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Source: *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, Vol. 126, No. 3 (Dec., 2005), pp. 397-428

Published by: Springer

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4321668>

Accessed: 02-11-2018 13:01 UTC

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QUALIA: THEY'RE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM

ABSTRACT. Whether or not qualia are ways things seem, the view that qualia have the properties typically attributed to them is unjustified. Ways things seem do not have many of the properties commonly attributed to them. For example, inverted ways things seem are impossible. If ways things seem do not have the features commonly attributed to them, and qualia do have those same features, this looks like good reason to distinguish the two. But if your reasons for believing that qualia have the features are epistemically on a par with reasons for believing that ways things seem have the features, and you know that ways things seem do not have the features, then those reasons cannot justify your belief that qualia have the features. I argue that the reasons are epistemically on a par in this way.

1. INTRODUCTION

What is the relation between the philosophical notion of qualia and the ordinary notion of how things seem? There is a strong inclination to identify the two.¹ But even among qualiaphiles, there is some inclination to distinguish them.² I leave open both possibilities. I will argue that whether or not qualia are ways things seem, the view that qualia have the properties typically attributed to them is unjustified. My argument begins by setting aside the philosophical notion of qualia and focusing on the ordinary notion of how things seem. Surprisingly enough, ways things seem do not have many of the properties commonly attributed to them. Inverted ways things seem are impossible. How things seem to you is not determined by the intrinsic properties of you or your present experience. And how things seem to you can change without your noticing. In arguing for these claims, I do not assume physicalism or functionalism. I will assume that sometimes people mean what they say and that if you can see what color something is you do not need to think

about that color under a description. But I am not working with a theory of anything. I simply rely on your intuitions about cases.

If ways things seem do not have the features commonly attributed to them, and qualia do have those same features, this looks like good reason to distinguish the two. But if your reasons for believing that qualia have the features are epistemically on a par with reasons for believing that ways things seem have the features, and you know that ways things seem do not have the features, then those reasons cannot justify your belief that qualia have the features. I will argue that the reasons are epistemically on a par in this way. In the final section of the paper, I look for reasons for believing in qualia if qualia are not ways things seem. But I restrict my attention to reasons that would make it obvious that there are qualia and show that there are none. This does not show that there are no qualia over and above ways things seem. Nor does it show that there are no reasons for believing in qualia over and above ways things seem. But it does show that qualia are not what they seem. Either they do not have the features commonly attributed to them, or they are not the obvious features of experience qualiphiles typically suppose them to be.

2. A SURPRISING IMPOSSIBILITY

Consider the following hypothesis:

(Hype) As far as their colors are concerned, fire hydrants seem to Laverne the way grass seems to Shirley.

We are not to imagine that Laverne and Shirley live in different neighborhoods where the colors of things are different. We keep fixed, if we can, the colors of things. We are not to imagine that Laverne and Shirley are colorblind and that red things and green things seem the same to each of them. We are not to imagine that there is something specifically peculiar about grass and fire hydrants. To anticipate slightly, everything Laverne and Shirley both call “red” seems one way to Laverne and

another way to Shirley. And the same goes for things they both call "blue" and the rest of the colors. We imagine that the shift is total but systematic. All of the things they both call "orange" look the same or similar to Laverne, and those things all look the same or similar to Shirley. It is just that the way those things look or seem to Laverne is different from the way those things look or seem to Shirley. Let us assume that things have always been this way.

We need not assume that Laverne and Shirley are physically or intrinsically or even functionally indistinguishable. It may turn out, as a consequence of our hypothesis, that Laverne and Shirley are, in some sense, behaviorally indistinguishable. It may or may not turn out that Laverne and Shirley are functionally indistinguishable, but if so, that will be a consequence of our hypothesis rather than something we assume at the beginning. You may assume, if you like, that there is some physical difference between Laverne and Shirley, perhaps in the brain or on the eyes, that causes or accounts for the difference in how things seem.

There is one further thing you should not assume. You should not assume that you have heard this story before. Presumably you have heard all about inverted qualia, absent qualia, unimaginable qualia and so on. This is a story about how things seem. The story does not require any technical terminology or philosopher's distinctions either to tell or to understand. All expressions should be understood in their ordinary, non-technical, English senses. "Blue" means *blue*. "Seems blue" means *seems blue*. We will look at the relation between this story and qualia later.³

The hypothesis I have asked you to consider, understood in the way I have asked you to understand it, is impossible. There is no possible world in which it is true. It leads to a contradiction. Of course, there is no denying that our hypothesis *seems* possible. But then, it seems possible for every meaningful predicate to determine a set, empty or non-empty. This hypothesis about sets is not just false. It is self-contradictory. It is just not obviously self-contradictory. The same goes for Hype.

To see the contradiction, we look at the consequences of our hypothesis. To do that, we suppose that it is true. One of the things that makes Hype so much fun is the idea that if it were true, we had be very unlikely to know that it was true. After all, Laverne and Shirley will have learned their color words in pretty much that same way, by reference to the same things, or at least, things of the same color. So, as anticipated, Laverne and Shirley will use their color words in pretty much the same way, as names for the same colors. This is the behavioral indistinguishability that makes detection so difficult.

But something more significant and less epistemic follows from the fact that Laverne and Shirley use the same color words as names for the same colors. If both Laverne and Shirley utter the sentence "Fire hydrants are red," there is a strong inclination to think that what each of them says is true. Neither is in a better epistemic situation with respect to fire hydrants than the other. If we suppose that half of the community is like Laverne and the other half like Shirley, there are no grounds for thinking that one rather than the other stumbled on the truth. In fact, neither Laverne nor Shirley is epistemically worse off than us. There is a way red things seem to each of them. They tell red things on the basis of the way things seem. If we can get it right about fire hydrants, so can they.

Given the truth of the utterances, and assuming that fire hydrants only have one color, there is a strong inclination to say that in making the utterances, Laverne and Shirley both attribute the same property to the same objects. And if we assume, as I have suggested, that unlike "the color of my true love's hair," "red" is not a description of a color, there is a strong inclination to say that Laverne and Shirley both express the same proposition when they utter the same sentence about fire hydrants. Given this, there is a strong inclination to say that they mean the same thing by the word "red."

In deriving a contradiction from Hype, I will be relying on certain background assumptions. I think these assumptions are fairly obvious. To the extent that we understand the distinction between names and descriptions as it is applied to predicates,⁴ "red" is an obvious case. But when push comes to shove,

someone may go looking for something to deny in order to avoid the contradiction. So I will try to keep my assumptions explicit.

