

Responses to comments from Haoying Liu and Feng Yu

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1. Bodily sensations

Yes, I say that I hope that I could be spared from having to be a representationalist about bodily sensations. But in fact, I do not even want to be a representationalist about any experience. I do not have to be a representationalist when I say that two experiences are different because when we have them, we experience different things. Well, one could understand “different things” as different contents, but I do not want to be so committed. In fact, in the article, I do consider if one is NOT a representationalist about experience, what she might say about experience when she denies that there are qualia.

But bodily sensations like pain are different from, say, visual experience. On the one hand, it seems pretty intuitive to say that visual experience represents, but that seems counterintuitive with regard to bodily sensations. But I think that is at least partly because we do not consider our bodies as parts of our environment. Indeed, when content externalists claim that the contents of our mental states are at least partly determined by our physical and social environments, they do not consider our bodies as parts of our physical environment. Of course, we could see our bodies. I can see my arms, legs, etc. So, probably in that peculiar sense, our bodies are parts of our physical environment. But the term “from skin in” surely suggests otherwise. On the other hand, the relation between one’s body and one’s brain is different from the relation between one’s environment and one’s brain, or so it seems. Probably so different that we may not even think that bodily sensations are caused by anything outside of one’s mind.

It might be the case that bodily sensations are not so fundamentally different from other kinds of experiences and they do not deserve special treatment. But even if that is the case, since the paradigms of so-called qualia are qualia of visual experiences, as shown in the Mary case, if I have done what I want to do in the article with regard to visual experiences, I am pretty content with myself.

2. Awareness

When I am wandering around Waitan of Shanghai, I see that the SOSO Building is pretty high. Then I remember that the Imperial Building in New York city is also high. There is a difference between the two mental states of mine. In the former case, I am AWARE of the SOSO Building, an external object in the world, in the latter, I am NOT aware of anything.

But could you please tell us in what this awareness consists? Well, I cannot, or at least I do not think that I have to. Note that I do not deny that we are AWARE of the external world. What I deny is that we are aware of the intrinsic properties of an experience.

3. Baptism

There are usually two ways of introducing a new term into the language: by stipulation and by ostension. An example of the former is: Let us call the F “N”. An example of the latter is: Let us call that, while pointing at somewhere, “N”. In both cases, nothing might be baptized: if nothing is F or

one is pointing at nothing. Then, "N" would be an empty name or term. My point in the article is: "quale" is a term with no referent. We do not really baptize anything when "quale" is introduced into the language, no matter in which of the two ways it is introduced.

4. Talks about qualia in ordinary language

"A gourmet tasting a dish and describing the taste can be regarded as talking about "qualia". A subject in a visual perception experiment who reports "I see yellow" when in fact she sees only red and green light flashing can be regarded as talking about "qualia". A long distance runner who describes the experience of running a marathon by saying "it feels like ..." can be seen as talking about "qualia". Even pointing to a red flower and saying "this is what it is like to see red" isn't going beyond ordinary language."

I still see NO terms in our ordinary language here used to describe qualia, the subjective phenomenal character of experiences. I cannot see here even one example of the terms in our ordinary language that are used specifically to describe qualia or to refer to qualia. On the other hand, "what it is like..." does not sound like a term in ordinary language, especially when it is used to refer to intrinsic property of experience.

5 New knowledge

No new fact, but new knowledge. This response might seem weird to us. But I do make a claim that a new experience could be regarded as a new piece of knowledge, and that is why the title of the article is what it is. The more important thing is the difference between my response and others. I claim that Mary acquires a new experience of red, which is her new knowledge. As a consequence, I take her new knowledge to be of RED, not her experience of red. Her new knowledge is about the external world, not about her own experience. All of her knowledge about the PHYSICAL world before the release take the form of propositional knowledge, not that of experience. But if experiences are knowledge, or experiencing is a way of knowing, then acquiring a new experience would be acquiring a new piece of knowledge. It is only that this new piece of knowledge is not a new piece of PROPOSITIONAL knowledge.