


F. H. Bradley's Concept of Immediate Experience: An Evaluation in terms of Debates on Phenomenal Consciousness

BETÜL YILDIZ 
Ankara University

Review Article

Submitted: 08.05.2026 | Accepted: 23.05.2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21133094>

Abstract: The aim of this study is to examine the concept of "immediate experience" in the philosophy of F. H. Bradley, one of the prominent figures of British Idealism, and to re-evaluate the philosophical problems it generates within the context of contemporary philosophy of mind. According to Bradley, immediate experience is a primary, non-relational unity that precedes thought, judgment, and the subject-object dichotomy. However, attempts to bring this experience into conceptual and philosophical discourse objectify it, thereby altering its pristine immediacy and generating a "paradox of reflection." This paper argues that, contrary to Bradley's historical marginalization by the analytic tradition, his methodological dilemma shares a common ground and a meaningful structural tension with contemporary debates on phenomenal consciousness (Ned Block), qualia, Thomas Nagel's "what is it like to be" question, and non-conceptual content theories (Gareth Evans, Christopher Peacocke). While the study addresses the difficulties inherent in Bradley's idealist metaphysical commitments and the problem of "ineffability," it ultimately concludes that his approach to immediate experience remains a provocative conceptual resource for current consciousness studies due to its power to problematize deeply-entrenched epistemic and cognitive assumptions.

Keywords: F. H. Bradley, immediate experience, paradox of reflection, phenomenal consciousness, non-conceptual content, qualia.

Introduction

How the dimension of experience that precedes conceptual thought should be understood has been addressed by different traditions throughout the history of philosophy. In particular, the phenomenal character of consciousness, the subject-object dichotomy, and the question of whether experience can be reduced to language or concepts lie at the center of both classical and contemporary philosophical debates. F. H. Bradley focused on this aforementioned issue in the chapter titled "On Our Knowledge of Immediate Experience" of his work *Essays on Truth and Reality*. According to Bradley, immediate experience, which is the most fundamental level of experience, is a state of unity where thought and judgment have not yet been applied, and the subject-object dualism has not yet emerged. However, attempting to address this unity within philosophical discourse objectifies the non-conceptual through the act of conceptualization, and in this process, it loses its pristine structure.

The epistemic paradox generated by the above-mentioned problem shares a common ground with the problem of the explainability of phenomenal consciousness, which is one of the controversial issues in contemporary philosophy of mind. The problem formulated by Thomas Nagel with the question of "what it is like to be," the distinction drawn by Ned Block between phenomenal consciousness and access consciousness, and the debates on *qualia* occupy the same territory as the problem of the objective inexpressibility of the subjective and momentary dimension of consciousness problematized by Bradley. However, Bradley's positioning within the framework of British Idealism and the coherence theory has caused this context – through which a relationship with the analytic philosophy of mind could be established – to remain in the background, and consequently, it has not found sufficient place in the academic literature.

This study aims to demonstrate that the problem Bradley poses with his understanding of immediate experience still bears a vital philosophical significance today. In doing so, positioning Bradley as a pioneer of contemporary theories has been avoided. Bradley's under-

standing of immediate experience stands in a meaningful philosophical tension with the structural problems of the debates on phenomenal consciousness, *qualia*, and non-conceptual content. While this tension makes it possible to independently evaluate the truth value of Bradley's views, it also illuminates certain conceptual dimensions overlooked by contemporary debates. In addition to this, Bradley's approach involves serious difficulties in the context of his metaphysical commitments and ineffability; the study will also open these difficulties to discussion.

