

# Qualia that It Is Right to Quine\*

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Dennett (1988) provides a much discussed argument for the nonexistence of qualia, as conceived by philosophers like Block, Chalmers, Loar and Searle. My goal in this paper is to vindicate Dennett's argument, construed in a certain way. The argument supports the claim that qualia are constitutively representational. Against Block and Chalmers, the argument rejects the detachment of phenomenal from information-processing consciousness; and against Loar and Searle, it defends the claim that qualia are constitutively representational in an externalist understanding of this. The core of the argument is contained in section 3. In the first part, I contrast a minimal conception of qualia, relative to which their existence is not under dispute, with the sort of view to which I will object. In the second part I set the stage by presenting the facts about (minimal) qualia on which a Dennett-like argument can be based.

## 1. Minimal vs. Cartesian Conceptions of Qualia

Dennett's views on qualia can be seen in different ways. Sometimes he seems to be arguing for an eliminative position; at other times, only for their reduction to some kind of functional or representational properties. If we characterize qualia in a minimal way, proposals to eliminate them are out of the question. It is only if qualia are characterized in such a minimal way that their existence can be proven, as Searle's (1992, 8) suggests, by such methods as "pinching oneself and reporting the results in the *Journal of Philosophy*". The minimal characterization includes the following propositions:

- (i) Qualia are types, instantiable repeatables as opposed to particulars.

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- (ii) The instantiation of qualia distinguishes the conscious mental states of a subject from those mental states subjects have even when they are not conscious (dreamlessly sleeping or in a coma, say).
- (iii) Qualia are paradigmatically instantiated in mental states involving sensations, emotions, and imaginings, as opposed to more purely rational conscious states like unimagined logical or inductive reasoning or deliberation.
- (iv) Qualia characterize what it is like for the subject instantiating them to be in those conscious mental states, the way things appear to him.
- (v) Qualia are therefore known by the subject instantiating them. Moreover, they are known in a privileged way, in that: (a) subjects are granted a special authority in those matters; (b) knowledge of qualia by their subjects is non-inferential; (c) it is not so easy to be mistaken about appearances than about corresponding realities.

The existence of qualia in the minimal sense is compatible with very different philosophical views on their more specific nature. Wittgensteinians could accept it; Wittgenstein suggests that sensations are for us involved in determining the meaning of sensation-terms, as internal samples. The minimal sense is also compatible with the views of functionalists, particularly with the kind of functionalism that Dennett embraces when he avoids eliminativist suggestions. It is also compatible with the kind of view that Block (1996) calls “representationism”—views like those of Dretske, Harman, Lycan or Tye. And, of course, it is compatible with what I will refer to as *Cartesian views* on qualia, to be introduced later. The argument defended here, which is inspired by Dennett’s, grants that minimal qualia exists, but rejects the existence of Cartesian qualia.

Proposition (v) in the minimal characterization, which concerns what is the perhaps hottest issue about qualia, should be understood in its own minimal terms. In particular, the privileged character of the knowledge at stake could be philosophically explained in many different terms. It could be explained in the reliabilist terms Sellars (1963), Shoemaker (1994) and others have proposed. It could alternatively be explained in a Wittgensteinian way, as based on the “grammatical” point that we would not attribute mental states such as pains to subjects that would not know them in a more authoritative way than others. This privilege is compatible with the sort of mistakes in particular cases that will be mentioned later. It is compatible with the possibility that in specific cases a subject ignores a quale that he in fact instantiates; and it is compatible with the possibility that a subject, in specific cases,

judges that he instantiates a quale that he in fact does not instantiate. In short, it is compatible with restricted forms of error and ignorance. For convenience's sake, I will use 'introspection' to refer to the process by means of which a subject might come to know, and in fact comes to know, qualia that he instantiates in a direct, privileged, authoritative way (however this is further elucidated). To use this term does not prejudice the nature of the introspective process.<sup>1</sup>

The minimal characterization does not indicate whether or not qualia are intrinsic, using 'intrinsic' not as related to *essential*, but to *non-relational*. A proper explication of the concept is difficult, and will not be undertaken here.<sup>2</sup> Qualia according to *the Cartesian view*, or C-qualia in short, are characterized (in addition to the claims in the minimal account) by their intrinsicness. But we have to refine this characterization on at least two counts.

Firstly, the Cartesian will be well-advised to accept that qualia are constitutively relational, if the relations at stake are only among qualia. A subject conscious of two sounds might also be conscious that one is louder than the other; a subject conscious of two toothaches might also be conscious that one is more intense. In fact, it might well be constitutive of qualia that they belong in qualitative spaces, defined by their qualitative relations. The simplest case of a relational aspect of qualia that should be considered constitutive of them is perhaps the following. A subject conscious that a quale he is experiencing is familiar (that he is *recognizing* it) is thereby conscious that this instance is of the same type as others experienced in unspecified previous cases. He does not need to have in mind any particular earlier event of experiencing another instance of the quale; but, through that impression of familiarity, he does have in mind that he has experienced earlier instances of the quale.

Secondly, the Cartesian might also accept that qualia are constitutively representational, representing in some cases things that the conscious subject takes to be objective, or "outside the mind". He can accept it, to the extent that the representational relations in question do not constitutively presuppose the existence of material things, which are not instances of conscious states. As Loar puts it, Cartesians "may allow that, say, visual experiences are in some sense intrinsically representational ..., [that they have] (some sort of) internally determined intentional structure, so that it is an introspectable and nonrelational feature of a visual experience that it represents things visually as being thus and so".<sup>3</sup> Searle (1992) insists that, in his view, consciousness is constitutively representational; given the internalism on which

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, it might well be that (as Shoemaker (1994) has convincingly argued) it bears little resemblance to perception.

