

A Representationalist Account of Qualia-Ineffability

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1. The Problem: An Introduction

Ineffability is a feature widely attributed to phenomenal properties, along with other features such as subjectivity, privacy, and infallibility. We can tentatively think of ineffability as indescribability of conscious mental states, that is, such states cannot be described and fully conveyed to others. Later you will hear more on the notion of ineffability.

I will provide an explanation of ineffability in terms of representationalism about consciousness. It seems at a *prima facie* level that representationalism cannot accommodate ineffability. For on the one hand, phenomenal properties are intuitively ineffable. And on the other, a representationalist account of the phenomenal implies that they are effable, because representationally conceived, the phenomenal are identical to represent¹, which is effable. How can this be compatible with our ineffability intuition? I will try to propose a representational account of ineffability in order to overcome this dilemma as well.

The apparent incompatibility between our ineffability intuition and representationalism can be solved in three possible ways:

- (a) We can reject the ineffability intuition in one way or another.
- (b) We can hold that the sort of representations, with which the phenomenal is identified, is ineffable
- (c) We can do both (a) and (b).

¹ Representum (singular form of representum) is what represents, i.e., the vehicle of representation with which representationalism identifies consciousness. It is in contrast with representans, i.e., what is represented or the object of representation with which higher-order theories identify consciousness.

Note that representationalists usually hold that the phenomenal are identical to representational contents not the vehicle of representations. Let's call the former "C-representationalism" and the latter "V-representationalism". I am inclined to the latter view and I think that the literature is occasionally confused between the two conceptions. Dretske (1995, p. 72) identifies qualia with the properties that the experience represents things as having, so he takes sides with C-representationalism. He considers qualia as experientially represented properties of objects. Roughly, this view translates the statement "I feel pain" to "there's a bodily damage which is represented to me". But V-representationalism identifies qualia with what represents a property in a particular mode. Roughly, it translates the statement "I feel pain" to "there's a particular manner of a representation of a bodily damage in me". One advantage of V-representationalism to C-representationalism is the case of bodily sensations such as pains and itches. As plausible C-representationalism might look in cases such as colors (since intuition helps us to take them as properties of objects not those of experiences), it looks highly implausible in the case of bodily sensations since intuition takes them as properties of experiences not of objects. However, V-representationalism looks more plausible in both cases: both pains and colors are representum of certain properties.

What matters here is that both views apparently entail the effability of the phenomenal. For C-representationalism identifies the phenomenal with representational contents which seem describable, and V-representationalism identifies it with representing a content which also seem describable.

We can do (a) by establishing that phenomenal properties are effable and describable just like any other non-phenomenal ones, because they are identical to representations which are effable. Just as non-phenomenal properties can be characterized in terms of more primitive properties, phenomenal properties are essentially describable in terms of more primitive properties. Nonetheless, a story is needed to explain why phenomenal properties *seem* ineffable to us. This is the task that adherents of (a), if there are any, must accomplish.

However, (b) might be done by requiring a *subjective* aspect for the sort of representations that are to be identified with the phenomenal. The subjective character of this sort of representations makes it ineffable. This version of representationalism, which preserves many phenomenal features in the kind of representations that are to be identified with the phenomenal, does not commit itself to a full-fledged identity. Apparently Chalmers (2004) adheres to such a version of representationalism. This way, representationalism can preserve other peculiar features of the phenomenal in the representational tenet; features such as infallibility, subjectivity, privacy, and so on.² Another way to do (b) is to distinguish between conceptual and non-conceptual (analog) representations and show that the latter is ineffable. Thus, both representationalism and the ineffability intuition are saved. Carruthers (2000, p. 125) says, “[a]ny nonconceptual representation will be ineffable -in a sense- in relation to the concepts used to describe its content. For example, my visual system delivers representations of color which are *analog*, in the sense that they allow a seemingly-smooth spectrum of only-just-distinguishable shades of color to be represented.”³

In this paper, I shall do (c). I will distinguish between two senses of ineffability: descriptive and demonstrative, because they have different sources. The former is the failure of description in terms of more primitive features and the latter consists in the failure to intersubjectively pointing to something (more on this later). I will argue that qualia are ineffable in both senses, and I will explain both in terms of representationalism. I argue that primitive representations are descriptively ineffable. The idea is to identify the phenomenal with these primitive representations. Thus, the intuition and representationalism will be compatible: the intuition tells us that qualia are descriptively ineffable and representationalism tells us that qualia, which are identified with representations, are descriptively ineffable because they’re the most primitive representations that are not preceded by any representations to be described with.

