

ON GILBERT HARMAN'S *The Intrinsic Quality of Experience*

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I. Introduction

Gilbert Harman's article *The Intrinsic Quality of Experience* (Harman, 1990) occupies the 94th place of the 100 most cited articles in the philosophy of mind in the last couple of decades.¹ This is admirable since the number of article entries on *Mindpapers* is already 28490.² In the article, Harman argues against the thesis that we are directly aware of intrinsic qualities of experience. This thesis, if true, poses a serious objection to functional accounts of the mind. For it is said that the phenomenal character of an experience is fundamentally shaped by such intrinsic qualities, and that no functional account can be given of these particular phenomenal elements of experience. By showing that, in fact, we are not aware of such intrinsic qualities, Harman hopes to show that functionalism can provide an adequate account of the mind after all.

Although Harman does not use this terminology himself, his article is usually understood as arguing for what has come to be known as the so-called "transparency of experience", or the view that experience is "diaphanous".³ Also, the view that Harman presents in his article has come to be associated with views of philosophers such as Fred Dretske (Dretske, 1995) and Michael Tye (Tye, 1995) who maintain that phenomenal character is nothing but a species of representational content. The transparency of experience is usually put forth as one of the main motivations for this thesis about phenomenal character. The view that phenomenal character is nothing but a species of phenomenal character has come to be known as "representationalism" or "representationism".⁴

Be that as it may, it is not quite clear to me what exactly it is that Harman is arguing for, and what it is that he is arguing against. Also, I am not sure what his arguments are, and whether they are sound. Although Harman presents his statements as if they are all part of one big argument;

¹"100 most cited works by philosophers in MindPapers according to Google Scholar", http://consc.net/mindpapers/sreq/most_cited_phil.html, accessed on 17-01-2014

²"MindPapers: Contents", <http://consc.net/mindpapers>, accessed on 17-01-2014

³See e.g. (Tye, 1995), (Stoljar, 2004), and (Bourget & Mendelovici, 2013)

⁴Ned Block uses this second term, see e.g. (Block, 2003)

upon closer consideration the feeling cannot escape that a lot remains unclear. This partly has to do with certain terminological issues that need to be resolved. But besides that, although Harman makes a lot of individual statements that I am in agreement with, I am not convinced that they are sufficient to paint the overall picture that Harman wants them to paint. Hence, this paper has two aims. The first is to identify and resolve certain terminological difficulties that stand in the way of a proper evaluation of Harman's views. My second aim is to show that Harman's arguments fail to give an adequate response to the objection that phenomenal character resists functional explanation.

II. A short exposition of Harman's arguments

As the title of this section indicates, I would like to begin with a short exposition of Harman's arguments. This will enable us to get before us Harman's own wording of things. It will also give us some overview of the issues that we are dealing with. The reason I want to take this approach is that many of the key terms in the philosophy of mind, such as e.g. "qualia", "experience", "representation" etc. do not have univocal meanings. And the best way to determine what Harman is likely to mean by certain commonly used terms is to see how he uses them himself. When one reads the literature on the philosophy of mind, one really gets the impression that a univocal terminology is lacking. Or, at the very least, it seems to me that very often authors take insufficient care to articulate the meanings of the terms they use. However, this is absolutely required when it comes to meaningful (philosophical) dialogue. Of course I do not have the pretension that, in this paper, I am going to solve all these terminological ambiguities. Rather, I merely hope that, by taking these conceptual\terminological difficulties into account, we will be led in the end to more clarity.

In the abstract of his article Harman indicates that there are three objections against psychophysical functionalism but that these objections can be resolved by noting that they fail to distinguish between the properties of an *experience* and properties of the *object* of an experience. We shall only be interested here in the first of these objections and the manner in which Harman tries to deal with it. According to Harman, the objection begins with the premise that we are directly aware of qualities of experience that are *intrinsic* to it. Since functional definitions of mental states are formulated in terms of a mental state's causal *relations* to other mental states, sensory inputs, and behavior; the argument concludes from this that no functional account can be given of the qualities because, by definition, they are intrinsic. He cites Thomas Nagel as one of the proponents of this argu-

ment.⁵ However, as Harman points out, this objection fails to distinguish between the properties of an experience and the properties of the object of an experience. According to Harman, as long as we keep an eye on this distinction, we shall have to conclude that we are not in fact aware of any intrinsic qualities of experience. And because the objection to functionalism depends on the truth of this premise, the initial objection to functionalism does not actually pose a threat.

