

CHAPTER 7

QUALIA AND CONSCIOUSNESS (I)

7.1 Introduction

This and the following chapters are largely devoted to analyzing issues arising from Dennett's treatment and discussion of qualia and consciousness.¹ Issues considered here are straightforward. They are, in the main, concern with problems arising from Dennett's undertaking to quine qualia, though issues pertaining to the relationship between qualia and consciousness are also touched upon intermittently. We start with the analysis of the quartet properties of qualia *en masse*. The appropriateness of these quartet properties to serve as the framework for Dennett's pursuit is examined before they are individually analyzed in more detail individually in subsequent sections. Discussions in this chapter are important because qualia is arguably the crux of consciousness.

¹ Discussion of this chapter is largely drawn from Dennett's *Quinning Qualia* (Dennett 1990i). To avoid repeated quotation, only paginations of *Quinning Qualia* indicated in parentheses cited.

7.2 Quinining Qualia

As far as humans are concerned, consciousness is evidently basic. Existence is defined by it, without which life, the way it is familiar to us is inconceivable. If there is anything we regard *real* at all, this would have to be built upon the axiomatic reality of consciousness. Consciousness hence becomes some kind of gateway to the world and ourselves.² Dennett's theoretical position attests to this, for he invariably believes consciousness real. However, due to his strong verificationist proclivity,³ one observes how Dennett in the foregoing chapters rigged consciousness of genuine intentionality, as he also employs similar tactical moves to quine qualia. Dennett denies that any of these qualitative experiences real, the way consciousness is real. They are likened to fiction (mere 'seeming' in other words), something to be ultimately relinquished, instead of entities to be seriously heeded (520).

Present concern is therefore a detail examination of Dennett's long-standing bid to quine qualia. Whilst issues pertaining to intentionality and consciousness (and other issues arising thereof) would be duly taken up in the next two chapters. However, if intuition is any guide, his campaign to banish qualia whilst concurrently bestowing reality to consciousness appears self-defeating. What is it to proclaim qualia fictional whilst consciousness real? It sounds very much like

² "Consciousness enables us to say (to others) what we're doing. Less trivially, it enables us to say to ourselves what we're doing" (RLM 292).

³ "I am ready to come out of the closet as some sort of verificationist.....let's all be Urbane Verificationists... This book pursues the course further, arguing that if we are not urbane

saying H₂O that comprises water is illusory whilst claiming conversely that water is real. If the way to identify phenomenal experiences is its unmistakable 'the way it is like to be something,' and if what generally constitutes consciousness exhibits qualitative properties (one way or the other), then inevitably there is something it is like to be conscious. If this cannot be taken as the starting point of analysis, then the theory of mind in consideration could be so implausibly indiscriminate that even some lifeless inanimate objects (machines, computers etc) could be considered conscious.

So, on the phenomenality of experience, Dennett asserts thereof: "[n]otice that 'experiential sensitivity' (whatever that might be) never comes in to my account – the 'conscious feelings themselves' get distributed around into the powers and dispositional effects of all the extra informational machinery...[so] consciousness is (as I argue) not a single wonderful separable thing ('experiential sensitivity') but a huge complex of many different informational capacities that individually arise for a variety of reasons" (BC 174-175). In other words, there is no special lights glowing, nothing is lit within (BC 24, 139, 286; CE 447).⁴ Ultimately,

verificationists, we will end up tolerating all sorts of nonsense: epiphenomenalism, zombies, indistinguishable inverted spectra, conscious teddy bears, self-conscious spiders" (CE 461).

⁴ We see Dennett maintains that "the situation with regard to consciousness is like that confronted by the theorists who are asked what fatigues are... The natives in this imaginary land, you may recall, have a curious doctrine of 'fatigues' – too many fatigues spoil your aim, a fatigue in the legs is worth two in the arms, and Mommy, where do fatigues go when I sleep? We modern scientists arrive in their midst and they ask us to solve their traditional mysteries about fatigues. The hysterical realist takes on the thankless task of finding something real in the body to declare to be the fatigues so favored by the local folk. And I say 'Gimme a break! We already know enough about fatigues to know that they are not a good category for precision science; you simply cannot motivate a realist theory of fatigues. There's nothing left to discover that could be relevant to what the right theories of fatigues would be.'I say that we already know enough empirical facts about what consciousness isn't to know that the ordinary concept of consciousness, like the concept of fatigues, is too frail; it could never be turned into the sort of scientific concept that

Dennett's theory may have the privilege of not having to deal with the evanescent of phenomenality by pronouncing it unreal (or fictional), whilst claiming the converse for consciousness. But oddly enough, this is hardly the consciousness we know.⁵

Consciousness is an entirely private, first-person phenomena which occurs as part of the private, first-person process we call mind.... Perhaps the most startling idea....in the end, consciousness begins as a feeling, a special kind of feeling, to be sure, but a feeling nonetheless. I still remember why I began thinking of consciousness as feeling and it still seems like a sensible reason: consciousness feels like a feeling, and if it feels like a feeling, it may well be a feeling.....Consciousness feels like some kind of pattern built with the nonverbal signs of body states. It is for this reason perhaps that the mysterious source of our mental first-person perspective – core consciousness and its simple sense of self – is revealed to the organism in a form that is both powerful and elusive, unmistakable and vague (Damasio 1999: 12, 312).

[F]or me the word that comes nearest to the essence of consciousness is feeling....In sum then, by the word 'feeling' I mean 'an item or element of conscious experience' and I am asserting that conscious experience consists of nothing else than feelings thus broadly defined (Cairns-Smith 1996: 184, 189).

What is daunting about consciousness is that it does not seem to be a matter of behavior. It just is – winking on with the light, multiple and simultaneous in its mode and objects, ineluctably ours. It is a process and one that is hard to score. We know that it is for ourselves but can only judge its existence in others by inductive inference. As James put it, it is something the meaning of which 'we know as long as no one asks us to define it' (Edelman 1992: 111).

And it is certainly not clear if we should still consider it such if there is nothing it is like at all to be conscious (see also Mangan 1993: 3).

could wring answers to the currently unanswerable questions" (GR 531; see also Dennett 2000a: 377). In responding to Seager's complaint that Dennett's account of consciousness amounts to all darkness inside, Dennett has the following to say. "But of course! We know that to be true. There is nothing 'luminous' going on in the brain. The conviction that this extra, well-lit process must occur is, of course, a persistent symptom of Cartesian Materialism" (Dennett 1993c: 154). Correspondingly, Dennett also believes there is no distinction between a zombie and a really conscious person, "because the putative contrast between zombies and conscious beings is illusory" (BC 176), "since the zombie has (by definition) exactly the same content-systems as the conscious person" (Dennett 1993b: 55; see also GR 532). As the followings also similarly underscores: "I am pleased to see that Tye grants that if my arguments against 'phenomenal realism' were successful, I really would have explained consciousness" (MNM 922).

⁵Given the infancy status of research in the field, we would have *largely* no choice but to appeal to introspective criteria to ground many of the basic issues in consciousness. So, we see Dennett himself in his arguments on blindsight patients with Block ends up saying something like the followings: "I for one would wonder what sort of lexical amnesia or madness had overcome anybody who could gather that much information from a glance and yet deny having any conscious visual experience" (Dennett 1995i: 253). Given this, it is true, however, we cannot

7.3 Qualia and Properties

That said, perhaps the issue could be more luminously cast by dissecting deep into Dennett's concerted campaign to quine qualia, hoping simultaneously to throw lights on its relationship with consciousness. Dennett's general strategy to banish qualia is briefly captured by the belief that "[e]verything real has properties" (520). Since, as he believes - and tries to demonstrate with arguments via various intuition pumps - that "conscious experiences has no properties that are special in any of the ways qualia have been supposed to be special" (520), hence, there is no qualia. More specifically, the agenda of his entire campaign could be set forth below.

My claim, then, is not just that the various technical or theoretical concepts of qualia are vague or equivocal, but that the source concept, the 'pretheoretical' notion of which the former are presumed to be refinements, is so thoroughly *confused* (italics mine) that even if we undertook to salvage some 'lowest common denominator' from the theoretician's proposals, any acceptable version would have to be so radically unlike the ill-formed notions that are commonly appealed to that it would be tactically obtuse - not to say Pickwickian - to cling to the term. Far better, tactically, to declare that there are no qualia at all (520).

Whatever informational, dispositional, functional properties its internal states have, none of them will be special in the way qualia are. If you share this intuition, you believe that there are qualia in the sense I am targeting for demolition (522).

So, contrary to what seems obvious at first blush, there simply are no qualia at all (544; see also CE 372, 404, 459-460).

Dennett believes phenomenal states point towards some attributes traditionally associated with qualia, which he takes to be the special properties usually

prove Dennett wrong (any more than he could be proven right), but perhaps what makes Denett's thesis difficult to swallow is its blatant counter-intuitiveness.

regarded to ground qualia. As seen earlier, the properties Dennett singles out as representative are as follows:

- i) ineffability;
- ii) intrinsicness;
- iii) privateness; and
- iv) directly or immediately apprehensible qualities (523).

Accordingly, we would survey these properties at the general level before examining them individually.

What does it mean to say A possesses property XYZ? Essentially the property concerned would act as some kind of benchmark (or attribute) that helps distinguish it from other things, besides serving to outline the nature and characteristic of the said object. So, for instance, we could identify an electron based on specific properties of mass, spin, electric charges and so on. As Dennett has given us a list of items he suppose to be the tradition bestowed properties (which curiously, in spite of Dennett's astuteness, he does not find it necessary to subject them to careful scrutiny before employed further to build his thesis) which single out qualia, it would be of utmost importance that they indeed postulate genuine properties, the way properties of electrons, for example, work. If they fail to deliver or function properly, then we ought to be wary of the conclusions drawn based on arguments or analyses that employ them as *explanan* (of which we would see more in later section). But for now, we see why the way qualia is characterized invites tension in Dennett's theory, resulting eventually in paradoxical consequences.

As the excerpts above make clear, according to Dennett, qualia deserves to be quinned if the four properties set forth is ill conceived (on this, see also Johnsen 1997: 53-54, De Leon 2001: 125). But for the sake of argument, lets grant for the moment that qualia does in fact possess, in coherent manner, the properties that Dennett suppose qualia to have. That is, let's see what happens if we suppose that Dennett fails to disprove these properties, establishing instead that qualia does in fact satisfy these conditions. But does this prove that qualia is thereupon grounded by these properties? If the theory is to carry weight, the possession of these properties ought to confirm the theory if its invalidation discredits it. Qualia ought to exist if it could be proven to possess those properties.

But, could we, based on Dennett's theory, say that qualia exists if it validates the quartet properties above? Ultimately however, though confirmation of the possession of these properties logically entails the acceptance of qualia, heterophenomenological considerations would seem to disqualify it outright.⁶ As seen in earlier discussion, the heterophenomenological method, which forms the basis of Dennett's inquiry, sees qualia as figment of imagination precisely because there is no real goings-on in the brain that resemble the defining properties of the alleged phenomenal items (CE 85).⁷

⁶ Note, for instance, what the method actually calls forth at the end. "As heterophenomenologist, our task is to take this text, interpret it, and then relate the objects of the resulting heterophenomenological world of Dennett to the events going on in Dennett's brain at the time" (CE 407).