<sup>2</sup> For a plausible proposal, see Langton & Lewis (1998).

<sup>3</sup> Loar (1997, 597); for a fuller elaboration of the idea, see Loar, forthcoming.

he also insists (see particularly Searle 1983, *passim*), he must be relying on some such “internally determined intentional structure”.

Hence, what distinguishes the Cartesian view is not to consider qualia intrinsic as such, but the claim that qualia are not constitutively related to “things outside the mind”. Quoting again from Loar, Cartesians “typically suppose that such mental properties are not relational—that is, that they present themselves as not intrinsically involving relations to things outside the mind [...] Phenomenal concepts are conceptually irreducible in this sense: they neither a priori imply, nor are implied by, physical-functional concepts. Although that is denied by analytical functionalists [...], many other physicalists, including me, find it intuitively appealing”. I will use ‘s(subjective)-intrinsicness’ for this feature of qualia as conceived in the Cartesian view, or C-qualia.

Superficially Searle’s and Loar’s view is very different from the views advanced by Block’s (1995) and Chalmers (1996). The latter distinguish between phenomenal and access consciousness (Block) or between phenomenal consciousness and psychological consciousness (Chalmers). In both cases the idea is to *conceptually* separate qualia (which, for both writers characterize phenomenal consciousness) from any functional or representational properties. According to Block’s definition, a state is access conscious “if, in virtue of one’s having the state, a representation of its content is (1) inferentially promiscuous [...], that is, poised for use as a premise in reasoning, (2) poised for rational control of action, and (3) poised for rational control of speech” (Block 1995, p. 231). However, I think that the main source of the difference among them lies in that, unlike Searle and Loar, Block and Chalmers assume that representational properties are to be understood along contemporary externalist lines. What is distinctive of these contemporary externalist conceptions is to think of representational relations as constituted by externally determined (causal, or social) relations. Applied to qualia, a strong version of externalism contends that when a subject is conscious of a quale, the subject is simultaneously causally or socially in contact with an instance of a material property, and therefore such an instance simultaneously exists. A weaker version claims only that the subject has been so related causally or socially in the past, and therefore such an instance has existed. It is the weaker version that I will assume here. Now, solipsists and phenomenologists could pay lip service to “externalism”, by assuming that causal relations, social relations and the material world are all constituted by their relations to the primitively given conscious world of the subject. What I will call ‘externalism’ here excludes this possibility; material properties, as well as causal and social relations are, I assume, objective, constituted independently of the qualitative states of any subject. I will use ‘o-extrinsicness’ to refer to this feature, contrasting it with the s-intrinsicness of C-qualia.

I interpret Block's and Chalmers's claim that phenomenal consciousness (consciousness which involves qualia) and access/psychological consciousness are conceptually (and constitutively, I take it) distinct as a form of the Cartesian view. Block and Chalmers contemplate that, as a matter of empirical fact, qualia might "turn out to be relational" (Block 1994, 514): "I acknowledge the empirical possibility that the scientific nature of phenomenal consciousness has something to do with information processing" (Block 1995, 245, fn. 10). But qualia do not conceptually or constitutively involve relations with things outside the mind: "Phenomenal consciousness is not a functional notion" (Block 1995, pp. 232); "Perhaps phenomenal consciousness and access consciousness amount to much the same thing empirically even though they differ conceptually" (Block 1995, 242).

Block (1996) defends under 'phenomenism' a view which denies "that representational content is all there is to phenomenal character. I insist that phenomenal character *outruns* representational content' (*op. cit.*, 20). As will become clear, my own view could be counted as a form of phenomenism thus understood. However, I think that Block's considered views are stronger than phenomenism, in that he would subscribe to Loar's claim quoted above: concepts of qualia "neither a priori imply, nor are implied by, physical-functional concepts". This is stronger, because one could deny that for each quale there are physical-functional conditions whose instantiation conceptually suffices for that of the quale, while still accepting that proper qualia concepts imply a priori physical-functional conditions; and Block also argues against the latter claim. For him, a quale is "a phenomenal property of an experience which eludes the intentional, the functional and the purely cognitive" (*op. cit.*, 25). Although 'elude' is still vague, I think that Block's insistence that there can conceptually be both phenomenal consciousness without access consciousness, and vice versa, makes it clear that it is the stronger view that he holds.

To critically discuss Cartesian views, we confront an important difficulty: aside from negative claims ("qualia do not conceptually involve external relations with external things"), they say precious little about what they take to be the nature of qualia. Fortunately, there is a more positive proposal in the literature elaborating on the nature of C-qualia, due to Loar, to which Block (1996) is sympathetic. According to Loar's suggestion, phenomenal qualities are internal properties we discern in our own experiences. There are ways in which our experiences differ and resemble each other with respect to what it is like to have them, from which we form special kinds of concepts, phenomenal concepts. "Phenomenal concepts are formed 'from one's own case'. They are *type-demonstratives* that derive their reference from a first-person perspective: 'that type of sensation', 'that feature of visual experience'. And so third-person ascriptions of phenomenal qualities are projective ascriptions of what one has grasped in one's own case: 'she has an experience of that type'"

(Loar 1997, p. 597). Phenomenal concepts belong to the wider class of *recognitional concepts*, which are type-demonstratives “grounded in dispositions to classify, by way of perceptual discriminations, certain objects, events, situations ... typically linked with capacities to form images” (*ibid.*, 600).

