

## A comment on Ren's target article

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This paper addresses two principal concerns. Firstly, it challenges the notion that qualia constitute a genuine (real) property. Secondly, it contends that even without endorsing the ontological status of qualia as a property, one can acknowledge that Mary acquires **New knowledge** while be compatible with physicalism. My commentary primarily focuses on the latter one. The perspective offered here resembles the "old facts, new knowledge" strategy that has been previously advocated by certain philosophers of mind. However, this strategy is not without its own set of challenges, particularly from dualism.

The author posits that regardless of qualia's lack of status as a real property, Mary still attains new forms of knowledge. Though Mary possesses all the factual knowledge within the confines of her black and white environment, she is devoid of the subjective (phenomenal) knowledge. Such knowledge represents a novel understanding of old facts.

Ren's claim aligns with the views of several mind philosophers and is encapsulated by the phrase "old facts, new knowledge." Tye (1995) considers phenomenal experience as a representation, a unique form of physics accessible to the cognitive system, and conceptualizes phenomena as "indexical concepts". Lycan (1996) introduces another representational theory concerning the attributes of phenomena. He suggests that only upon exiting the room does Mary develop "introspective second-order representations" of her color experiences. This sort of representation involves an introspective state or an introspective individual, thereby constituting a qualitative experience. Upon perceiving color, Mary acquires a psychological lexicon to articulate this first-order introspective state. This introspective lexicon constitutes a novel form of knowledge. Papineau (1996) differentiates between third-person and first-person experiences. In her first-person contemplation, Mary engages with thought-related experiences. After her departure from the room, she becomes intimately acquainted with the experience of color vision, which she can subsequently "reproduce" imaginatively. Nevertheless, Mary's newly formed first-person beliefs (phenomenal beliefs) about specific experiences are grounded in existing third-person beliefs (physical beliefs) about the same facts, signifying her acquisition of new knowledge based on old facts. Proponents of the "old facts" perspective argue that while Mary does gain new knowledge upon leaving the room, this knowledge merely constitutes an alternate representation of "old facts," which are not new factual knowledge.

However, the "old facts, new knowledge" perspective has encountered numerous counterarguments. For instance, Tye's position may appear counterintuitive. He contends that the phenomenal aspects of color vision are fundamentally physical, but only insofar as they are interpretable and describable by physical concepts. This does not imply that a physicalist interpretation fully encapsulates the essence of "seeing colors as they truly are." The lack of knowledge of a fact in one representational mode does not preclude its knowledge in another. In the black and white room, Mary may be ignorant of the fact of color vision in the phenomenal representational mode, yet she is aware of it in the physical mode. Consequently, in this thought experiment—as in others—the referential object is defined by two distinct representational modes. In the physical mode, color vision is perceived as a physical fact and is thus comprehensible in physical terms. Conversely, in the phenomenal mode, color vision manifests as a phenomenal

characteristic. The presence of dual modes of presentation precludes the defense of physicalism, as it necessitates the recognition of non-physical properties at a more sophisticated explanatory level, thereby enabling dual cognitive access to a single physical fact: the fact is presented separately through physical and non-physical representational modes, referenced via both physical and non-physical properties. Thus, Tye's stance is more aligned with property dualism than with physicalism, and I believe a similar critique is applicable to the author's viewpoint.

## Reference

- [1] Lycan W. G. *Consciousness and Experience*[M], Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996: 92.
- [2] Papineau D. The Antipathetic Fallacy, in T. Metzinger (ed.), *Conscious Experience*[M], Paderborn: Schöningh/Imprint Academic, 1996: 259–27.
- [3] Tye M. *Ten Problems of Consciousness*[M], Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995: 144.