⁷ For instance, Dennett asserts that qualia is acceptable if it could be "justifiably asserted, *empirically verified*" (525, italics mine), and that "[t]he outcome of this series of thought experiments is an intensification of the 'verificationist' argument against qualia" (526). "The

Needless to say, it is inconceivable to expect science (or heterophenomenology for that matter) to verify the properties of ineffability, privacy, immediate apprehension and intrinsicness.⁸ And as Dennett acquiesces, “[p]ostulating special inner qualities that are not only private and intrinsically valuable, but also unconfirmable and uninvestigable is just obscurantism” (CE 450). So, given the way Dennett construes his theory, only one conclusion seems possible. Qualia does not exist. Dennett may not intend it, but one way or the other, this strongly conveys the impression that Dennett could not be wrong.⁹ It appears that invalidation of the alleged properties shows, on Dennett’s account, qualia does not exist. However, the validation of these properties also does not overthrow Dennett’s conviction that qualia is imaginary. Dennett may not realize it, but this necessarily gives the impression that these properties are postulated to act like strawman.¹⁰ As such, Dennett’s exposition (of qualia) is in danger of being

indirectness of the heterophenomenological method is precisely a way of evading ill motivated obligations to ‘identify’ or ‘reduce’ the entities that inhabit the ontology of subjects” (CE 459). And, as noted earlier, Dennett claims outright he is a verificationist of sorts. This is important lest “we will end up tolerating all sort of nonsense” (CE 461).

⁸ It is truly a curiosity that Dennett has not subject these properties for probing by the heterophenomenological method, for, it is indeed, according to Dennett, the science of subjectivity (Dennett 1993g: 196, see also RWEC 232), or the “empirical scientific study of the way it seems to individual subjects of experience” (RLM 286n1). Conceivably, all of Dennett’s toil in his resolute attempt to quine qualia would have been spared if this is employed. The same conclusion would have been reached with a more straightforward and much clearer means.

⁹ “It seems *easy enough*, then, to dream up empirical tests that would tend to confirm Chase and Sanborn’s different tales, but if passing such tests could support their authority (that is to say, their reliability), failing the tests would have to undermine it. The price you pay for the possibility of empirically confirming your assertions is the outside chance of being discredited. The friends of qualia are prepared, today, to pay that price” (529, emphasis added). There is apparently nowhere evident that Dennett is prepared to pay them (the price) in his treatment of these properties.

¹⁰ Dennett denies this in other slightly different context and argues that “[t]he term ‘phenomenal’ means nothing obvious and untendentious to me, and looks suspiciously like a gesture in the direction leading back to ineffable, private, directly apprehensible ways things seem to me” (523).

reduced in the end to rhetorical exercise because the nonexistence of qualia is in fact already a foregone conclusion.¹¹

Reliance on these properties to ground qualia is problematic. Consider what happens if we are to ground the properties of air (breathing air as it appears to the naked eye) as possessing the following characteristics (as abstract and elusive as that used to characterize qualia): it is not visible (or ineffable), it cannot be touched, though immediately apprehensible to a degree. It is also nonetheless without smell and (colorless). In other words, they possess, no less significantly, characteristics that are as indescribable as qualia. But how far shall we take these supposed properties of air seriously? It appears pointless and certainly futile if one is to take this up and actually seriously go about trying to prove the existence (or the nonexistence) of air by virtue of these properties. Of course, this does not prove Dennett wrong, but the way qualia properties are characterized is certainly controversial and problematic, to say the least.¹²

Above notwithstanding, let's see what happens if we are to push Dennett's argument in opposite direction. In this case, let's assume Dennett is right, indeed,

¹¹ One could somehow feel shortchanged at the end, because after a prolong and tedious round of arguments, even if one can disprove Dennett's thesis, nothing seems to come off it (for other criticisms, see also Flanagan 1992: 65, 78, Goldman 1997a: 124n4, Dretske 1994: 52, De Leon 2001: 135-136), because existence of qualia is still nullified.

¹² Surely, Dennett could argue that these properties are what the tradition takes it to be. But since they might as well be proven to exist through this exercise (and hence confirming the existence of qualia), more care should perhaps be given to see how well they actually ground qualia. So, for instance, if we are trying to confirm the existence of X by virtue of dubious properties that is far from grounding X, then irrespective of the outcome, this is only likely to be a fruitless undertaking. It does not quite matter if the result confirms or disconfirms X, because the undertaking is ill-fated from start.

qualia is proven not to possess all these properties. In other words, it is not ineffable, and it is public, hence relational and indirect (or unprivileged). But these properties also pick out many things. In any case, they are arguably those features we normally associate with things (in the world) that carve nature at the joints. So, oddly enough, Dennett appears to identify these properties with the nonexistence rather than the presence of something that obtains. For, normally, we attribute reality to things that come in line with these purported properties. It is counterintuitive at best to have something expressible, public and relational, yet having no claim to existence! If this is the case, then Dennett's undertaking to quine qualia appears questionable. Either the properties he proposes as the basis to confirm the existence of qualia is misguided or the heterophenomenological method ought to be abandoned altogether. As heterophenomenology is "nothing but good old third person scientific method" (FFP 3), it then appears one ought to be wary of the properties proposed.

Meanwhile, if we consider consciousness in light of what Dennett says about qualia properties, how would it ultimately turn out? As seen earlier, Dennett in fact claims that all real events have properties, by which he subsequently identifies consciousness with K-property (BC 134-135).¹³ However, this supposed warrant for realism in consciousness (with the postulation of K-property) is ill-motivated. For we see there is no way this K-property could be verified by the

¹³ So, Dennett proclaims consciousness real. "Conscious experience are real events occurring in the real time and space of the brain, and hence they are clockable and locatable within the appropriate limits of precision for real phenomenon of their type" (BC 135). "I don't deny the reality of conscious experience, I grant that conscious experience has properties" (520).

heterophenomenological method.¹⁴ If qualitative properties (and also intentionality) are denounced simply because no real goings-on in the brain could be found correlating to the heterophenomenological claims, the same ought to apply, even more so here because not unlike the messiness of qualia (FFP 5), Dennett also believes that consciousness is a mongrel notion (GR 546), in fact “a knotty problem on which no progress was being made” (Dennett 1993b: 49).

So, we see Dennett in fact claims that Block agrees with his assertion that consciousness is a mongrel concept (GR 546), whilst we see Block in fact has the following to say on consciousness:

the word consciousness connotes a number of different phenomena. We reason about ‘consciousness’ using some premises that apply to one of the phenomena that fall under ‘consciousness,’ other premises that apply to other ‘consciousness,’ and we end up with trouble. There are many parallels in the history of science. Aristotle used ‘velocity’ sometimes to mean average velocity and sometimes to mean instantaneous velocity; his failure to see distinction caused confusion... The Florentine experimenters of the seventeenth century used a single word for temperature and for heat, generating paradoxes... These are very different cases, but there is a similarity, one that they share with the case of ‘consciousness’ (Block 1997: 375).

If this is the case, then not unlike qualia, it seems the concept of consciousness is no less messy.¹⁵ In fact, Dennett himself identifies it as “ephemeral, swift, curious, metaphorical” (BC 123), nothing short of “ungodly mess” (GR 546). In spite of this, however, Dennett has not find it necessary to quine consciousness, nor at least showing clues of putting the house of consciousness in order. This

¹⁴ This is important because Dennett in fact maintains that heterophenomenology is the “maximally inclusive science of consciousness” (FFP 5; RWEC 230, Dennett 1997f: 118), or the “objective science of consciousness” (DDI 356n7). Hence, heterophenomenology ought to apply here as it is in the case of qualia.

¹⁵ In this regard, a good case in point would evidently be the contention between Block and Dennett himself in debates on what constitutes consciousness (between access and phenomenal experiences) that invariably ends in standoffs (GR 546-547, Dennett 1995i: 252-253). See also Baker (2000: 60n3) for pointed remark on the impossibility of non-circular definition of consciousness.

inevitably raises the suspicion that Dennett's theory is constructed with one-sided concerns.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Churchland proposes "salient features" and "provisional explanatory target" (Churchland 1995: 213-214) of consciousness that Dennett accepts and discusses (Densmore and Dennett 1999):

- i) it displays steerable attention;
- ii) it is independent of sensory inputs;
- iii) it has the capacity for alternative interpretations;
- iv) it involves short term memory;
- v) it disappears in deep sleep;
- vi) it reappears in dreaming; and
- vii) it harbors the content of the several basic sensory modalities within a single unified experience.

Dennett has also himself associated with consciousness, the cognitive competence such as "the availability to deliberate reflection, the non-automaticity...[and] the

¹⁶Could Dennett in any meaningful sense maintain a thesis that bestows reality to consciousness whilst consistently maintain that qualia is fictional? Dennett's absolutist third person stance is probably the greatest motivating factor that drives him to impute fictional significance to phenomenal experiences. However, it is unclear what is it that actually provides grounds for his proclamation that consciousness is real. Obviously, the chief drawback of this move is its blatant counter-intuitiveness. It seems perfectly legitimate if Dennett has instead opted to quine consciousness, whilst maintaining the reality of qualia. In fact, it would be interesting to see what the outcome would be like if one is to take this opposite strategy. Absurd though it seems, there is conceivably nothing in Dennett's construction that would bar such a tactical move, for *arguably* consciousness (on customary construal) also fits perfectly into the quartet properties, and heterophenomenology is as powerless to substantiate its existence, as it is incapable of establishing the reality of qualia. If this seems preposterous, what then makes Dennett's original position of maintaining the reality of consciousness whilst banishing qualia any less absurd is obscure at best (see also, for instance, Lockwood 1993: 69-70, Brook 2000)! Meanwhile, elsewhere, Dennett argues that consciousness would not have evolved if it does no work (Dennett 1995c: 677), but it is not clear in the present context, what work consciousness has performed that is denied qualia which in turn justifies the claim that consciousness real whilst qualia not.

open mindedness that permits a conscious agent to consider anything in its purview in any way it chooses" (RWE 224). If we do not in general identify all these features of consciousness as *the* properties of consciousness, there is no reason why we must regard ineffability, privacy, immediate apprehension and intrinsicality as *the* properties of phenomenal experiences, because in the final analysis, they appear to belong to the same genre (referring more to general features of things, instead of pointing to some specifically defined properties). If this is not unreasonable, then even if we grant that Dennett's campaign to quine qualia quartet successful, it by no means follow that Dennett has successfully annihilated qualia, because if we are to emulate Churchland's demarcation, this qualia quartet merely serves as *provisional* explanatory target that could be revised if found untenable.

7.4 Immediate Apprehension (Privilege access)¹⁷

7.4.1 Inverted Spectrum

In spite of the foregoing, in what follows, let's examine in greater detail each of the individual property, which in their various ways, contribute to Dennett's overall attempt to quine qualia. The chief premise Dennett relies upon to repudiate immediate apprehension as legitimate property is subject's dubious access to or indeterminacy of introspection. The aim is to discredit *special*

privilege access subject claims to have. Confusion of subject's (own) internal state is the principal theme Dennett consistently capitalizes to build his case. Let's recap briefly Dennett's argument.

A) In the inverted spectrum experiment, Dennett contends that inversion could be created in (at least) two different ways:

i) Invert one of the 'early' qualia-producing channels, e.g. in the optic nerve, so that all relevant events 'downstream' are the 'opposite' of their original and normal values. *Ex hypothesi* this inverts your qualia.

ii) Leave all those early pathways intact and simply invert certain memory-access links – whatever it is that accomplishes your tacit (*and even unconscious*) comparison of today's hues with those of yore. *Ex hypothesi* this does not invert your qualia at all, but just your memory-anchored dispositions to react to them (525, emphasis added).