² This version of representationalism is not apparently intended to *explain* anything about the phenomenal; rather it is a descriptive thesis, that is, it seeks to describe all there is to the phenomenal: the phenomenal does not consist in mere phenomenal properties; it has some representational aspects as well. But we should distinguish between two views: (1) the view that the phenomenal is not identical to representational contents or vehicles of representations, but it does represent some properties, (2) the view that the phenomenal is identified with representational contents or vehicles of representations. Showing only that the phenomenal represents certain properties, though it is non-representational in nature, as (1) says, is not the standard version of representationalism.

³ Note that Carruthers himself defends a version of higher-order theories of consciousness. What he says here is on the basis of first-order representationalism, though he maintains that higher-order theories provide a better explanation of ineffability and a host of other phenomenal features.

Demonstrative ineffability is originated in pure subjectivity and I will explain it in the following form: qualia are identified with *manners* of representations and since each manner is internally determined, there arises the possibility that each subject has a different manner of representation from others. Therefore, these manners cannot be demonstratively communicated.

Representationalism aside, ineffability is an interesting problem in itself and has strong affinities with the “explanatory gap” which is expressed by Jackson’s famous story of Mary, the brilliant scientist who is confined in a black-and-white room and knows everything physical there is to know about colors, but when she is released from the room and sees the sky and roses for the first time, she learns something new about colors. The conclusion Jackson draws from the story is that everything physical about colors is not everything about colors *simpliciter*. In other words, there’s something that physical explanations of colors miss: the phenomenal qualities of colors. If colors were fully describable and communicable to people who have not experienced them, Mary would know everything about them via reading a comprehensive written description of them and seeing the colors in person would not add anything to her knowledge. So as you can see, the cogency of the knowledge argument against physicalism owes much to the ineffability of the phenomenal.

More strictly speaking, if the phenomenal were not ineffable, the following counter-argument could work against the knowledge argument⁴: suppose that Mary is confined in a black-and-white room, but instead of knowing everything physical there’s to know about colors, she knows everything non-physical about colors. She is given a lot of descriptions of colors in a non-physical language. Now imagine that she is released from the black-and-white room. She definitely learns something new by seeing the sky and roses. This counter-argument can work against dualism, since non-physical knowledge of colors is not everything there is to know about colors, therefore, colors are not non-physical. The only way to escape this counter-argument is to say that colors are ineffable, so that it is impossible to give non-physical descriptions of colors to Mary. Mary learns something new because what she was given was not in fact a description of colors; rather it was a description of functional or dispositional properties of colors. Thus, for knowledge argument to work against physicalism, it must appeal to the ineffability of qualia.

Also in Nagel’s famous paper “What It Is Like to Be a Bat?” (1974) to know the what-it-is-like of experiences of bats is not possible except if you were a bat yourself. If bat’s experiences were exhaustively describable and conveyable, one would know their what-it-is-like without being a bat himself. Therefore, it appears that it is the ineffability of phenomenal experiences that makes them *seem* mysterious and non-physical; in this paper, I shall try to demystify this feature of our phenomenal experiences.

Thus, what follows is intended to render the ineffability intuition and representationalism compatible, and this will be done by giving a representationalist account of ineffability. I wish to demystify at least some aspects of consciousness by this account.

2. Descriptive vs. Demonstrative Ineffability

⁴ It has, in fact, been raised with slight differences by Churchland (1985) and retorted by Jackson (1986).