1. Immediate Experience in Bradley

The starting point of Bradley's theory of knowledge is the claim that there exists a level of experience more fundamental than thought and judgment. According to him, understanding the problem of truth first requires explaining the layer of experience that precedes thought. For this reason, he begins the sixth chapter of *Essays on Truth and Reality* with the problem of "how immediate experience can become an object for itself," thereby questioning the nature of immediate experience and its relationship with thought.¹

According to Bradley, immediate experience is an undifferentiated state of unity that encompasses the entire content of any given moment – no matter how relational or distinct it may be. Therefore, experience signifies a more fundamental level than the intellectual structures in which subject and object are separated from one another:

At every moment my actual experience, however relational its contents, is in the end non-relational. No analysis into relations and terms can ever exhaust its nature or fail in the end to belie its essence.²

This passage demonstrates that immediate experience does not exclude relational contents, but rather points to a more fundamental unity that encompasses them. Perceived objects, thoughts, and feelings reside within a primary wholeness positioned beyond the subject-object dichotomy. Bradley employs the concept of *feeling* to define this level of experience. In Bradley's philosophy, *feeling* does not signify

¹ Francis Herbert Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 159.

² Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 176.

the pleasure-pain dualism, but rather expresses a form of non-relational awareness that precedes the subject-object division. Thus, this usage of *feeling* diverges from the conventional understanding of the term.³

By feeling, in short, I understand ... an awareness which, though non-relational, may comprise simply in itself an indefinite amount of difference. There are no distinctions in the proper sense, and yet there is a many felt in one.⁴

This explanation harbors a tension between the claim of a non-relational awareness on the one hand, and the expression of a multiplicity felt within a single whole on the other. Since the concept of awareness evokes, at least at a minimal level, a subject-object dichotomy, the idea of a completely non-relational awareness is conceptually problematic.⁵ Bradley, while acknowledging this difficulty, argues that immediate experience cannot be fully expressed through the categories of thought; indeed, to describe this dimension of experience, he uses the adjectives "non-relational" and "non-objective" interchangeably.

The relation (so to express ourselves) of immediate experience to its felt contents... must be taken simply as a fact. It can neither be explained nor even (to speak properly) described, since description necessarily means translation into objective terms and relations.⁶

At this point, Bradley's central claim becomes clear. The moment immediate experience is made an object of thought, it loses its pristine structure. In other words, the attempt to explain experience simultaneously transforms it. This situation forms the foundation of the paradox of reflection, which will be addressed in the subsequent sections.

One of the most significant consequences of the understanding of immediate experience is that the subject-object dichotomy is not ac-

³ Emel Koç, "F. H. Bradley Metafiziği Üzerine", *SDÜ Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 37 (2016), 61.

⁴ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 174.

⁵ James Ward, "Bradley's Doctrine of Experience", *Mind* 133 (1925), 15.

⁶ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 177.

cepted as the primary datum of experience. Bradley explicitly expresses this view in the text titled "Consciousness and Experience" in the remainder of the sixth chapter:

What comes first in each of us is rather feeling, a state as yet without either an object or subject. Feeling here naturally does not mean mere pleasure and pain... Feeling is immediate experience without distinction or relation in itself. It is a unity, complex but without relations. And there is here no difference between the state and its content, since, in a word, the experienced and the experience are one.⁷

The final sentence in this passage – the experienced and the experience are one – reminisces the general analysis of experience in Husserlian phenomenology, yet it remains a metaphysical claim unique to Bradley. Object and subject are abstractions that emerge as a result of the analysis of consciousness, whereas immediate experience precedes this abstraction. This stance significantly diverges from the Cartesian tradition, which fundamentally defines experience within a subject-object relationship. However, precisely at this point, a new difficulty arises. If immediate experience can only be problematized through thought, how can it be claimed to precede the subject-object dichotomy? If it is argued that even early conscious experience, in its most primitive form, involves a subject and an object, awareness is inevitably relational for the observer. The idea of immediate experience, then, is "a caricature" of psychological reality.⁸ The force of this objection stems from Bradley's own methodology. If immediate experience can only be known through thought and judgment, characterizing it as prior to the subject-object dichotomy relies on nothing more than a reconstructed hypothetical position.