Dennett claims that these different surgical invasions produce similar effect on subject. Subject is, however, confused whether it is her qualia that is being inverted, or rather her qualia has remained intact, whilst her memory-linked qualia-reactions that was tampered with. Since subject cannot tell the difference, hence condition of privilege access does not hold.¹⁷

B) In the example of Sanborn and Chase, same argument is used. Seen earlier, Sanborn and Chase both discover they do not like Maxwell coffee anymore. But both are in the predicament of ascertaining whether it is their coffee qualia or taste

¹⁷ To have better appreciation of the arguments, readers may wish to consult Dennett's original work, *Quinning Qualia* (Dennett 1990i), from which the following discussion and the subsection that follows are primarily drawn.

¹⁸ "Since *ex hypothesi*, the two different surgical invasions can produce *exactly the same* introspective effects while only one operation inverts the qualia, *nothing in the subject's experience can favor one of the hypothesis over the other*. So unless he seeks outside help, the state of his own qualia must be as unknowable to him as the state of anyone else's qualia. Hardly the privileged access or immediate acquaintance or direct apprehension the friends of qualia had supposed 'phenomenal features' to enjoy!" (526, emphasis added). Note that Dennett is here using immediate acquaintance, privilege access and direct apprehension interchangeably.

of coffee that has shifted, or a mixture of both. There is no way of telling, even empirical tests fail to confirm the hypothesis for they ultimately depend on judgement that is the *resultant* of two factors "in varying proportion: roughly dispositions to generate or produce qualia and dispositions to react to the qualia once they are produced" (530). To further extend his arguments, Chase is assumed to undergo some kind of surgical inversion of his taste buds, which he subsequently compensated (recovered).¹⁹ Post-operative recovery entails some pre- and post-qualia adjustments (through compensation as in (i) and (ii) below) that Dennett considers equivocal, so much so that they even escape physiological scrutiny. Hence, they are two stories to be told, upon compensation (recovery that is) through readjustment - assumed here accomplished in the memory accessing process.

i) Chase's current qualia are still abnormal, but thanks to the revision in his memory-accessing process, he has in effect adjusted his memories of how things used to taste, so he no longer notices any anomaly.

ii) The memory comparison step occurs just prior to the qualia phase in taste perception; thanks to the revision, it now yields the same old qualia for the same stimulation (531).

To Chase, as in the case of (A) above, introspective effects are the same, but subject is likewise unable to distinguish between the two accounts. As Dennett notes:

Chase's introspective evidence will not settle the issue between (i) and (ii) either, since *ex hypothesi* those stories are not reliably distinguishable by him....The idea that one should consult an outside expert, and perform elaborate behavioral tests on oneself in order to confirm what qualia one had, surely takes us too far away from our original idea of qualia as properties with which we have a particular intimate acquaintance (531, 533).

¹⁹ "Let us suppose the compensation so thorough that on all behavioral and verbal tests his performance is indistinguishable from that of normal subjects - and from his own pre-surgical performance" (531).

Generally considered, the central premise of the intuition pump is questionable. It is doubtful if intimate or immediate acquaintance in fact requires subject to possess the ability to state clearly the *nature* (or causes) of change in her mental states²⁰ (see also De Leon 2001: 128). Dennett seems to have misrepresented the issue. The question whether subject's introspective experiences change as a result of inversion in qualia (H_1), or qualia concocted due to alteration in memory accessing processes (H_2) (or even H_3 , H_4 , and so on) is not the issue. Neither does privilege access entail the ability of subject to distinguish between H_1 and H_2 , amongst others. Significantly, according to above argument, H_1 and H_2 are essentially indistinguishable. As far as the subject is concerned, they all appear the same – at least experientially. If this is the case, insofar as the phenomenology is experientially immediate (direct and noninferential) to the subject, this appears good enough condition to satisfy privilege access. For privilege access is construed, in the main, with privilege status of subject vis-à-vis her experience, or the prerogative or immediate nature of the experience to respective subjects (see Snowdown 1995: 71, Goldman 1999: 742-743). As he himself notes elsewhere in other contexts,

[p]rivilege access is nothing if it is not a power to make autobiographical statements that have an epistemic status that is superior to the epistemic status of the correlative heterobiographical statements made by even very well informed observers, and this is just what we have with regard to judgements. If you treat my utterances as expressions of my judgements, then although you may have theories good or bad according to which my utterances succeed or fail to express my judgements accurately, your pronouncements on this score – your utterances – are epistemically inferior to my own. The truth of your heterobiographical statements depends on the acuteness of your data gathering, the excellence of your theory, your capacity to generate a conclusion, and ultimately, once you have reached a judgement about my judgement, your capacity to express your

²⁰ Lets say subject experiences grass as green (Q_1) in color. Upon surgery, grass turns red (Q_2). Dennett contends that Q_2 is a result of either qualia inversion (A (i) above or H_1) or qualia concocted owing to alteration in memory (A (ii) above or H_2). And Q_2 appears the same to the subject on H_1 and H_2 . Same argument applies to B.

judgement. The truth of my autobiographical statement depends only on my capacity to express. '...If I say what I mean to say, I express my judgement. You can say what you mean to say and still miss my judgement by a mile' " (AP 96; CE 68-70).²¹

²¹ Hence, though Dennett has forcefully argued against the presence (or legitimacy) of privilege access, we see the same is echoed rather differently elsewhere in his writing. "There is one sort of event, I will argue, to which we have a sort of privileged access: viz., the propositional episodes [judgements] that comprise our streams of consciousness....My reason for extending privileged access to these judgements while denying it to other candidates is simply that I can see how to provide for and defend a genuine privilege, a *limited* (emphasis added) but real incorrigibility, for our access to judgement, but can conceive of no way of extending that privilege, or any other *diminished* (emphasis added) but distinguishing privilege, to other items. ...My access to my judgement is first of all *experientially* direct in the sense that, as Anscombe might say, 'nothing shews' me I am judging as I do. But this does not distinguish my access to my judgements from my access to many mundane, external matters; nothing in the normal case shows me the position of my limbs, or that there is a table here in front of me either. I make no *conscious, experienced* inferences from cues or feelings or itchings of the eyeball that the table is here. Beyond this my access to my judgements is *evidentially* or *epistemically* direct, there is no room for an inference from evidence to hypothesis, and hence no room for error. My access to my judgements is, in a very *narrow sense* (emphasis added), incorrigible. If I am sufficiently deranged or otherwise subnormal either temporarily or permanently I may not be up to judging at all, but if I judge at all I am necessarily the best judge of what I judge" (AP 94-96). Apart from discussion on immediacy of judgement pertaining to privilege access, the issues of infallibility and incorrigibility are raised alongside. Accordingly, this is commented upon below. On infallibility and incorrigibility, Dennett briefly notes in the context of argument in the main text above: "[t]he infallibilist line on qualia treats them as properties of one's experience one cannot in principle misdiscover..." (528). This notwithstanding, Dennett also underlines the fact that "I think that everyone writing about qualia today would agree that there are all these possibilities for Chase and Sanborn [referring to the equivocalness of the claims of both Chase and Sanborn]. I know of no one these days who is tempted to defend the high line on infallibility or incorrigibility that would declare that alternative (a) is – and must be – the truth in each case, since people just cannot be wrong about such private, subjective matters" (528). If this is so, since no one believes in absolute infallibility and incorrigibility, the absence of this property ought not be used to discredit privilege access. They ought not be the issue here because as Lormand notes: "direct access [immediate acquaintance] doesn't require infallibility, incorrigibility, or any weaker kind of reliable access, and Dennett's argument therefore does not count against direct access, even if it counts against reliable access" (Lormand 1994: 133; see also Levine 1994: 120). Besides, arguably, a weaker form of privilege access is not incommensurate with imperfect infallibility or incorrigibility, as Dennett himself attested to in a couple of places in the opening excerpt above (the one italicized; see also Alston 1971: 231). In addition to that, Dennett also notes that "I am not maintaining that my privilege access to my judgements is a matter of my having incorrigible beliefs (or judgements) *about* my judgements (past or present) but simply that my *expressions* of my current judgements are privileged" (AP 96-97). This seems to suggest that we could still adhere to attenuated (version of) privilege access whilst acknowledging that our experiences are not perfectly infallible nor absolutely incorrigible. However, all said, it is doubtful if these notions are essentially concerned with infallibility or incorrigibility of subject to identify causal underpinnings (as in H₁ or H₂ for Q₂ in note 20 above) that subserve particular experience. We have not seen Dennett resort to such maneuver in defending his notion of judgement having privilege access. Nothing pertaining to the causal precursor of judgement (or something akin to that) mentioned nor raised. In fact, at one point, the converse is upheld. So we see, for instance, he in fact claims the followings: "[w]hat lies beyond or on the interior of our judgements of the moment, what grounds or causes or controls them, is wholly a matter for science or speculation – in any event it is not a matter to which we have any *privileged* access at all" (AP 95). In other words, contrary to arguments made in H₁ (A (i)) or H₂ (A (ii)) (or in the case of B), Dennett is here ruling out the need for subject to know the causal precursor of judgement for subject to be accorded privilege access. One way or another, this only seems to suggest that Dennett is invoking different standard for the same argument, for

So, perhaps justice is not served with Dennett's treatment of the concept. But for the sake of argument, let's grant that Dennett is in fact justified in the foregoing interpretation. However, before going into more general review of the theory, some brief comments on the technical assumptions of the thought experiments are in order.

7.4.2 Technical Presumptions of Dennett's Thought Experiment

i) In (A), Dennett's argument essentially hinges on the fact that condition of privilege access is vindicated if subject could correctly discern the "visual color qualia inversion" (525) upon surgery. Since, according to Dennett, only *one* of the two surgical invasions involves a shift in qualia (the first operation that is) but subject could not in fact distinguish between them, hence privilege access is not vindicated. However, if we consider closely alternative (ii), Dennett says the effect is achieved in (ii) by inverting the "memory-access links" (525), as it produces the *same* effect as in (i) by altering the "memory-anchored dispositions to react to them" or the "memory-linked qualia reactions" (525). But there is no reason why inverting qualia at the end of memory interface (where comparison is made with earlier qualia), does not constitute a shift in qualia, whilst earlier inversion closer to the 'source' does, otherwise it is outright baffling how

subject here is granted privilege access despite them not knowing anything about the causal underpinnings of their judgements. Meanwhile, curiously subjects in (A) and (B) are said to possess privilege access only if they could also state the causal underpinnings of their qualia experiences (as in, for instance, Q_2 in note 20 above).

transformation of qualia is achieved in the first place.²² For instance, if inversion involves subject seeing grass turning red, or the sky yellow, it is puzzling what else could be responsible for the qualia change in (ii) if it does not entail some form of qualia inversion.²³ If this is right, then it appears Dennett's argument has failed because (ii) also involves inversion in qualia. And if there is inversion, does it also matter whether it is occasioned in the memory or other brain structures (see also Seager 1999: 123-124)? If the test to endorse privilege access is recognition of shift in qualia *per se*, then it appears that subject has satisfied this.²⁴ It does not matter if subject could actually tell the difference between (i) or (ii), for both involve inversion in qualia.²⁵

ii) In (B), in the case of failure of both Chase and Sanborn to undo their confusions (refer also the exposition in Chapter 5 on the same subject), Dennett appears to have overstated his case. As Dennett states few pages after his initial exposition of Chase and Sanborn:

Chase intuitive judgements about his qualia constancy [and this is the crux of the Maxwell coffee argument] are no better off, epistemically, than his intuitive judgements about, say, lightning intensity constancy or room temperature constancy – or his own body temperature constant (532).

