

## Experience as a Way of Knowing: The Knowledge Argument and Qualia

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### ABSTRACT

It is first shown that many questions could be raised about phenomenal concepts and the popular answer to the question what Mary learns upon release, namely, that *this* is what it is like to see red. It is then shown that the category of quale is actually a postulate of philosophical theories and philosophers posit qualia because they fail to see how to account for the two related features of experience, namely, subjectivity and phenomenality. It is argued that we don't need qualia to explain the subjectivity and phenomenality of experience because we don't have to posit apparent properties. It is then proposed that experiencing is a way of knowing and that the new knowledge Mary acquires upon release is her knowledge by acquaintance with red.

### KEYWORDS

the knowledge argument; qualia; phenomenal concepts; sense-data theory; apparent properties; representationalism; knowledge by acquaintance

I believe that there is something deeply wrong with all the talks about qualia. But in this article I would rather mainly focus on the discussions about the knowledge argument (hereafter, KA).<sup>1</sup> This is because the discussions of KA show that we don't even agree on a) whether Mary learns anything new upon release; b) if she does, what kind of knowledge that she learns—a new piece of propositional knowledge or knowledge of other kinds; and c) if she learns a new piece of propositional knowledge, what exactly she learns. This, as would be argued blow, indicates that we aren't really clear on the ontological status of qualia in the first place. As a result, the debate between physicalism and anti-physicalism is just wrongheaded. In this article, I would like to clear that out and show that physicalism has a powerful reply to KA and other arguments in its ilk.

This article would be divided into four sections. In section I, I would like to show the difficulties that we face when answering what Mary learns upon release. In section II, I would try to show that the category of quale is a postulate of philosophical theories. In section III, I would like to show that positing qualia results from the failure to realize that there are no apparent properties. In the last section I would establish the following point: experiencing is a way of knowing. A corollary of this point would be: Mary does acquire a new piece of knowledge, which is nothing but her new experience of red. She learns what red looks like *by* having the experience of red, that is, *by experiencing* red. She acquires no extra new knowledge about her own experience of red. Therefore, there is no threat to physicalism.

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1 Jackson (1986).

KA has one simple premise: a brilliant scientist Mary with all the physical knowledge of human color vision learns something new upon seeing the color red for the very first time. This premise is not, as Jackson admits (1986, p.295), demonstrated by any proof. It is rather established by appeal to our intuition. Since our intuition on this matter seems not that clear and distinct, it is really hard to figure it out what exactly Mary learns, even though we do intuit that Mary learns something new, or so it seems. A contemporary philosopher of mind, when asked, might reply that Mary learns *what it is like* to see red. This answer is so prevalent that almost everyone who hears it behaves as if she really understands it. But let us forget for a moment about the questions that might be raised on the term of art “what it is like...” dubbed by Nagel (1974). At first blush, this new piece of knowledge acquired by Mary would be *objectual* knowledge instead of propositional knowledge, for the term “what it is like to see red” behaves like a noun and picks out, as is normally believed, a phenomenal property, or a quale. If the new piece of knowledge that Mary acquires is objectual knowledge, it would seem that the force of KA against physicalism would rapidly decrease. For one might fail to have objectual knowledge about a physical object or property even though one has all the propositional knowledge about that object or property.

One might object that Mary cannot learn a piece of objectual knowledge without learning the corresponding propositional knowledge, or so it seems. According to some linguistic theories of embedded questions, the claim that Mary knows what it is like to see red just amounts to the claim that she stands a knowledge relation to the proposition that is the answer to the embedded question.<sup>2</sup> However, what is the new propositional knowledge that Mary acquires? When pressed, one might come up with this new answer: “Mary learns that *this* is what it is like to see red,” or “Mary learns that it is like *this* to see red.” It should be noticed that “*this*” is intentionally italicized to prevent a possible misunderstanding—it is *not* the normal demonstrative “this” that we use every day but is supposed to express a phenomenal concept that denotes a phenomenal property. Some awkwardness has already shown itself through this *purposely* italicized term. If there are qualia, why don’t we have any terms in our ordinary language that denote them? Jackson (2003) once says that qualia cannot be epiphenomenal because we are talking about them and we are writing *numerous* papers on them. But are we really talking about something when we talk about qualia? Notice that many scientists were once talking about ether all the time and writing many papers, on it, but it turned out that there is no ether. On the other hand, why don’t laymen on the street have any terms for qualia and talk about them? It seems that *only we philosophers* talk about them.

It is of course possible that, as one might suggest, we philosophers consider some profound questions that laymen don’t even understand (if that is really the case, so bad for philosophy). Further, it seems that if we like, we could coin many terms for qualia, for example, “ $Q_r$ ” for the quale of the experience of red, “ $Q_g$ ” for the quale of the experience of green, etc. An obvious characteristic of this way of coining new terms for qualia is that we have to coin them by reference to our experiences while at the same time we identify our experiences by reference to the objects of them: my experience of *red*, my experience of *the noise*, etc. (It might be argued that for bodily sensations like pain, itch, etc., they have no object. I am not sure whether that is true, but I will spare myself from getting involved in the mud.) This way of coining new terms would make trouble for us. First, the claim that my experience of red has  $Q_r$  would be entailed by that every experience has a quale. As a result, if Mary knows that every experience has a quale prior to her release, she would learn nothing new if she learns that her experience of red has  $Q_r$  after release. But Mary surely could know that every experience has a quale if that is really the case because she would have experiences in

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<sup>2</sup> See Stanley and Williamson (2001) and Shaffer (2007), among others.

the black and white room. Second and relatedly, if it is the case that every experience has a quale, then once I know that the object in front of me is red, I would be in a position to know that my experience of it has  $Q_r$  without even putting my experience under introspection, given that I had experiences before. But isn't it claimed that introspection is the (only) way for me to know (or know about) the qualia of my experiences? How could I know that my experience of red has  $Q_r$  without even attending to it in introspection?

There is another famous way of dubbing terms for qualia—Nagel's way: what it is like to *see red*, what it is like to *taste vegemite*, what it is like to *smell skunk*, etc. Again, we see that this way still does by reference to the type of experiences and the objects of them. Further, on a closer look, this is not really a new way of dubbing terms for qualia, as it might seem, for what could we possibly mean by "what it is like to see red" except the quale of experience of red? Isn't it supposed that "quale" is roughly synonymous with "what it is like to be in an experiential state"? So, the claim that every experience has a quale is roughly the same as the claim that there is something it is like to have an experience. As a consequence, the proposition that *this* is what it is like to see red would have no more cognitive content than the proposition that an experience of red has a quale. As a further consequence, if Mary knows that every experience has a quale, when she comes to learn that *this* is what it is like to see red, she actually learns nothing new. It might be replied that the proposition that this is what it is like to see red does have cognitive content as the concept *THIS* and the concept expressed by "what it is like to see red" have different modes of presentation. But what is the difference between the two modes of presentation? Are they both the "phenomenal" mode of presentation of the quale of the experience of red? Isn't it even claimed that qualia serve as their own modes of presentation?<sup>3</sup>

Could I be unfair here? When Mary sees red for the very first time, she learns that her experience of red has a *peculiar* quality, as we usually say, which is called by philosophers "the quale of an experience of red". Furthermore, Mary might demonstratively introduce a term, say, " $Q_r$ ", for the quality. Then her new knowledge could be expressed as follows:

My experience of red has  $Q_r$ . This proposition has more cognitive content than the proposition that every experience has a quale, given how " $Q_r$ " is introduced. Therefore, Mary's knowledge of it is *not* cognitively insignificant.