As Loar makes clear, though, this classification of phenomenal concepts in the wider class of recognitional concepts “grounded in dispositions to classify by perceptual discriminations” has limited explanatory power. For “‘phenomenal concept’ cannot simply mean ‘self-directed recognitional concept’” (*ibid.*, 603). We have dispositions to classify, by means of perceptual discriminations, properties of ourselves like cramps, superficial injuries, itches, etc, and to form images thereof; nevertheless, recognition-based concepts of those states are not phenomenal concepts, but concepts of material properties. Only recognition-based concepts of cramp-feelings, itching-feelings, etc, might count as phenomenal concepts; and only if properly based on the process we are calling ‘introspection’.<sup>4</sup>

According to Loar, introspection provides conceptually sophisticated subjects like us with a specific capacity for making discriminations among states of ourselves, and for forming images thereof. This capacity is sufficiently analogous to perceptual discriminations for the concepts constituted in that way to be properly classified as recognitional concepts. This is not a reductive explication of phenomenal concepts in terms of the concept of self-directed recognitional concept. To find out about the introspective process, we must rely on our own experience; otherwise, there is no way to understand what that “first-person perspective” is from which the reference of phenomenal concepts derives, according to him. We must take the nature of that process as given for the explication of phenomenal properties. But, nonetheless, Loar’s suggestion states a constitutive fact about these phenomenal properties. I think that it is a true claim regarding phenomenal consciousness. It will not be questioned here that qualia are, constitutively, entities of which the kind of phenomenal concepts described by Loar can be formed. What will be questioned is whether this allows for a conception of qualia such that relations with the external world are not constitutive of them.

Loar’s positive proposal, thus, does not provide a reductive explication of C-qualia, but relies in part on our own introspective knowledge. It will be convenient to be as clear regarding what it states as regarding what motivates it. What is the intuitive motivation for the belief in C-qualia? Part of it lies in the attempt to account for the intuitions unveiled by famous examples, like Jackson’s (1986) Mary or Nagel’s (1974) bat. These examples show at least that phenomenal concepts differ from neurological or computational/psychological concepts. This is also the motivation that leads me to

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<sup>4</sup> Compare Loar’s “more fanciful self-directed nonphenomenal concept” based on blindness, *op. cit.*, 603.

partially accept Loar's suggestion. However, this alone cannot account for claims of s-intrinsicness; for it is coherent (and true, in my own view) to contend that qualia are both potential objects of recognitional phenomenal concepts, and that they are o-extrinsic.

Something more must motivate the Cartesian view. This extra part of the motivation is close to that for traditional Cartesian views. It lies in the conceptual possibility Cartesians envisage of radical skeptical scenarios, compatible with our conscious life being exactly as it is. Loar aptly presents it thus: "A compelling intuition about mental life sees it as a stream of conscious thoughts, feelings and perceptions. [...] The stream of conscious thoughts, memories and perceptions seems to have a life of its own that is constituted independently of its external environment. [...] Apparently I can imagine what it is like to be an isolated brain that is a physical duplicate of my own brain. [...] The intuition supports the view that my own mental stream's intentional features—even those of its outward directed thoughts—are constituted independently of my actual situation in the world" (Loar forthcoming, 2). I will refer to this aspect of the motivation as the *internalist intuition*. This is the intuition that no external relation with external things could be constitutive of consciousness, for it is compatible with our conscious life being exactly as it constitutively is that no such relation exist. The alleged conceivability of zombies that Chalmers (1996) envisages depends on that same Cartesian intuition. For suppose one assumes the contrasting view defended here, that being consciously aware of a phenomenal state constitutively involves knowing some determinate aspects of the external world, and the existence of functional relations between it and the phenomenal state. Then one should at least suspend judgement on whether it is really possible that there is someone physically identical to me, but without consciousness.

## 2. Dennett's Argument

Dennett's argument is based on well-known examples, like the Chase-Sanborn example (Dennett 1988) or those contrasting "Orwellian" and "Stalinesque" explanations (Dennett 1991). I take it that the point of these examples is to justify the following claim: to the extent that qualia exist, there are some determinate facts about them that cannot be established from the first-person perspective. Take the Chase-Sanborn example, for instance. S introspects a quale he is experiencing (the taste of Maxwell House coffee now) as differing from related qualia he experienced in the past (the taste of Maxwell House coffee then), in that he does not seem to like the former as much as he used to like the latter. There are at least two hypotheses S can consider to account for this (Chase's and Sanborn's): (i) the two instances are qualitatively different; (ii) the two are qualitatively the same, but the standards

governing S's preferences have changed. If qualia are well-behaved properties, at most one of (i) and (ii) state a fact. However, S cannot discard either (i) or (ii) on introspective bases alone.

This and other examples by Dennett appear to involve memory. The determinate facts which cannot be established from the first-person perspective at a given time  $t_2$  are in part facts regarding which qualia the subject instantiated at an earlier time  $t_1$ ,  $t_1 < t_2$ . Given only the minimal conception, the conscious remembrance subjects have at a given time of their experiences at earlier times lacks any special privilege. There might be determinate facts about which qualia a given subject experienced in the past, but they cannot be established on the basis of the conscious thoughts of the subject now. The special privilege of introspection reaches only, at the most, occurrent qualia-instances.