“Ineffable” literally means indescribable or what cannot be expressed in words. In issues concerning the phenomenal, ineffability is a *linguistic* property of the phenomenal. By a linguistic property, L, of something, O, I mean that O has L as a matter of its being expressed in language, not as a matter of its being known (which is epistemological) or its being a certain way in the world (which is metaphysical), though L might stem from other epistemological or metaphysical or whatever features of O. One might have knowledge of her or even other people’s phenomenal experiences such as red-sensations, but, according to ineffability thesis, she cannot adequately describe this knowledge and communicate it to others.

Effability (hence ineffability) can be conceived in two ways:

- (a) Descriptive effability: P is descriptively effable if it is preceded by more primitive⁵ properties and features and can be communicated in their terms. For example, the concept HOUSE is effable because it can be communicated in terms of its structural elements such as those of ROOM, CEILING, FLOOR, WALL, HABITABILITY, etc. Of course, each of these primitive properties might be preceded by still more primitive properties in its own right, in terms of which it can be communicated. But in order for the regress to stop (and it must stop, because otherwise, our concepts would not get formed from the beginning), we must have the second sort of effability.
- (b) Demonstrative effability: some primitive properties are only demonstratively effable, that is, via being pointed to in an *intersubjective* way.⁶

Descriptive *ineffability* is, thus, the impossibility of a property to be communicated in terms of more primitive properties. In other words, descriptive *effability* of x is by mentioning features of x by means of which x can be recognized by someone who has never experienced it or the memory of x can be identified by someone who has experienced it. Take book as a paradigm example of an effable concept. Imagine that Laura has never seen a book before and does not know the meaning of “book”, but she is a competent language-user in all other respects. Now suppose that you explain the meaning of “book” to her in the following way:

BOOK is a collection of printed or manuscript pages sewn or glued together along one side and bound between rigid boards or flexible covers (you can find such a definition in dictionaries).

Having this definition in mind, Laura *can* identify a book among many different things in a room. It means that BOOK is descriptively effable. Now imagine that Mary (I borrow the copyrighted character from Frank Jackson’s story!) was confined in a black-and-

⁵ My use of the word “primitive” shall be understood in atomistic terms. An instance of P is primitive iff it is not based on a lower-level instance of P. In the case of representations, for example, a representation R is primitive iff it is not mediated by another representation R*.

⁶ The motive for this distinction is that each descriptive and demonstrative sorts of ineffability has a different source, as shall be clear in section 3.

white room and has never seen colors before and does not know the meanings of color-words, but she is a competent language-user in all other respects. Now suppose that you describe the meaning of “red” to her in the following way:

(D) RED is an exciting, mesmerizing, energetic ... color.

Having this definition in mind, Mary can never identify red objects in a room, because her attitudes towards red might be different from yours, or she might have the same attitude towards many colors. Of course, she might gain the identification ability via something like the following:

(D*) RED is the color of blood, ripe tomato, or roses.

But it is not a description of RED itself. The description in question must address P, not its functions, dispositions or other relations. Thus, P’s expressibility in terms of its functional specifications does not amount to P’s descriptive effability. That’s why in the literature, describing functional specifications of qualia has nothing to do with its ineffability. The above description refers to the relation of redness to its owners, and is not sufficient for the descriptive effability of redness. Yes, it might be sufficient for the *demonstrative* effability of redness.

Demonstrative *ineffability* is the impossibility of a property to be pointed to in an *intersubjective* way. I will argue that qualia would be demonstratively ineffable if inversion-arguments are to be approved of; since they deny the intersubjectivity of the phenomenal (the only thing they maintain is that qualia are nominally the same like Wittgenstein’s beetle in a box), and when there’s no intersubjective notion of qualia, there will not be one and the same shared notion to be pointed to. I shall present a representationalist explanation of both descriptive and demonstrative ineffability of the phenomenal.