Now first, how could Mary demonstratively introduce the term " $Q_r$ "? It might seem that she could do so by saying "I going to call this quality ' $Q_r$ '" while at the same time pointing inwardly, as it were, to the quality of her experience of red. However, does she really point to anything? Second, even if we suppose that she really points inwardly to a quality which is peculiar, we may wonder whether the term " $Q_r$ " could become a term of public language. Surely, Mary could tell other people that by " $Q_r$ ", she means a quality which could be attended to introspectively when one is having an experience of red. But could we be sure that we are introspectively attending to the quality denoted by " $Q_r$ " or even anything at all when following Mary's instruction?

But let us forget for a moment about all of these bothering questions that might be raised. Suppose that in this way, Mary has successfully introduced the term into our public language. It is obvious that if Mary could do so, other people could do so too. Then, suppose someone else instead of Mary had successfully introduced " $Q_r$ " to the public language before Mary was born, and the term denotes a peculiar quality of human experience of red. Now, we might want to say Mary learns that her experience of red has  $Q_r$  when she is released. As pointed above, this proposition would have cognitive content. However, now we might wonder why Mary could not know this proposition in the black and white room. Could we just tell her that human experience of red has  $Q_r$ ? Notice that we could not say that she only possesses physical knowledge and therefore she doesn't know

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<sup>3</sup> For example, see Loar (1990, 2003).

(we would not tell her?) that her experience of red has Qu-r, which is a phenomenal fact, for this would blatantly beg the question. So, if Mary really acquires some new propositional knowledge, it seems that the new knowledge could not be that her experience of red (or human experience of red, if one prefers) has Qu-r.

One may argue that Mary's new knowledge is still of the fact that human experience of red has Qu-r, even though she might have already possessed a piece of propositional knowledge of this fact, by testimony or otherwise, in the black and white room. Suppose that in the black and white room, Mary is told that human experience of red has a peculiar quality that is called by philosophers "Qu-r". One may argue that given that Mary hasn't had any experience of red yet, her concept of this peculiar quality is pretty much impoverished: she *merely possesses* the concept of Qu-r without *mastering* it. After being released, Mary has an experience of red and therefore, masters the concept. If we individuate knowledge more finely, we can say that Mary only knows<sub>p</sub> ("p" for possessing) that human experience of red has Qu-r, when she only possesses the concept of Qu-r, in the black and white room, and Mary knows<sub>m</sub> ("m" for mastering) that human experience of red has Qu-r, when she masters the concept of Qu-r, after being released. So, Mary indeed acquires new knowledge upon release.<sup>4</sup> There are some obvious problems with individuating knowledge *that* finely. For one thing, if we individuate knowledge that finely, we would have to accordingly individuate belief that finely. As a consequence, my belief that elm trees are beautiful would be different from Jones' (Jones is an expert on botany) belief that elm trees are beautiful. But if they are different, they must have different truth conditions. This, however, seems clearly an unacceptable result. Another problem is that we have no non-question-begging criterion for distinguishing merely possession from mastery of the concept of Qu-r.

Even if we forget about the problems with this defense of KA, the defense would sharply decrease the force of KA. For now, the (supposed) matter of fact that human experience of red has Qu-r *could* be known by someone who has never had any color experiences. Though one may insist that Mary could not know<sub>m</sub> that human experience of red has Qu-r, lack of this piece of knowledge shouldn't be a worry to physicalists, for one may fail to know a matter of physical fact in many different ways. Of course, one might further rebut that if Mary has all the physical knowledge of human color vision, why couldn't she master the concept of Qu-r in the black and white room? Well, let me first remark that we need an argument to show that Mary really couldn't master the concept of Qu-r in the black and white room in the first place. If one appeals to intuition here, I have to say that I don't have a clear and distinct intuition that Mary could not master the concept of Qu-r in the black and white room if it is really the case that an experience of red has Qu-r. Second, in order to make trouble for physicalism, one has to show that physicalism entails that one would master every concept of physical objects and properties if one knows all the physical facts. I don't think that physicalists have to commit themselves to this claim.

Given this problem, to save the force of KA, one may retreat to the view that phenomenal concepts are in fact *inexpressible* in public language. Then, Mary in the black and white room could not know that human experience of red has a peculiar quality, if it is a matter of fact, for she could not possess the concept for the quality deferentially and, as is supposed, she couldn't possess the concept non-deferentially either. This view seems to be in harmony with the fact that we don't have terms for qualia in our public language except those purportedly coined by philosophers. It is interesting to note that the major theories of phenomenal concepts for sale in town all imply this view more or less. Some people think that phenomenal concepts are demonstrative concepts.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Alter (2013).

<sup>5</sup> See Perry (2001).

Since for demonstratives, we need context to fix their referents, while context seems not expressible in public language in the sense that it cannot be described completely, phenomenal concepts are inexpressible in public language. Some people think that phenomenal concepts are recognitional concepts.<sup>6</sup> Again, this claim would also imply that phenomenal concepts are not expressible in public language, for any term in public language that expresses a phenomenal concept could be learned by someone who nonetheless cannot recognize the phenomenal property denoted by the concept. Some people think that phenomenal concepts are quotational concepts which would include a particular token experience as part of its content: the experience \_\_\_\_.<sup>7</sup> Since what fills in the blank is inexpressible in public language, phenomenal concepts as quotational concepts are inexpressible in public language. Now, if phenomenal concepts are inexpressible in public language, then if Mary learns a new piece of propositional knowledge, her new knowledge would be inexpressible in public language. Indeed, any phenomenal truth, if there is any, would be inexpressible in public language if phenomenal concepts are inexpressible in public language.

This is quite astonishing, for if Mary's new propositional knowledge is inexpressible in public language, why would we believe that she learns a new piece of propositional knowledge in the first place? Likewise, if phenomenal concepts are inexpressible in public language, why do we think that there are such concepts? It might be replied that there are phenomenal properties, and we know about them, so we must possess concepts of them. However, are there phenomenal properties? Do we really know about them? How do we know about them? It might be replied: "Don't you see that when you are having an experience of red, your experience has a special feel? That feel is the phenomenal property (character) of your experience of red!" Let me concede for this moment that there is a feel. However, how do I know it or know about it? It seems that the only way for me to know it or know about it is to *feel* it. But when I feel the feel, am I just experiencing red? There doesn't seem to be an additional mental act there when I am experiencing red—feeling the feel when I am experiencing red is nothing but experiencing red.