Introspection does not even reach all concurrent qualia. Examples are qualia which the subject instantiates, although his attention is fully engaged by some other features of his stream of consciousness. This is an example from Block: "suppose you are engaged in intense conversation when suddenly at noon you realize that right outside your window there is—and has been for some time—a deafening pneumatic drill digging up the street. [...] you were P-conscious of the noise all along, but at noon you are both P-conscious *and* A-conscious of it" (Block 1995, 234). Notice that the facts before noon could be exactly the same, even if the realization at noon does not actually occur. Concerning cases like this, Block seems to be suggesting that the subject instantiated before noon a quale, even though it could not have been established that he was instantiating it relative to what he was actually introspecting; for he had his attention fully occupied by some other conscious experiences.<sup>5</sup> One could contend that qualia and introspection (conscious awareness) are such that, by stipulation, S instantiates a quale if and only if S introspects it. But then qualia cannot be stipulated into existence, nor can their existence be established by pinching alone.

The case of attention suggests that a subject might instantiate a quale at  $t$ , without introspecting it concurrently, and therefore without coming to know it. Phenomenal states are highly accessible epistemically, but not ignorance-free. The same point is uncontroversial when memory is involved; it is much more commonsensical to allow that a subject might well have instantiated earlier a quale which he does not introspect now. Other cases, which I will not discuss for brevity's sake, suggest in addition that phenomenal consciousness is not error-free. A subject might instantiate a quale at a given time, while the subject is uncertain that he instantiates it (or even wrongly judges that he doesn't, if he is epistemically careless). The point is again easier to grant when memory is involved.

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<sup>5</sup> Searle (1992, 137-139) appears to recommend the same view.



These cases do not contradict the reliability of introspection. To account for the fact that it is constitutive of qualia that they are reliably accessible—introspection being the reliable process to access them—we can say with Hill and McLaughlin (1999, and references there) that token-qualia themselves are the vehicle of their introspective access. As Hill and McLaughlin suggest, this could also account for the part of the Cartesian motivation for C-qualia that I granted at the end of the previous section, like the Jackson Mary argument or the conceivability intuitions. Introspection is a form of (pre-reflective, or non-conceptual) belief-formation; and, on this view, introspective beliefs about qualia constitutively involve those very qualia. However, a quale can be instantiated without serving as an introspection-vehicle—if the quale is instantiated in the past, with respect to the time when it is supposed to serve as an introspection vehicle; or if the subject’s attention is fully engaged elsewhere. Besides, less reliable processes of belief-formation can interfere with introspection.

I will assume henceforth that we have sufficiently established that it is compatible with the minimal conception of qualia and introspection that phenomenal consciousness is not ignorance-free or error-free. To use a notion introduced by Williamson (1996) in a related context, qualia are such that the subject instantiating them is constitutively *in a position to know* by introspection. “To be in a position to know that *P*, it is neither necessary to know that *P* nor sufficient to be physically and psychologically capable of knowing that *P*. No obstacle must block one’s path to knowing that *P*. If one is in a position to know that *P*, and has done what one is in a position to do to decide whether *P*, then one knows that *P*. The fact is open to one’s view, unhidden, even if one does not yet see it. Thus, being in a position to know, like knowing but unlike being physically and psychologically capable of knowing, is factive: if one is in a position to know that *P*, then *P*” (Williamson 1996, 555). Certain conditions should obtain for this constitutive possibility of knowing to be actualized. Among them: simultaneity, engagement of attention, non-interference of other unreliable processes, non-borderline character of the instance.

The same applies to the possibility of exercising Loar’s phenomenal concepts. Phenomenal concepts allow for the reflective, conceptual counterpart of introspection. Qualia are constitutively such that the kind of recognitional conceptions of them described by Loar can be formed, or exercised, “from one’s own case” by a subject capable of conceptual thinking. But certain conditions should obtain for this possibility to be actualized: qualia must be instantiated simultaneously with the exercising of the conception; they must be attended to; they cannot be borderline cases; no other, less reliable process should interfere. In a nutshell, they must be not only instantiated, but introspected. This is all I will need for the argument.

Block provides a useful reconstruction of Dennett's argument, relative to the example of Chase and Sanborn (compare Block 1994, 212):

- (1) Suppose phenomenal consciousness exists, that is, there are real phenomenally conscious properties.
- (2) Then there can be a fact of the matter as to whether Chase and Sanborn are right.
- (3) But if there are real phenomenally conscious properties, they are transparent.
- (4) However, only an expert, say a neurophysiologist who can examine the brains of Chase and Sanborn, could tell whether their memories, aesthetic standards and current conscious qualities on drinking Maxwell House have changed.
- (5) The fact that we cannot rely on the testimonies of Chase and Sanborn themselves shows that phenomenally conscious qualities are not transparent.
- (6) From (3) and (5) we can deduce that there are not real phenomenally conscious qualities.

Block's reply goes as follows: "The fact that it is possible that the stories Chase and Sanborn believe are wrong shows only that their memories could be wrong, and that an expert might be able to tell that. But no advocate of transparency of phenomenal consciousness ought to suppose that *memories* of conscious states are literally *incorrigible*. There are a variety of ways of understanding 'transparent' in which it plausibly applies to phenomenally conscious qualities of my states *when I am having those states*, and these senses would make (3) true without making (5) true" (Block 1994, 212-213).