Laverne and Shirley both say, "Fire hydrants are red," and they both say that fire hydrants are red. Neither is attempting to deceive. Each is trying her best to say what she believes. It does not have to be easy to say what you think or to mean what you say, but if it is possible for people in Laverne and Shirley's situation to say what they believe, that is what is going on in this case. I think it is easy to say what you mean, but I will just make explicit my assumption that if Laverne and Shirley's situation is possible, it is possible for them to express their beliefs. So, if they say the same thing, and they believe what they say, they believe the same thing. This is not surprising. They each acquired the concept of red by reference to things the color of fire hydrants. Their ability to tell when things are the same color is on a par with ours. So of course each of them is in a position to know, and so believe, that fire hydrants are red.

So far so good. But I promised you a contradiction, and so far, all we have are some intuitions about the content of words and thoughts about the external world. Laverne and Shirley mean the same thing by the word "red," and they both believe that fire hydrants are red. Now suppose that Laverne and Shirley are in a situation where they believe the lighting is abnormal. Each of them says, "I do not know what color fire hydrants really are, but they seem red to me." Here there is a strong inclination to think that what each of them says is true.

Why should we believe that the utterances are true? We can suppose that neither Laverne nor Shirley is lying. Each is trying to say what she believes. Of course, it is possible for them to lie. But if it is also possible for them to express their beliefs, we suppose that that is what is going on in this particular instance. So each says that it seems red to her; each believes what she says; so each believes that it seems red to her. Here our intuitions about first-person authority or privileged access come into play. Of course it is possible for people to be wrong about how things seem to them. But if it is possible for them to get it right, once again, we assume they do. And it certainly seems

possible. Neither Laverne nor Shirley is epistemically worse off with respect to the goings on in her own mind than you are with respect to yours. If you can know how things seem, so can they.

Laverne and Shirley each say that fire hydrants seem red to her. Since they believe what they say, each believes that fire hydrants seem red to her. Since each is in a position to know what is going on in her own mind, both beliefs are true. So fire hydrants seem red to both Laverne and Shirley. So, as far as their colors are concerned, fire hydrants seem the same way to both Laverne and Shirley. A similar argument will show that grass seems the same way to them both as well. It is part of the story that fire hydrants and grass do not seem the same way either to Laverne or to Shirley. And it follows from this that as far as their colors are concerned, fire hydrants do not seem to Laverne the way grass seems to Shirley. This is the negation of Hype.

There is something about a hypothesis that entails its own negation: it is impossible. There is no way for it to be true. Hype is like that: it is impossible. I do not believe Hype is impossible because I love functionalism. I do not love functionalism. I do not believe it is impossible because I love physicalism. Physicalism is fine with me, but it is an empirical hypothesis. If we have evidence for non-physical things, we should reject the hypothesis. I think Hype is impossible because when you think about what it would take for it to be true, you realize that one of the things it would take is its own negation. And you know that that is the kind of thing that cannot happen.

Regardless of its relation to more beloved hypotheses, the impossibility of Hype is interesting and important in its own right. Hype is a claim about how things seem. You can know on the basis of introspection that there are ways things seem, and you can have a fairly clear conception of what it is for things to seem a certain way to you. Given this conception, it looks for all the world as though Hype is possible. But this possibility is merely apparent. And merely apparent possibility is not a kind of possibility. Whether or not the surprising impossibility of Hype tells us anything about physicalism or

functionalism, it might, if we pay attention to it, tell us something about ways things seem.

The impossibility of Hype is the impossibility of inverted ways things seem. But this impossibility might not rule out the possibility of inverted qualia. That all depends, of course, on the relation between qualia and ways things seem. If qualia just are ways things seem, then you have a fairly clear conception of them and good reason to believe in them, but inverted qualia are impossible. If qualia are not ways things seem, it becomes unclear what they are and why we should believe in them. But one thing is clear. If qualia are not ways things seem, you can not use your intuitions about the possibility of inverted spectra to argue for the existence of qualia.

One of the basic intuitions about inverted spectra is that Hype is possible. At least our initial intuitions about inverted spectra are intuitions about inverted ways things seem. But these intuitions are simply mistaken. Now if qualia are not ways things seem, they are at least very similar to ways things seem, so similar, in fact, that people tend to confuse the two. If you have, in addition to your intuition about inverted ways things seem, an intuition about inverted qualia, you should be deeply suspicious of this intuition. If you know that one particular intuition is mistaken, and you have a nearly indistinguishable intuition about a nearly indistinguishable subject matter, it would be unreasonable of you to take the later intuition at face value in the absence of some independent confirmation. So you have to know what qualia are and what they are like first, before you can figure out whether or not you can invert them. But this means that you can not use your intuitions about the possibility of inverted spectra to argue for the existence of qualia.

3. A SURPRISINGLY UNSTABLE SITUATION

Hype was supposed to be a situation in which the colors of things remain fixed while the way those things seem to people is different. Now I want to consider one particular situation in which the colors of things are different, but the way they seem

to people is the same. I want to consider the story Ned Block tells in "Inverted Earth."⁵ Though the story is the same, the questions I will ask about the story might be different. I will be asking about how things seem. If, as many qualia-philosophers believe, qualia just are ways things seem, then my questions and Block's questions will come to pretty much the same thing. Only the answers will differ. But if, as Block believes, qualia are not ways things seem, then my initial questions are simply about something else. In any case, I will ask about ways things seem first and worry about the relation between qualia and ways things seem later.

Here is the story. Suppose there is a planet, Inverted Earth, which is very similar to Earth in terms of the shapes and sizes and locations of the objects. Every pencil in every desk on Earth has a corresponding pencil of the same shape and size in a corresponding desk in the corresponding place on Inverted Earth, and so on. In addition to these similarities, there is a significant and widespread difference. The colors of things on Earth are different from the colors of things on Inverted Earth. If something on Earth is one color, the corresponding thing on Inverted Earth is the complimentary color. On Inverted Earth, the sky is orange; grass is red; and fire hydrants are green.⁶

There is one further significant difference between Earth and Inverted Earth, and this is a difference in the meanings of words. On Earth, "red" is the name for the color red. On Inverted Earth, "red" is the name for the color green. Corresponding words are used for complimentary colors. This is not because someone makes a mistake. This is because the meanings of words are conventional, and they have different conventions. Though this might go without saying, if we can mean what we say, they can mean what they say.