One might suggest that when I am experiencing red, my experience of red is at the same time under introspection and it is by introspection that I come to know that my experience of red has a special feel. This suggestion has it that whenever I use my biological eyes to see red, my mental eyes, as it were, are seeing the special feel of my experience of red. Clearly, this suggestion runs afoul of the transparent thesis of experience, which, roughly speaking, says that my mental eyes can only see what my biological eyes see, so to speak. Even if one might not accept the transparent thesis of experience, it is clear that this suggestion would multiply mental acts. The question is: why add an extra mental act when not necessary? One might believe that actually there is a kind of necessity involved. According to some higher-order theories of consciousness, it is exactly because my experience of red is under introspection that it is a conscious mental state.<sup>8</sup> But must my introspection that makes my experience conscious be conscious too? If the answer is "yes", then there would be an infinite hierarchy of mental acts involved in one single experience. So, the answer has to be "no", that is, it has to be the case that though my introspection makes my experience conscious, it could be nonetheless *unconscious* itself. But then, why do we think that my experience of red is under my introspection if the introspection is unconscious, that is, if I am *not aware of* the introspection? This would make the *extra* mental act of introspection seem *ad hoc*: my introspection is there only to explain why my experience is conscious.

One might follow the self-representing theory of consciousness and reply that when I am

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6 See Loar (1990).

7 See Papineau (2002).

8 See Rosenthal (2002).

experiencing red, I am also experiencing my experience of red, and through experiencing my experience of red, I come to know the special feel of it.<sup>9</sup> That is to say, my experience is not only representing red (I am experiencing red), it represents itself as well (I am also experiencing my experience of red). There is only *one* mental act, but in one mental act, I am doing *two* things. The claim that my experience of red also represents itself seems unintelligible to me, for how could it exactly do that? When I am experiencing red, I am *undergoing* my experience of red, and in that sense, we could say that I am experiencing my experience of red. But clearly that is just another way of saying that I am experiencing red. Besides, the self-representing theory faces a deadly objection: if my experience of red represents itself, it can never go wrong. However, isn't it the case that wherever there is representation, there is a question of correctness? If there is representation, there must be misrepresentation.

If my experience of red has a special feel, the only way for me to know it is to feel it. On the other hand, feeling the feel is nothing but experiencing red. Since through experiencing red, all I can know is about red, it seems that if there are phenomenal qualities, we have no way of knowing them—we cannot really feel them. So, if phenomenal concepts are not expressible in public language, appeal to our knowledge of phenomenal qualities won't eradicate the doubt that there are phenomenal concepts.

It should be noticed that by "phenomenal concepts" I mean the concepts that pick out phenomenal properties, or qualia. These concepts might be possessed by someone deferentially if they are expressible in public language. As a consequence, if phenomenal concepts are expressible in public language, Mary could possess phenomenal concepts relevant to color experiences deferentially in the black and white room. One might therefore argue that Mary would then learn nothing new upon release as she could know that *this* is what it is like to see red before release. This way one might argue that KA fails to challenge physicalism.<sup>10</sup> But this way of arguing that KA fails assumes that there are concepts that picks out phenomenal properties. But this has been shown above to be questionable.

## II

Despite the questions raised and considered above, one could still insist that there are qualia, that there are phenomenal concepts, that phenomenal concepts are inexpressible in public language, and that Mary learns a new piece of propositional knowledge upon release, and so on and so forth. I don't want to prove that if one does insist so, one is wrong. What I want to show is that for many claims made in the discussions of KA, some bothersome questions could be raised and further, many claims are inconsistent with each other. One might think that this is normal in philosophy, but I believe that it is also normal in philosophy that after many years of seemingly chaotic discussions and debates, we do make progress on the issues under discussion. However, it seems that in this area, we are not making much progress—we don't even have a clear answer to the question what Mary learns upon release, if we have reached an agreed view that she does learn something new, which is even doubtful by itself. So, there must be something wrong.

To figure out what is wrong, let us now consider a bit further whether phenomenal concepts, if there are any, are expressible in public language. As far as I know, there are very few examples of

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<sup>9</sup> See Kriegel (2004).

<sup>10</sup> See Ball (2009). Ball claims that there are *no* phenomenal concepts, but not because he denies that there are phenomenal properties, but because one could possess concepts of phenomenal properties *deferentially* whereas by "phenomenal concepts" Ball means a kind of concepts that cannot be possessed deferentially.



phenomenal concepts in public language, even though there are a great number of philosophical papers on qualia and related issues. Some have used the term “reddish experience” and “reddish” is supposed to express a phenomenal concept. But what could they mean by “reddish experience” except experience with the quale of an experience of red? I believe that nobody would take any experience to be reddish literally. Then “reddish experience” is just another term for experience of red and “reddish” is defined (implicitly?) to mean *having the quale of an experience of red*. Some have dubbed “Q<sub>r</sub>” for the quale of experience of red, and then take “Q<sub>r</sub>” as a term expressing a phenomenal concept. But first, “Q<sub>r</sub>” is a symbol instead of a term; second, even if it were a term, clearly it acquires its meaning *by definition*: it is defined to be a term that picks out the quale of experience of red. “Pain” sometimes is also taken to express a phenomenal concept, as well as “red sensation.” But clearly, by “pain” we usually mean the unpleasant *experiences* rather than the phenomenal character of them resulted from damage of tissues, etc. while by “red sensation” we usually mean the *sensations* rather than the phenomenal character of them resulted from seeing red. One surely could instead use them to pick out the phenomenal characters of pain and red sensation respectively, but then both terms are *re-defined* to express phenomenal concepts.<sup>11</sup> Through these examples, we can see that first, all of these terms expressing phenomenal concepts are *defined* to be phenomenal terms; second, they are defined in terms of *quale* or *phenomenal character*.

As shown above, Nagel’s way of coining phenomenal terms, “what it is like to see red,” etc., are not really a different way from defining them in terms of quale. As also considered above, introducing new terms expressing phenomenal concepts demonstratively is suspicious, for nobody knows, including the subject, whether the terms so introduced really pick out any properties, let alone phenomenal properties. On the other hand, we don’t seem to have any terms expressing phenomenal concepts introduced in this way in public language.

So, though there are phenomenal concepts that are expressible in public language, that is, there are phenomenal terms in public language, they are *phenomenal* terms only because they are *defined in terms of quale by philosophers*. It is clear that this way of defining phenomenal terms could be successful, in other words, the terms so defined would be phenomenal terms, only if “quale” is itself a phenomenal term or a categorical term picking out the category of phenomenal properties. Obviously, “quale” is taken by the community to be the latter.<sup>12</sup> Now the question is: how does “quale” acquire its status of being a categorical term for phenomenal properties?

It seems that there are two ways in which “quale” could be introduced as a categorical term, one is by being defined through other phenomenal concepts: the category of the things picked out by phenomenal terms “p<sub>1</sub>,” “p<sub>2</sub>,” …, if they constitute a category. The other is by being defined through stipulation: the category of so-and-such things. Obviously, the first way requires that there be phenomenal concepts expressible in public language before “quale” being defined through them, which, as shown above, is hardly the case. The second way, therefore, is left to be the only way in which “quale” could be introduced as a categorical term. So, we find the following stipulations on qualia:

In each of these cases, I am the subject of a mental state with a very distinctive subjective character. There is something it is *like* for me to undergo each state, some phenomenology that it has. Philosophers often use the term “qualia” (singular “quale”) to refer to the introspectively

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11 It should be emphasized here that one may think that any term that picks out an experience that has a phenomenal character is therefore a phenomenal term, and therefore expresses a phenomenal concept. I take phenomenal concepts to be concepts of phenomenal characters of experiences rather than concepts of experiences themselves.