I will assume that Block would also accept the examples in which memory was not involved. He would just add more qualifications to the sense of 'transparency' (accessibility to introspection, I take it) his advocate of phenomenal consciousness needs: not just *when I am having those states*, but also *when I am attending to them, no other cognitive process interferes* and so on. He would then grant that there might be determinate facts about qualia, even when they are not introspected, including the sort of cases we have been discussing. Block's reply is then a good one to the most radical contentions by Dennett. Thus, Dennett says that qualia whose existence can only be established by a third party "are not qualia, for the simple reason that one's epistemic relation to them is *exactly* [Dennett's emphasis] the same as one's epistemic relation to such external, but readily—even if fallibly—detectable,

properties like room temperature or weight. The idea that one should consult an outside expert, and perform elaborate behavioral tests on oneself in order to confirm what qualia one had, surely takes us too far away from our original idea of qualia as properties with which we have a particularly intimate acquaintance" (Dennett 1988, 533). By itself, this is not a compelling objection; for all we have seen so far, it is compatible with the examples to say that a subject's access to those of his qualia he does introspect is still epistemically privileged.

The issue I want to raise, however, is whether someone who, like Block, posits C-qualia, which as we have seen are characterized by their s-intrinsicness, can consistently accept that their transparency is merely conditional in the way we have suggested. I want to suggest that it is doubtful that the following two claims are consistent:

- (i) In some cases, it is a determinate fact that S instantiates Q, even though S does not introspect Q.
- (ii) Qualia are s-intrinsic.

Making explicit an assumption tacit in Dennett and Block, I derive from (i) the following. It is conceptually or a priori possible that it be known that S instantiates Q, even when S does not introspect Q. There is a form of verificationism involved in this; but it is a mild form of verificationism, far removed from the radical contentions of the logical empiricists. It is the kind of verificationism that excludes only highly contentious philosophical views like the epistemic conception of vagueness. This verificationism does not require that every determinate fact (in particular, every determinate fact concerning non-introspected qualia) be knowable. It might turn out that, given the constitution of our cognitive endowment, microphysical indeterminism, or both, there are facts which we cannot (as a matter of nomic and/or metaphysical necessity) know. Moreover, I do not rely on a general principle, concerning any fact, that its knowability is conceptually possible. It is enough to rely on the knowability in principle of facts regarding the instantiation of natural kinds (I assume that qualia are such). Thus, it is also compatible with this verificationism that there be unknowable mathematical facts.<sup>6</sup>

In the presence of this mildly verificationist implication, for (i) to be the case it must be conceptually possible to identify instances of Q otherwise than by introspection. A scientific (functional or neurological) characterization would be appropriate. Block relies on this; as I mentioned in the preceding section, he admits that qualia, even though conceptually and constitu-

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<sup>6</sup> For an articulation and defense of the sort of mild verificationism envisaged here, see Peacocke (1988).

tively *s*-intrinsic, might turn out to involve relations with things outside the mind; scientific research might establish this.

### 3. The Argument against C-qualia

Subject *S* instantiates a quale *Q*, but *S*'s first-personal perspective on a given occasion *o* does not include introspective access to an instance *q* of *Q*. Perhaps *q* lies in the past, or *S* is not attending to it, or some other cognitive process is interfering so that *S* wrongly judges that *q* has a different character than *Q*. How can it be a determinate fact that *S* instantiates *Q*? How might the fact that *q* belongs to *S* at *o* be established? Block would answer along the following lines. By knowing the *a posteriori* identification of the relevant instance of *Q* with a scientific kind *F*, computational-psychological or neurological, we learn that *F* is sufficient for *Q*. We then learn that an instance *f* of *F* belongs to *S* at *o*. However, what justifies the *aposteriori* identification compatibly with the *s*-intrinsicness of qualia?

Post-Kripkean theories of reference have made us familiar with analogous possibilities, so there does not seem to be any problem here. But there is; let us examine the matter more closely. In all cases usually mentioned ('water', 'gold' and so on) it is true that a proposition of the form *an F is Q* (were *Q* stands for the concept at stake, and *F* for a condition necessarily sufficient for it) is only known *a posteriori*. It is nonetheless also true that there is "reference-fixing" material, conceptually connected with *Q*, which mediates *a priori* the link with *F*. Thus, it is a metaphysically necessary truth that water is H<sub>2</sub>O; and this is known only *a posteriori*. Still, it is constitutive of our water-concept that water is, as a matter of fact, the odorless, tasteless and colorless liquid filling the rivers, lakes and oceans of our planet. And it is known *a priori* that, if being *F* accounts for these features, it is metaphysically necessary that being *F* suffices for being a quantity of water.<sup>7</sup>

With this in mind, let us consider again the case at stake by first examining firstly why the problem does not arise if the *s*-intrinsicness of qualia is rejected. The point of incorporating the recognitional element of Loar's proposal in an explication of the constitutive nature of qualia is to account for the correct intuitions pumped by examples like Jackson's (1986) Mary or Nagel's (1974) bat. We can explain in this way the (illusory) appearance that qualia cannot be identified, say, with neurological kinds. However, this does not entail the existence of C-qualia. It does not require us to grant that proper conceptions of qualia "neither *a priori* imply, nor are implied by, physical-functional concepts". It might also be constitutive of phenomenal concepts that they entail functional, or representational, relations of the subjects experiencing the corresponding qualia with instances of material properties. There is intuitive support for this from the "diaphanousness" of qualia, which

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<sup>7</sup> See Jackson (1994); Kripke already suggests this view in *Naming and Necessity*.