Another relevant distinction here is between the ineffability of experience E for those who underwent E before and those who never underwent E . For E to be descriptively ineffable, it does not matter whether the subject has experienced E before or not. For descriptive ineffability, as I shall explicate in the next section, arises from the lack of structure or lack of cognitive or linguistic resources to describe the relevant property. Such a property is descriptively ineffable even if the subject has experienced it before⁷. But for E to be demonstratively ineffable, the subject must not have experienced E before. For if she has already experienced E , she will share the intersubjective notion of E with other subjects and can demonstratively talk about it. Of course, if E is a pure subjective property, that is, it is not intersubjective, it will be demonstratively ineffable even for those who have already experienced it, because in this case it is not possible to find out whether my experience E_1 is intersubjectively the same as your experience E_2 .

⁷ Speaking to Russelian jargons, the subject’s previous experience of E lends her only the knowledge by acquaintance not knowledge by description. By having undergone E , the subject does not gain the ability to describe the phenomenal features of her experiences. She just gains an ability to *demonstratively* talk about the phenomenal features.

Therefore, having or lacking a previous experience is irrelevant to discussions about descriptive ineffability. But some writers on the issue have given an account of descriptive ineffability⁸ on the basis of the distinction between having and lacking a previous experience. Mussachio's (2005) account makes such a mistake. For the sake of brevity, I just quote a part of his paper: "[t]he references to qualitative experiences entered in the regular dictionary are unintelligible to individuals who *do not share* our genetic endowment and phenomenology, as illustrated by color blindness" (emphasis mine). The problem with such an account is that qualia are not only descriptively ineffable for individuals who do not share our phenomenology. As I will delineate in the next section, qualia are descriptively ineffable even for those who share them. (The same is true about Michael Huemer 2001, p. 66)

3. Sources of Ineffability

We can think of two sorts of factors that give rise to the ineffability of qualia: the factors on the side of the *uttered* and the ones on the side of the *utterer* (or better, *the medium of utterance*).

Instances of the former are primitiveness and subjectivity without intersubjectivity which I call 'pure subjectivity'. Primitiveness is a source of *descriptive* ineffability and is compatible with demonstrative effability. But pure subjectivity is a source of demonstrative ineffability, since it entails the (irrefutable) possibility that the subjective experiences of each of us is totally different from those of others. In such a case, there would be no one and the same phenomenal property to be demonstratively effable, rather the property is only nominally the same across different subjects. The situation would be like Wittgenstein's famous example of beetle in a box in which, everyone calls what they have in their boxes a "beetle" but since they have no access to the contents of each other's boxes, each box might contain a totally different object from the rest, though everyone calls it a "beetle". Thus if our phenomenal states are purely subjective in a way that nobody can have access to, and know what is phenomenally going on in other subjects, how can we be sure that we all have the same intersubjectively, and not merely nominally, the same experiences? How can we overcome the possibility that what I call 'red' is your green? The qualophile would insist that even if the input-channels that give rise to red-sensations as well as their outputs *and* their realizers are the same across subjects, we cannot yet guarantee that sensations are not only nominally the same.

Instances of the latter sort are cognitive and linguistic deficits. If there's no problem on the side of the uttered, the thing might still be ineffable because the cognitive system, which is supposed to describe it, has natural or acquired limits that prevent it from cognitively capturing the property and it comes to be ineffable. And sometimes, there's no problem on the side of the uttered, and there's not a cognitive deficit, but it is still ineffable, because natural languages have a lot of limits and deficits that make them unable to express a variety of contents. Dennett's (1991, pp. 382-3) denial of the

⁸ Note that descriptive and demonstrative kinds of ineffability have not been distinguished in the literature, but in retrospect, most writers either talk about descriptive ineffability or their accounts are confused between the two.

simplicity of qualia and his complexity-based explanation of ineffability is an appeal to cognitive sources of ineffability, because on his account, phenomenal experiences are too complex to be captured by our cognitive systems; so if our cognitive system was strong enough to capture highly complex phenomena, qualia would not be ineffable. He explicitly makes this point in another part of his book (p. 49), "...If you retort, 'I'm not just saying that I can't describe it; I'm saying it's indescribable!' we heterophenomenologists will note that at least you can't describe it *now*, and since you're the only one in a position to describe it, it is at this time indescribable. Later, perhaps, you will come to be able to describe it, but of course at that time it will be something different, something describable". The same is true about Churchland's (1996 "The rediscovery of light") explanation of ineffability based on an appeal to the perceptual system's inability to discriminate structure within features of experiences.