Harman starts his argument with the supposition that experiences have *intentional* or *representational content*. According to Harman this means that experience represent things as being a certain way. Perhaps this sound as a rather trivial proposition. However, an important qualification of the proposition that experiences have representational content is that this involves that an experience has the possibility to *misrepresent things*. That is, experiences may convey to us things that are false. This happens in cases of perceptual illusions and hallucinations. It should be noted that this proposition is a lot less trivial. For one could also suppose that cases of perceptual illusion or hallucination are not so much cases of having wrong *experiences*, but rather having wrong *believes about* experiences. One way then to express the idea that experiences have representational or intentional content is to say that already *in and of themselves* experiences are *truth-conditional*.

In addition to expressing his commitment to the thesis that experiences are intentional, Harman gives other examples of intentionality. He mentions the story of Ponce de Leon (a 16th century Spanish explorer) who was on a search in Florida to find the Fountain of Youth. The interesting thing about this story, is that it shows that we can search for things that do not exist. After all, for all we know, there is no such thing as the Fountain of Youth. But as Harman points out, this does not mean that Ponce de Leon was not actually searching for something. After all, Ponce de Leon *was* searching for something. However, what he was searching for simply happens not to exist. In addition, Harman states that: “We can therefore say that his search had an intentional object. But the thing that he was looking for, the intentional object of his search, did not (and does not) exist” (Harman, 1990, p. 34).⁶

Another example that Harman considers are paintings. As an example he takes a painting of a unicorn. For all we know, unicorns do not in actual fact exist. However, this does not mean that the painting is not a depiction of a unicorn. That is, the fact that no unicorns actually exist does not *prevent* the painting from having a certain “intentional content” (Harman, 1990, p. 34). Hence, the fact that a painting has the intentional content that it does is quite independent from whether or not the object that it depicts actually exists.

Harman then proceeds to another philosophical insight, an insight which

⁵See (Nagel, 1970). Levine makes a similar point (Levine, 1995)

⁶We will come back to Harman’s phraseology here later.

I take to be rather different from the insight that, apparently, some things can represent other things that do not exist. He points out that imagining a unicorn is usually understood as being similar to a painting of a unicorn. After all, both seem to have the same non-existent intentional object. However, and this is Harman's crucial point, imagining a unicorn does not involve any awareness of a *mental picture* of a unicorn. According to Harman, this is plain from the fact that imagining a unicorn is not the same as imagining a *picture of* a unicorn; they are two acts of imagination with different intentional objects.

It is in connection with this that Harman points out the importance of distinguishing between the "properties of a represented object and the properties of a representation of that object" (Harman, 1990, p. 35). To make his point, Harman draws attention to the fact that although a unicorn supposedly has legs and a horn, neither a painting of a unicorn, nor the act of imagining one, has legs or a horn. Conversely, Harman points out that although a painting is flat and covered with paint, and imagining a unicorn a mental activity, a unicorn neither is flat and covered with paint nor a mental activity. These examples then make clear, on Harman's account, that there is a distinction between the properties of a representation and the properties of a represented object.

Harman thinks that a similar distinction applies to experience, and that especially the argument from illusion, which is often used to motivate the sense data theory, fails to honor it. The conclusion that Harman draws from this is that the argument from illusion is false, and that therefore it cannot be used in support of the sense data theory. The argument from illusion starts from the premise that the way things appear to us may not be the way things really are, such as in cases of illusion or hallucination. The argument then concludes that, because what appears to us in these cases are not external physical objects, what appears to us must really be something "mental or internal" (Harman, 1990, p. 35).