²² It is just as preposterous to argue, for instance, if one is to put on an image-inverting goggle (CE 397, 535), there is a resulting inversion in the experiences of image, but if one could somehow implant a miniaturized version of this device in the memory comparator (or memory access links) that yield *similar* end result, could we also reasonably argue that the image thus rendered is not to constitute a shift (or inversion) of phenomenal experiences?

²³ As it is, arguably, Dennett's expositions of A and B are not completely clear, but as it does not really affect the crux of the arguments, we would not take issue with this. The detour would probably make the commentary unnecessarily complicated and confusing.

²⁴ For the subject could recognize both alternatives. Upon operation and after waking up, the subject in fact exclaims: "Egad! Something has happened! Either my qualia have been inverted or my memory-linked qualia-reactions have been reacted. I wonder which" (525).

²⁵ Of course only if identification of the shift *per se* is the issue, as Dennett seems to think it is. "If they are qualia, they are even less accessible to our ken than we had thought....we cannot tell in our own cases whether our qualia have been inverted" (526, emphasis added). For "only one operation inverts the qualia" (526).

Taking cue from the foregoing, if I am to take up the challenge to see if I could discern correctly whether my microwave oven is as hot as it is now six years to this date (as required by the Maxwell coffee experiment), or whether my fully grown-up dog still weigh the same between the same period, most likely than not, I would likely fail (see also Block 1992: 205, Block 1994b: 212, Seager 1999: 93, 99). One likely explanation of this failure is inadequacy of memory,²⁶ but Dennett has not really considered this a plausible cause in his undertaking to *renounce* qualia through above arguments (by way of Chase and Sanborn allegory),²⁷ though he himself admits elsewhere that "human memory is not innately well designed to be superreliable" (CE 224).²⁸ We are aware, however, that this failure in identification (in which memory is likely to play critical role) does not warrant the conclusion that temperature (of microwave oven) or weight (of dog) does not exist. Why should we expect otherwise in the case of Chase and Sanborn? And insofar as Dennett has not sufficiently addressed this possibility, Dennett's subsequent claim that qualia is "[l]ogical constructs out of judgements must be

²⁶ Dennett in fact briefly raises this but has not really followed it through (527).

²⁷ Lormand puts it the following way. "In comparing a current e_1 (qualia) with a past e_2 , one's memory for e_2 can be unreliable or fallible (or indirect, for that matter) even if current access to e_1 is reliable or infallible (or direct), and even if past access to e_2 was reliable or infallible (or direct)" (Lormand 1994: 135).

²⁸ In fact, it is interesting to see what else Dennett in fact says. "Is the standard red of the stripes on the American flag the same red as; or is it darker or lighter or brighter or more or less orange than, the standard red of Santa Claus's suit (or a British pillar box or the Soviet red star)? We are able to make such comparisons 'in our minds' eyes,' and when we do, we somehow make something happen in us that retrieves information from memory and permits us to compare, in conscious experience, the colors of the standard objects as we remember them. Some of us are better at this than others, no doubt and many of us are not very confident in the judgements we reach under such circumstances. That is why we take home paint samples or take fabric samples to the paint store, so that we can put side by side in the external world instances of the two colors we wish to compare" (BC 147). "There is no good reason to deny that memories can be spurious, and there is plenty of confirmation that they can" (BS 141).

viewed as akin to theorists' fictions" (529), for if "nothing for instance, that would shed any light on the different psychological claims that might be true of Chase and Sanborn – what is the point of asserting that one has it?" (528) – is likely to be unconvincing. Because the failure may not be due to the nonexistence of qualia, but in this case, due to the breakdown of memory.

iii) In (B), Dennett further claims that empirical means fall short in resolving both Chase's and Sanborn's predicament due to inseparability of "dispositions to generate or produce qualia and dispositions to react to the qualia once it is produced" (530). This seems an important point stressed repeatedly (529-530, 532), for this appears a predicament both Chase and Sanborn cannot (in principle) avoid. That said, there is nonetheless something worth underscoring here. The concept of "dispositions to react to qualia" alluded to above is not unproblematic. According to Dennett, "a subject's experience has the quale F if and only if the subject judges his experience to have quale F" (529). In other words, qualia is a dispositional states of the brain (CE 460; see note 52 on p. 260 in Chapter 7). Hence, if we substitute this understanding of qualia into the concept of "dispositions to react to qualia," it turns out to be something like the followings: 'dispositions to react to dispositions of judgements.' What in fact becomes of a disposition to react to another disposition verges perhaps more on obscurity.

iv) On one hand, to counter the claim that subject has privilege access, Dennett argues that subject has to appeal to the third person benchmark, and hence indirect

means (as opposed to subject's direct apprehensibility) to tell the difference between the purported alternatives. So, for instance, Dennett says that "far from being directly or immediately apprehensible properties of our experience, they are properties whose changes or constancies are either entirely beyond our ken, or inferable (at best) from 'third person' examinations of our behavioral and physiological reaction patterns" (532; see also 542 in which the same is urged for Sanborn and Chase in the context of discussion on ineffability). "The idea that one should consult an outside expert, and perform elaborate behavioral tests on oneself in order to confirm what qualia one had, surely takes us far away from our original idea of qualia as properties with which we have a particularly intimate acquaintance" (533).²⁹ In spite of these claims, Dennett has not shown how exactly empirical means are to accomplish this feat.³⁰ Instead, on the same passage, Dennett claims that even empirical and neurophysiological analysis is not likely to amount to much (530-532). This appears quite a glaring incongruity. This disparity, however, serves to demonstrate the (almost irreconcilable) tension that threatens to cripple Dennett's theory. It *appears* that these conflicting claims tend to make sense, however, if we see them used to serve different ends in his account of things. On the one hand, he denies even empirical (or

²⁹ In relation to this, Dennett claims that "[t]here are, as we shall see, good reasons for neurophysiologists and other 'objective, third person' theorists to single out such a class of properties to study. But they are not qualia, for the simple reason that one's epistemic relation to them is exactly the same as one's epistemic relation to such external, but readily – if fallibly – detectable, properties as room temperature or weight" (533). But certainly one's epistemic relation to room temperature and weight besides taking the form of impersonal measurement through the callous use of apparatuses, there also exists a dimension of personal acquaintance with the experience by way it feels like to be something in relation to temperature and weight, and what is this if not qualia?

³⁰ Dennett certainly has not shown how "third person examinations of our behavioral and physiological reaction patterns" (532) made a difference in helping subject to have indirect access

neurophysiological) means could make any difference,³¹ because clearly if this is granted, qualia would become some kind of respectable entity confirmable and susceptible to investigation by scientific means, which Dennett clearly opposes. For, if this is permitted, it would have dire consequences on the whole of Dennett's theoretical edifice. But to satisfy his other agenda of denying the subject any privilege advantages, Dennett readily appeals to the third person – that employs means to repudiate any suggestions of privilege access – which is in turn employed as the basis to quine qualia. For if one of the properties of qualia is immediate acquaintance, and if it is proven they rely on means that is indirect or not at all privileged (as in the method of third person), then Dennett's aim to quine qualia is vindicated.

(v) Amongst the limitations of the neurophysiological evidence portrayed in (B) is “physiological facts will not in themselves shed any light on where in the stream of physiological process twist tasting and telling to draw the line at which the putative qualia appear as properties of that phase of the process” (531), and there “seem to be two substantially different hypothesis, but the *physiological evidence*, no matter how well developed, will not tell us on which side of memory to put the qualia” (531, emphasis added). Oddly enough, in order for the thought experiment to be possible at all, the surgeon would have to physically alter the relevant physiological structures in the brain in order to achieve the initial desired inversion. So, there must exist some form of mastery of the relationship between

to qualia, and hence helping them to distinguish between the different proposed accounts (in the case of Chase and Sanborn for instance).

qualia and brain structure. And if one is assumed to possess this physiological knowledge in "as much detail" as one likes, as competent as for example the surgeon (531), then it appears questionable why one could not also find ways to distinguish between (i) and (ii) in (B), upon post-operative renormalization of qualia through adjustment in the memory-accessing process.

Perhaps subsequent elucidation would help put the arguments in better lights. The thought experiment actually grants that one could correctly identify the location of the adjustment (or the compensatory effect) in some parts of the brain, in this case, the memory accessing process (presumably through existing physiological theory). And if as Dennett countenances, "our physiological theory tell us ...that the compensatory effect in him has been achieved by an adjustment in the memory-accessing process that is required for our victim to compare *today's hue to those of yore*" (531, emphasis added), it is quite puzzling, however why if physiological evidence is good enough to determine the source of the adjustment, it is totally powerless to determine exactly which memory link the compensatory effect is achieved. Reverting to (A), we note in A (ii), the inversion effect is accomplished precisely through surgical inversion of the memory access link (the bone of contention in B) that compares *today's hue with those of the yore* (525). If one is capable of inverting the memory access process in A (ii) through surgery to achieve the desired ends, there is no reason why one cannot also identify the differences in B, as both involve process of revision in *memory* (responsible for

³¹ For a rebuttal of this view, see Nikolinakos (2000: 511-512).

comparing today's hue with those of the yore). One way or another, it leaves Dennett in grueling position.

7.4.3 Analysis of Dennett's Argument Against Privilege Access

Technicalities aside, the crux of Dennett's argument in this section appears to revolve around the "idea that people might be mistaken about their own qualia is at the *heart* of the ongoing *confusion*" (526, emphasis added),³² hence invalidating privilege access which in turn warrants qualia as the target for "demolition" (522).³³ However, even setting aside the questions raised in earlier discussions, Dennett nonetheless appears to have overstated his case. We ought to be wary of the conclusion drawn for the arguments do not seem to warrant it (see also Block 1992: 205).

³² For instance, he says that "[w]e normally think in a confused and potentially incoherent way when we think about the ways things seem to us" (534). And "the intuitions that surround and purport to anchor the current understanding of [qualia is] revealed to be in utter disarray" (538; see also FFP 5).

³³ As pointed out earlier, Dennett contends that "not just that the various technical or theoretical concepts of qualia are vague or equivocal, but that the source concept, the 'pretheoretical' notion of which the former are presumed to be refinements, is so thoroughly *confused* (italics mine) that even if we undertook to salvage some 'lowest common denominator' from the theoretician's proposals, any acceptable version would have to be so radically unlike the ill-formed notions that are commonly appealed to that it would be tactically obtuse – not to say Pickwickian – to cling to the term. Far better, tactically, to declare that there are no qualia at all" (520). Qualia "is a philosophers' term which fosters nothing but confusion, and refers in the end to no properties or feature at all" (524). Arguably, this alleged confusion is best exemplified by cases of (A) and (B) above, as well as the example of Chase and Sanborn discussed in Chapter 5. As Dennett points out above, they are (i.e., these mistaken conception of qualia) at the heart of the ongoing confusion. However, presumably this argument on confusion applies also to other properties discussed by Dennett. Even if this is the case, arguments set forth below apply nonetheless.

In (A) and (B) respectively, to arrive at his decision to quine qualia, we note Dennett has placed significant importance on confusion of subject's internal states. This is a theoretical position Dennett extensively argues in consolidating his position on qualia. However, this only invites skepticism. First of all, absolute infallibility³⁴ is a principle very much out of fashion, as is recognized by Dennett himself (528). Besides, perceptions and memory (certainly important in establishing the case of Sanborn and Chase) are not in themselves perfect.