If you were surreptitiously switched to Inverted Earth, and no compensating measures were taken, you might think there was something wrong with your eyes, especially when you hear people say things like, "The sky is blue." But there is nothing wrong with your eyes. You are thinking and talking about different things, things of a different color. And though people on Inverted Earth say, "The sky is blue," they do not say that

the sky is blue. The sky is orange and they know it. Since their word "blue" means *orange*, that is how they express their knowledge.

Now suppose you are surreptitiously switched to Inverted Earth, and compensating measures are taken. Complimentary colored dyes are injected into your skin and blood and so on, and special lenses are implanted in your eyes. These not only change how your eyes appear to external observers, they change how external things seem to you. With the lenses, red things seem green to you, and blue things seem orange. This change in the ways things seem is the result of a purely physical change in the eyes or brain.

Unlike the case in which no measures are taken, in this case when you are switched, you would not notice the change. You will wake up in a house that you think is yours. Of course, it is not yours, and though you think you have, you have never been in it before in your life. When you go into work and see someone who looks familiar to you, you will think it is your friend. But that is not your friend. You have never met that person before in your life. And though you think you know what that person likes, your belief that, e.g., that person likes chocolate ice cream is only accidentally true. Facts about your friend make you justified, while facts about this stranger make your belief true. So your fortuitously true belief does not constitute knowledge. Just as an idle curiosity, if you remain on Inverted Earth for some time, this person you think is your friend will become your friend, and the belief you think constitutes knowledge will come to constitute knowledge, and the place you call "home" will become home. These changes are extremely subtle. You will not notice them. But they are changes nonetheless.

When you first arrive on Inverted Earth, the sky seems blue to you. Since you have no reason to suspect that anything is amiss, you believe that the sky is blue. This belief is perfectly reasonable. It is based on how things seem in the absence of grounds for doubt. Though reasonable, the belief is false. The sky on Inverted Earth is orange. And there is nothing specifically peculiar about the sky. Things typically and regularly

seem to be ways that they are not. There is a set of properties that we ordinarily think of as obvious: the colors of ordinary, unobstructed objects in broad daylight. When you first arrive on Inverted Earth, you are systematically wrong about which things have these properties. Though restricted to colors, this is a case of massive, systematic error.

If we set aside, just for a moment, the question of what influence this story ought to have on our views about qualia and think about the story for its own sake, what is interesting and surprising about the story is not its impossibility. Unlike Hype, this is a genuine possibility. What is surprising about the story is its instability. Unless you are moved to another planet or put in a different situation, the people on Inverted Earth that you incorrectly think of as your friends will eventually become your friends. Merely apparent friendship is inherently unstable. Merely apparent friendship is not a kind of friendship. Unlike apparent friendship, which may or may not be what it seems, *merely* apparent friendship is no friendship at all. If I want to keep up the appearance of friendship, I need to spend time with you. If we spend enough time together, either we will end up friends, or I will get sick of the deception, or you will get sick of me.

Inherently unstable situations are not impossible. It is not even impossible to perpetuate an inherently unstable situation indefinitely. They just require a lot of work and some outside help. They do not perpetuate themselves. Unlike cases where you know a lot about the world around you and very much like cases of merely apparent friendship, cases of massive and systematic error are inherently unstable. How interesting.

How do we know that cases of systematic error are inherently unstable? Well, let's just look at this one. When you first arrive on Inverted Earth and see someone who looks just like your old friend Laverne, you will, reasonably enough, think that it is Laverne. But it is not. It is some stranger you have never met whose name you do not know. Given this reasonable but false belief, you will try to use your word "Laverne" to refer to this stranger. But you can not. Your word "Laverne" refers to your old friend. So when you say, "Laverne just went next

door," what you say is false. Laverne, your old friend, is not next door. She is thousands of miles away.

After you have been on Inverted Earth for some time, perhaps ten years, perhaps fifty, things will have changed. Now the person you thought was your friend has become your friend. And now you know her name. You still try to use your word "Laverne" to refer to this individual. But now that you know her and her name, there does not seem to be anything to prevent you from succeeding in this attempt. It is not obvious that you can not use "Laverne" to refer to your old friend. But it is obvious that you can use the name to refer to your new friend.⁷

Now when you say, "Laverne just went next door," if you think this because your new friend just went next door, then what you say and what you think are both true. The earlier and later utterances of the sentence containing the name, like the beliefs they express, do not just differ in truth value. They differ in truth conditions. The truth of the earlier utterance depends on the activities of one individual while the truth of the later utterance depends on those of another. There may be more to meaning than truth conditions, but a difference in truth conditions is a difference in meaning.

Just by staying on Inverted Earth for some time, you meet new people, learn their names, and come to mean different things by your words. And all of these changes occur without your noticing them. This is somewhat surprising. But it is not the end of the world. What goes for "Laverne" seems to go for "red" as well. When you first arrive on Inverted Earth and look at a fire hydrant, it will look red to you, and you will believe that it is. But this belief is mistaken. Things are not as they seem. Given this reasonable but false belief, you will try to use the word "red" simply as a name for the color of fire hydrants, ripe tomatoes, and things like that in your new neighborhood. But you can not. You do not know anything about the colors of things in your new neighborhood.

If you remain on Inverted Earth for some time, you will acquire knowledge about the colors of things in your environment. Now when you confidently predict that the next fire engine will be the same color as the next fire hydrant, your

evidence is not accidentally connected to the fact that makes your belief true, and now you know. So you have seen the color of ripe tomatoes and fire hydrants in your new neighborhood a number of times, and you can recognize it. You know it when you see it. Given your ignorance of the switch, you will try to use “red” as a name for that color. Given your epistemic access to the color and your intention to refer to it, there seems to be no reason why you can not.

Now when you say, “Fire hydrants are red,” what you say is true. Of course, when you utter that sentence, you do not mean that fire hydrants are the color of fire hydrants. You can tell from the inside that you do not mean anything even remotely like that. Since you can see the color, there is no need to describe it. If someone else can not see what color you are talking about, and you want to let them know, you might pick a description to let you do this. But pretty much any description will do. None of the descriptions gives the meaning of your word “red,” and none of them fixes the reference, if fixing the reference means making it the case that you refer to one thing rather than another. You are talking about one color rather than another because that is the color you can see and recognize, not because you think of it as the color you see and recognize.

Fire hydrants and ripe tomatoes in your new neighborhood are green. The color you see, recognize, and use the word “red” to refer to is the color green. So, of course, when you say, “Fire hydrants are red,” what you say is true because what you say is that fire hydrants are green. And you do not say this to deceive someone. You believe what you say. So what you mean and think, like what you know and can recognize, has changed without your noticing. But in all relevant respects, you are the same on the inside at the beginning of your stay on Inverted Earth and at the end. So what you say and mean and think is not completely determined by what you are like on the inside.