It is the inference from 'what appears is not external' to 'what appears must be mental or internal' that Harman thinks is especially fallacious. In fact, according to Harman it is precisely at this point that the argument from illusion makes the mistake of not distinguishing between the properties of an experience and the properties of a represented object of experience.

To demonstrate his point, Harman uses Ponce de Leon's search for the Fountain of Youth and the painting of a unicorn as analogous examples. He claims that an argument about paintings analogous to the argument from illusion would infer that, because unicorns do not actually exist, the painting must really be depicting something mental ("for example, the painter's idea of a unicorn") (Harman, 1990, p. 35). Harman claims however that this inference is fallacious, and that this becomes obvious as soon as we apply the same trick to the case of Ponce de Leon:

Ponce de Leon was searching for the Fountain of Youth. But there is no such thing. So he must have been searching for something mental.” This is just a mistake. From the fact that there is no Fountain of Youth, it does not follow that Ponce de Leon was searching for something mental. In particular, he was not looking for an idea of the Fountain of Youth. He already had the idea. What he wanted was a real Fountain of Youth, not just the idea of such a thing.”(Harman, 1990, p. 35-36)

This then is Harman’s criticism of the argument from illusion. Harman argues that it is wrong to suppose that, because the Fountain of Youth does not exist, Ponce de Leon was searching for something mental.⁷ Similarly then, it is equally wrong to suppose that in cases of illusions or hallucinations we are aware of something mental as the argument from illusion wants us to believe. According to Harman, the argument from illusion is simply a bad argument.

Remember that Harman’s point is to show that we are not in fact aware of any intrinsic qualities of experiences, so as to counter an important objection to functionalism. Harman thinks that with the points he has just made, he has all the resources to do this. How does he think he can accomplish this?

First of all (as is indicated by the previous passage), Harman equates the conclusion of the argument from illusion with the thesis that we are aware of intrinsic qualities of experience. In other words, Harman thinks that ‘being aware of something mental or internal’ is really the same thing as ‘being aware of an intrinsic quality of experience’. Next, because Harman believes he has shown that the argument that has been used in support of this thesis is false, he concludes that the thesis that we are aware of intrinsic qualities of experiences must also be false.

To be sure, Harman connects all this with the distinction between the properties of a representation (or an experience, or an intentional act, etc.) and the properties of the object that is represented. Also, in addition, he also argues for this by an appeal to introspection:

When Eloise sees a tree before her, the colors she experiences are all experienced as features of the tree and its surroundings. None of them are experienced as intrinsic features of her experience. ... Look at a tree and try to turn your attention to intrinsic features of your visual experience. I predict you will find that

⁷Whether or not it is really obvious that it is wrong to suppose that Ponce de Leon was searching for something mental, we shall go into in the next section. Perhaps Harman thinks this is obvious given that, were a contemporary of Ponce de Leon to ask him whether he was searching for something mental, Ponce de Leon would probably have answered in the negative (except of course, if Ponce de Leon considered himself a kind of Berkelean idealist!).

the only features there to turn your attention to will be features of the presented tree...(Harman, 1990, p. 39)

Hence, we must say that Harman really gives *two* arguments against the view that we are directly aware of intrinsic qualities of experiences. First Harman argues that the argument from illusion, which is used to support this thesis, is based on a fallacious *inference*. Second, Harman claims that if we *introspect* our experiences, we shall see that all that we find are qualities objects are represented as having and not any intrinsic qualities of the experiences themselves. It seems then that Harman appeals to both *logical* and *phenomenological* grounds to make his case.

To conclude, because Harman believes himself to have shown that we are not in fact aware of any intrinsic qualities of experience, functionalism is saved from one serious objection to it. After all, if we are really aware of intrinsic qualities of experience, then functionalism cannot properly account for it. However, because the antecedent of this objection is now shown to be false, functionalists do not need to worry that they should account for something that they cannot in fact account for. Ergo, the objection does not pose a threat to functionalism.