Although, as lay people, we take it for granted that perception offers us sure knowledge of the world, perception is deficient in some rather fundamental ways. It doesn't reveal all that we know about the world. Unaided, it says very little, for example, about the microscopic structure of the matter. Perception can also be mistaken at the scale of the everyday, showing a host of well-known errors, so-called illusions. *Yet, these obvious limitations do not shake our confidence in perceptual experience.....and the long history of research in perception contains a catalog of errors and illusions* (Nakayama 2001: 737-739, emphasis added).

Meanwhile,

it is sometimes amusing and occasionally distressing to discover that these perceptual judgements are relative rather than absolute, and that they can be radically different in different contexts. For example, manipulating context by altering perspective and contrast in painting, photography, and cinematography can give apparent depth to a flat surface, make small objects appear large, or large objects appear small, or make objects appear far away when they are really very near or the reverse. The relative nature of a sensory judgement is also evident when dealing with combinations of cues from different modalities. There is, in fact, a rather rich literature filled with examples in which the presence of a cue from one modality can substantially alter perceptual judgements of cues in other modalities. For example, the presence of a visual cue can substantially change a subject's perception of proprioceptive and auditory cues, and proprioceptive cues can alter the subject's perception of where an auditory cue is located. These cross-modality perceptual effects can be quite potent.....(Stein *et al.* 2001: 710).³⁵

In spite of this supposed shortcomings (resulting in mistakes and confusions) above, we rely on perceptions to do science and maneuver in the world. Besides, we reason, have thoughts and do mathematics. But we have not really put science

³⁴ This point is also raised earlier in our discussion on privilege access.

³⁵ On a lesser note, this is also echoed by Dennett elsewhere. "No one doubts that there are perceptual illusions and some of these – for example, the Ames distorting room – outrage our naïve expectations" (IS 9).

and mathematics to doubt (or relinquish them) because we are *confused* or *mistaken* about its nature (it could subserve in neurostructure X or Y or Z or maybe none of those).³⁶ In fact, thinking and the likes are amongst our most prized possessions. This certainly stands in stark contrast to Dennett's retort with respect to (B) that "[i]f we cannot distinguish (i) from (ii), we certainly cannot support either of your claims. If you want our support, you must relinquish your concept of qualia" (532).³⁷ Nor has perception employed in science for that matter becomes *more real* now that we have a more respectable theory of perception (supposedly allowing for better appreciation of its nature) compared to say people in the early period, though present understanding is still very much at its infancy.³⁸ We continue to rely on them, however, though our knowledge of its nature is, as it is, dreadfully scanty.³⁹

³⁶ Dennett himself, with regards to Poincare, has the following to say: "[Poincare] was, if anyone ever has been, a creative and original thinker, and yet his own analysis of how he accomplished his inventions seemed to deny him responsibility for them" (BS 88). "We have come to accept without the slightest twinge of incomprehension a host of claims to the effect that sophisticated hypothesis-testing, memory-searching inference – in short, information processing – occurs within us even though it is entirely inaccessible to introspection" (Dennett 1987d: 162).

³⁷ Dennett puts this in the mouth of scientists in his thought experiment.

³⁸ "We might achieve a theory of perception that answered all our detailed questions without ever tackling the big one: what is a perception? Such a state of affairs might confound the bystanders – or amuse or outrage them, but so what? Most biologists can get on with their work without getting absolutely straight about what life is, most physicists comfortably excuse themselves from the ticklish task of saying exactly what matter is. Why should perception theorists be embarrassed not to have achieved consensus on just what perception is?" (Dennett 1996b: 159). Could we also regard the same of qualia without really having to (at least not now) know exactly what qualia is?

³⁹ And it is also worth noting that meme could not itself be made rigorous, apparently due to the same problems that plague Dennett's notion of qualia. Meme cannot be turned into rigorous science. "The very creativity and activity of human minds as temporary homes for memes seems to guarantee that lines of descent are hopelessly muddled, and that phenotypes change so fast that there's no keeping track of the 'natural kinds' ... even if memes do originate by a process of 'descent with modification,' our chances of cranking out a science that charts that descent are slim" (DDI 355-356). In other words, not unlike qualia predicament above, there is no way one could trace out its *origin* through the standard evolutionary tree used in taxonomy, and the employment of the concept itself is also no less of a contention (Aunger 2000: 7-9, 21; Dennett 2000g: 12n5). Yet, as seen earlier (in Chapter 5 and 6), Dennett accords it some very important role in his theory of consciousness.

Let's consider consciousness as the case in point. Descartes believed that the pineal gland is where consciousness is located. Till this day, consciousness is, however, still as elusive and mysterious. Despite the fact that different models have been proposed to explain consciousness, it is still not easy to define consciousness without circularity. As Guzeldere notes:

[t]here is perhaps no other phenomenon besides consciousness that is so familiar to each of us and yet has been so elusive to any systematic study, philosophical or scientific. In thinking about consciousness, the puzzlement one often finds oneself is rather like St. Augustine's riddle in his contemplations about the nature of time: When no one asked him, he knew what it was; being asked, however, he no longer did.....These questions do not have any easy, obvious answers. Nor is there at present anything that could be regarded as a received view on problems of consciousness in the scientific and philosophical community. Furthermore, it is common to find serious doubts expressed in the literature about whether there can ever be a complete understanding of the phenomenon of consciousness...It is noteworthy that the spectrum of disagreements ranges over not only particular accounts of consciousness but, more fundamentally, whether any satisfactory naturalistic explanation of consciousness can in principle be given. Part of this disagreement owes, no doubt, to the difficulty in the nature of the phenomenon of consciousness. But there is also a part that stems from a *conceptual disarray* surrounding the notion of consciousness...it is not uncommon to come across statements about consciousness that convey [opposite conviction]: that not only is there no clear and generally accepted definition, but we are not even in possession of a stable pretheoretical conceptions of consciousness... 'Consciousness,' says Professor Ward, 'is the vaguest, most protean, and most treacherous of psychological terms'; and Bain, writing in 1880; distinguished no less than thirteen meanings of the word; he could find more today....Moreover, not only is there no consensus on what the term consciousness denotes, but neither is it immediately clear if there actually is a single, well-defined 'the problem of consciousness' within disciplinary boundaries (Guzeldere 1997: 1-2, 6-7; emphasis added).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Dawkins in quoting Dennett on defining consciousness has the following to share: "I shall therefore use consciousness to mean simply an immediate awareness in any or all of the senses used above but stress that consciousness comes in many forms and that its nature is still deeply mysterious to us. To go any further at this stage would be to run the risk of what.....Dennett has happily called the 'heartbreak of premature definition'" (Dawkins 1998: 5). And Sutherland in his *International Dictionary of Psychology* puts it this way. "The having of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings; awareness. The term is impossible to define except in terms that are unintelligible without a grasp of what consciousness means....Consciousness is a fascinating but elusive phenomena: it is impossible to specify what it is, what it does, or why it evolved. Nothing worth reading has been written about it" (Sutherland 1995: 95; cf. Guzeldere 1997: 8). And no less significant, "[a]lthough consciousness is the most obvious and intimate feature of our being, philosophical as well as psychological discourse is replete with conceptual confusions and conflicting characterizations. R. B. Perry remarked, '[h]ow can a term mean anything when it is employed to connote anything and everything, including its own negation?' Most psychologists regard consciousness as awareness. Unfortunately, the concept of awareness is no less ambiguous" (Rao 1996: 183; see also Antony 2002: 1).

So, the phenomena of consciousness is no less baffled and confounding (confused) as it was in the time of Descartes. But clearly, we do not hence set it as target for demolition (522), nor do we say because it fosters confusion (or vagueness or equivocalness), hence there is simply no consciousness (520). We see Dennett in fact affirms that consciousness is real and he actually writes a book to explain it.

Besides, different conflicting and thoroughly confused and mistaken things have been said about the origin of the universe, mankind (and fellow species on earth), the nature of planetary systems and other phenomena of nature. Most of this are utterly confused, and worse, terribly wrong. Yet, this does not overthrow or put to doubt the reality of the phenomena concerned (see also Sprigge 1993: 41, Nikolinakos 2000: 517, Levine 1994: 113, 120). We do not also thereby give up our effort to understand them.⁴¹

In Dennett's theory of MDM, we observe there is no fact of the matter that helps distinguish between the Orwellian and Stalinesque account as perpetrated by the phi phenomena (woman in glasses and the metacontrast) examples. So, for instance, we see Dennett argues that

⁴¹ For instance, Dennett has the following to say on the difficulty and equivocalness of identifying species. "'Well-defined' species certainly do not exist" (DDI 45). "There is nothing unprecedented about this: biologists shrug when asked whether herring-gulls and lesser black-backed gulls are truly different species" (GR 525-526; see also Seager 1999: 100). In evolution, random drift is one of the important contributing causes of evolutionary change, but it is not always easy (and hence could be confusing) to attribute these changes either to forces of the drift as such or natural selection or both (mirroring the dilemma of Sanborn and Chase).

the distinction between *perceptual* revisions and *memory* revisions (emphasis added) that works so crisply at other scales is not guaranteed application....when we abandon Cartesian Materialism... the distinction between pre-experiential and post-experiential content revisions cannot always be maintained...Note that the inability to distinguish these two possibilities does not just apply to the outside observers who might be supposed to lack some private data to which the subject had 'privileged access.' You, as a subject in a phi phenomenon experiment, could not discover anything in the experience from your own first-person perspective that would favor one theory over the other; the experience would feel the same on either account (Dennett 1992d: 13, 14, 16; CE 126).

Further to that, Dennett claims that

there is no crisp way of telling exactly which parts of the multiple parallel streams are conscious. Any one of the streams sometimes contributes to awareness and sometimes not. No one stream is necessarily conscious by its very nature. And that is our theory of consciousness. It is a *bad day for 'realism' when only phenomena with hard-edged necessary and sufficient conditions can be considered real* (Dennett and Kinsbourne 1992b: 239, emphasis added).

Above notwithstanding, Dennett even turns to Einstein's physics to support his contention:

Einstein noted that it is impossible to distinguish by local observation between a gravitational field and an accelerated frame of reference. This led him to postulate the equivalence that is at the heart of relativity theory. Now insert the 'realist,' who says 'Oh just because you can't distinguish the two doesn't mean they aren't different! There might be a difference that is indistinguishable by any current test! Never say never!' Yeah, there might be, but in the meantime, tremendous progress is made by concluding that there isn't. I am proposing similar simplifications: since you can't distinguish between the Orwellian and Stalinesque models of meta-contrast, or between a zombie that acts just as if its conscious and a conscious being, they are equivalent (GR 532).⁴²

If this is the case, there is no reason why the same cannot be applied to the case of qualia. For we see that these confusions or indeterminacies do not demolish (the reality of consciousness) but in fact serves pivotal role in Dennett's theory of consciousness. It is unclear, then, how he is justified to quine qualia based on the grounds we saw in (A) and (B) above.⁴³ So if privilege access *demand*s that

⁴² Contra his views on qualia, Dennett is here proposing that we rely on something indeterminate and unconfirmed.

⁴³ As Goldman succinctly observes, "[e]ven if it were true that nobody, including the subject, could subsequently determine which of the two stories is right [referring to Orwellian and Stalinesque phenomena], why does it follow that there is no matter of fact? It may be impossible now for anyone to get decisive evidence about the ornaments (if any) that Julius Caesar wore on

subject is infallible/incorrigible (in order for qualia to exist), then it is the ungainly notion of privilege access that ought to be renounced, not qualia (this further reinforces earlier view that privilege access is likely not the legitimate ground to subserve qualia).