Bradley, on the other hand, argues that thought and judgment are not the constitutive principles of experience, but rather derivative operations. Thought analyzes the unity of immediate experience, breaking it down into terms and relations. However, this process can never be fully completed because every objectified content continues to rely

⁷ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 194.

⁸ Ward, "Bradley's Doctrine of Experience", 15-16.

on a felt background that encompasses it:

Everything which is got out into the form of an object implies still the felt background against which the object comes, and, further, the whole experience of both feeling and object is a non-relational immediate felt unity.⁹

Therefore, objective knowledge is not a structure that replaces or transcends immediate experience. On the contrary, all activities of thought take place upon this more fundamental ground of experience. In Bradley's theory of knowledge, thought is not the constitutive source of experience, but a secondary activity that analyzes a unity already given. For this reason, the problem of truth cannot be explained solely through the relations between propositions; behind it lies a more fundamental realm of experience that thought can never completely exhaust.¹⁰

2. The Paradox of Reflection

While Bradley's understanding of immediate experience provides significant explanatory power to his theory of knowledge, it simultaneously generates a serious philosophical difficulty. As briefly mentioned above, if immediate experience is a non-relational unity that precedes the subject-object dichotomy, how can we speak about this experience? More importantly, can we still speak of immediate experience the moment we make it an object of thought? Bradley explicitly sets forth this problem:

For, if it becomes an object, it, so far, we may say, is transcended, and there is a doubt as to how such transcendence is possible. On the one hand as to the fact of immediate experience being transcended we seem really certain. For we speak about it, and, if so, it has become for us an object. But we are thus led to the dilemma that, so far as I know of immediate experience, it does not exist, and that hence, whether it exists or not, I could in neither case know of it.¹¹

This passage demonstrates the fundamental dilemma Bradley

⁹ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 176.

¹⁰ Koç, "F. H. Bradley Metafiziği Üzerine", 59.

¹¹ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 160.

faces. The moment immediate experience is spoken about, it becomes an object of thought and loses its immediacy. Conversely, as long as it preserves its immediacy, it seems impossible to have knowledge about it. Thus, the attempt at philosophical explanation produces the paradoxical result of transforming experience while trying to explain it.

This problem is not unique to Bradley; it re-emerged in various forms throughout the twentieth century in phenomenology, the philosophy of language, and the philosophy of mind. The tension Husserl identified between the immediacy of lived experience and phenomenological description, Wittgenstein's distinction between what can be said and what can only be shown, and the views in contemporary philosophy of mind arguing that phenomenal consciousness resists conceptual explanation can all be read as different expressions of the same fundamental problem. The common issue is whether the lived quality of experience can be entirely translated into conceptual and objective language. Bradley strives not to leave the paradox unresolved. According to him, the problem stems from the assumption that immediate experience is completely obliterated by thought. However, thought does not destroy experience; it merely transcends its character of sheer immediacy. For this reason, immediate experience continues to persist even after the emergence of thought:

Immediate experience is not a stage, which may or may not at some time have been there and has now ceased to exist. It is not in any case removed by the presence of a not-self and of a relational consciousness. All that is thus removed is at most, we may say, the mere presence of immediacy.¹²

According to this approach, rather than being a stage that thought has historically left behind, immediate experience continues to exist as a living ground and a dynamic background upon which thought rises at every moment. According to this solution, which lies at the center of Bradley's philosophy, objective knowledge does not eliminate immediate experience but gains its function by relying on it. Even when thought produces objects, concepts, and judgments, this

¹² Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 178.

felt ground preserves its existence and serves as a criterion that regulates the legitimacy of objective judgments. Consequently, the object is felt to the extent of its relation of harmony or disharmony established with the content of the momentary experience, and this cognitive sentiment exerts an inevitable epistemic pressure on the truth value of the objective description.