Thus some people might have the tendency to say that ineffability of phenomenal experiences arises from our cognitive or linguistic limits. They might argue that our cognitive or linguistic capacities fall short of capturing our phenomenal experiences. Had our cognitive and linguistic abilities been more sophisticated, we would be able to express and communicate our phenomenal experiences to each other. However, if we blame the metaphysical status (primitiveness and pure subjectivity) of the phenomenal for its ineffability, it would remain ineffable no matter how much or in what way our cognitive capacities evolve. I believe that when an intrinsic feature of the phenomenal is sufficient for ineffability, we will not need to resort to the cognitive and/or linguistic origins. In other words, even if we suppose that *both* kinds of factors are involved in the ineffability of the phenomenal, they would not over-determine its ineffability; only the intrinsic factors would determine it, because in this case, even if we imagine that our cognitive and/or linguistic capacities become more sophisticated, they could not still capture the phenomenal because of its peculiar metaphysical status of primitiveness and/or pure subjectivity. Thus, in what follows I will focus on these intrinsic factors in order to account for ineffability.

4. Descriptive Ineffability of the Phenomenal

As I mentioned above, x is descriptively ineffable if it cannot be recognized by any amount of description. Phenomenal properties, such as redness, pains, and emotions are descriptively ineffable in this sense: an otherwise competent language-user who has never experienced them cannot detect them by any amount of description. But this is not a peculiar feature of phenomenal properties. All descriptions require features to describe with, and descriptions of these features require their own features in turn, and so on. This chain must stop somewhere in order for the descriptions to start at all: there must be features and properties which are necessarily indescribable. These "primitive properties" are the building-blocks of descriptions, that is, no description would be possible without them.

Phenomenal states are primitive *representations* of the world (including the subject's own body). By "primitive" I mean that they are not derived from other representations in turn. Rather they directly represent the world to us and are not expressible in terms of any other representations. There are two types of representations: primitive and sophisticated.

The tokens of the latter are constructs out of those of the former. Primitive representations are directly in contact with the world, that is, no representation mediates between them and the world. Sophisticated representations are describable in terms of less sophisticated ones and this description must eventually end in primitive representations which are not preceded by more primitive representations in terms of which they could be described; otherwise a vicious regress would follow. This argument is not refutable by discoveries of the science of color that colors are analyzable. For primitiveness is compatible with analyzability: a phenomenal property P might be primitive in the sense that it directly represents the world and is not mediated by another representation, though it is analyzable to some features and aspects.⁹

It might be objected¹⁰ that naturalistic theories of representation render all representations descriptively effable, whether they are primitive or sophisticated; and since qualia are descriptively ineffable, they cannot be identified with representations. Let R be a primitive representation; R can be defined in the following way: “A representation R is a representation of red if and only if P”, where P can be filled in with any naturalistic theory of representations you have, for example, it can be “R covaries with the surface reflectance property H” or “it is the result of a process that has evolved to carry information about H”. These theories provide a description of representations just as “mean molecular kinetic energy” provides a description of heat.