Shoemaker describes thus: “if asked to focus on ‘what it is like’ to have this or that sort of experience, there seems to be nothing for one’s attention to focus on except the content of the experience. Indeed, it may seem at first that there is nothing to focus on except the external object of perception [...]” (Shoemaker 1994, p. 301). Especially in the case of appearances of so-called primary properties (shapes, distances in time and space, force-related properties like solidity or pressure), there is nothing counterintuitive in the view that they are there to track instances of the objective, independent material properties of which they are appearances.

So, let us assume that, aside from the feature in Loar’s proposal, quale Q constitutively has folk-psychological functional aspects. Vaguely put, it has aspects like these: it is a property such that, when its subject introspects it, he gets thereby the information that an instance of some material property is instantiated in his environment, becoming thereby disposed to act accordingly if he also has the relevant conative states. If folk-psychological functional features along these lines are conceptually linked to Q, then there does not seem to be any problem in accounting for the identifications of *q* with an instance of a scientific kind, which would solve the problem posed by Dennett-like cases. In fact, under ordinary, not excessively demanding requirements for knowledge, the relevant facts could well be established without waiting for the *a posteriori* identifications. Take attention cases. We hear the deafening pneumatic drill digging up the street. We can see S deeply involved in an absorbing philosophical argument. He does not show any awareness (we had promised him to pay him \$1,000 if he just raises his hand when he hears a pneumatic drill, but he does not raise his hand); we ask him later, and he resolutely denies having heard any drill. Nonetheless, S is not deaf at all, the sound has been going on for a time sufficiently long to reach his consciousness, and we know that he can be carried away by a philosophical argument that much. Under these circumstances, we might be sufficiently certain that the sound had reached his consciousness, it is just that his attention was fully engaged elsewhere. And there does not seem to be any problem in making the required *a posteriori* identifications.

The question is: Can we make them under the *s*-intrinsicness assumption? The only constitutive aspect of qualia, on this view, is that they are objects of Loar’s phenomenal conceptions. However, the possibility of exercising phenomenal conceptions requires introspection. Hence, under the conditions we are assuming, S cannot direct any of his phenomenal conceptions to the relevant instance of Q in *o*. What reason can then be provided, to ascribe an instance of Q to him? Suppose that the alleged reason is that S also instantiates the functional-physical property F. There are two relevant hypotheses. The first is that F suffices necessarily for Q, and hence S also instantiates Q (without exercising a phenomenal conception of Q at *o*). The second is that S

does not exercise a phenomenal conception of Q at *o*, and hence F cannot suffice necessarily for Q. Are there good reasons to choose the first?

The argument against C-qualia is abductive. We understand how there could be reasons for the first hypothesis if we reject s-intrinsicness. If functional relations with objects outside the first-person perspective are conceptually constitutive of qualia, we know how the relevant a posteriori identifications of qualia could in principle be made. However (I will argue now), no real alternative has been advanced by friends of C-qualia. Therefore, to the best of our knowledge, we should disbelieve that C-qualia exist.

To support the final premise in this abductive argument, I will examine critically the only sufficiently worked out alleged alternative that I know, which is suggested by Loar. The suggestion is as follows. Acts of introspection on occasions other than *o* in the past regarding earlier instances of Q, and exercizings of the relevant phenomenal conception are examined. A correlation is found between those instances, and instances of F. (Perhaps when S introspects instances of Q, he has access to states of his brain through a cerebroscope.) Establishing that F is instantiated by S at *o* might then suffice (together with general methodological considerations) to conclude that Q is also instantiated at that occasion.

This suggestion, however, does not really support the case for C-qualia, because it is not compatible with s-intrinsicness. Loar says that phenomenal concepts, like recognitional concepts in general, are “perspectival”. Given the irreducibility of qualia concepts, he relies here on our intuitive idea of what the relevant perspective is. But I understand that the first-personal perspective from which those type-demonstratives constituting phenomenal concepts derive is the perspective of a subject *at a given occasion*. For this is what the intuitive motivation for C-qualia, the *internalist intuition* (§ 1), seems to require. Assume that I can imagine what it is like to be an isolated brain that is a physical duplicate of my own brain. In that case, I can also imagine what it is like to be such a brain with an actual qualitative past entirely different from my own, or with no actual qualitative past at all; Loar (1997, 612) explicitly grants this. Assume, alternatively, that Chalmers’ zombies are conceivable. By the same token, I can also conceive that I am the continuant of such a physically identical zombie counterpart of my earlier self. After all, the access a conscious subject has to his actual qualitative past is not any more privileged than the access he has to the material observable properties instantiated in his environment. From the perspective of a subject at a given occasion, it is as much an external matter which qualia the subject *actually* instantiated in the past (as opposed to which memory-images of them he may have now) as which material properties caused them then, or are now acting upon him.

In sum, invoking correlations between past instances of a phenomenal property and other properties to settle between our two hypotheses is in fact to go beyond the first-personal perspective, which according to the view we are discussing provides the only constitutive feature of phenomenal properties. Once this step is taken, there is no reason not to also include, as constitutive properties of phenomenal qualities, some of the relational facts that the analytical functionalist posits. The point can be made in the form of a dilemma. The first horn is that it is only constitutive of qualia that they are objects of the phenomenal conceptions a subject exercises at a given occasion. The second is that relations that might hold between current qualia-instances and earlier instances of those same qualia types might also be constitutive of them—not just relations which they appear to be in to the subject from his perspective at the given occasion. If the former, we have been given no reason yet to think that the identities that might solve Dennett's cases are forthcoming. If the latter, the motivation to consider qualia *s-intrinsic* is undermined, and we might as well enrich our conception of the constitutive nature of phenomenal properties by including also external relations in which those earlier instances of qualia were with instances of material properties. For, as indicated earlier, there is intuitive motivation for this, including in particular the “diaphanousness” of qualia, and the nature of qualia corresponding to primary properties.