Before directly addressing the paradox of reflection, Bradley discusses the problems of attention and introspection. These two issues are employed to substantiate the general structure of the paradox. When we direct our attention to a sensation, how can we understand whether that sensation emerges by virtue of attention or whether it was already there and merely noticed? According to Bradley, the change felt in experience demonstrates that these two situations are not identical. The change experienced when attention is directed and the sheer transition of a sensation from A to B are felt differently from an experiential standpoint. This difference shows that attention does not transform its object; therefore, the sensation prior to coming under attention is truly there. The problem of introspection possesses a similar structure. Can I observe my own internal state, or does the act of observation itself alter that state? Bradley proposes the same solution here as well. The observed sadness does not completely eliminate the felt sadness; the emotion remaining in the background guides the judgment by making the harmony or disharmony of the objective description felt.¹³

Bradley's solution explained above also gives rise to new questions. If immediate experience is indeed a non-relational and non-conceptual unity, how this experience functions as a criterion for objective judgments remains not fully explained. Bradley asserts that the felt background stands in a relation of harmony or disharmony with objective descriptions, yet the mechanism through which this harmony is established remains obscure. The idea that a non-conceptual content can justify or falsify conceptual contents presupposes a

¹³ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*.

new type of relation that itself stands in need of explanation.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Bradley's analysis regarding the paradox of reflection bears a remarkable significance for contemporary philosophy of mind. This is because the issue discussed here is, in essence, the problem of whether phenomenal experience can be reduced to conceptual representation.

3. Problems of Philosophy of Mind and Bradley

Bradley's understanding of immediate experience and the paradox of reflection he developed in connection with it appear at first glance to be a metaphysical discussion within a historical context. However, when examined more closely, it becomes evident that the problem addressed here shares a common ground with many debates at the center of contemporary philosophy of mind. Bradley's fundamental question is how the relationship between the lived dimension of experience and the intellectual and conceptual explanations developed upon this experience can be established. The difficulty in Bradley's system – namely, that the very moment we begin to think about immediate experience, we transform it – remains one of the fundamental methodological problems confronting consciousness research today.

This situation becomes even more apparent when compared specifically to the debates on phenomenal consciousness. The distinction drawn by Ned Block between phenomenal consciousness and access consciousness in his article "On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness" represents one of the significant attempts to differentiate between various dimensions of conscious experience. According to Block, while phenomenal consciousness expresses how an experience is subjectively felt, access consciousness signifies the availability of this experiential content for use in reasoning, thought, and the regulation of behavior. Although this distinction does not exactly coincide with the distinction Bradley makes between immediate experience and thought, it carries certain parallelisms. The non-relational realm of experience that Bradley terms *feeling* points to the dimension of experience that has not yet been transformed into conceptual structures.

¹⁴ Ward, "Bradley's Doctrine of Experience", 25.

Thought and judgment, on the other hand, emerge as secondary processes that operate by objectifying this experiential content.¹⁵

However, Bradley's aim is not to segregate conscious states into functional categories, as is the case in contemporary consciousness theories. It is evident that the issue he is concerned with is the question of whether thought itself can fully comprehend the experiential ground that makes its very activity possible. For this reason, Bradley's paradox of reflection addresses not merely a distinction between different types of consciousness, but the inherent limits of thought itself. Since thought transforms the very thing it attempts to explain while trying to explicate experience, a gap difficult to bridge emerges between the lived dimension of experience and its conceptual expression.¹⁶

This problem also exhibits remarkable similarities with the domain known in contemporary literature as the *qualia* debates. The concept of *qualia* is employed to designate the subjective and qualitative character of conscious experience. It concerns the problem of whether an experience – such as seeing red or feeling pain – can be expressed in fully objective, third-person terms. In other words, subjective experiences do not merely signify the occurrence of certain cognitive processes, but they also encompass the question of "what it is like" to undergo those experiences. Thomas Nagel's question, "What is it like to be a bat?", questions whether this subjective dimension can be fully grasped from a third-person perspective.¹⁷

The similarity between Bradley's paradox of reflection and the debates on *qualia* emerges precisely at this point. In both cases, the core issue is whether the lived aspect of experience can be exhaustively represented through objective descriptions. According to Bradley, the moment we reflect upon immediate experience, we objectify it. For

¹⁵ Ned Block, "On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 18 (1995), 231.