In fact, confusions and mistakes ordinarily act as negative incentive or impetus in generating more and improved hypotheses for testing, hence playing key role for much progress in science.⁴⁴ Besides, science is itself not infallible. Hence, it is not clear how uncertainty (or confusion or mistakes) by themselves *warrant* repudiation of qualia if agnosticism (or neutrality) is *the* working assumption of heterophenomenology (which according to Dennett, is the “tacit order of the day”) (FFP 3).⁴⁵ In fact, if the worry is confusion or uncertainty, commitment to

his toga when he was slain. It hardly follows that there is no true fact of the matter, independent of our verification” (Goldman 1997a: 119).

⁴⁴ Dennett himself notes in a somewhat Nietzschean manner. “Making mistakes is the key to making progress...Instead of shunning mistakes, I claim, you should cultivate the habit of making them. Instead of turning away in denial when you make a mistake, you should become a connoisseur of your own mistakes, turning them over in your mind as if they were works of art, which in a way they are. You should seek out opportunities to make grand mistakes....First the theory, and then the practise. Mistakes are not just golden opportunities for learning; they are in an important sense the only opportunity for learning something truly new” (Dennett 1995a: 137-138). “Science...is not just a matter of making mistakes, but of making mistakes in public” (DDI 380; Dennett 1994c: 176-177).

⁴⁵ In this regard, Dennett claims in *Brainstorm* that pain is conceptual (BS 198), and the fact that we could not make computer that feel pain is because our theory of pain is incoherent, yet Dennett does not find the motivation here to jettison the confused concept, he actually hopes that science may one day help throw light on the problem. So, we see Dennett claims that “the intuitions we would have to honor were we to honor them all do not form a consistent set, there can be no true theory of pain, and so no computer or robot could instantiate the true theory of pain, which it would have to do to feel real pain.....The parochiality of the concept of pain protects us but not robots from the skeptical arguments.....for the inability of robot model to satisfy all our intuitive demands may be due not to any irredeemable mysteriousness about the phenomena of pain, but to irredeemable incoherency in our ordinary concept of pain” (BS 228). Instead of suggesting outright banishment of the concept of pain, Dennett pins his hope on the eventual progress in science to unlock the stalemate. “If and when a good physiological sub-personal theory of pain is developed, a robot could in principle be constructed to instantiate it. Such advances in science would probably bring in their train of wide-scale changes in what we found intuitive about pain, so

neutrality should counsel one to defer judgement (until more evidence come to light) instead of what appears to be the premature jettisoning of qualia.⁴⁶

7.4.4 Awang and Qualia

Perhaps we can bring out these points better by conjuring a thought experiment that mirrors earlier discussion to see how far confusion and privilege access are useful to ground the reality of qualia. Awang suffered from some pretty serious congenital color-blind problem. Due to poverty and relative backwardness of his homeland, no one has taken any notice nor pay attention to his problems. However, when Awang went overseas for his graduate education, as the beneficiary of the university's medical program, Awang received some first-rate

that the charge that our robot only suffered what we artificially called pain would lose its persuasiveness" (BS 228-229; see also Bricke 1984: 414-418).

⁴⁶Says Feynmann, "[it] is necessary and true that all of the things we say in science, all of the conclusions, are uncertain, because they are only conclusions. They are guesses as to what is going to happen, and you cannot know what will happen, because you have not made the most complete experiments....Scientists, therefore, are used to dealing with doubt and uncertainty. All scientific knowledge is uncertain. This experience with doubt and uncertainty is important. I believe that it is of very great value, and one that extends beyond the sciences. *I believe that to solve any problem that has never been solved before, you have to leave the door to the unknown ajar.* You have to permit the possibility that you do not have it exactly right. Otherwise, if you have made up your mind already, you might not solve it....This freedom to doubt is an important matter in the sciences and, I believe, in other fields. It was born of a struggle. It was a struggle to be permitted to doubt, to be unsure. And I do not want us to forget the importance of the struggle and, by default, to let the thing fall away. I feel a responsibility as a scientist who knows the great value of a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance, and the progress made possible by such a philosophy" (Feynman 1998: 26-28, emphasis added; see also Roitblat 1988: 526). Also, we see, for instance, Dennett in his reply to Goldman's criticism of his theory has the following to say on maintaining a neutral position with regards to phenomenology. "Now it may be that your point about 'perceptual-phenomenal' states that go beyond 'mere' belief-states will someday be supported somehow. But in the meantime, cognitive science proceeds along merrily, leaving itself strictly neutral about that. And in at least some instances the claim that there is anything 'perceptual-phenomena' about the presentiment over and above the inclination so to judge seems particularly dubious. But in any case, cognitive science can and should (and does!) remain strictly neutral about such questions of phenomenality until the case is clearly made" (FFP 8). If cognitive science chooses to remain neutral on the question, then Dennett's campaign to quine qualia appears somewhat premature.

treatment that eventually helped correct the problem. There were two ways to address the problem, however. Either Awang affixes an awkward looking glass or goggle, or he could undergo laser operation to correct the problem. Lets assume Awang was operated without him knowing it. Apparently, upon operation, Awang's color quale is normalized. However, he was also fixed with the goggle on awakening,⁴⁷ but this is of course not the special glasses used for correction but just some bogus replica.

However, since from the very beginning, he was fixed with the optical device and was not informed about the operation, it is only natural he attributed the normalization to the glasses (Scenario 1). Obviously, he misidentified the real cause of the change, but this does not alter the fact that his qualia is reverted or normalized. His color quale is certainly different from that before. And if he is later informed about the operation and told about the bogus glasses and lens (Scenario 2), the fact that he could now identify correctly the true nature of change does not, in any way, make the altered qualia any more *real* than before.

So, we see freeing one from mistakes in identifying the *nature* and sources of alteration in experiences does not change anything. Or if we could imagine still a third scenario when Awang was utterly confused (Scenario 3), when for some reasons, the surgeon chose to leave him in the dark, i.e., he did not even know if the change is actually caused by the glasses or surgery. Assume he was being

⁴⁷For the sake of argument, we assume both the glasses and the goggle, whichever applies, could not be dismounted at will, except with the help from the surgeon.

informed about the operation, with the goggle still fix to him upon awakening, but was informed that only one of these (between the goggle and the operation) corrects his problem. Certainly, Awang in Scenario 3 is confused, and Awang in Scenario 1 mistaken, but color qualia in these cases are presumably *no* different from Awang's correct attribution in Scenario 2. Hence, the subject's *confusion* is clearly not a good measure in ascertaining the reality of qualia. Because if Awang's color quale constancy does not vary in concert with subject's knowledge of the nature of alteration in experiences, then reality of qualia is not simply reducible to the question of subject's mistakes or confusions about such delimitation.

Meanwhile, to see if privilege access (the way Dennett construes it) is any better in making meaningful differences pertaining to the issue at hand, lets consider the following modifications to the thought experiment. Now, let it be the case that Awang was not told anything about the operation whatsoever. On awakening from sleep, and with the glasses fixed to the eyes, he discovered that he could see color. To determine the true cause of the change, Awang performed a simple experiment. He dismounted the glass⁴⁸ and found the qualia change intact with or without glasses.

⁴⁸ Assuming, in this case, the glasses, like ordinary spectacles could be mounted or dismounted at will.

So, let's denote this Scenario 4 where subject is able (on their own) to identify the true nature of the alteration. On Dennett's contention, this constitutes a case for some sort of privilege access because without outside or third person help, he could, by relying solely on internal resources, correctly attribute the change to alteration via surgery *approximating* the case in (A) where privilege access is supposedly warranted if subject could identify the nature of qualia change. But again, in spite of Awang's supposed privilege (access) in Scenario 4, there is no reason to claim this qualia any different from Scenario 2 (without immediate acquaintances because correct attribution was due to help from third person), and also Scenario 1 and 3. If existence of qualia does not thus become more nor less real regardless if subject is privileged (or the reverse in accessing his own mental states) or confused (or the converse) in her attributions, then credibility of argument that purport to affirm or deny the metaphysical status of qualia based on both these premises is at least open to doubt.⁴⁹ Crudely and perhaps slightly oversimplified, what is shown in this thought experiment is that both privilege access and subject's confusion are at best problematic indicators to answer question pertaining to the reality of qualia.

⁴⁹ One could also carry out the same thought experiment but this time involving correction of short-sighted problem. It also entails qualia change as the myopia problem is corrected. This probably sounds more plausible as it is a familiar oft-encountered real-life predicament.

7.5 Ineffability and Privacy⁵⁰

Dennett's main purpose here as in the previous section is to see if both the properties under consideration "fit the bill" (544), if not, then there "simply are no qualia at all" (544). However, the main thrust of his argument in this section is "it would be a mistake to transform the fact that inevitably there is a limit to our capacity to describe things we experience into the supposition that there are *absolutely* indescribable properties in our experience" (544, italics mine). "In their place are relatively or *practically* ineffable public properties we can refer to indirectly via reference to our private property detectors – private only in the sense of idiosyncratic" (544). This effectively sums up Dennett's basic assertion in this section.

Dennett makes use of the memorable example of osprey cry to make his case. So, following Dennett, let's use this as the starting point of analysis. Dennett dubs the complex S as unique quale of osprey cry. To make his case, Dennett switches to the metaphor of Jello Box. As seen in the fifth chapter, there exists M-detector that serves as "apparatus for detecting shape property M" (541). Information contained in M property is complex, could only be "uniquely instantiated" by its M-detector. S complex of osprey cry could be likened to M property which, in turn, depends on some property detector, presumably S-detector for detection.⁵¹

⁵⁰ To a large degree (though not absolutely), ineffability (and also intrinsicity) could be identified with privacy. For a discussion on privacy, see Lormand (1994: 141-143).

⁵¹ So, for instance, Dennett says, "when I first hear the osprey cry, I may have identified a property-detector [S-detector] in myself, but I have no idea (yet) what property [presumably

According to Dennett, ineffability of S does not hold because experience could *in principle* be articulated, for as seen in the Jello Box case, failure to describe M property is principally due to its highly complex and unique jagged edges. Insofar as this could be overcome - though difficult but not impossible - the property is describable. Articulateness of osprey experience is likewise circumscribed by its highly complex S, but this is not *absolute* ineffability, for experience could be described if complexity could somehow be surmounted. So, osprey experience is in principle expressible. Or at least if it is ineffable at all, it is practical ineffability. It is to the analysis of these issues we now turn.