So much for what you think and mean. What about how things seem? When you first get to Inverted Earth, you say, “Whatever color fire hydrants really are, they seem red to me.” What you say is true. Merely being transported to another

planet does not obstruct your privileged access to facts about how things currently seem. This is unsurprising. After you have been on Inverted Earth for some time, you say, "Whatever color fire hydrants really are, they seem red to me." What you say is true. Merely learning things about the colors of objects in your new neighborhood does not obstruct your privileged access either.

Here is what is surprising. When you now say, "Fire hydrants seem red to me," you mean, and believe, that fire hydrants seem green to you. Since this belief is true, fire hydrants seem green to you. How things seem to you has changed without your noticing. Since you are the same on the inside in all relevant respects before and after the change, how things seem to you is not completely determined by what you are like on the inside.

I wish I had a theory about ways things seem, a theory that would tell me what they are, what makes it the case that things seem one way rather than another, and when you have one and when you have two. Unfortunately, I do not have such a theory. All I have are my intuitions about cases. And my intuitions about cases tell me that ways things seem are uninvertable, i.e., that Hype is impossible. My intuitions tell me that ways things seem do not supervene on intrinsic, neurophysiological properties. And my intuitions tell me that ways things seem to me can change without my noticing.⁸ Understood simply as claims about ways things seem, these are all interesting and surprising in their own right.

I do not want to deny that we have an intrinsicness detector, or that ways things seem seem to be intrinsic. I do not know what our intrinsicness detector is. Perhaps it is a theory, or a paradigm, or a motley disjunction of different things on different occasions. But there is something in us, i.e., philosophers who care about such things, that makes certain properties seem intrinsic to us. Look at the color of a wall. Does that color seem like an intrinsic property of the wall? I am not asking if you believe that it is intrinsic. If I were asking that, I had ask you to imagine an intrinsic, molecular duplicate of that wall in a world where the laws of nature are different so that the light bouncing

off it in that world is different from the light bouncing off it in this. I am just asking if it seems intrinsic. And I think we should admit that it does.

Think about the content of one of your own conscious, occurrent thoughts. It seems as though the content is an intrinsic property of that very thought. It seems as though that thought could exist in a vacuum and still be about the same things, or at least represent the world as being some way or another. There is no need to deny that this is how it seems. But according to any plausible theory of content, and most implausible theories, relations determine content. Perhaps they are relations between the thought and other things in or around the head: other thoughts, inputs, and outputs. Perhaps relations between the mind and the world matter as well. Making the content intrinsic to something else, the possible world in which it occurs, the planet on which it occurs, or the brain in which it occurs, will not capture the intuition. The intuition is that the content is intrinsic to the thought itself.

There is no doubt that we have an intrinsicness detector. And there is no doubt that our intrinsicness detector is highly unreliable. Regardless of any relation to qualia, there is a strong intuition that how things seem is determined by the intrinsic nature of experience. It seems as though this experience could occur in a vacuum in the absence of any other events, mental or physical, and the way things seem would be exactly the same. This is the intuition. No one really has intuitions about what is intrinsic to a brain. But this deliverance of the intrinsicness detector, like so many others, is simply mistaken. How things seem to you is not determined by the intrinsic properties of you or your experiences.

If qualia are ways things seem, then qualia are not what they seem. They do not supervene on neurophysiology; they can change without your noticing; and inverted qualia are impossible. If qualia are not ways things seem, then you should be very worried about what justification you can have for believing that qualia, unlike ways things seem, are intrinsic, invertible or what have you. If you believe that qualia are intrinsic for the same reason that most people believe that ways things seem are

intrinsic, namely, that they seem intrinsic, and you know or have good reason to believe that despite appearances, ways things seem are not intrinsic, then you should be very worried about any belief about qualia formed on the same basis. I am not assuming that reliability is a necessary condition for justification. Maybe it is, and maybe it is not. But known unreliability constitutes genuine reason for doubt. Perhaps this reason for doubt can be overcome. But it must be overcome in order to reasonably believe that qualia are intrinsic. This means that you need independent reasons for thinking that qualia, unlike ways things seem, really are intrinsic.

4. SHOULD WE BELIEVE IN QUALIA AT ALL?

If qualia are ways things seem, then you should believe in them. You just should not believe the hype about them. If qualia are not ways things seem, two questions naturally arise: what are they, and what reason do we have for believing in them? As far as the first question is concerned, I am a little hesitant to guess. But I think that if qualia are not ways things seem, then qualia include things like the redness that is in the mind. The redness that is in the world, out there on the surfaces of objects, is not a qualitative feature of experience. It is not any kind of feature of experience. It is a feature of ordinary, mind-independent objects.

I am extremely hesitant to attribute this view to anyone.⁹ This is my best attempt to make sense of the hypothesis that there are qualia, but they are not ways things seem. In this attempt, I am hampered by my own conceptual limitations. I can only discuss what I can understand. While I have absolutely no idea what “the redness of red” is supposed to mean, I think I understand the expression, “the redness that is in the mind” well enough to know that it is non-denoting. Qualia are features of experience. So they are in the mind. Whether you call it “the redness of red” or “red’,” it is not an accident that you reach for the word “red” to get at what you are talking about, either directly or indirectly. We are not now talking about a feature of your experience that has something to do with shape or motion.

We are talking about the color, not the color that is in the world, and not just any color, but the redness that is in the mind.

So here is our working hypothesis. If there is redness in the mind, there are qualia. So what reason do we have to believe in the redness that is in the mind? I hope to have shown so far that your intuitions about the invertability and intrinsicness of qualia are highly suspect. You should treat your own intuitions on this matter with suspicion. You should treat these specific intuitions with suspicion because you have the very same intuitions about ways things seem, and those intuitions are misleading. This does not show that qualia are not invertable or intrinsic. Nor is it intended to show that. The point is purely epistemic.

When looking for reason to believe in the redness that is in the mind, over and above both the redness that is in the world and the ways things seem, you can not depend on intuitions that are, from your point of view, just like intuitions that you know are unreliable. If you have independent reasons for thinking there is some redness in your mind, and independent reason for thinking that this redness is an intrinsic feature of you, then you can use Block's story to show that qualia inversion is possible. If you have those independent reasons, then you should think that your qualia intuitions, unlike your intuitions about ways things seem, are not mistaken. My only point is that you need the independent reasons.