¹⁶ Joseph Levine, "Materialism and Qualia: The Explanatory Gap", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (1983), 357.

¹⁷ Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?", *The Philosophical Review* 83, no 4 (1974), 435-436.

qualia theorists, on the other hand, the subjective quality of experience cannot be entirely exhausted by physical or functional explanations. Granted, there are significant differences between the two approaches. While *qualia* theories mostly concentrate on the ontological status of conscious states, Bradley is more concerned with the structural limits of thinking itself. Nevertheless, it can be argued that both approaches converge on the idea that the lived dimension of experience exhibits a certain resistance to conceptual explanations.¹⁸

A similar affinity is also observed in theories of non-conceptual content, which have been intensively debated in recent years. Thinkers such as Gareth Evans and Christopher Peacocke have argued that perceptual experience possesses a content that cannot be reduced to conceptual categories. According to this view, a subject does not necessarily have to possess the corresponding concept of an experience in order to undergo that specific experience. For instance, being able to discriminate a particular shade of color may not require the ability to conceptually define that shade.¹⁹

There is a distinct structural similarity between Bradley's understanding of immediate experience and this approach. In both cases, a layer of experience that resides prior to thought and conceptualization is acknowledged. However, Bradley's approach is more comprehensive than contemporary theories of non-conceptual content. While for Peacocke non-conceptual content primarily signifies a dimension of perceptual representation processes, for Bradley immediate experience constitutes the foundation of not merely perception, but the entirety of mental life. Therefore, what he advocates for is not the non-conceptual character of specific cognitive contents, but rather a more fundamental experiential unity from which thought as a whole derives.²⁰

The connections that can be established between Bradley and contemporary debates are not limited solely to the analytic tradition.

¹⁸ Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?", 441.

¹⁹ Norbert Niclauss, "A Study of Concepts by Christopher Peacocke", *Erkenntnis* 42/3 (1995), 410.

²⁰ Pakize Arıkan Sandıkçıoğlu, "A Case against Conceptualism about Perceptual Content: First Perception", *Metazihin* 1, no 2 (2018), 189.

The concept of pre-reflective consciousness, developed within the phenomenological tradition, is also shaped around similar questions. Particularly in Merleau-Ponty's analyses of bodily experience, the existence of an experiential realm where subject and object have not yet been sharply differentiated is emphasized. In everyday experience, the world manifests itself most of the time not as an object of theoretical reflection, but as a directly lived environment. Conceptual explanations developed subsequently are then constructed upon this experiential realm.²¹ It is not possible to establish a direct identity between Bradley and phenomenology, given that the two approaches belong to different philosophical traditions and have different aims. However, both approaches acknowledge that experience contains a pre-reflective dimension and that thought struggles to entirely objectify this dimension.

4. Bradley's Relevance for Contemporary Philosophy of Mind

The strongest aspect of Bradley's understanding of immediate experience is its refusal to reduce the most fundamental layer of experience to a subject-object structure, and its treatment of this very dichotomy as a derivative structure that itself stands in need of explanation. It is remarkable that during a period when many contemporary debates on the nature of experience had not yet emerged, he addressed problems that would later gain central importance in phenomenology, consciousness studies, and the philosophy of mind. Rather than explaining how the relationship between subject and object is established, Bradley's aim is to question the assumption that this relationship is the primary and necessary form of experience. In this respect, his approach can be evaluated as a significant philosophical intervention that problematizes established assumptions regarding the structure of experience.²²

The second important aspect of Bradley's approach is its treatment of the tension between thought and experience not as a temporary difficulty, but as a fundamental problem concerning the very

²¹ Gülay Özdemir Akgündüz, "Algının Fenomenolojisi'nde Beden ve Dünyanın Algısal Deneyimdeki Birliği", *Ekev Akademi Dergisi Özel Sayı* (2023), 171.

²² Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 194-195.

structure of consciousness. His observation that immediate experience undergoes a transformation the moment it is conceptualized by thought points beyond an element of his own system to a more general problem regarding how experience can be philosophically addressed. For this reason, Bradley's approach, which can be termed the paradox of reflection, still offers a noteworthy starting point for a wide literature extending from phenomenology to contemporary debates on consciousness.²³

Similarly, his view that immediate experience does not disappear with the emergence of thought and judgment, but rather continues its activity in their background, can be seen as a significant contribution. This ground, which Bradley defines as the *felt background*, suggests that experience does not consist solely of objectifiable contents, but possesses a dimension upon which every activity of conceptualization relies yet can never completely exhaust. It can be argued that this approach offers certain explanatory possibilities, particularly in the analysis of phenomena such as attention, introspection, and self-awareness.²⁴

However, Bradley's approach also brings various difficulties along with it. Foremost among these is the tight link between his understanding of immediate experience and the framework of Absolute idealism. For Bradley, immediate experience is not merely the starting point of individual consciousnesses, but also a core element of a metaphysical view concerning the ultimate structure of reality. Indeed, the approach expressed in *Essays on Truth and Reality* with the statement, "Nothing in the end is real but what is felt" transforms the analysis of experience into an ontological principle. This situation requires contemporary readers to make an important distinction. The phenomenological observation that experience contains a non-conceptualizable dimension and the metaphysical conclusion that reality ultimately relies on experience do not appear to be equally defensible. The contemporary value of Bradley's system depends largely on the extent

²³ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 160-161.

²⁴ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 176-178.

to which these two levels can be separated from each other.²⁵

Another difficulty is the problem of ineffability. Bradley acknowledges that immediate experience cannot be directly described and that every attempt at description will transform it by bringing it into the realm of relational thought. However, this acknowledgment gives rise to a certain methodological problem. If immediate experience is, in principle, an indescribable structure, the question arises as to how the claims put forward about it are to be substantiated. At this point, Bradley's approach can be interpreted in two different ways. According to the first interpretation, immediate experience is a necessary point of reference that demonstrates the limits of language and conceptual thought. According to the second interpretation, the concept in question runs the risk of turning into a theoretical assumption that immunizes itself against criticism and is difficult to verify. For this reason, the strength and the vulnerability of Bradley's view converge at the very same point; while attempting to render the most fundamental dimension of experience visible, he is compelled to acknowledge that it is impossible to fully conceptualize it.²⁶

Nevertheless, these difficulties do not entirely diminish the contemporary significance of Bradley's approach. Particularly in recent years, interest in the non-conceptual dimension of experience has undergone a resurgence within the frameworks of debates on embodied cognition, enactivism, pre-reflective consciousness, and phenomenal consciousness. The enactivist approach developed by Francisco Varela and his colleagues argues that cognitive processes must be understood through the experiential relationship that the organism establishes with the world rather than through abstract mental representations. Although Bradley's metaphysical premises differ significantly from these approaches, his fundamental intuition that experience contains a dimension prior to thought exhibits a certain affinity with contemporary debates.²⁷

²⁵ Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, 190.

²⁶ Ward, "Bradley's Doctrine of Experience", 18-19.

²⁷ Francisco Valera vd., *Bedenlenmiş Zihin*, çev. Feyza Önder (İstanbul: Albaraka Yayınları, 2023), 174-178.

In this context, it is difficult to say that Bradley's understanding of immediate experience offers a direct solution to contemporary philosophy of mind. Nevertheless, his approach still provides a fertile ground for reflection regarding questions such as whether phenomenal experience can be exhaustively consumed by conceptual analysis, whether the subject-object dichotomy is a constitutive element or a derivative consequence of experience, and how the qualitative character of consciousness should be understood. Therefore, Bradley's significance lies not so much in providing ultimate answers to specific problems, but rather in making visible the very assumptions upon which these problems are constructed. For this reason, the concept of immediate experience, even if its metaphysical framework is not fully embraced, continues to be a conceptual resource worth taking into account for contemporary debates on consciousness.