Before examining this in greater detail, it may be instructive to look at some basic assumptions of the thought experiment. Jello Box allegory is important for if it does not hold, the rest of Dennett's claims would be in a tottering state. Dennett depends on it for the M-detector metaphor that forms the nexus for arguments in this section. It appears, however, that Dennett's presentation of qualia as property

referring to S] my new-found property detector detects" (541). "The same predicament naturally faces anyone trying to say what property someone detects when something 'looks the way it looks to him'....What property does Otto judge something to have when he judges it to be pink? The property he calls pink. And what property is that?....All that [it] accomplishes is to point to his own idiosyncratic color-discrimination state, a move that is parallel to holding up a piece of Jell-O box and saying that it detects this shape property" (CE 382-383). And this is made clearer when Dennett brings in the case of Sanborn and Chase for discussion when he refers to taste-detectors (presumably the taste buds) as M-detectors (542). Meanwhile, referring to M-property, Dennett adds: "[t]he only readily available way of saying what property M is is just to point to our M-detector and say that M is the shape property detected by this thing here. And that is just what we do when we seem to ostend, with the mental finger of inter intention, a quale or qualia-complex in our experience. We refer to a property via reference to our personal idiosyncratic capacity to respond to it" (541; see also CE 376, 382). M property, however, does not refer to the raw content of sensation. For it does not quite make sense to say that wave length of light, sound, surface

to be detected by some detector of sorts does not sit comfortably with his views of qualia at large. To Dennett, qualia (for instance, particular quale of osprey cry) is "[l]ogical constructs out of judgements [which] must be viewed as akin to theorists' fiction" (529). Hence, there is nothing in phenomenology besides judgement (CE 134, 366; BC 146).⁵² Consonant with the aforesaid, Dennett makes the following assertions.

We may 'point inwardly' to one of the deliverances of our idiosyncratic, proprietary property-detectors, but when we do, what are we pointing at? What does that deliverance itself consist of? Or what are its consciously apprehensible properties, if not just our banished friends the qualia? We must be careful here, for if we invoke an inner perceptual process in which we observe the deliverance with some *inner eye and thereby discern its properties*, we will be stepping back into the frying pan of the view according to which qualia are just ordinary properties of our inner states (542, emphasis added).

[T]he physical difference between someone's imagining a purple cow and imagining a green cow might be nothing more than the presence or absence of a particular zero or one in one of the brain's 'registers'.... Such a brute physical presence is all that it would take to anchor the sorts of *dispositional* differences between imagining a purple cow and imagining a green cow (543, emphasis added; see also BC 147, 151).

Shoemaker seems to go along with the natural but treacherous assumption that reactive dispositions must involve the person reacting to a quale, presented somehow to the reactor, and causing, by its presentation, the reaction. (*The given is then taken.*) For instance, here's how pain works: the pain-networks produce....the awfulness quale, which is then the very property to which 'one' reacts with abhorrence. My view is that this confuses cause and effect; it is the reactions that compose the 'introspectable property' and it is through reacting that one 'identifies' or 'recognizes' the property (MNM 927, emphasis added).

tactile, chemical of smell and taste contain complex information, so M-complex has to refer to qualia. This is reinforced by Dennett's calling the information bearing property *phenomenal* (542).

⁵² "You've fallen in a trap, along with a lot of others. You seem to think there's a difference between thinking (judging, deciding, being of the heartfelt opinion that) something seems pink to you and something really seeming pink to you. But there is no difference. There is no such phenomenon as really seeming – over and above the phenomenon of judging in one way or the other that something is the case....What there is, really, is just various events of content-fixation occurring in various parts at various times in the brain" (CE 364-365). "What qualia are, Otto, are just those complexes of dispositions...You seem to be referring to...homogeneous pink, but this is just how it seems to you, not how it is. That quale of yours is a character in good standing in the fictional world...but what it turns out to be in the real world in your brain is just a complex of dispositions" (CE 389). "I claim, then, that sensory qualities are nothing other than the dispositional properties of cerebral states to produce certain further effects in the very observers whose states they are" (BC 146; 143-144, 146-151; see also 535).

In view of the above, it appears quite implausible to reconcile viewing qualia as dispositional aftermath of judgement and viewing it concurrently as M property to be detected by some M-detector, e.g., taste bud (542). Even if this is only metaphorical, it still appears out of place. As alluded to in the excerpt above, it is not something given in order to be subsequently taken (or detected). But this awkward way of stretching the notion (of qualia) nonetheless appears intelligible when seen in context. Arguably, to demonstrate that ineffability is not absolute, Dennett invokes the *complexity* of phenomenal information for justification. But of course, this only works if there also exists some kind of device that 'recognizes,' 'identifies' or 'detects' this complexity which is used in turn to substantiate claim that qualia's ineffability is only practical owing to complexity of phenomenal information. However, the price Dennett pays for invoking this arguably spurious scaffold is that this confounds - more than sustains - his account of qualia generally.⁵³

More marginally, lets also consider issue tangential to our concern here. Dennett in attempting to underscore the complexity of M-property, employs phenomenal information property (pip) as stand in for qualia complexes. So, for instance, Dennett recasts the Maxwell coffee tasters to align it with present concern (with original intent intact). Hence, it is observed that "[b]oth Chase and Sanborn ought to wonder whether their pips [coffee qualia] have changed. Chase's speech shows

⁵³ Because Dennett's presentation of qualia as dispositional-cum-illusory-propensities does not seem to go well with its postulation as M property (or S property) that could also be simultaneously detected. For qualia is logical construct out of judgement, or figment of

that he is under the impression that his pips [coffee qualia] are unchanged.....Sanborn is under the impression that his pips are different" (542). In light of the above, it appears rather unusual how something that is mere *figment* of imagination (or fiction), *not in any way grounded in reality* to contain highly complex and idiosyncratic information contributing to ineffability.⁵⁴ Whence (or how) is this complexity derived? Presumably, there must be something that distinguishes it from other systems that does not yield complex qualia. But what actually makes the difference? Dennett has not addressed this.

Above notwithstanding, lets hereby scrutinize more closely points Dennett takes to refute the thesis that qualia is ineffable. To shed some lights, lets consider other familiar example where prediction is considered *practically* impossible. Nonlinear systems that follow chaotic dynamics exhibit complex behavior (random, erratic, aperiodic) that is unpredictable. Paradoxically, these chaotic behaviors emanate from simple systems that are essentially deterministic. However, in chaotic systems, miniscule imprecision or uncertainty in the specification of initial conditions,⁵⁵ is later exponentially amplified, resulting in complex behaviors that could not be ultimately predicted.

imagination. Mechanism of detection here seems to require postulating qualia presented in some sort of (Cartesian) theater awaiting detection, which Dennett himself seeks to overthrow.

⁵⁴ So, for instance, to Dennett, pip is some "complex property so highly informative that it practically defies verbal description" (543-544).

⁵⁵ Which is inescapable, for there would always remain some imprecision in measurements during experiments, rounding off errors in calculation, and no human nor computer's memory could handle calculation that involve infinity and so on (see, for instance, Peak and Frame 1994: 148-151).

Though long-term behaviors are chaotic, this impossibility of prediction is only practical, because complex behaviors are germinated in deterministic systems where future behavior is completely determined by current state of knowledge. In other words, "precise knowledge of the conditions of the system at one time allows us, at least *in principle*, to predict exactly the future behavior of that system" (Hilborn 2000: 3; emphasis added). So, not unlike osprey cry where ineffability is only practical due to complexity of information in S quale, unpredictability of non-linear system is in like manner, practical impossibility, for if we can know the initial conditions exactly, prediction is possible.

But what is the use (or rationale) of being concerned with practical predictability (mirroring practical ineffability in the case of osprey cry) of chaotic systems? Though certainly in this case the impossibility is only practical, the upshot is still that prediction is impossible. For instance, we could not predict whether say a hurricane would hit X a month from now,⁵⁶ and if it really happens to strike, it would do no good to tell victims that prediction of hurricane is in principle possible, or for that matter prediction is not absolutely impossible. Or consider the case of cancer, advanced cancer metastasis cannot be cured, but technically

⁵⁶The atmosphere or weather is a chaotic system. In fact, it is through the study of these systems, among others, that gives rise to the birth of chaos as respectable discipline. See, for example, Garnett (1997) for good introduction to chaos theory.

speaking, it could be obliterated if patients are given some very toxic or potent drugs. But this probably kills the patients even before it kills the malignant cancer cells. So, changing the way of speaking does not change the fact that patients still die of cancer. On this, it is instructive to see what Dennett himself says in his rebuttal of Block's look-up table:

Block claims that a huge look-up table could always 'in principle' provide the innards governing any behavioral regularities whatever....But as Alan Turing recognized when he proposed his notoriously behavioristic game, the Turing Test, this 'in principle' possibility is *not* really a possibility at all. A look-up table larger than the visible universe, accessed at speeds trillions of times in excess of the speed of light, is not a *serious possibility*, and nothing less than that would suffice (MNM 923, emphasis added).

Dennett's claims on the 'practical descriptiveness' of osprey cry appear to suffer from the same fate. Dennett says that "it would be a mistake to transform the fact that inevitably there is a limit to our capacity to describe things we experience into the supposition that there are absolutely indescribable properties in our experiences" (544). We could recast this in the context of the chaos theory: it would be a mistake to transform the fact that inevitably there is a limit to our capacity to [specify the initial conditions] into the supposition that there are absolutely [unpredictable chaotic complex behavior]. Surely, this ineffability/unpredictability is not absolute (but relative or practical), but as seen in the foregoing, this figurative way of speaking does not amount much because as Dennett alludes to above, "in principle possibility is not really a possibility at all." Admittedly, if practical unpredictability (or practical ineffability for that matter) is any substitute for real predictability, people would not have to die from hurricane (or cancer). People die from it precisely because it could not at the end

be predicted. Regardless of what is said, if nothing fundamental in *status quo* is altered, then the exercise appears futile.⁵⁷

So, we must be wary that even Dennett could establish that ineffability is only practical (which is certainly not uncontroversial, see below), it does not thereby follow that he has thus established anything of significance. The upshot is still that experiences are essentially ineffable. Take osprey cry for example. No amount of physical information (descriptions of it in bird books, physical examination of its chirp in terms of sound wave, descriptions from bird-lover friends, examinations of osprey's vocal cord) would make any difference. So, short of hearing the cry, there is no way one could acquire the experience.⁵⁸ Having said that, it is worth considering to what extent ineffability, the way Dennett would have it, is practical.

Lets draw on Dennett's Jello box to highlight the points to be made, utilizing M and M-detector as proxy for S and S-detector. With today's technology, it is

⁵⁷ As Dennett himself observes elsewhere, "the result of complexity theory show that there are many officially computable results that are not *practically* computable – the algorithms that are guaranteed to yield answer would take billions of years to run on the fastest conceivable computers" (Dennett 1989c: 1055). "[W]e have discovered many complex processes – such as the weather – that cannot be accurately simulated in real time (in time for weather *prediction*, for instance) by even the fastest, largest supercomputers currently in existence. (It is not that the equations governing the transitions are not understood. Even using what we know now is *impossible*.)" (IS 329, emphasis added).

⁵⁸ And so Dennett points out: "see that while the verbal descriptions are true, accurate and even poetically evocative - I decide I could do no better with a thousand words – they still fall short of capturing the qualia complex I have called S" (540).

perhaps not impossible to replicate (reconstruct) both M and M-detector. For the sake of argument, let's grant that this is plausible. If intuition is any guide, even if this is granted, it is not clear, however, how mere alleviation of (M or M-detector's) complexity itself could make the experience any less ineffable, or for that matter describable.⁵⁹ In other words, there is no presumption why dissolution of complexity *per se* would render the experiences any less ineffable. This could be seen more clearly if we could allow to imagine an extreme case: to super-intelligent Martians, information structure of M or M detector probably does not present to them insurmountable obstacles. Let's further assume, through their helping hands, humans are finally able to decode their abstruseness, to the extent that they become not any more complex than solving simple arithmetical problems. However, despite this superlative supposition, it is hard to imagine how the perplexity of ineffability is dissolved via stratagem of such nature.

In other words, there is no presumption why simpler structure *alleviates* ineffability whilst a more complex one *bolsters* it.⁶⁰ Even without invoking the excesses of Martians allegory,⁶¹ similar inference could be made. If history of

⁵⁹ Which ought to be the case if Dennett's juxtaposition of practical ineffability with complexity is along the right lines.