III. Terminological Difficulties and Doctrinal Ambiguities

When I reflect upon the contents of Harman's article, several questions enter my mind. These questions spring on the one hand from certain doubts about terminological issues that, after reading Harman's article, I am left with. On the other hand, they spring from worries about the soundness of the arguments themselves. Related to this is also that I am just not sure which view it is that Harman is arguing against. Of course, no doubt these difficulties are all more or less related to each other.

Let me begin with some of the terminological difficulties that I have. To be sure, these difficulties do not so much arise out of Harman's article taken by itself as they arise within the bigger context of all the different terminologies that are used by philosophers in dealing with the issues of contemporary philosophy of mind. As I have already indicated in the previous section, it is my impression that usually no two philosophers mean the same thing when they make use of one and the same term. Perhaps resolving such terminological issues is not very exciting task. However, I believe everyone will agree that the settlement of such issues is absolutely required.

One terminological aspect that confuses me is that Harman's account is usually put under the header of "representationalism" and that his argument is understood to argue for the thesis that experience is "transparent" or

“diaphanous”.⁸ My confusion has to do with the following. One central theme in Harman’s article is his *opposition*, to the sense data theory of experience. And he does this, in part, by an appeal to the transparency of experience. However, the early 20th century philosopher G.E. Moore is usually accredited as being the first to have emphasized the diaphanousness of experience.⁹ But G.E. Moore was in fact himself a sense data theorist! Second, in *Perception: A Representative Theory* by Frank Jackson (Jackson, 1977, Ch. 6) we find a (relatively) contemporary defense of the sense data theory which also labels itself as “representational”.¹⁰ I hope the point that I want to make is clear; the dichotomies in which Harman speaks (or at least are now commonly attributed to him) do not seem, on the surface at least, to be recognized by those he opposes himself to.

Before we can examine Harman’s arguments it is necessary that terminological issues such as these are resolved. Fortunately, I have found some answers to these terminological difficulties in the literature.

Let me begin by addressing the difficulty of accounting for the sense data theorist’s and Harman’s shared commitment to the thesis that experience is diaphanous. Daniel Stoljar (Stoljar, 2004) proposes a solution to this difficulty.¹¹ First, Stoljar indicates that Harman’s arguments are aimed at refuting qualia realism. However, Stoljar points out that there are in fact *two kinds* of qualia realism¹², and that the argument from diaphanousness really is only directed at *one* of these. He explains that the two kinds of qualia realism differ with respect to their commitment to what he calls the “relational thesis”. According to the relational thesis, the phenomenal character of an experience (i.e. “what it is like” to have the experience (Nagel, 1974)) is wholly determined by the objects that one is related to in having the experience.¹³ Now the first kind of qualia realism affirms the relational thesis, while the other one denies it. The view that is proposed by the sense data theory is an example of the first kind, while adverbial theories (Chisholm, 1969) and more contemporary views such as the ones that can be found in (Shoemaker, 1990) and (Block, 2003) are examples of the second kind. It is only this second kind of qualia realism against which the argument of diaphanousness is aimed. The diaphanousness of experience supposedly shows that there is nothing over and above the objects of experience that determines phenomenal character.

What then about the terminological issue that springs from the fact that,

⁸See e.g. (Shoemaker, 1990), (Dretske, 1995), (Tye, 1995) and (Tye, 2013), (Kind, 2003), and (Stoljar, 2004).

⁹See his *The Refutation of Idealism* (Moore, 1903)

¹⁰It should be noted however that Jackson no longer defends this theory (Jackson, 2000)

¹¹An article by Tim Crane was also very helpful here (Crane, 2002)

¹²Or to put it in the kind of terms that we were already using; Stoljar points out that there are two ways of construing the notion of an ‘intrinsic quality of experience’. From now on I’ll use these terminologies interchangeably.