Loar (1991, 129-130) makes the suggestion I have been discussing while confronting a related difficulty. He distinguishes *recognitional concepts*, concepts which “typically point backwards and forwards, by involving the memory of a perceived kind and a stipulative disposition to include new things in the extension”, from *pure type-memory demonstratives*, “fossilized recognitional concepts” such that “the demonstrative points exclusively in memory”. He says:

Now the question is whether a recognitional concept can be falsely ascribed from any perspective whatever. My answer is [...] yes in a manner of speaking. Suppose you have a recognitional conception of a kind of bird, a stipulatively active concept and not a fossilized pure type-memory demonstrative, and suppose that from the relevant perspective you nod “one of those” at a bird of a different kind. It may be useful to *treat* this concept as a pure type-memory demonstrative and thus to count the present ascription as false. [...] Suppose you conceive your concept's intended reference as a unified kind. We might then say “false” in order to register that your current ascription deviates from a hitherto unified string of identifications.

Loar's suggestion is that, if S conceives the referent of his phenomenal concepts as unified kinds, facts about past instances of a given quale might be sufficient to ascribe to S an instance now, even though he is not exercising the relevant phenomenal conception. My point is that this involves going beyond the resources allowed by the internalist intuition. It involves in fact taking qualia as constituted, not just by facts concerning access to them from

the first-personal perspective, but also by actual external relations among their instances through time. But once these relations are taken as constitutive of qualia, any intuitive reason that there could be for not including the ones posited by analytical functionalists loses its force. Recognitional concepts are as much externally constituted as any others: to possess a recognitional concept of an object, property or kind is a capacity to form propositional attitudes involving the concept *as a causal result* of earlier confrontations with that to which it applies (Evans 1982, ch. 8). My point has been that, by appealing to the notion of a recognitional capacity, Cartesians are smuggling in externalist features to which they are not entitled, thus making their proposals appear more plausible than in fact they are.

Let me provide a summary of the argument I have been given.<sup>8</sup> 1) Subjects can instantiate qualia that they do not introspect. 2) There is a matter of fact as to the nature of unintrospected qualia. 3) For there to be a determinate matter of fact about the nature of an unintrospected instance of quale Q, a way to identify instances of Q otherwise than by introspection should possibly exist. 4) The only proposal for identifying qualia non-introspectively is by identifying *a posteriori* whatever physical or functional state they are identical to. 5) But to *a posteriori* identify Q with a physical or functional type we must have a way of identifying Q from a third person point of view by relations to something outside the perspective of the subject. 6) By definition C-qualia are not constituted by relations to anything outside the perspective of the subject. 7) So there are no C-qualia. Premise 5 is supported abductively, by reference-theoretical considerations given by Jackson and others; I have argued in addition that the alleged alternative appeal to recognitional concepts which Loar provides is no alternative at all, due to its not being compatible with internalist assumptions.

In a recent paper, Block and Stalnaker (1999) argue against Jackson's reference-theoretical considerations. They claim that, even in the absence of bridging "reference-fixing" conceptual truths, the relevant identities can be justified. They can be justified, Block and Stalnaker suggest, on the basis of methodological considerations of "simplicity": "Identities allow a transfer of explanatory and causal force not allowed by mere correlations. Assuming that heat = mean kinetic energy, that pressure = molecular momentum transfer, etc. allows us to explain facts that we could not otherwise explain. Thus, we are justified by the principle of inference to the best explanation in inferring that these identities are true" (*op. cit.*, 24). This is correct, but by itself irrelevant, because it does not stand in contradiction to the considerations by Jackson and others on which I am relying here. For, if there are "reference-fixing" conceptual truths that bridge the way to the *a posteriori* identities,

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<sup>8</sup> An anonymous referee provided the essentials of this, I think, helpful summary.



they are among those to which the methodological considerations mentioned by Block and Stalnaker apply.

The real issue is then whether the methodological considerations could apply even if those conceptual truths were missing. Block and Stalnaker do provide a thorough criticism of the conceptual analyses allegedly involved in establishing a posteriori identities. Although I lack the space to substantiate this here, however, I think that at crucial points in their arguments they assume an outdated conception of conceptual analysis based on the *bachelor* model, on which my argument does not rely at all.<sup>9</sup> I do not therefore think that their suggestion helps the defender of C-qualia. If qualia involve conceptually the sort of relation with material properties to which analytical functionalists appeal, then considerations of simplicity might justify their identification with functional-psychological or neurological properties. If, on the other hand, our conception of them really reduces to what the Cartesian wants, then there is not enough to which considerations of simplicity could apply.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

I would like to make clear in concluding that I do not think I have established much. In the so-called “middle period” (the period of the *Philosophische Bemerkungen*), and in my view also in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein defended an extreme, but deeply thought out version of what I am calling Cartesianism. I think that he would not be moved by the considerations I have been deploying; heavier philosophical machinery should be needed to address such a view. Still, views like his are not at all intuitive, but intuitively deeply paradoxical, and were never intended to be supported merely on the basis of intuitions. In contrast, a view like Block’s seems to combine all kinds of intuitive support. It seems able to respect the externalist intuitions about content and knowledge, together with internalist intuitions about phenomenal consciousness. My main aim has been to dispel this illusion.