12 Of course, since “quale” is a term picking out the category of phenomenal properties, in a certain sense, it is therefore a phenomenal term.

accessible, phenomenal aspects of our mental lives. In this broad sense of the term, it is difficult to deny that there are qualia.<sup>13</sup>

Qualia are the subjective or qualitative properties of experiences. What it feels like, experientially, to see a red rose is different from what it feels like to see a yellow rose. Likewise for hearing a musical note played by a piano and hearing the same musical note played by a tuba. The qualia of these experiences are what give each of them its characteristic “feel” and also what distinguish them from one another. Qualia have traditionally been thought to be intrinsic qualities of experience that are directly available to introspection.<sup>14</sup>

Qualia include the ways things look, sound and smell, the way it feels to have a pain, and more generally, what it’s like to have experiential mental states. (“Qualia” is the plural of “quale”.) Qualia are experiential properties of sensations, feelings, perceptions and, more controversially, thoughts and desires as well. But, so defined, who could deny that qualia exist?<sup>15</sup>

Since the demise of sense data theories, the term qualia has come to refer to the qualitative, or phenomenal, character of conscious, sensory states, so that it is mental states, not phenomenal individuals, that are the subjects of predication. Another expression for this aspect of mental life is the “raw feel” of experience, or “what it’s like” to have certain sensory experiences. Qualia are part of the phenomenon of the subjectivity of consciousness, and pose one of the most difficult problems for a materialist solution to the mind-body problem.<sup>16</sup>

Unsurprisingly, none of the above statements about qualia mentions any phenomenal concepts; instead, we are told that “quale” is roughly synonymous with “what it is like (for one) to be in a certain experiential state” and “the (raw) feel” when one is having an experience. Though one may not consider it an embarrassment that one could only point to qualia through rough synonymies, it nonetheless reveals that the ontological status of qualia is suspicious, for none of the supposed synonymies clearly and distinctly picks out anything. So, it is really surprising to note that philosophers think that it would be perverse to deny that there are qualia as so characterized.

Though the term “quale” is not introduced through other phenomenal concepts, we are nevertheless told that qualia have certain features: 1) that they are subjective, by which I guess it is meant that they can be apprehended only from the subjective point of view; 2) that they are phenomenal, by which I guess it is meant that they are ways how *experiences* feel or appear to the subject; 3) that they are qualitative and characteristic of experiences, by which I guess it is meant that they are real or substantial properties that distinguish one experience from another. Given these features, we could actually define “qualia” as follows:

Qualia are the subjective, phenomenal characters of experiences.

Two other features of qualia that are discussed in philosophical literature would also be relevant here. One is that qualia are introspectively accessible, the other is that qualia are the intrinsic properties of experience whose nature is directly revealed to us in experience. It should be noticed that all of these features are not independent of each other. But I believe that the above definition is the core of many conceptions, including the statements quoted above, of qualia. But, defined as such, are there qualia?

Before we investigate on this question, it would be appropriate here to note that the category of quale is a postulate of philosophical theories. It is not the case, as is indicated by the fact that there are no phenomenal concepts expressible in public language that are not defined in terms of quale,

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13 Tye (2021).

14 Kind (2022).

15 Block (2004).

16 Levin (1998).



that we first identify qualia *independently* of philosophical theories, and then find out that qualia have so-and-such features, that is, build up a theory of qualia. Quite the other way around, qualia are defined to be the entities that have the features characterized by philosophical theories. As a consequence, "qualia" has an exact definition that gives the sufficient and necessary conditions for being a quale. Could something that is not subjective be a quale? No. Could something that is not phenomenal be a quale? No. Could there be anything other than qualia that is the subjective, phenomenal character of an experience? Still, no. On the other hand, semantically, "qualia" is supposed to be like natural kind terms, but no natural kind terms could be exactly defined without being backed up by a specific scientific theory, if we believe that science could find the essence of natural kinds. Both features of "qualia," namely, being introduced by stipulation and being defined exactly, strongly indicate that the category of quale is a postulate of philosophical theories.

Once we note that the category of quale is a postulate of philosophical theories and accordingly, other phenomenal concepts can only be defined in terms of quale, it would not be surprising to note that we cannot even non-trivially answer what Mary learns upon release if we believe that she learns a new piece of propositional knowledge about the quale of experience of red. The incredibly popular answer to the question—*this* is what it is like to see red—has no cognitive content given the definition of qualia. The supposed phenomenal concept *THIS* must be defined in terms of the quale of experience of red, whereas "what it is like see red" is supposed to be synonymous with "the quale of experience of red." Likewise, it would not be surprising to notice that theories of phenomenal concepts all have the consequence more or less that they are inexpressible in public language, for these theories must respect qualia, which are the referents of phenomenal concepts, as postulates of philosophical theories. Qualia are supposed to be essentially subjective and the subjective point of view seems to have no objective characterization in public language. If phenomenal concepts are rather expressible in public language, one would be able to acquire it without taking the subjective point of view, that is, one could apprehend qualia (in whatever sense) without taking the subjective point of view. But this is just what the philosophical theories about qualia deny. In the demonstrative theory of phenomenal concepts, the context is subjective in the sense that one could be in such a context only if one takes the subjective point of view. In the recognitional theory of phenomenal concepts, one could only recognize qualia from the subjective point of view. Similarly, in the quotational theory of phenomenal concepts, the token experience quoted could be only apprehended from the subjective point of view. Furthermore, a glance at contemporary philosophy of mind would make it clear that many claims or theories about phenomenal consciousness respect qualia as defined above. The reason is obvious: if they don't, they are not related to qualia and then, they are not about phenomenal consciousness.

However, it is exactly because the category of quale is a postulate of philosophical theories that we should ask whether there are qualia, for the history of science tells us that many postulates of scientific theories turn out to be nonexistent. Philosophers would say: "Of course there are qualia, is it clear that pains feel different from itches? Is it clear that seeing red feels different from seeing green? Or, in other words, is it clear that what it is like to see red is different from what it is like to see green?" I understand that pains feel different from itches, but only when it is construed as: pains, *qua* experiences, are different from itches, *qua* experiences, and they are different experiences because by having them, we experience different things: damage of tissues vs disturbance of skin. Similarly, I understand that seeing red feels different from seeing green, but only when it is construed as: experiences of red are different from experiences of green, and they are different because by having them, we experience different things: red vs green. The difference between an experience of red and an experience of green could be readily explained: they have different representational content: one is of red while the other is of green. One may think that I just miss the point: the difference *also* (if not only) consists in the phenomenal feel, that is to say, experience of

red *phenomenally* feels different from experience of green. Or, using Nagel's term of art, what it is like (for me) to see red is different from what it is like (for me) to see green. I must confess that I don't find it intelligible that experience of red *phenomenally feels* different from experience of green. I understand that red appears to me differently from green, but still, by that I only understand that red would cause me a different experience from green. I may therefore claim that *red* is *phenomenally* different from *green*. I may further claim that red is therefore a different *phenomenal* quality from green. But this is not to say that *experience* of red phenomenally feels different from *experience* of green or that my *experience* of red has a different phenomenal quality from my *experience* of green. To say that would commit, it seems to me, a categorical mistake (more will come in next section). On the other hand, if by the claim "Experience of red has a different phenomenal quality from experience of green" one merely means that red is a different phenomenal quality from green, it would be out of the question whether there are qualia: red, as a phenomenal quality, is *not* a property of *experiences* but a property of *objects* of experiences.