Answer: Naturalistic theories do not *conceptually* reduce the representations to naturalistic properties to claim that the concept of representation is identified with that of those properties. Rather they only *ontologically* reduce them to naturalistic properties, that is, their claim is that ontologically speaking, representations are nothing over and above instantiations of these properties, though each of them has its own concept. The point is that even in the wake of a highly plausible naturalistic theory of representations, we do not, at the ordinary, pre-theoretical level, have an effable concept of them. The only thing we learn is their ontological status¹¹. That’s why, physicalism -which is a direct reduction of qualia to the physical- is not at odds with the ineffability intuition, since it is just committed to an ontological sort of reduction not a conceptual one, and this difference at the ordinary conceptual level suffices for preserving the intuition. Take as an example a symphony of Beethoven which is reduced to certain vibrations of wave pressure. This reduction only means that the symphony is not ontologically something over and above those vibrations; but if your friend asks you to describe the symphony, it

⁹ I am aware of an alternative holistic explanation of the interdependency of all representations; but this is not the place to talk about such general issues. The only thing I could mention here is that however plausible holism might be between cognitive states themselves, it is implausible when we consider the relation between cognitive states on the one hand and perceptual ones on the other.

¹⁰ The objection was raised by Farid Masrour.

¹¹ For more clarification, we can employ the difference between reductionism and eliminativism: the latter replaces X by Y without residual (and the concept X is considered as a false concept to be eliminated from our language), but the former keeps the concept of Y but identifies the referent of Y with that of X. Naturalistic theories of representation are not eliminativist. Rather they claim that though the concept of the natural property N is different from that of representation, both concepts refer to one and the same token in the world. Therefore, a dualism of their concepts is preserved which means that each of the two concepts has its own description: one is not a description of the other.

would be absurd to delineate the physicalistic story to her. It must be done by means of pre-theoretical concepts.

Now that naturalistic theories just provide us with the ontological status of representations and not their concepts, the type of definitions they offer for phenomenal properties (identified with representations) is much like “red is the color of ripe tomatoes”, that is, they only give a demonstrative definition not a descriptive one. Even if a naturalistic theory employs ordinary concepts to define phenomenal properties such as “phenomenal red is the kind of experience that I have when I see red things”, it does not render them *descriptively* effable, since an otherwise competent language-user who has never seen red things before and does not know the meaning of “red” cannot recognize red things by that definition only. As I said before, this definition just renders phenomenal redness demonstratively effable (if phenomenal properties are intersubjectively the same).

5. Demonstrative Ineffability of the Phenomenal

As I repeatedly mentioned above, demonstrative effability of the phenomenal depends only on its intersubjectivity. Pure subjectivity amounts to the possibility that each subject has a different phenomenal property from others. So there will not be a common property to which subjects can point and on the basis of which they can give definitions of the form of “red is the color of ripe tomatoes”. Here I shall consider an argument against the intersubjectivity of the phenomenal: the famous inversion argument. The argument goes like this: since I don’t have any access to other people’s subjective states, it is possible that my subjective experiences are totally different from them. For example, what Jack experiences as green and calls it “green” might be experienced by Bob as red, though he also calls it “green”. If this inverted situation holds, neither subjects would have a way to find it out. The possibility arises for any other kinds of phenomenal states as well. Consider tastes. It is possible that Jack experiences sugar as sweet and calls his subjective experience “sweet” but Bob experiences it as bitter and yet calls it “sweet”, or in the case of emotions, when Jack is in love, he has the phenomenal experiences peculiar to love and calls it “love” but when Bob is in love, he has the phenomenal experiences peculiar to hatred and yet calls it “love”. In all these cases, the relevant behaviors in both normal and inverted subjects are supposed to be the same. The force of the argument is that there is no way to repudiate the possibility of inversion. No behavioral evidence is to dispense with the possibility, since the assumption is that manifest behaviors in the inverted cases are the same as those in the normal ones. Nor is there a direct access to other subjects’ heads to form an interpersonal comparison. One implication of this argument is that the phenomenal are even demonstratively *ineffable*. We cannot define the phenomenal property of redness by just saying that “red is the color of ripe tomatoes or blood”, since this property is determined by phenomenal features which might be different for different subjects. [In other words, I cannot convey what I have in my head in my red-experiences to you.] Therefore, we cannot say that the phenomenal concept RED refers to the phenomenal property of redness, since if there’s no intersubjectivity, each person has his or her own peculiar red phenomenology. Thus there might not be a common property to which the concept RED can refer.