Many who believe in qualia think it is obvious that there are qualia. I disagree. I think you need reason to believe in them. This is the point of showing the unreliability of your intuitions in this area. I also believe that if you honestly go looking for reasons to believe, you will not find any. This is difficult to show, but we can look at some obvious candidates: introspection, intrasubjective spectrum inversion, and the argument from illusion. If these sources do not give us reason to believe in qualia, it certainly does not follow that there are none. It does not even follow that you have no reason to believe in them. Perhaps there is some much more subtle and complicated argument for the existence of qualia.¹⁰ But in addition to

seeming invertable and intrinsic, qualia also seem obvious. If qualia are ways things seem, then they are neither invertable nor intrinsic. If they are not ways things seem, then they are not obvious. Either way, they are not what they seem.

We are looking for reason to believe in qualia, or the redness that is in the mind. Let us start with introspection. First, we need to distinguish two questions. The first question is this. Where is the closest red thing to you? I only raise this question to distinguish it from the second question and then set it aside. Here is the question that matters. Where does the closest red thing seem to be? If you are not visibly bleeding, and you are like the rest of us, it will seem to you as though the closest red thing is at some distance from you. It seems to be outside of you. It does not seem to be inside of you. Of course, it does not follow from this that it really is outside of you. You know your blood is red. But unless you are seriously injured, you do not know the color of the blood that is still inside you on the basis of how things visually seem right now.

Regardless of where the redness really is, it seems as though the redness is outside us. How do we know this? We know this fact about how things seem on the basis of introspection. This is not a complicated intuition. Block, replying to Harman's appeal to introspection, suggests that we should not rely on complicated intuitions about simple cases. He prefers simple intuitions about complicated cases.¹¹ But this is a simple intuition about a simple case. Where is the redness seem to be? "There!" you say, pointing to the external world. Of course it might not really be there. That is just where it seems to be. This is the simple intuition.

Perhaps when you are aware of that apparently external red thing, you are also aware of your own awareness of it. This is somewhat complicated.¹² But if I am aware of a red thing, and I am thinking about philosophy, it does seem as though I can become aware of the fact that I am aware of a red thing. I do not know what your awareness of red things is like for you. But whether it is a case of illusion, or hallucination, or (veridical) perception, it seems to me, from the first-person, subjective point of view, just like a case of perception. If illusion were not

introspectively indistinguishable from perception, we would never be taken in. Whether this awareness really is or not, the awareness certainly seems like a genuine relation between me and the world: seeing a red thing, something that requires the existence of an external red thing. But this relation does not seem red. And the relation does not seem to be inside me. It seems like a relation between me and a red thing. So even if you are aware of your own awareness, if that awareness itself does not seem red, then the closest red thing still seems to be outside you.

This claim about how things seem is not merely a quibble about qualia. It has genuine epistemic consequences. If it really did seem to you as though you were looking at mental images, if the passing show really did seem to be in your mind, then the question of skepticism would be simple. If it really did seem that way, should you believe that there are some invisible, physical, something-or-anothers casting these mental shadows? Absolutely not. Whether or not you could even conceive of such a thing in such a situation, you certainly could not find evidence for them. On the other hand, if it seems to you as though you are already in the world, one object among others, it at least makes sense for you to believe there is a book on the table because there seems to be one, at least if you have no reason to think that there is not. And it at least makes sense for someone to think that believing in this way is not necessarily a bad thing.

It seems as though all the redness is out there in the world. It does not seem as though there are any red things in the mind. It does not follow from this that all the redness is in the world or that there is no redness in the mind. Things are not always as they seem. It does follow from this that your evidence for believing in the redness that is in the mind is not based on how things seem; it is not based on anything you are obviously aware of; and it is not based on introspection. Though its seeming that way does not guarantee that it is that way, its seeming that way might provide some evidence that it is that way. If that is right, then introspection is not neutral on the question of qualia. You know on the basis of introspection how

things visually seem to you right now. It visually seems to you that the redness is in the world and not in the mind. This is some evidence, not conclusive evidence, but some evidence that there is no redness in the mind. If we make further assumptions about qualia, e.g., that you would notice them if they were there, the case against qualia gets stronger.

So much for introspection. What about intrasubjective spectrum inversions?¹³ Suppose you put on a pair of color-inverting lenses. At first, grass looks red; the sky looks orange, and so on. After enough time passes, if the representational content of your experiences changes, you might say that grass looks green and that the sky looks blue. Or you might not say this. Or you might be inclined to say this but also be inclined to say that even though grass looked green before the lenses and looks green now, in a way, or in a sense it looks different. And you might be inclined to say that even though grass looked red immediately after the lenses went on and looks green now, in a way, or in a sense it looks the same. And this may lead us to think that “looks” or “seems” is ambiguous. Given the ambiguity, it may be that everything I say is right when “looks” or “seems” is used in one sense. But perhaps, our epistemic situation with respect to qualia is like our epistemic situation with respect to the referent of “seem” when it is used in the other sense.

I do not think “look” or “seem” is ambiguous in this way.¹⁴ But I am happy to concede the point. The fact that “magician” is ambiguous between *one who performs various tricks* and *one with genuine magical abilities* does not tell us anything about the existence of magic or our epistemic access to the magical facts. And if “looks” is ambiguous, we will need some unambiguous terminology to continue our debate. I suggest we use “looks red” in whatever sense that makes it true that if something looks red, that is some *prima facie* reason for thinking that it is red. We can use “qualia” to express the other sense of “seems,” the one that is more concerned with qualitative similarities between experiences. Given this way of talking, our epistemic situation with respect to qualia is strictly identical to our epistemic situation with respect to the referent of “seem” when it is

used in the latter sense. I will put the question either way, but the question remains. How good is that epistemic situation?

If “looks” is ambiguous, this is a fairly subtle case of ambiguity. This is all I need to run my argument. Most people most of the time do not distinguish between representational and qualitative content. It is not that they can not, and it is not that you do not. It is that the ambiguity is so subtle because the subject matters are so similar. Given the similarity, the epistemic evaluation of your views on one subject, e.g., intuitions that ways things seem are invertable, intrinsic, and not subject to change without notice, are relevant to the evaluation of your views on the other. Throw in the fact that people use the same words to talk about both subjects, and the epistemic relevance becomes more obvious. Since you have reason to believe that the intuitions about ways things seem are unreliable, you have genuine reason to doubt the corresponding intuitions about qualia.