It should be noticed that some philosophers mean something different by the term "qualia." For example, some philosophers take qualia to be the represented properties of the represented objects, not properties of experiences. Some philosophers take qualia to be the representational content of experiences. Representational content in a certain sense could be viewed as a relational property, but it should be clear that representational content of an experience is the way how the represented object appears to the subject, not the way how the experience feels or appears to the subject. Therefore, these philosophers either don't respect the above definition of qualia or make a mistake. The question addressed here is whether there are qualia *as defined above*.

Though one may unconsciously slide from that red is phenomenally different from green to that experience of red is phenomenally different from experience of green, I rather think that this slide is undoubtedly pushed by various philosophical arguments, one of them is Nagel's famous argument that psychophysical reduction is impossible. In the rest of this section, I would take Nagel's argument as an example to show that it is presumed in these arguments that there are qualia as defined above.

According to Nagel (1974), the process of reduction consists in "a move in the direction of greater objectivity, toward a more accurate view of the real nature of things (p.444)." Such reduction is possible for those phenomena that, in Nagel's terms, have a *more objective* character than is revealed in their appearance. Such reduction of conscious experiences, nevertheless, confronts an unsurmountable difficulty as conscious experiences are essentially connected with a single point of view—the subjective point of view, removing which would lead us no closer to the nature of conscious experiences but far away instead. Here, by "objective" phenomena or facts, Nagel means "the kind that can be observed and understood from many points of view (p.442)." By contrast, if some phenomena or facts can only be observed and apprehended from a single point of view, they are subjective. Given the difference between objectivity and subjectivity, it is clear that nothing that is essentially subjective, that is, nothing whose nature could be revealed only to the subjective point of view, could be reduced. Since physical processes are essentially objective while conscious experiences are essentially subjective and therefore, cannot be reduced, even though conscious experiences might be physical processes, we would never be able to know or understand how they could be—a sort of explanatory gap.<sup>17</sup>

I would not question this theoretical framework in terms of objectivity and subjectivity. Rather, I would like to ask whether Nagel has successfully shown that there are qualia, or in Nagel's own terms, there is something that it is like to be, say, a bat. Nagel first tells us that "fundamentally an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like to *be* that

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17 See Levine (1983).

organism—something it is like *for* the organism,” which is called by Nagel “the subjective character of experience (p.436).” Then, Nagel says that we all have the belief that bats have experiences, the essence of which, according to Nagel, is that there is something that it is like to be a bat. He then argues no matter how we try, we just cannot fully apprehend what it is like (for a bat) to be a bat, for our resources are limited by our own experiences, which are radically different from bats’ experiences. Nagel later on generalizes the reason in terms of subjectivity: what it is like to be a bat (or other species with radically different perceptual apparatus from us) is essentially connected with a subjective point of view, which we just cannot take.

It is clear that Nagel is mainly concerned with raising a question for psychophysical reduction. But it is also clear that he must think that the reduction of qualia is at the core of the problem, for if there is nothing it is like for a bat to see a cubic object, etc., there would be nothing that it is like to be a bat. One surely would wonder why we would believe that there is something that it is like to be a bat, if we cannot fully apprehend what it is like to be a bat. Nagel does consider this wonder. He argues that if we deny that there is something that it is like to be a bat solely because we cannot fully apprehend it, intelligent bats or Martians would claim that there is nothing it is like to be us by the same token. However, Nagel says: We know they (intelligent bats or Martians) would be wrong to draw such a skeptical conclusion because *we know what it is like to be us*. And we know that while it includes an enormous amount of variation and complexity, and while we do not possess the vocabulary to describe it adequately, its subjective character is highly specific, and in some aspects describable in terms that can be understood only by creatures like us. (emphasis added, p.440)

So, Nagel concludes that the doubt that there is something it is like to be a bat is unfounded.

Clearly, the conclusion that there is something it is like to be us is reached through the premise that *we know* what it is like to be us. However, do we really know? Nagel doesn’t say anything on this matter: he provides no argument at all for this premise. He might think that it is just *obvious* that we know what it is like to be us. I think that most philosophers share this *feeling* with Nagel: we *just know* what it is like to be us, in other words, we *just know* the qualia of our experiences. From this they conclude: there are qualia—“obviously,” as one might add.

So, two points are clear: first, Nagel presumes that there is something it is like to be a bat, then argues that we cannot fully apprehend it. Second, when one doubts whether there is anything it is like to be a bat based on our lack of knowledge of it, Nagel argues against this doubt by appeal to another presumption: there is something it is like to be us. *We simply know that*. These two points indicate that qualia are just posited without being adequately argued for.

One would wonder: if Nagel doesn’t provide any argument for there being qualia, how could his paper become the *locus classicus* in philosophy of consciousness? I do believe that Nagel’s paper is a *locus classicus* in philosophy of consciousness, and his argument that psychophysical reduction faces a formidable difficulty is indeed a cogent one that no physicalists could afford to ignore. But, as I said above, one might unconsciously slide from that objects appear to us differently to that experiences have different phenomenal feels. Once this slide is done, Nagel’s argument, given its cogency, would make the latter view entrenched. Indeed, once qualia are posited, they, as Nagel has powerfully shown, would make the mind-body problem almost insoluble.

### III

Fortunately, we don’t have to believe that there are qualia—the subjective, phenomenal characters of experiences. Of course, we have to investigate why so many philosophers think that there are qualia—obviously.<sup>18</sup> Merely saying that they just unconsciously slide from that objects of

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18 There are other diagnoses, see Dennett (1988, 2020) and Crane (2000), but I don’t think that they are quite adequate.

experiences appear to us differently to that experiences have different phenomenal feels is not enough. Something peculiar, as we might say, must have misled them. In this section, I would show that it is the view that there are apparent properties that has misled them and argue that we have no reason to think that there are apparent properties.

Experiences are subjective, in the sense that one can experience only from the subjective point of view. The subjectivity of experience does make experiences peculiar in a certain sense. Other kinds of mental states don't have this feature. One could believe that tomato is red without taking the subjective point of view, but in order to see (visually experience) a red tomato, one has to experience from the subjective point of view.

It is of course a tough task for philosophers to give an account of the subjectivity of experience. However, as far as consciousness is concerned, the subjectivity of experience, when considered on its own, is not of much interest, for then characterizing it would be characterizing the subjective point of view *qua* a point of view. The subjectivity of experience becomes much more interesting when considered together with the phenomenality of experience, namely, in experience, objects of experiences *appear* to be so-and such. Since an object that is not red might appear, red to me, there is a distinction between appearance and reality. Obviously, appearance is essentially connected with the subjective point of view: an object appears to be F only by appearing F *to a subjective point of view*. Nothing could *appear* to the objective point of view. Once we take the phenomenality of experience into consideration, the subjectivity of experience becomes much more substantial: it is not just that one can only experience from the subjective point of view, it is also that when one experiences from the subjective point of view, an object *appears* to one in a certain way *in virtue of* one's taking the subjective point of view. The subjectivity and the phenomenality of experience are now mutually constitutive of each other. It is this kind of subjectivity that is thought to make trouble for physicalism or psychophysical reduction.

