perception, for him, is conceptual. So, the content of perception is intuitional instead of propositional but has conceptual content. So, it is very clear in McDowell's account that the content of perception and the content of thought are not conceptual in the same way. From Dreyfus' interpretation of McDowell's account, it seems that as if the later does not make any distinction between thought and experience. The content of the world, for him, is also not propositional. About openness to the world, McDowell never says that we are entertaining the propositional or conceptual structure of the world. In his account, when we are open to the world, we do not step back and reflect on the proposition that such and such is the case. Instead, we directly perceive the world and engage with it. Capacities to step back and reflect might be the special characteristic of humans for exercising rationality but we should not understand our openness to the world in this way. When we are performing certain actions, we are not monitoring the situation while responding to the particular facts of the world. Dreyfus is right in claiming that it would lead to disruption in the flow. It is wrong to think that if concepts are being operative in our perception and action, we cannot fully be absorbed while responding to uniqueness of each situation that we face in our everyday lives. But it is not clear how and why McDowell's position could have such a consequence.

Conclusion

In this paper we reflected on how to bridge the gap between conceptuality and embodiment following the phenomenological tradition, particularly through the works of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Both these philosophers have tried to break the "through structure" or the

framework of mediational epistemology. In fact, it is not about bridging the gap between conceptuality and embodiment in the work of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Rather one can say that they have discussed perception and embodiment in such a way that this gap or dualism does not arise. We have also discussed how both these philosophers have given us a radical alternative to break free from the traditional picture of understanding the relationship between subject and the world. Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty address or overcome the problem of dualism neither in physicalistic way nor in mentalistic way. Rather they invented new ways or notions altogether in terms of which we can overcome the dualism not by falling into the trap of it. They tried to break free from the “through structure” of mediational epistemology. It is not the concepts nor is it the sense data or sense impressions through which we engage with the world in our everyday coping in the world. But then the issue at stake here: is it the case that in our embodied coping there is no concepts at play? For McDowell, it is not the concepts only through which we engage with the world. Rather it is due to our distinctive nature some basic form of concepts are at play in our perception and action in the world. For him, the world is not already a conceptualized world. Hence, McDowell’s account is not susceptible to Charles Taylor’s allegation that it is a form of mediational epistemology. The true essence of our embodied engagement with world through perception and action cannot be captured by both intellectualism and traditional empiricism. But our emphasis on embodiment must not be seen as devoid of any form of self-consciousness and agency. Dreyfus’ account of embodiment seems to be problematic as it does not successfully accommodate in his explanation the relationship between conceptuality and embodiment. Both McDowell and Dreyfus would agree on the point that if the presence of mindedness or conceptuality is seen as detached contemplative or monitoring relation then certainly it is a myth. Moreover it brings in the old dualism between mind and world into the force again. There is a need of some form of conceptuality even in our embodiment. To say that our embodied coping in the world is permeated

by rationality is not to adhere to a position where a detached form of rationality is introduced at the level of embodiment. Dreyfus' use of the works of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to argue against McDowell does not really show how their works can stand against McDowell's position. McDowell's account does not fall, as is criticized by himself, into the "intolerable oscillation" between empiricism, on the one hand, and intellectualism, on the other hand.

*Department of Philosophy
Presidency University, Kolkata*

Notes and References

- i. Dreyfus, H. L. (2005, November). Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers can profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise. 47-65. Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, 79(no. 2), 47.
- ii. I am not, in this paper, going to discuss in detail the debate between John McDowell and Hubert Dreyfus and their response and counter response to each other. Rather my focus is more on to discuss Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's view on perception, embodiment and world. For a critical analysis of the debate see Panda, Manoj Kumar. (2016). Concepts and Phenomenological Given: A Reflection on McDowell-Dreyfus Debate. Indian Journal of Analytic Philosophy, Vol. VI.
- iii. Dreyfus' critique of McDowell heavily draws on the works of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty.
- iv. See McDowell, J. (2007, August) What Myth? 338-351. Inquiry, 50(no. 4), 338-351.
- v. See McDowell, J. (2013). The Myth of the Mind as Detached. In Joseph K. Shear(ed). Mind, Reason and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate, 15-40. London, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- vi. I think, though, Descartes, himself did not subscribe to a Transcendental notion of "I".
- vii. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). Sense and Nonsense. Hubert Dreyfus and Patricia Dreyfus(trans). Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 71-72.
- viii. Wittgenstein, L. (1953). Philosophical Investigations. G. E. M. Anscombe (trans). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, sec. 115. Also see Taylor's remarks on Wittgenstein in Taylor, C. (2005).
- ix. Taylor, C. (2005). Merleau-Ponty and the Epistemological Picture. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds). The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty. 26-50, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 26.
- x. Ibid., the idea is that between our mind and world there is something like sense-data, concepts, mental pictures, images etc. through which we have perception and knowledge of the external world.
- xi. Ibid., 27.
- xii. Ibid., 32-33.
- xiii. My reading and interpretation of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in this paper primarily draws from the literature surrounding the debate between Dreyfus and McDowell.