Conclusion

In this study, F. H. Bradley's concept of *immediate experience* was addressed, and the epistemic paradoxes generated by this concept alongside its structural similarities with the contemporary debates in the philosophy of mind were examined. Within his philosophical system, Bradley points to a non-relational, primordial layer of unity that precedes thought and judgment, wherein the subject-object dichotomy has not yet emerged. However, any attempt to incorporate this immediate layer into a philosophical and conceptual discourse inevitably objectifies it and distances it from its authentic structure. This methodological and epistemic impasse, which solidifies as the paradox of reflection in Bradley's philosophy, harbors the question of whether the lived quality of experience can be exhaustively converted into conceptual and objective language.

Although the link between Bradley and the analytic philosophy of mind has long been overlooked in academic literature due to his commitments to British Idealism and Absolutist metaphysics, the issue he thematizes lies at the very heart of contemporary consciousness research. As demonstrated throughout this study, Thomas Nagel's "what it is like to be" question formulating subjective experience, the boundary drawn by Ned Block between phenomenal consciousness

and access consciousness, the *qualia* debates, and the theories of non-conceptual content developed by thinkers such as Evans and Peacocke stand in a meaningful philosophical tension and parallelism with Bradley's problem regarding the inexpressibility of immediate experience in objective language. Similarly, the concept of pre-reflective consciousness within the phenomenological tradition, as well as current approaches of embodied cognition and enactivism, share Bradley's fundamental intuition that the constitutive source of experience is not the subject-object dichotomy.

Undeniably, Bradley's philosophy harbors serious methodological difficulties in the context of ineffability and contains theoretical assumptions that are difficult to verify. The mechanism through which a non-conceptual content or a felt background establishes a criterion of justification over the truth value of objective judgments remains a philosophical ambiguity. Nevertheless, the contemporary relevance of Bradley's approach stems not from offering ready-made, dogmatic solutions for the contemporary philosophy of mind, but from its power to problematize established assumptions regarding the qualitative character of consciousness, the inherent limits of thought, and the very structure of experience. Bradley's understanding of immediate experience, even if its idealist metaphysical framework is not fully embraced, continues to be an illuminating and noteworthy conceptual resource for contemporary debates on consciousness shaped around the question of whether phenomenal experience can be exhaustively consumed by conceptual analysis.

References

- Arikan Sandıkcioglu, Pakize. "A Case against Conceptualism about Perceptual Content: First Perception". *Metazihin* 1, no 2 (2018), 183-194.
- Block, Ned. "On a confusion about a function of consciousness". *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 18 (1995), 227-287.
- Bradley, Francis Herbert. *Essays on Truth and Reality*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Koç, Emel. "F. H. Bradley Metafiziği Üzerine". *SDÜ Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 37 (2016), 51-63.

- Levine, Joseph. "Materialism and Qualia: The Explanatory Gap". *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (1983), 354-361.
- Nagel, Thomas. "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" *The Philosophical Review* 83, no 4 (1974), 435-450.
- Niclauss, Norbert. "A Study of Concepts by Christopher Peacocke". *Erkenntnis* 42/3 (1995), 409-412.
- Özdemir Akgündüz, Gülay. "Algının Fenomenolojisi'nde Beden ve Dünyanın Algısal Deneyimdeki Birliği". *Ekev Akademi Dergisi Özel Sayı* (2023), 169-187.
- Valera, Francisco, vd. *Bedenlenmiş Zihin*. Çev. Feyza Önder. İstanbul: Albaraka Yayınları, 2023.
- Ward, James. "Bradley's Doctrine of Experience". *Mind* 133 (1925), 13-38.