So, let us investigate on the phenomenality of experience. Suppose that an object appears red to me. It seems that redness cannot be a real (objective) property of the object, for first, if only because an object appears red to me that we claim that it is red, then, if an object that is not red but appears red to me (in the case of an illusion), we would have to claim that it is both red and not red. But that is absurd. Second, if redness is a real property of the object, some intelligent creatures with radically different perceptual apparatus from us would be able to observe and apprehended it, that is, the object would appear red *to them*. But this seems to be doubtful. Though redness seems not to be a real (objective) property, it nevertheless seems to be a real property in the sense of being existent, for it seems crystal that I am *aware of redness* vividly in my experience when the object appears red to me—I could not be aware of something that doesn't exist. If we say that F is an apparent property if an object appears F to me, then it seems that redness is a paradigm of apparent properties. It should be clear that the problem of apparent properties is just the problem of how to account for the phenomenality of experience.

Apparent properties have always been a headache to philosophers at least since Locke. They seem to be *real (existent)* properties but *not real* in the sense of not being objective, it is therefore difficult to locate them in the ontological space. Historically, the sense-data theory is one philosophical effort to account for the apparent properties and therefore, the phenomenality of experience. According to this theory, when we have an experience, what we are directly aware of in the experience are sense-data and their properties, which are called "qualia" by sense-data theorists. Sense-data are pretty special, for all of their properties are apparent properties. In other words, the distinction between appearance and reality simply doesn't apply to them: if a sense-datum appears to be F, it is F, and vice versa. Given this special feature of sense-data, the phenomenality of experience is accounted for in the following way: apparent properties are real properties of sense-data, both in the sense of being objective (the objects of experiences are now

sense-data not the objects in the external world) and in that of being existent.

But the problem of apparent properties is not really solved but only postponed, for the ontological status of sense-data is dubious. If sense-data are the bearers of real (existent) apparent properties, they must exist. But are sense-data physical? Are they mental?

Most contemporary philosophers of mind don't believe that there are sense-data and therefore, they don't believe in qualia *as properties of sense-data*. Nonetheless, some philosophers share one view with sense-data theorists: when we have an experience, we are aware of some properties in the experience. Since they don't believe in sense-data, they take these properties to be properties of the experience itself. That is the old "qualia" with a new coat: there are apparent properties that we are aware of in experience, but now these properties have new bearers—experiences rather than sense-data. Clearly, it is the view that there are apparent properties that has led these people to posit qualia.

But do we have to accept this view? Let's check the two reasons for this view, i.e., that when an object appears red to me, I am aware of redness in my experience and that an object would not appear red to a creature with radically different perceptual apparatus, in turn.

When we form a belief on the basis of an experience, it is by default that our belief-forming system would take the experience at its face value. On the other hand, since we make no mistake in forming beliefs in this way, we are reluctant to take any belief formed in this way to be false. Then, we would have a problem in the case of illusion. Suppose that an object that is not red appears red to me. I would naturally form the belief that the object *is* red, but this belief is false. Since I am reluctant to admit that I have formed a false belief, I would choose to say that my belief is rather that the object *appears* red to me. Now, if we agree and choose to *literally construe* my belief as: *the property of appearing red is instantiated by the object*, we have just posited some weird property, i.e., the property of appearing red. Nevertheless, positing this property won't solve the problem. We surely do not want to say that the object would still *appear* red when it is not perceived by me, so we won't take the bearer of the apparent property to be the object. But if the bearer of the apparent property is not the object, the belief that *the object* appears red to me still would not be true if construed *literally*. To solve this problem, sense-data theorists claim that what appears red to me is actually a sense-datum, not the ordinary object in the external world.<sup>19</sup> Though in a certain sense, sense-data theorists stick to the literal construal of my belief, they in another sense *do not* because the object that appears red to me is no longer the ordinary object in the external world that causes my experience. If all we can do is this, why do we literally construe my belief in the first place?

If we do not interpret my belief that the object appears red to me literally, then do we still have a reason for thinking that there are apparent properties? One might think that there is. One might claim that when the object appears red to me, I am aware of redness in my experience of the object. Since one cannot be aware of something that doesn't exist, the redness that I am aware of must be instantiated. Since it is not instantiated by the object (the object is not red), it must be instantiated by something else. If this something is not a sense-datum, then it must be my experience itself.

But am I really aware of redness in my experience when an object that is not red appears red to me? When I see a red object, we might claim that I am aware of its redness just as we would claim that I am aware of the object. But we make this claim only because I will, other things being equal, judge that the object is *red* and my judgment will be true, that is, redness is instantiated by the object. When an object that is not red appears red to me, just as I might claim that the object *appears* red to me when I know that the object is not red, I might claim that I am aware of redness

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<sup>19</sup> Taking what appears red to me to be a sense-datum also helps dissipate the weird property of appearing red for by saying that a sense-datum *appears* red, we just mean that it *is* red.

even though I know that the object is not red. But just as we should not interpret the claim that the object appears red to me literally, we should not interpret my claim that I am aware of redness literally either. What I mean by the claim that I am aware of redness is just that I will, other things being equal (e.g., if I do not know that the object is not red), judge that the object is red. Once interpreted as such, the claim would not make us committed to any apparent properties.

One might object that I am obviously aware of redness because I clearly see redness. But will I claim that I see red when I know that the object is not red? It is very doubtful.

Now, let's move to the second reason. If redness is a real (objective) property, then other intelligent creatures with radically different perceptual apparatus from us would be able to observe and apprehend it. One may then wonder whether the object would appear red to these creatures. Some people would think that it would not because how an object appears to a creature would be at least partly determined by the perceptual apparatus of the creature. But this view seems to be based on a confusion. It is true that when the perceptual apparatus is different, there must be some corresponding difference in perception. We might therefore claim that creatures with different perceptual apparatus would perceive *differently*, or put it in another way, perceive *in different ways*. However, by this claim we should only mean that creatures with different perceptual apparatus would perceive by instantiating different kinds of properties pertaining to their perceptual apparatus, physical or nonphysical. It doesn't follow that objects of experiences would be perceived *as different*, or *as in a different way*, or put it in another way, it doesn't follow that objects of experiences would appear differently to those creatures. An object can be perceived differently or in different ways but *as the same* nonetheless. A cubic object could be perceived *as the same*, say, as cubic, in different ways: by sight, by touch, or by supersonic echo. That is, the object would *appear cubic* to creatures with radically different perceptual apparatus. It is also true that in order for a creature to perceive something *as red*, that is, in order for something to appear red to a creature, the creature must have the appropriate perceptual apparatus: things cannot appear red to a bat. But this should not be regarded as a reason to deny that red objects could appear red to creatures with radically different perceptual apparatus that is capable of perceiving red.