Perhaps ambiguity is not the issue. What about the case? You have had the inverting lenses on for some time. Let us suppose you have some inclination to say that now that you are used to the lenses, grass looks green. But let’s suppose that you also have an inclination to say that even though you are used to the lenses, grass looks the way pre-lens fire hydrants used to look, i.e., red. To the extent that you feel a conflict between these inclinations, you do not think “looks” is ambiguous. If there were ambiguity, there would be no conflict. But one way to describe the situation would be to say that once you put on the lenses, the qualia you get from grass remain the same, the same as the qualia you used to get from fire hydrants. But as you get used to the lenses, those qualia that used to represent red come to represent green. If this is what happens, and “looks” is ambiguous, that would explain your apparently conflicting inclinations.

This is not the only story that would explain your apparently conflicting inclinations. But at least one part of the story would probably be very popular among people who went through the experiment and were asked to describe their experience. Probably, this part of the story would be just as popular among

people who simply imagined going through the experiment. The popular part of the story, of course, is the part about the qualia remaining unchanged while the lenses are on. I do not doubt that many people, even many non-philosophers, believe in qualia. People think of experiences as mental intermediaries between themselves and the world, intermediaries they can see and smell and taste and touch. While I do think you have a kind of privileged access about what you see (your knowledge of what you see is more direct than my knowledge of what you see), I do not think that privilege precludes error.

The part of the story that I think would be somewhat unpopular among philosophers and non-philosophers alike is the true part. In order to explain the apparently conflicting inclinations by way of the distinction between qualitative and representational content, you have to assume that representational content can change without your noticing. This assumption is somewhat surprising and goes against what most people think. But if this assumption turns out to be true, then what most people think is not. So let's set aside, for a moment, any questions about qualia and focus our attention exclusively on representational content. When you first put on the lenses, your experience represents grass as red. Once you get used to the lenses, if you do not think that representational content can change without your noticing, there will be some inclination to say that your experience still represents grass as red. On the other hand, there will also be an inclination to think that your beliefs about the colors of grass and previously unseen green things are not inferential. So there will be some inclination to think that grass and those other things just look green, or, if you have the vocabulary, some inclination to say that the representational content of the experiences is that the things are green.

As long as people are inclined to doubt that representational content or ways things seem are subject to change without notice, there will always be this ambivalence. If this ambivalence can explain the apparently conflicting inclinations, postulating the ambiguity is unnecessary. But even if we have ambiguity in addition to ambivalence, that does not settle the

issue. Most people with the lenses will think they have qualia and that qualia are not subject to change without notice. Most people without lenses think this as well. But this is a philosophical view, and while mistakes about your own mind are not unheard of, mistaken philosophical views are hardly uncommon. Is there any genuine reason to doubt this philosophical view? Of course there is. The view is, for all we know, just like the corresponding view about ways things seem, and we know the latter view is false.

I may have explained the apparently conflicting inclinations in terms of ambivalence rather than ambiguity. But have I explained what it is like from the inside to undergo a spectrum inversion? Is not what it is like to see grass different before and after the lenses, and does not a difference in what it is like entail a difference in qualia? I do not know what it is like to undergo a spectrum inversion. I can only extrapolate from my experience with sunglasses. But I certainly do not think that a difference in what it is like entails a difference in qualia. When I put on a pair of brightly colored sunglasses, the world looks brighter, or rosier, or what have you. Once I get used to the glasses, the world looks normal again. There is a difference in what it is like to look at grass just after the sunglasses go on and after I have gotten used to them. But this difference in what it is like cannot be explained in terms of qualia because qualia are supposed to be immune from the mere operation of thought.

So I assume that there is a difference in what it is like to see grass just after you put on the color-inverting lenses and after you have gotten used to them. At least to some extent, the world looks normal again. This difference in what it is like is explained in terms of a difference in the representational contents of the experiences. But what about a difference in what it is like before the lenses and after you have gotten used to them? Here the representational contents of the experiences are the same. But a difference in what it is like to undergo a pair of mental states does not require a difference in the contents of those states themselves. A difference in the mental context in which those states occur will do. If Barney is Fred's dog, then what it is like for Fred to find out that Barney just got run over

by a car is different from what it is like for me to find out the same thing. There is no difference in the contents of the beliefs. The difference in what it is like is the result of a difference in other representational states: beliefs, desires, and emotions.

Before you put on the lenses, you see a lawn you have never seen before, and you automatically register that the grass is green. There is nothing peculiar about the grass, your experience, or your belief. This lack of peculiarity is based on an implicit comparison between your current states and past states. Your present experience of grass is pretty much like all your past experiences of grass. After you get used to the lenses, you see a lawn you have never seen before, and you automatically register that the grass is green. But suppose there is a difference between what it is like to see grass now and what it was like back then. This difference is based on an implicit comparison between your current states and past states.

Your current experience seems similar to some extent to your experiences of grass before the lenses. As we would say, they both represent grass as green. But your current experiences also seem similar to some extent to your experiences just after you put on the lenses. Is this apparent similarity qualitative similarity? No, this apparent similarity is merely apparent. After all, the representational content of your experiences has changed without your noticing. You do not notice a difference between the experiences just after the lenses go on and the experiences after you get used to them. This does not mean that there is no difference. Merely apparent similarity is not a kind of similarity. But it does mean that once you have gotten used to the lenses, when you implicitly compare your present experiences of grass with your past experiences of grass, you are comparing them to two very different sets of experiences: those before and those just after the lenses went on. Since you can tell the difference between these two sets, there is a difference between this implicit comparison and the comparison you made before the lenses went on. And that is why there is a difference in what it is like to see grass before and after the lenses.

So am I suggesting that the difference in what it is like is the result of a difference in knowledge of past experience, that what

we think can have an influence on how things feel or seem? Absolutely. Merely knowing about wine can influence how it tastes. There is supposed to be a fine line between our experiences and our interpretations of them. Like a rock, what an experience is really like is not at all determined by what you think it is like or what you expect it to be like. That is why what the experience is like is supposed to be an intrinsic feature of the experience itself. The rejection of this picture is at the bottom of many people's rejection of qualia. Functionalism and the rest are secondary.