¹³This is also called the *act-object model* of perception. See e.g. (Fish, 2010, p. 16)

in the contemporary debate, ‘representationalism’ is usually contrasted with theories that defend qualia realism (such as the sense data theory) and the fact that, at the same time, sense data theorists such as Jackson label their theories as ‘representational’ accounts of experience?¹⁴

An answer to this question can be found in an article by Frank Jackson in which he himself rejects his former sense data theory in favor of “representationalism” (Jackson, 2000).¹⁵ In the article he states “the reason I abandoned the sense datum theory was my belated realisation that it fails to capture the representational nature of perceptual experience”. In the article he makes clear that what he means by the “representational nature of perceptual experience” is the idea that phenomenal experience is *inherently truth-conditional* (a notion that I already elaborated on in the previous section). This implies then that when Jackson put his sense-data theory under the banner of “representationalism” what he had in mind was precisely not truth-functionality but something else! Clearly, Jackson thinks that in one important sense his sense data account of perception was representational while in another very important sense it is not. How should we account for this ambiguity?

I believe Brad Thompson (Thompson, 2008) gives a useful answer to this particular question. He points out that we should distinguish between ‘*content-based representationalism*’ and ‘*vehicle-based representationalism*’. Content-based representationalism is the view that phenomenal qualities are properties that are *represented*. On the other hand, vehicle-based representationalism is the view that phenomenal qualities are the vehicles that do the *representing*. The distinction may be illustrated as follows. According to content-based representationalism “dog” represents a particular pattern of ink, while according to vehicle-based representationalism “dog” represents the animal that is man’s best friend. While sense data theories are essentially committed to vehicle-based varieties of representationalism, contemporary representational accounts of phenomenal experience, such as those of Harman, Dretske and Tye, are essentially content-based. It is because of this content-based variety of representationalism that take themselves to be able to account for phenomenal character in truth-conditional terms.¹⁶

¹⁴See (Price, 1950) and (Robinson, 1994) for two other examples of authors that seem to hold that the sense data theory is perfectly compatible with ‘representationalism’. Also, to be sure, in this sentence I refer to what is now in the contemporary debate called ‘*strong representationalism*’. See (Chalmers, 2004) for an overview of some of the contemporary varieties.

¹⁵See also e.g. (Byrne, 2009)

¹⁶Consider the following two linguistic expressions: (a) ‘Amsterdam is the capital city of the Netherlands’, and (b) ‘Амстердам является столицей Нидерландов’. Now suppose both (a) and (b) are two different phenomenal experiences. According to vehicle-based representationalism both (a) and (b) would represent the same content, viz. that Amsterdam is the capital city of the Netherlands. According to a content-based account however both (a) and (b) would represent entirely different things (e.g. a Latin scripted English

To summarize, the terminological difficulties that I have indicated can be resolved by noting that there are *two kinds of qualia realism* and *two kinds of 'representationalism'*. The two kinds of qualia realism are distinguished by their attitude to the thesis that the phenomenal character of an experience is entirely determined by the kinds of objects to which the experience is related. The kind of qualia realism that the sense data advocates affirms this thesis, while the other kind of denies it. Furthermore, the ambiguity of representationalism can be dealt with by making a distinction between a *content-based* variety and a *vehicle-based* variety. Contemporary representationalists such as Harman advocate the first variety, while sense data theorists commit themselves to the second.

We are now in a better position to evaluate Harman's position and the arguments that he uses. First of all, we should remind ourselves that Harman argues against the view that we are aware of intrinsic qualities of experience. Now, as I have pointed out there are two ways to construe the notion of an intrinsic quality of experience. Hence, the question is; which of these is Harman arguing against? Unfortunately, Harman is not sufficiently clear about this.

On the one hand, Harman says that he opposes himself to the sense data theory. But he does this in part by appealing to the fact that when we try to attend to our experience of things, all we notice are objects of experience but never the experience itself. However, on the present account, the sense data theory is in perfect agreement with this, for it affirms the relational thesis according to which the phenomenal character of an experience is fully captured by the objects that are represented in it. Perhaps then it is more plausible to take Harman as arguing against the other type of qualia realism according to which there is *more* to a phenomenal experience than just the objects the experience is of.¹⁷