- xiv. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Colin Smith (trans). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 174.
- xv. Wrathall, M. A. (2005). *Motives, Reasons and Causes*. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. 111-128. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 115.
- xvi. Motor intentionality can be described as the direct bodily inclination to act in a situation specific environment. Motor-intentionality facilitates the way our body responds to the situation, constitutes the nature of bodily agency.
- xvii. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Colin Smith (trans). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 252.
- xviii. *Ibid.*, 325, 281.
- xix. Rene Descartes in Meditation writes, “something which I thought I was seeing with my eyes is in fact grasped solely by the faculty of judgment which is in my mind” (*The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. ii; at VII 32. Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason* says, “all synthesis, through which even perception itself becomes possible, stands under the categories, and since experience is cognition through connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience.” (B 161)
- xx. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Colin Smith (trans). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 43, 34, 39. As Quoted in Carman, T. (2005). *Sensation, Judgement, and the Phenomenal Field*. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. 50-73. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 62.
- xxi. *Ibid.*, 36, 28, 33.
- xxii. *Ibid.*, 44, 34-5, 40.
- xxiii. Carman, T. (2005). *Sensation, Judgement, and the Phenomenal Field*. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. 50-73. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 65.
- xxiv. The general meaning of comportment is behaviour and bearing.
- xxv. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Colin Smith (trans). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 4.
- xxvi. Kelly, S. D. (2005). *Seeing Things in Merleau-Ponty*. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds.) *The Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. 50-73. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 87.
- xxvii. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962) *Phenomenology of Perception*. Colin Smith (trans). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 48-49.
- xxviii. Wrathall, M. A. (2005). *Motives, Reasons and Causes*. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. 111-128. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 118.
- xxix. *Ibid.*, 122.
- xxx. Carman, T. (2005). *Sensation, Judgement, and the Phenomenal Field*. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. 50-73. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 51.
- xxxi. Thompson, E. (2010). *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and The Sciences of Mind*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 237.
- xxxii. *Ibid.*

- xxxiii. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Colin Smith (trans). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 150.
- xxxiv. Ibid.
- xxxv. Ibid., 250.
- xxxvi. Heidegger, M. (1976). *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit, Gesamtausgabe*. Band 21, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 144.
- xxxvii. Taylor, C. (2005). Merleau-Ponty and the Epistemological Picture. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. 26-50, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 32.
- xxxviii. Ibid., 34.
- xxxix. Heidegger, M. (1982). *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. A. Hofstadter (trans). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 276.
- xl. Heidegger, M. (1976). *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit, Gesamtausgabe*. Band 21, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 144.
- xli. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Colin Smith (trans). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 319.
- xlii. Taylor, C. (2005). Merleau-Ponty and the Epistemological Picture. In Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. 26-50, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 38.
- xliii. Ibid.
- xliv. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1963). *The Structure of Behaviour*. A. Fisher (trans). Pittsburgh, PA: Dusquene University Press, 169.
- xlvi. Ibid., 168-169.
- xlv. Heidegger, M. (1985). *History of the Concept of Time*. T. Kisiel (trans). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 197.
- xlvi. Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (trans). New York, London: Harper Perennial, 107.
- xlviii. Heidegger, M. (1976). *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit, Gesamtausgabe*. Band 21, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 144.
- xlix. Heidegger, M. (1982). *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. A. Hofstadter (trans). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 163.
- l. Heidegger, M. (1985). *History of the Concept of Time*. T. Kisiel (trans). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 197.
- li. Dreyfus, H. L. (2013). *The Myth of the Pervasiveness of the Mental*. In Joseph K. Shear (ed). *Mind, Reason and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell-Dreyfus Debate*. 15-40. London, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 18.
- lii. Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (trans). New York, London: Harper Perennial, 412.
- liii. This case and similar cases raise a concern as to what kind of self is present in our embodied coping or whether any self is present in our embodied coping or not. For a critical discussion on this issue see Panda, Manoj. (2020-2021). I in "I Think/Know/Do": Revisiting Arguments for a Transcendental Notion of Self. *Jadavpur Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 30.
- liv. Dreyfus, H. L. (2007, August). *The Return of the Myth of the Mental*. 352-365. *Inquiry* 50 (no.4), 354.

- lv. Dreyfus, H. L. (2002, December). Intelligence without representation- Merleau-Ponty's critique of mental representation. *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences*. 367-383. 1(no. 4),378.
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- lvii. Dreyfus, H. L. (2007, August). The Return of the Myth of the Mental. 352-365. *Inquiry* 50(no. 4), 358.
- lviii. *Ibid.*, 357.
- lix. *Ibid.*