I do not think people believe in qualia on the basis of introspection or philosophical thought experiments. Let us turn, finally, to the argument from illusion. If you are like me, you believed in qualia as an undergraduate. You did not come to this view late in life after careful study. If you were like I was as an undergraduate, you not only believed in the redness that is in the mind, you also believed in the rocks and trees and plants and things in the mind. The argument was pretty much the same in both cases. If you are merely hallucinating a red rock, neither the redness nor the rockness is in the world. So they must be in the mind. By now, I will assume, you no longer think you have rocks in your head. But then, you are faced with the difficult question of why the argument for mental redness works, if it does work, while the argument for mental rockness does not. There must be a distinction between properties like redness and properties like rockness. A property is like redness when, if it seems to be exemplified in the world, but is not exemplified in the world, then it must be exemplified in the mind. A property is like rockness when it can seem to be exemplified without actually being exemplified anywhere in the neighborhood on that occasion, neither in the world nor in the mind.

Maybe you never believed in mental rocks. But the problem is real. However you try to draw the distinction between properties like redness and properties like rockness, it is clear that it will not line up with the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. If there really is some redness in the mind, that apparent redness is going to have some apparent shape or another. You just can not have an exemplification of redness,

any kind of redness, without its having some kind of shape. If it fills the visual field, it is the same shape as the visual field. If this redness has a shape, it must be in space, if not physical space, then in mental space.

If mental space is not too much for you, there is more where that came from. When you hallucinate a red rock, the rock, the redness, and the roundness are not really out there in the world. But they certainly seem to be out there in the world. And this apparent out-there-ness, or apparent objectivity is as much a feature of your experience as the apparent redness and roundness. If the apparent redness is a kind of redness, subjective redness, then maybe the apparent objectivity is a kind of objectivity, subjective objectivity. No matter what else you believe, no one should believe in subjective objectivity.

I think that all properties are like rockness. If you hallucinate a red rock, the redness, like the rockness, is merely apparent. Merely apparent redness is not a kind of redness. This is not supposed to be a deep insight into the nature of reality. This is supposed to follow from what "merely" and "apparent" mean when they are put together in the ordinary way. But we are looking for reasons to believe in the redness that is in the mind. Introspection would not help. Perhaps a fixed up version of the argument from illusion will do. The argument needs fixing up because it appears at first to be as plausible for redness as it is for rockness, and it appears to be absolutely implausible when it comes to rockness. We know what it would take for rockness to be exemplified. There had have to be a rock. And no mere appearance is sufficient for that.

In order to fix up the argument, you need to draw a distinction between properties, perhaps like redness, for which the argument works and properties, probably like rockness, for which it does not. Without the distinction, your reasons for believing in qualia are, for all you know, just like reasons for believing something we know is false, e.g., that there are mental rocks. This is a situation you ought to avoid. Perhaps the distinction is this. You have to infer the rockness, but you can just see the redness. But this can not be it. Something can seem like a rock to you even when you know that it is not. The

appearance persists in the face of knowledge that it is not veridical. If you do not think it is a rock, you do not infer the rockness. And you do not infer the objectivity, but you should not believe in inner outness.

Perhaps the distinction comes to something else. But the epistemic situation for the qualiophile seems quite precarious. If you already know that there are qualia, and you know what they are, you have some way of figuring out the difference between properties like objective redness that do have mental counterparts and properties like objective rockness that do not. Given sufficient examples, it is simply an exercise in conceptual analysis to find the principle that distinguishes the cases correctly. But if you already know that there are qualia, and you know what they are, then you do not need the argument from illusion. So you do not need the principle to fix the argument. On the other hand, if you do need the argument from illusion because you do not have independent reasons for believing in qualia, and you thought the argument from illusion might help, then you do not have any examples to go on in figuring out the principle.

Unconstrained use of the argument from illusion leads to rocks in the head. In order to constrain the use of the argument, you need a principle. To find the principle, you need some examples to go on. But in order to find the examples, you need to already know what the constrained argument from illusion was supposed to show you: that there is mental redness, but there are no mental rocks. But is this heavy-handed, overly foundational, stodgy, old-fashioned, and bad? I am not so sure. In the usual case, you start with some intuitions about cases, some principles that seem like they might be on to something, and you go from there, juggling everything, trying to come up with the best fit with the facts that you can. You might have very general or abstract worries about how the philosophical method could be reliable. But in the absence of specific, genuine reason for doubting the particular intuitions you are going on, philosophical method is a matter of believing that p because it seems to you that p . I have no problem with that.

The case of qualia is not the usual case. In the case of qualia, we have genuine, specific reason for doubting these particular

intuitions. Our intuitions about qualia are, from the first-person point of view, just like intuitions that we know are misleading. Ways things seem, just as much as qualia, seem both invertable and intrinsic. But they are neither. When you hallucinate a red rock, the rockness seems as real as the redness. If we do not think that the rockness is real but not objective, should we treat with suspicion our nearly indistinguishable inclination to believe that the redness is real but not objective? I am not an overly cautious individual. But if I can not see the difference between x and y , and I know that x is no good, I am inclined to reserve judgment on y . This is all I am suggesting. Until you can see the difference between the ones you know are bad and the ones you hope are good, you ought to withhold judgment.

Neither inversion intuitions, introspection, nor the argument from illusion can justify belief in qualia. In the cases of inversion and illusion, we have undermining defeaters. We have reason to believe that our evidence is not up to the task of justifying the belief it is evidence for. The structure is the same in both cases. In the case of inversion, we have the intuitions that it is possible that my qualia are inverted relative to yours; that qualia are intrinsic properties of experiences, or at least subjects of experience; and that qualia can not change without the subject's noticing. These intuitions constitute our evidence that qualia are invertable, intrinsic, and so on. The defeater for this evidence comes in two parts. The first part is of a set of intuitions. Perhaps these are the same intuitions under another name. Perhaps they are distinct but quite similar intuitions about a distinct but quite similar subject matter. These are the intuitions that it is possible that the way things seem to me is inverted relative to the way things seem to you; that ways things seem are intrinsic properties of experiences, or at least subjects of experience; and that ways things seem can not change without the subject's noticing.

The second part of the defeater consists in showing that these latter intuitions are mistaken. If qualia are ways things seem, this is equivalent to showing that the former intuitions are mistaken as well. But we need not assume the identity to make the epistemological point. The epistemological point is that if

you can not trust your intuitions about ways things seem, then given the similarity in subject matter, you can not trust your intuitions about qualia either. They need independent confirmation. Otherwise, we would be treating the two sets of intuitions differently, accepting the ones about qualia while rejecting the ones about ways things seem, without being able to point to an epistemically relevant difference between them.