However, there are perhaps other reasons for holding that Harman really is arguing against the sense data theory. Perhaps his attack is not so much directed at the kind of qualia realism that is contrary to the diaphanousness of experience (after all, I have shown that this kind of qualia realism is not actually part of the sense data theory), but to the fact that the sense data theory proposes a representational account of experience that is essentially *vehicle-based*. According to vehicle-based representationalism we are only indirectly or mediately aware of external objects via other intermediary

expression versus a Cyrillic scripted Russian expression). Note that on a vehicle-based account it seems especially puzzling why (a) and (b) should appear the way they do. After all, it is entirely arbitrary that the English use something like (a), and that the Russians use something like (b), to express that Amsterdam is the capital city of the Netherlands. Misguided scientists might even argue that there is an explanatory gap between (a) and (b) *qua* patterns of ink and the fact that Amsterdam is the capital city of the Netherlands! From a content-based point of view however, the fact that (a) and (b) appear the way they do is simply because, as a matter of fact, patterns of ink just look like that!

¹⁷Stoljar gives a similar account (Stoljar, 2004).

objects. The argument from illusion is used to demonstrate this. Vehicle-based versions of representationalism want to “reify appearances” (Jackson, 2000, p. 2). Vehicle-based representationalism is essentially committed to what Howard Robinson calls the “phenomenal principle”. According to the phenomenal principle, when something appears to a subject with property P , it follows there actually is something that *is* P , even in cases of illusion and hallucination (Robinson, 1994, p. 32). Vehicle-based representationalism can allow for this because it holds that phenomenal properties simply are representational vehicles and not representational contents (which are truth-functional). According to Harman however, this reification of appearances is misguided, for it appeals to the argument from illusion (which is fallacious).

Perhaps we should put the whole story as follows. Harman really gives *two* arguments.¹⁸ The first argument argues that the argument from illusion is fallacious, and that the vehicle-based representationalism that is built on it is misguided. Here Harman is really arguing against the sense-data theory. Harman’s second argument however, by an appeal to the diaphanousness of experience, argues that all we are aware of in experience are the objects our experience is of. Here, although he does not seem aware of this himself, Harman is not so much arguing against the sense-data theorists as he is arguing against the qualia realists that deny the relational thesis. Of course, Harman himself does not explicate this as such. However, he *ought* to have, for his claim that his main target is the sense data theory is conceptually inadequate. In any case, it seems to me that, in light of the terminological\doctrinal issues that I have addressed, this reconstruction of Harman’s arguments is the most appropriate and\or adequate.

IV. Examining the arguments

I would now like to proceed to an actual examination of Harman’s arguments. I intuit that they may not be sufficient to save functionalism from the objection that it cannot account for the phenomenal character of our mental states. Of course this is not to say that functionalists may not have other resources to counter this objection. All it says is that to the extent that a functionalist appeals to the kind of arguments that Harman puts forth, the functionalist fails to counter the objection that phenomenal character cannot be fully functionalized. In other words, I am not so much arguing against functionalism here as I am arguing against Harman’s attempts to save functionalism from one serious objection to it.

Let me begin by addressing Harman’s criticism of the argument from illusion. First of all, it should be pointed out that in the context of evaluating

¹⁸I already indicated this somewhat in the previous section

objections to functional accounts of the mind, it seems a bit odd, initially at least, that Harman should want to focus so much of his attention on the argument from illusion. For the argument from illusion is first and foremost an argument in favor of indirect realism. And when you read the literature on functionalism it seems that the epistemological problem of indirect realism does not really seem to play any significant role. So why, when it comes to the problem of functionalizing phenomenal character, would you want to pay attention to the argument from illusion? Moreover, the argument from illusion seems especially concerned with accounting for the problematic circumstance *that* things appear to us that turn out not to exist. It seems to me however that the issue of functionalizing phenomenal character has more to do with *how* things phenomenally appear to us; i.e. with the issue of why mental states are phenomenally characterized the way they are (e.g. why pains feel the way they do).