We see that the two reasons for thinking that there are apparent properties are not very strong. We do not have a very solid ground for positing qualia.

If there are no apparent properties, how to account for the phenomenality of experience? To answer this question, let's first consider representationalism about phenomenal consciousness according to which the phenomenality of experience could be reduced to representational content. Some philosophers think that representationalism fails to do enough justice to the phenomenality of experience, for whatever representational content an experience might have, it could be the content of, say, a belief, but it is clear that there is no phenomenality of belief, or so it seems to most people. They therefore think that there must be something more in "O appears red to S" than in "O is represented as red by S." What is that? It is thought to be the phenomenal "feel" of experience, in which the phenomenality of experience really consists. This is the new "qualia" in a newer coat: qualia are no longer apparent properties but some exotic and weird properties of experiences nonetheless.

Some representationalists have already tried to respond to this objection by appeal to the difference in kind between the representational content of experience and that of belief or to other features of the representational content of experience such as richness, immediacy, inextricability, etc.<sup>20</sup> But it seems that those responses don't quite well fit with the phenomenality of experience. I believe that this is at least partly because these representationalists agree with those people who raise the question that there is phenomenal feel. Then, they surely would try to locate the feel within

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<sup>20</sup> For example, see Jackson (2003).



the representational content of experience.

I don't think that representationalists have to agree that there are phenomenal feels in order to account for the phenomenality of experience. Representationalists could simply claim that by *experientially representing* an object as so-and-such, one *is aware of* the properties of the object in the case of veridical experiences and *is seemingly aware of* the properties of the object in the case of non-veridical experiences. Since awareness is always conscious—one cannot be *unconsciously aware of* something, experiences are essentially tied with phenomenal consciousness. Since one must be aware of something from the subjective point of view, experiences are essentially tied with subjectivity. But when one *believes* that an object is so-and-such, one is *not aware of* or *is not seemingly aware of* the properties of the object. Therefore, belief is not tied with phenomenal consciousness, nor is it tied with the subjective point of view. By saying that a belief is conscious, we only mean that its content is poised to be available in theoretical and practical reasoning, not that one would be aware of the properties represented in one's belief. Experience and belief are different ways of representing. The phenomenality of experience consists in the distinctive way of representing. So, it is true that there is something more in "O appears red to S" than in "O is represented as red by S," for the former implies that S is or seemingly is *aware of* O's redness. But this something is not a feel. It is rather a distinctive way of representing.

If we are not representationalists, we could not claim that the phenomenality of experience consists in a distinctive way of representing. Nonetheless, the above discussion shows us how experience is different from belief. This gives us a clue how to account for the phenomenality of experience in general. When a red object appears red to me, I am aware of its redness (a representationalist would interpret this as that my experience veridically represents the object as red). When an object that is not red appears red to me, though I am not aware of redness, I have an experience which, other things being equal, would lead me to form the belief that the object is red just as the experience that I have as a result of seeing a red object, that is to say, I would have an experience *as if* I am aware of redness (a representationalist would interpret this as that my experience non-veridically represents the object as red). So, whether or not we think that experience represents, experiences are essentially tied with awareness and it is this tie that accounts for the phenomenality of experience.

#### IV

If there are no qualia, it might seem that Mary would not learn anything new upon release. But we, or most of us, do have a strong intuition that she learns something new upon release. Is our intuition wrong? If not, do we have to accept that there are qualia? Or perhaps there is a middle way? In this section, I would show that though there are no qualia, still, Mary learns something new upon release.

Before doing that, I would like to point out one common feature shared by the different kinds of responses that have been proposed so far to KA. It seems that most of the advocates of these responses believe in qualia, and this belief has played an important role in their responses, explicitly or implicitly. For example, according to the phenomenal concept strategy which has lots of adherents, upon release Mary does learn a new piece of knowledge, namely, that *this* is what it is like to see red. But this new piece of knowledge is of the old physical fact that she has already known in the black and white room. It is new knowledge only because it involves *THIS*, which is a new kind of concepts, namely, phenomenal concepts. That is to say, adherents of the phenomenal concept strategy believe that there are qualia, which are picked out by phenomenal concepts, though they as physicalists also believe that qualia are or could be reduced to physical properties.

Some people believe that the new knowledge that Mary acquires upon release is knowledge by acquaintance, which cannot be reduced to knowledge-that or knowledge-how. This is the Acquaintance Hypothesis. Still, they seem to believe that there are qualia. For example, Conee (1994) believes that what Mary acquires upon release is knowledge by acquaintance with experience of red and acquaintance with experience of red consists in experiencing phenomenal redness. But what is phenomenal redness given that it is not redness, the objective property we are aware of when we see a red object? The only answer is that phenomenal redness is just the quale of experience of red.

Again, according to the Ability Hypothesis,<sup>21</sup> the new knowledge that Mary acquires is knowledge-how that consists in the ability to recognize, remember, and imagine an experience of red. Though it is not entirely clear whether advocates of the Ability Hypothesis believe in qualia, it seems that if there are no qualia, how Mary could acquire the ability to recognize, remember, and imagine an *experience* of red by having an experience of red would be a mystery.

Since the above responses are all proposed in a way somehow related to the belief that there are qualia, explicitly or implicitly, it seems that if one doesn't believe in qualia, as I do, these responses would not be available to her to give us an account of what happens to Mary upon release. So, it might be a bit surprising to notice that the later Jackson (2003) says the following:

Rather, she is in a new kind of representational state from those she was in before. And what is it to know what it is like to be in that kind of state? Presumably, it is to be able to recognize, remember, and imagine the state. Once we turn our back on the idea that there is a new property with which she is directly acquainted, knowing what it is like to sense red can only be something about the new kind of representational state she is in, and the obvious candidates for that "something about" are her ability to recognize, imagine, and remember the state. Those who resist accounts in terms of ability acquisition tend to say things like "Mary acquires a new piece of propositional knowledge, namely, that seeing red is like *this*" but for the representationalist there is nothing suitable to be the referent of the demonstrative. (p.271)

On the one hand, it seems that Jackson is simply denying that there are qualia, the referents of "*this*" and its ilk. But on the other, he is saying that upon release, Mary is *directly acquainted with a new property* by being in a new kind of representational state, and the result of the acquaintance with this new property is the *ability to recognize, remember, and imagine an experience* of red. Clearly Jackson here just incorporates the elements of the Acquaintance Hypothesis and the Ability Hypothesis to give an account of what happens to Mary upon release. The difference, I guess, is that while Conee takes the new property to be phenomenal redness, Jackson takes it to be the intentional property, or the representational content, of experience of red. But this difference is not important here. What is important is that it seems that Jackson in fact does believe in qualia—he just takes qualia to be the intentional property of an experience with which one *could be directly acquainted by having the experience*. So, "*this*" in "seeing red like *this*" has no referent only because the proposition expressed is supposed to be known to Mary only upon release. Indeed, Jackson says: "I have argued that if 'what it is like (to sense red)' means all the properties of seeing red, it is possible (for Mary) in principle to deduce them all (in the black and white room) (p.264)."