The case of the argument from illusion is structurally similar, but instead of intuitions, we have uses of the argument. To begin with, we have the following use of the argument. If you hallucinate a red rock, the redness is not in the world, so it must be in the mind. This is our evidence for believing in mental redness, or the redness that is in the mind, which is my best guess about what qualia might be if they are not ways things seem. Again, the defeater comes in two parts. The first part is a set of other uses of the same argument. If you hallucinate a red rock, neither the rockness nor its objectivity is in the world, so they must be in the mind. The second part consists in showing that these uses of the argument are not sound. Given the obvious falsity of the conclusion, this is not too difficult. And again, the epistemological point is similar. If you should not believe in subjective objectivity or mental rocks on this basis, then you should not believe in mental redness on this basis either.

The case of introspection is quite different from the cases of inversion and illusion. In the latter cases, there is some evidence for qualia, but this evidence is undermined. In the case of introspection, there is only evidence against qualia, at least if qualia are not ways things seem. However things turn out to be, it certainly does not seem as though there are red, mental intermediaries between us and the world. Even if it turns out that things are not as they seem, it still seems as though the closest red thing is outside of us. These claims about how things seem are knowable on the basis of introspection, and they are evidence, some evidence, against the existence of mental redness. This evidence is by no means conclusive. But if all the introspective evidence suggests that there are no qualia, then you can not know there are qualia on the basis of introspection.

Scepticism about qualia need not be motivated by physicalism or functionalism. Scepticism about qualia can be motivated by reflection on the nature of experience. The scepticism I have tried to motivate is fairly moderate. I have not shown that there are no qualia. I have not even shown that there are no reasons for believing in qualia. I have not looked at any subtle or complicated arguments for qualia. I have simply looked at a few sources of evidence that might have made it obvious that there are qualia. If I have shown anything, I have shown that it is not obvious that there are qualia. This modest conclusion is important for two sorts of reasons.

First of all, when we look at the complicated arguments for qualia, a similar argumentative strategy is available. If, and this, of course, remains to be seen, but if the complicated arguments for qualia are epistemically on a par with complicated arguments for narrow content, a theoretical construct no one has yet constructed, then that counts as genuine grounds for suspicion. The second, more important reason for caring about the modest conclusion is that many people who believe in qualia think it is obvious that there are qualia and see no need for complicated arguments. This is a mistake even if there are qualia. If you believe something obvious in the absence of much in the way of reasons, you might be epistemically in the clear. But if you believe something that is not obvious in the absence of reasons, that is not so good.

You need some kind of argument in order to justifiably believe in qualia, at least if qualia are something over and above ways things seem. I have not shown that no such argument is available, but I have my suspicions. Block (1991), talking about what qualia are, quotes Armstrong talking about what jazz is. "If you gotta ask, you ain't never gonna get to know." With this, I am in complete agreement. I just think you gotta ask.

NOTES

¹ I assume that the way things look is a special case of the way things seem and that someone who introduces the notion of qualia on the basis of examples about ways things look or smell or feel is implicitly identifying

qualia with ways things seem. I think some identifiers include Jackson (1982), Loar (1997), Horgan and Tienson (2002) and Siewert (1998).

² Ned Block clearly distinguishes qualia from ways things seem or look when he says that *looking red* is an intentional, not a qualitative content. See Block, 1999. It might be suggested that “looking red” is ambiguous. As a claim about English, this sounds implausible to me, but this may be a merely terminological matter. Whenever I talk about something looking red, I mean whatever sense of “looking red” that makes it true that if something looks red to you, that is some *prima facie* reason for thinking that it is red. If there is another sense of “looking red” that is not even intended for use in talking about things and how they look (this is the part I find implausible) but is used to talk about the intrinsic, qualitative features of experience, I use “qualia” to express that sense.

³ Gilbert Harman tells the inverted spectrum story in terms of how things seem, so you may well have heard this story before. See Harman, 1990. Harman’s argument for the impossibility of the inverted spectrum is fairly brief and at least appears to assume functionalism. Block (1999), in “Inverted Earth,” criticizes Harman for telling the story in this way on the grounds that qualia are not ways things seem. In addition to providing a better argument for the conclusion that inverted ways things seem are impossible, I hope to show the relevance of this fact to the belief in qualia whether or not qualia are ways things seem.

⁴ If someone says, “Their walls were the color of a ripe mango,” the expression “the color of a ripe mango” looks like a description used as a predicate. If descriptions can be used as predicates, I do not see why names can not be used that way as well, at least if the names and descriptions are names and descriptions of properties.

⁵ The story of inverted Earth comes from Harman (1982). Harman’s discussion of Inverted Earth is even briefer than his discussion of the inverted spectrum. It also more clearly relies on the assumption of functionalism, or conceptual role semantics.

⁶ We ignore possible asymmetries in the color wheel for the sake of argument.

⁷ Intuitions like these underlie the original Twin earth case. For Twin Earth, see Putnam, 1975, Burge, 1977.

⁸ I am not sure this conclusion is that surprising. If you put on a pair of rose-colored glasses, the world looks a little rosier than usual. Once you get used to the glasses, the world looks perfectly normal. The way things look has changed without your noticing.

⁹ Though perhaps Ned Block wouldn’t mind. The idea that there is redness in the mind is not that much different from the idea that there is mental paint. Real red paint represents red things by being red. According to Block, experiences represent things at least partly in virtue of their intrinsic, qualitative features. But experiences have lots of these features. So

perhaps the idea is that an experience represents a red thing at least partly in virtue of being red, or being mentally-red, or being red'. In any case, the idea that there is some kind of redness in the mind is strongly suggested by the analogy of mental paint.

¹⁰ For subtle and complicated arguments for the existence of qualia, see Peacocke, 1983.

¹¹ Block, 1999, p. 495.

¹² Self-reference does not always stop a regress. If your awareness of the little red rubber ball requires awareness of the awareness of the little red rubber ball, why does not awareness of the awareness of the little red rubber ball require awareness of the awareness of the awareness of the little red rubber ball?

¹³ Shoemaker (1984) argues for qualia on the basis of intrasubjective spectrum inversions. I had like to thank an anonymous referee for making me confront this issue.

¹⁴ Though it may be unclear what you should say in this case, certain things seem clearly wrong. Even if everyone knows that everyone knows about the lenses, so we do not have to worry about misleading anyone, I do not think you could comfortably say "For a while it looked red, and now it looks green, but it looked the same color throughout." On the other hand, if everyone knows that everyone knows that you are going to the river and I am going to cash my check, you can easily get people to assent to "I am going to the bank, and you are going to the bank, but we are not going to the same place." This is some evidence against the ambiguity hypothesis.

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