Perhaps I misunderstand the role that Harman's attack on the argument from illusion plays in his overall attempt to defend functionalism. Perhaps Harman only uses the argument from illusion to illustrate the kind of faulty reasoning that the thesis that we are aware of intrinsic qualities of experience is also guilty of making. In other words, perhaps Harman merely uses the argument from illusion as an example *alongside* the other examples of Ponce de Leon and paintings of unicorns to show that it is wrong to suppose that we are aware of intrinsic qualities of experience. However, to interpret Harman in this way, I think, would be mistaken. For according to Harman, the argument from illusion tries to show that we are only indirectly aware of external objects by being directly aware of sense data, and he equates being aware of sense-data with being aware of intrinsic qualities of experience. In other words, Harman does seem to think that the argument from illusion is somehow relevant to the issue of functionalizing phenomenal character.

In any case, it is not obvious to me why the argument from illusion should bear any direct relevance to phenomenological issues of functionalism. But even if we grant Harman this, I am not sure if his criticism of the argument from illusion is convincing. More specifically, I doubt whether his criticism is really *sufficient* to refute the thesis that we are aware of intrinsic qualities of experience.

Harman argues that from the fact that the Fountain of Youth does not exist, it does not follow that Ponce de Leon really was searching for something mental. True, but it also certainly does not follow that the Fountain of Youth is not *in fact* something mental! It seems to me that Harman overlooks the circumstance that his examples have *intensionality*. Or at least, it can be argued that a function such as "Ponce de Leon is searching for *x*" ought be treated as intensional. Suppose Ponce de Leon was searching for the Morningstar, and suppose that he did not know that the Morning Star is the Evening Star. Then on an intensional reading of "Ponce de Leon was searching for the Morning Star" it certainly does not follow that Ponce de

Leon was searching for the Evening Star, but it also does not follow that the Morningstar is not in fact the Evening Star.¹⁹ As a matter of fact, the Morningstar *is* the Evening Star. This then shows that, although Ponce de Leon was not searching for something mental, this does not preclude the possibility that the Fountain of Youth is not in fact something mental. In a similar way can allow for the possibility that illusions and hallucinations make us aware of something mental.

I am not sure how serious this objection is. But then again, I am also not that sure why Harman thinks Ponce de Leon is not searching for something mental. It seems to me that the only reason for this, is that if a contemporary were to ask Ponce de Leon if he was searching for something mental, he would have answered in the negative. But we should account for this in intensional terms. And as I think I have shown, such an intensional account does not at all show that the Fountain of Youth is not in fact something mental. In addition to this, I want to point out that Harman's criticism can also be applied to some of the things that he himself says. He says: "In fact, there is no such thing as the Fountain of Youth, but that does not mean Ponce de Leon wasn't looking for anything. We can therefore say that his search had an intentional object. But the thing that he was looking for, the intentional object of his search, did not (and does not) exist" (Harman, 1990, p. 34). According to Harman, Ponce de Leon's search had an intentional object. However, by Harman's standards, I would suppose that it would be equally *wrong* to say that Ponce de Leon was searching for an intentional object! Again however, as I have tried to show, from this it does not follow that the Fountain of Youth is not in actual fact an intentional object.

Although I think there is more to be said about Harman's evaluation of the argument from illusion, I want to conclude with a difficulty that I have with the phenomenological part of Harman's argument. As I have pointed out, even if Harman has satisfactorily showed that the argument from illusion is fallacious, I don't believe this sufficiently shows that we are not in fact aware of intrinsic qualities of experience (remember, Harman thinks that 'being aware of something mental' is equivalent to 'being aware of an intrinsic quality of experience'). One could therefore ask whether there are maybe other considerations that favor the view that we are not in fact aware of such qualities. Now Harman could point out that if we try to find these intrinsic qualities of experience through introspection, it appears that such qualities are nowhere to be found. Experience is diaphanous, and the only thing that we are aware of are the object represented by the experience.