Jackson's position is not inconsistent. One surely could deny that there are qualia as things about which Mary would learn something new upon release while at the same time hold that there are qualia as intentional properties of experiences. However, according to Jackson, qualia in the latter sense are what could be *directly acquainted with in experience*. Without this claim, he could not incorporate the Acquaintance Hypothesis and the Ability Hypothesis. But this claim is exactly what I deny, for it is actually the leftover of the sense-data theory, even though it is about the intentional

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21 This kind of response is championed by Lewis and Nemirow.

properties of experience, or qualia in Jackson's sense. My objection to Jackson is: No properties of experience, intrinsic or relational, will reveal itself to the subject in experience. If "what it is like for a subject to have an experience" refers to a property or properties of the experience, the subject simply cannot know it or them by having the experience—the subject simply cannot be acquainted with it or them in the experience. It is easily seen that this objection applies almost across the whole board.

But in experience we *are* acquainted with something. According to Russell (1917) who first makes the distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, in experience, we are acquainted with sense-data and their properties—the apparent properties. We know now that sense-data and apparent properties are philosophical postulates with dubious ontological status. But if we are not acquainted with sense-data or their properties in experience, what are we acquainted with? The answer is too obvious that most philosophers seem to just overlook it: we are acquainted with objects of experiences and their properties. By having a visual experience of a tomato, I am acquainted with the tomato and its properties: redness, ripeness, etc. Saying that *in an experience*, we are aware of the object of the experience and its properties amounts to saying that *by having an experience*, we are acquainted with the object of the experience and its properties.

If Russell is correct in taking acquaintance with an object as knowledge of it, then since by having an experience, we are acquainted with the object of the experience and its properties, the experience would constitute knowledge by acquaintance, that is, the experience would be a knowledge state. Of course, one might think that Russell's reasons for taking acquaintance with an object as knowledge of it are not persuasive, especially when one notices that according to Russell, the objects of acquaintance are sense-data and the relation between sense-data and experiences is supposed to be more intimate. But Russell's mistake for taking the objects of acquaintance to be sense-data should not be taken as a reason to deny that our acquaintance with something is a kind of knowledge.

We are now ready to give an account of what happens to Mary after release. As Jackson rightly noted, Mary now is in a new kind of mental state that she has never been in before, namely, an experience of red. She has all of the factual knowledge about red, but she has never had an experience of red before. Since under normal circumstances, only by having an experience of red could Mary be directly acquainted with red, before release she had no knowledge by acquaintance with red despite all of her factual knowledge about red. Now Mary has an experience of red, she therefore acquires knowledge by acquaintance with red. This knowledge is new to her. By having this new knowledge, Mary would be able to recognize, remember, and imagine red (rather than an experience of red.)

The thought experiment that leads to KA is modified a bit later by Nida-Rümelin (1998). In this new thought experiment, the protagonist Marianna is just like Mary, but instead of being released directly to the outside world, she is first released to an empty room with splashes of random different colors on the walls. Suppose that Marianna first sees a red splash, we, or most of us, would intuit that she would then learn something new, even though she doesn't know that splash is red. Later on, if Marianna sees another red splash, she would be able to know that it is of the same color as the splash she first saw. But the ability to know that requires the ability to recognize and remember red. Also, Marianna would be able to imagine that she sees a splash of the same color just around the corner. So, if by seeing a red splash, Marianna acquires any ability, it seems that it should be the ability to recognize, remember, and imagine red.

Could the ability to recognize, remember, and imagine red rely on the ability to recognize, remember, and imagine an *experience* of red instead of red? But how could I recognize an experience of red, or remember it, or imagine it? I can recognize rose, iPhone, or my friends Trump and Biden, etc. But do I need to recognize my *experience* of rose in order to recognize rose? I can

remember how Trump looks like. But do I need to remember my *visual experience* of Trump in order to remember how he looks like? I can imagine an iPhone be presented to me as a gift. But do I need to imagine an *experience* of iPhone in order to imagine an iPhone be presented to me as a gift? It seems to me to be an unintelligent view that we recognize or remember or imagine *an experience*. We recognize *things and their properties*; we remember *things and their properties*; we imagine *things and their properties*.

If by seeing a red splash, Marianna is acquainted with an experience of red, it would be mysterious how she could acquire the ability to recognize, remember, and imagine red. On the other hand, isn't it much more natural to say that by seeing a red splash, she is acquainted with red? By seeing a rose, I am acquainted with *the rose*, its color, its shape, etc. By seeing Trump, I am acquainted with Trump, also his face, his charming smile, etc. It is true that there is a difference. By being acquainted with the rose, I could describe it, I could say that the rose is so-and-such; likewise with my knowledge by acquaintance with Trump. But by being acquainted with red, I cannot describe it, nor could I say that red is so-and-such. However, this difference could be readily accounted for. According to Russell, we could have factual knowledge (knowledge of facts) by being acquainted with a complex of sense-data—we simply analyze the complex. But when we are acquainted with a single sense-datum, apparently we could not do this kind of analysis to acquire factual knowledge. Clearly, redness is thought to be a singly sense-datum, or an unanalyzable (apparent) property. I believe that Russell's view could be reserved if we just replace sense-data with ordinary objects and apparent properties with real (objective) ones.

So, by seeing a red splash, Marianna is acquainted with red. Similarly, by seeing a tomato, Mary is acquainted with the tomato, also its color—red. This acquaintance with red would enable Mary to recognize red, besides the ability to remember and imagine red. And this is what pumps our intuition that Mary comes to learn something. Obviously, once released, Mary could not recognize red, but after seeing the tomato, she could, or so we intuit. Mary's ability to recognize red would lead us to attribute her knowledge of red (as knowledge of things). This is very common in everyday life. Suppose that one claims that she knows *Cyathea spinulosa* Wall. Our question about her claim would be pointless if she demonstrates that she could recognize *Cyathea spinulosa* Wall. On the other hand, we would deny her knowledge claim if she cannot recognize *Cyathea spinulosa* Wall. About knowledge by acquaintance with one thing, the ability to recognize that thing seems to be the ultimate criterion. Since the ability to recognize a thing doesn't depend on the ability to describe that thing, knowledge by acquaintance is fundamentally different from knowledge by description and factual knowledge.

At the end, it would be entertaining to note how this natural response to KA has been overlooked by philosophers. I think that this is at least partly because of the settings-up of KA. About what happens to Mary upon release, the earlier Jackson (1982) says:

What will happen when Mary is released from her black and white room or is given a colour television monitor? Will she *learn* anything or not? It seems just obvious that she will learn something about the world and *our visual experience of it*. But then it is inescapable that her previous knowledge was incomplete. But she had *all* the physical information. *Ergo*, there is more to have than that, and physicalism is false. (p.130, my emphasis on "our visual experience of it")

Also, it is supposed that Mary knows everything physical about *human color vision*. This settings-up would surely mislead people to think that if Mary learns something new, it must be about *our experience* (or about human color vision). So, most people have tried to search for the knowledge that Mary learns about *our experience*, and ended up with the answer: *this* is what it is like to experience red. And most physicalists then have tried to prove that this knowledge is either physical knowledge or about physical facts. But the claim that by having an experience, we could know something about the experience is, as shown above, groundless.

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