An alternative for the believer in C-qualia would be to more radically dispute the argument. Instead of taking the line pursued by Block, this philosopher would reject my treatment of the examples. He would insist that “proper” qualia exist if and only if they are introspected. He would treat non-introspected qualia as he would any other entity outside the proper realm of

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<sup>9</sup> On the view presupposed here, constitutive features of concepts include metaphysically contingent properties of their referents, some of them indexical elements.

<sup>10</sup> An anonymous referee made the following suggestion on behalf of friends of C-qualia: “Why can’t Block and Loar say that it is part of C-qualia concepts that they are causally related to events outside the mind if there are any. Then the kinds of methodological considerations that Block and Stalnaker mention can get a foothold.” Something like that was part of traditional Cartesian views, like Lockean representationalism or phenomenalism. I am assuming, however (with good reason, I think), that causation is also externally constituted, and thus I do not think that friends of C-qualia can get relief from the suggestion.

consciousness. He could grant that there is a sense in which there are unintrospected qualia-instances  $q$ ; but he would account for them by relying on counterfactuals, supported by the best world-theory delivered by his “proper” conscious life, including his methodological commitments. He would admit unintrospected qualia-instances  $q$  only in that it is true that he would introspect  $q$  if he attended to  $q$ , this counterfactual being supported by his considered world-view. Properly developed, this would, I think, constitute a form of solipsism. Something like this would be the line taken by traditional Cartesians. Perhaps Chalmers would also take a view like this. For he would not dispute the argument provided in the preceding section that the identifications which Block needs cannot be made; Chalmers uses the same kind of argument in support of his views on consciousness.

My point here is just that any option like this is intuitively implausible, in the face of the examples. To return to a previous rhetorical figure, I think I have shown that the existence of qualia understood under the stipulation that they exist if and only if they are introspected cannot be established by pinching alone; i.e., it cannot be established just by appeals to raw intuition. On the contrary, the phenomenological facts, interpreted in the light of the minimal characterization, go sharply against such a view. I do think that there are serious philosophical considerations against it, ultimately elaborations of Wittgenstein’s ideas on following a rule. I cannot go into them here, but perhaps some indication of the relationships between the present argument and the private language considerations are appropriate.

Let us assume that a private language is a language (individuated by its syntax and semantics) which cannot be *mutually known* by a community of more than one speaker. As a matter of epistemically contingent fact, two persons might perhaps associate the same definitions with the same terms. But none of them know that the other associate the same definitions with the same words as they do, they do not know that the other know that they associate the same definitions with the same words, and so on. Now, on an occasion when  $S$  can form a conception of a quale  $Q$  (he introspects an instance of  $Q$ ),  $S$  introduces  $Q$  as a name for this quale. It is part of the stipulation that  $Q$  functions like a feature-placing term, which can be correctly used in a context only if an instance of  $Q$  is instantiated in the context.

Now, languages that can be mutually known are normative. Applied to the present case, this means that it is in principle possible to determine occasions such that  $S$  asserts that  $Q$  applies, but this is not the case, or occasions when  $S$  does not assert that  $Q$  applies, but it is the case that it does. Suppose that Block were right in his response to our Dennett-based argument. Then,  $S$  would not be a private linguist in any problematic sense. For it is compatible with  $S$ ’s stipulation that a language including  $Q$  be normative in the indicated sense. Cases of ignorance and error on  $S$ ’s part regarding whether or not he

instantiates  $Q$  might be established. Given that  $Q$  might be in principle identified with third-personal properties, this could be independently settled, which might reasonably suffice for mutual knowledge of the conditions for application of  $Q$ . Matters are more problematic if the argument in the previous section works. If so, it is only from the perspective of  $S$  at any particular occasion that the issue whether or not  $Q$  applies should be decided. It thus appears that whatever seems right to  $S$  at the relevant occasion is right; the language including  $S$ 's stipulation does not then seem to be normative in the required sense.

The argument in the previous section concludes that qualia are not *s*-intrinsic, but rather *o*(bjectively)-extrinsic. The best-known theories of this kind in the literature are "representationist" accounts, like those offered by Dretske, Harman, Lycan or Tye). They are implausible, on two related counts. They do not appear to allow for the conceptual possibility of "inverted-spectrum-like" cases, nor for the existence of secondary properties, or even for the intelligibility of a distinction between primary and secondary properties. Fortunately, the present argument does not require us to adopt these views (see García-Carpintero (2002) for elaboration).

Firstly, the argument does not require reductive analyses of qualia that provide merely functional sufficient conditions, but only that external relations with material properties be constitutive features of qualia. Secondly, qualia are themselves constitutively related, forming qualitative spaces. An extrinsic conception of qualia can take advantage of this. I think the argument I have given only requires that *some* qualia be related by externally constituted relations to material properties, to the extent that all other qualia are constitutively related to them. Just for illustration, consider colors. There are qualia corresponding to each specific color, with its specific character. But there are also qualia corresponding to relations among colors of which we are aware, like brightness, saturation and hue; and the former are necessarily related to the latter. We are also conscious of the relation between a familiar quale we experience to others of the same type experienced at unspecified previous occasions. To satisfy the requirements of the argument, it is enough that these qualitative relations (resemblances and differences among qualia, along different dimensions) depend on external relations with objective corresponding relations among the colors themselves. We would end up with a view close to the one defended by Shoemaker (1975, and elsewhere), which is not refutable on the two counts mentioned in the previous paragraph.

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