Now I have pointed out that there are in fact two forms of qualia realism; i.e. two ways of construing the notion of an intrinsic quality of experience. And I have pointed out that the argument from diaphanousness is only di-

¹⁹Similar points have been put forward by (Smart, 1959), (Brandt & Kim, 1967), and (Churchland, 1985)

rected at one of these. The argument from diaphanousness only attempts to show that there is nothing more to the phenomenal character of an experience than the objects that are represented in it. However, this is compatible with the kind of qualia realism that the sense data theorists commits himself to. This other form of qualia realism is equally threatening to the prospect of giving a functional account of the mind. And as far as I can see, none of Harman's arguments show that this kind of qualia realism does not in fact hold true. Let me explain.

The content-based representationalist wants to solve the problem of phenomenal character by holding that phenomenal qualities are the qualities objects are represented as having. Or to put it differently, the content-based representationalist wants to solve the problem by "kicking the phenomenal character downstairs, into the external world" (Shoemaker, 2003, p. 256). However, the kind of qualia realism that is advocated by the sense data theory holds that certain phenomenal qualities only exist to the extent that they are actually being experienced. In other words, although it grants that there is nothing more to the phenomenal character of experience than the objects the experience is of, it also holds that at least some of these objects are entirely mind-dependent. If there are indeed such mind dependent phenomenal objects, then the content-based representationalist has a problem, because it would seem that phenomenal character cannot be entirely kicked downstairs into the external world.

I believe the argument from diaphanousness does not show that certain phenomenal objects are not in fact entirely dependent on the mind. When I focus my attention on my lips, I feel a certain kind of bodily sensation with its own unique phenomenal character. Now when I try to attend to my *experience of* the sensation that I feel in my lips, all I end up with is the sensation itself, which is the *object* of my experience. This is the point that the argument from diaphanousness wants to make. However, when I try to conceive of the peculiar sensation that I feel in my lips *apart* from my experiencing of it, I must equally well conclude that I do not know how to proceed. The same goes when I try to conceive of an unfelt pain; I cannot conceive of such a thing. Both the sensation that I feel in my lips and the particular painfulness of a pain each have their own kind of phenomenal character. However, it seems to me that these phenomenal characters do not exist, are not instantiated, apart from actually being experienced.²⁰ And to the extent that we might properly call such phenomenal characters intrinsic qualities of certain experiences, we must conclude that perhaps we *are* aware of intrinsic qualities of experiences after all.²¹

²⁰Searle also makes this point about pain (Searle, 1995).

²¹We are indeed justified to count this as intrinsic qualities of experience, even though they really concern the *objects* of the experience. According to some uses of the word, 'experience' can also be identified with the object one is related to in having the experience (Stoljar, 2004)

Harman's arguments do not show that certain phenomenal characters are not, as a matter of fact, only instantiated as a function of experience. This is neither logically precluded by his criticism of the argument from illusion, nor is it apparent from the phenomenological observation that experience is diaphanous. However, I do think that the inconceivability of unfelt pains or bodily sensations make a good case for the thesis that, as a matter of fact, certain features of phenomenal character only exist to the extent that they are actually experienced. Moreover, pains especially have been put forward as problematic cases for the functionalist.²² Hence, my conclusion is that the essentially experiential nature of pains and bodily sensations allow us to say that we are in some sense aware of intrinsic qualities of our experience. And because Harman's arguments do not affect this circumstance in any way, his arguments cannot be used to defend functionalism against the objection that phenomenal character cannot be accounted for in functional terms.

V. Final Remarks

In this paper I have paid considerable attention to some of the terminological and doctrinal difficulties that are involved in the contemporary philosophy of mind. I maintain that the resolution of such difficulties is of crucial importance to the understanding of an article such as Harman's. Without a doubt, my emphasis on these issues have prevented me from getting to more detailed examinations of Harman's arguments. For I think there is still much left to examine. However, I must conclude that this is only because there is a lot of philosophical vagueness on Harman's part. In so far as I understand Harman's article, I do think I have been able to expose some of its flaws. My resolution of certain conceptual issues have especially helped me in this, for they have showed me that the thesis that Harman is arguing against (the thesis that we are aware of intrinsic qualities of experience) can be interpreted in at least two ways, and that Harman's arguments only poses a threat to one of them.

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²²See e.g. (Lewis, 1980) and (Levine, 2003)

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