We can even go one step further and argue from absent qualia that we can in no way repudiate the possibility that other people lack qualia. Inversion arguments render qualia indeterminate concepts, and absent-qualia arguments render them empty concepts.

In other words, the main problem we are dealing with here is whether or not phenomenal properties such as colors and tastes are *demonstratively* conveyable to others *who have or have not experienced them*. First it is admitted that such properties are not demonstratively conveyable to those who have never experienced them before, because they don't share the intersubjective concept of those properties. Therefore, they cannot be informed by a demonstrative definition of the sort of "red is the color of X and Y". However a person who *has* experienced colors, yet does not know color-words such as 'red', 'green', etc., such a definition can be informative and helpful. For he knows X and Y on the one hand and has experienced red and green on the other and such a demonstrative definition gives him the ability to associate color words to his color experiences. The trouble raised by inversion arguments is that this person S might learn how to manipulate color words, yet has different color experiences from ours. Therefore, what I have conveyed might not, in fact, be what I have experienced, or more technically, since "color of X and Y" is a second-order property, my "color of X and Y" might be different from your "color of X and Y". For second-order properties might be different in different possible worlds unlike the first-order phenomenal property of redness which is the same in all possible worlds. Therefore, what we can demonstratively convey is a relational property of "P₁ is the P of X" like "pain is the feeling of a damaged member of the body", "red is the color of ripe tomatoes" or "sweet is the taste of sugar". And we can in no way demonstratively convey the *intrinsic* qualities of our experiences.

However, qualia *are* intersubjectively the same at a pre-epistemological level. For people have a background supposition of qualia-intersubjectivity in their ordinary lives; otherwise qualia-language and demonstrative definitions of qualia would not be there. But at an epistemological level, qualia are *not* intersubjectively the same, since the possibility of inversion is irrefutable.

A representationalist account of the phenomenal properties can accommodate this intuition: representationally conceived, qualia are manners of representations of things in the world. Red is a particular manner of representing red things, for instance. This particular manner of representation while might be intersubjectively the same across people (and is assumed so in ordinary lives), is subject to the possibility that everyone has their own particular manners of representing so-called "red" things. For this manner of representation is *internally* determined and thus, has a hidden aspect from other subjects. And this gives rise to the possibility of different manners of representations for different subjects. Qualia-language is formed on the basis of the pre-epistemological assumption of language-users that qualia are intersubjectively the same and at this level demonstrative communication of qualia is possible. However, at the epistemological level, we are caught up with the possibility that each of us has a different manner of representations (or qualia) from others.

6. Summary

There are two kinds of ineffability: descriptive and demonstrative. X is descriptively ineffable both for those who have experienced it before and those who have not. Our criterion for descriptive effability is that the description gives a subject S the ability to recognize X among other things; otherwise it is descriptively ineffable. Demonstrative effability is by intersubjectively pointing to X through definitions of the sort of “P₁ is the P of X”. X might be intersubjective at one level, like pre-epistemological level, hence demonstratively effable relative to that level, but pure subjective at another, like epistemological level, hence demonstratively ineffable at that level. Phenomenal properties P are descriptively ineffable because of their primitiveness. P is identified with primitive representations R, and R is not describable since it is not mediated by more primitive representations to be described in their terms. This is how representationalism can deal with the *descriptive* ineffability of the phenomenal.

Qualia are demonstratively effable at a pre-epistemological level, because people ordinarily think of qualia as intersubjectively the same and this is what gives them the ability to demonstratively teach or learn qualia. However at an epistemological level, they are demonstratively ineffable, since the possibility of different qualia with different subjects can in no way be repudiated, thus they cannot be demonstrated at this level. This fact is explained in representational terms: qualia are different manners of representations and since these manners are *internally* determined, subjects have no access to each other’s internal manners of representations of things in the world, which in turn gives rise to epistemological skepticisms about their intersubjectivity, hence demonstrative ineffability at an epistemological level.

Therefore, as we can see, representationalism can handle the ineffability of the phenomenal in both descriptive and demonstrative senses.

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