⁶⁰ Admittedly, arguments here are very much intuition-guided. Dennett's argument is necessarily no less so. Dennett's presumption that qualia is represented by some complex informational structure is by no means substantiated nor incontrovertible, hence a less demanding or more *laissez faire* presumptions ought not to have drastically altered the quintessence of the case. For there is no *a priori* necessity why simpler informational structures or patterns could not instantiate the kind of quale we see, whilst a more complex one could. Just like, for example, the chemical compositions and radio waves that result in taste and auditory sensations (qualia proper that is) are not themselves so inherently complex that preclude analysis altogether.

⁶¹ Which is not at all that outrageous, because what the Martians help accomplish, science would likely also eventually achieve in future. Only time stands in between.

science is any guide, it is not hard to conceive that structural patterns of these detectors (in the brain) would become describable one day, but the same presumption does not seem to apply for qualitative experiences. Because, if at present, we could marvel at the electrico-chemical intricacies of synapses and neurons yet having no inkling whatsoever about how complexity (at least as it appears to us now) of these structures affect (or is the factor responsible for) ineffability, the prospect thereby of alleviating ineffability through abatement of complexity via further refinement of our mastery of these electrico-chemical processes in future (with the hope of making it less inscrutable and hence less complex), is perhaps grim and looks unpromising.⁶²

If this is not unsound, then ineffability of osprey cry is not simply a question of informational complexity. As Lormand aptly notes, “high sensitivity seems unnecessary for ineffability, because simplifying the information [i.e., M or S] does not alleviate the appearance of ineffability. If completely blind people have trouble understanding what visual experiences are like for someone with normal vision, they would appear to have the same sort of trouble understanding what visual experiences are like for someone capable only of detecting a few points of light without information about color, shape, motion, or depth” (Lormand 1994: 141; see also Seager 1999: 90). Complexity is likely not the issue because

⁶² If we could master the intricacy of our brain, mastery of the brain of other animals should not present a problem. But it is likely not the case that we could know what it is like to be a frog (even vulture or octopus), though *relatively* speaking, their brain structure is much simpler than ours. And if simplicity of structure does not make the private life of these animals any less ineffable, then

ineffability *seems* compatible with both complex and simplistic (relatively speaking that is) informational structures.

Hence, it is difficult to concur that question of ineffability is reducible simply to the question of practicality in information articulation. Compare this with the case in chaos system, unpredictability is *practical* impossibility precisely because if initial constraints could be overcome, then prediction is possible. By contrast, in the case of osprey cry, the same does not seem to apply. Because even if complexity of phenomenal information is ultimately surmounted, ineffability is (arguably) still not overcome. That being the case, by force of argument, it appears natural to conclude that ineffability (of osprey cry) is absolute. In other words, nothing short of experiencing the quale itself would one have any idea of what experiences of qualia is like. Above besides, consider also Dennett's extended argument below:

[t]his putative grainlessness, I hypothesize, is nothing but a sort of ...cognitive impenetrability...[it] is not absolute but itself plastic over time...[they] have been discovered to be variable and subject under training to decomposition, so what counts for an individual as the simple or atomic properties of experienced items is subject to variation with training....A swift and striking example of this is illustrated in...the guitar string. Pluck the bass or low E string open, and listen carefully to the sound. Does it have describable parts or is it one and whole and ineffably guitarish? Many will opt for the latter way of talking. Now pluck the open string again and carefully bring a finger down lightly over the octave fret to create a high 'harmonic.' Suddenly a new sound is heard: 'purer' somehow and of course an octave higher. Some people insist that this is an entirely novel sound, while others will describe the experience by saying 'the bottom fell out of the note' – leaving just the top. But then on a third open plucking one can hear, with surprising distinctness, the harmonic overtone that was isolated in the second plucking..... The difference in experience is striking, but the complexity apprehended on the third plucking was there all along. After all, it was by the complex pattern of

there is no reason to expect alleviation of complexity in the case of human's brain would make a difference. If this is so, then mere complexity is likely not the issue.

overtones that you were able to recognize the sound as that of a guitar rather than a lute or harpsichord (543).

Dennett tries to garner further support for his thesis by arguing that we could learn to distinguish or discern subtle nuances in experiences in what originally appears to be (what he characterizes as) qualia impenetrability in terms of “homogeneity,” “atomicity to analysis,” and “grainlessness,” hence reinforcing his original aim of overthrowing qualia’s ineffability.⁶³

However, generalizing qualia as describable based on this claim appears to stretch it slightly too far. Because if Dennett’s view is right, this likely implies that the congenitally deaf (or blind) could eventually learn to know what music (color) is like because ultimately, qualia is describable through later day training (or learning processes to make fine distinctions amongst qualitative content). This, of course, does not follow. Because the argument would not work even for people with normal phenomenal experiences, not to mention those without. Consider trying to describe the following account of red to someone who knows what red is but without knowledge of its fine distinctions: cadmium red, cardinal, carioeca, carmine, carnelian, castilian red, cerise, cherry, chinese red, cinnabar, claret, cohceinal, cranberry, crimson, crimson lake and so on. If one does not have the experience, not a “thousand words” (540) or any amount of eye training or

⁶³“Consider the results of ‘educating’ the palate of a wine taster, or ‘ear training’ for musicians. What had been ‘atomic’ or ‘unanalyzable’ becomes noticeably compound and describable; pairs that had been indistinguishable become distinguishable.....on a third open plucking one can hear, with surprising distinctness, the harmonic overtone that was isolated in the second plucking. The homogeneity and ineffability of the first experience is gone, replaced by a duality as ‘directly apprehensible’ and clearly describable as that of any chord” (543).

“educating” of subject (543) could possibly make any difference. In other words, all these later day drilling is *likely* to come to naught at the end.

All the same, conclusion of earlier analysis is even more relevant here, because we could only talk about (or make distinctions of) guitarish (or wine for wine tasters) repertoire if we already possess the experience. If this is not satisfied, no amount of talking nor relaying or describing help in making any difference (Seager 1999: 89-90, see also De Leon 2001: 122, 133). If one already has the experiences, no amount of telling is necessary (see also Raffman 1993: 132-145). This serves to run down Dennett’s idea of seeing describability in terms of secondary learning processes or training.

7.6 Intrinsicity

Dennett, by relying on his thought experiments on beer drinkers, phenol-thio-urea, and pill for curing loathing of cauliflower has provided rather cogent arguments that discredit the notion of non-relational intrinsic phenomenal property said to designate qualia. Having said that, it nonetheless appears perplexing, how intrinsic property *per se* could be employed to ascertain or deny the reality of anything. Dennett is fond of using money as illustration to undermine the notion of intrinsicity (534, IS 208, BC 328, RWEC 233, Dennett

2001i: 2). So, let's build on this and see what it ultimately amounts to when the argument is taken apart. Surely, value of money is relative or relational, derived largely from its utility as medium of exchange for goods. Determination of its value is also largely influenced by market fundamentals, besides the intervening hands of central banks.

Consider the following scenario. May is a postgraduate student in the United States and had luck smiling on her when she hit home US\$ 100 million jackpot, which made her instant ^Mbillionaire. Being ardent intellectual in neuroscientific research, she is naive when it comes to mundane economic matters, for it is the last thing she bothers to hold an interest. From her experiences, however, she gathered that the exchange rate between currencies was somewhat fixed as she almost always got similar rate of exchange for currencies traded. Oblivious to the forces underlying determination of currency values, she somehow believed there existed absolute worth that explained or accounted for the differences in exchange rates.

So, quite naively and obviously mistaken, she believed in the intrinsic worth of currencies, the existence of some absolute innate values that define the exchange rate. Upon coming back to Malaysia, she kept all money in banks, denominated in RM. The 1997 Asian financial crisis wreaked havoc to the currency market in Asia, Malaysia not excluded. May was shocked by the almost overnight sharp

depreciation of her savings vis-à-vis the US\$. The shudder, however, opens her eyes up to fluctuations in money market and rudely awakened her to the nonexistence of absolute (or immutable value) of money. Value of currencies, she realizes, is relative and depends on a set of market and nonmarket parameters. But how does May's realization of the relative nature of money (by no means intrinsic nor absolute) change anything? Let's see what Dennett himself says on this.

Is economic value real? Of course it is. Are things more expensive now, or is it just inflation? Yes, sometimes, when the background conditions can be held constant or tracked in ways we understand ('in 1960 dollars'), we can make perfectly good sense of this question, and answer it. Sometimes, however, the circumstances have changed so much that there is just no principled way of settling what would count as the correct answer. Does a live goat cost more or less today than it did in Julius Caesar's Rome? *Economic value doesn't have to be 'intrinsic' or 'absolute' to be real...* (Dennett 2000a: 367-368, emphasis added).

If this is so, there is then no reason why we must treat qualia differently.

Dennett would have us believed that if qualia cannot possess intrinsic qualities but some extrinsic and relational properties, this warrants it for quinning. But if one (as is May) does not quine the value of currency upon discovering that it is relational and non-intrinsic, why must the same not apply to qualia? Even more perplexing, if qualia is not intrinsic property, it means they are extrinsic or relational,⁶⁴ the very properties that are commonly associated with legitimate real entity. So, why Dennett still chooses to quine qualia, in spite of his claim that "economic value doesn't have to be intrinsic or absolute to be real" is disturbing.

⁶⁴ As Dennett maintains, if "change in reactivity amounts to or guarantees a change in the property, then those properties, those 'qualitative or phenomenal features', cease to be 'intrinsic' properties, and in fact become paradigmatically extrinsic, relational properties" (533).

By contrast, one may believe there is intrinsicity to ethical values. Or one may even believe its value relational (or derived). Either case, the issue whether moral value is susceptible for demolition thereof does not arise. There is moral value whether one believes it derived or assumes it exists intrinsically. Likewise, one may believe knowledge is intrinsically valuable or otherwise, but whatever one's commitment, the question that knowledge is thus quinned or that there is no value to knowledge is a nonissue. At one time, it may be fashionable and even credible to believe that motherly instinct is intrinsic (innate) of mothers, but with the discovery of genes, it has been shown, for instance, that mothers with impaired gene circumvent the function of motherly instincts.⁶⁵ But this shift in perspective from early allegiance of intrinsic maternal nature to the later non-intrinsic viewpoint surely does not in any way negate its existence.

So, we observe that it is the relational rather than existential (or ontological) issues that appear to be the bone of contention. As the case of currency makes clear, issue of intrinsicity leaves the question of the reality of monetary property untouched. It concerns more the question of intrinsicity in virtue of its relation to other things. So, it appears rather unusual how discussion of relations *per se* could in turn constitute the premise to quine qualia. Dennett may be right that intrinsicity is a tradition-bestowed property of qualia. But if the argument above

holds, it only shows that intrinsicity is a *flawed* property to ground qualia, because qualia appears unscathed nor invalidated though intrinsicity is overthrown.

7.7 Conclusion

In the final analysis, perhaps what's bewildering is Dennett's almost complete silence on the possibility of grounding qualia based on other yardstick besides those he singles out. That is, even though we grant that Dennett is right in undermining these quartet properties, there is no reason why qualia could not be grounded differently. It seems equally legitimate if we in fact choose to quine the properties rather than qualia as such, though, admittedly, it is forbiddingly difficult to say at present what qualia actually amounts to. Dennett, however, has not considered this possibility. All said, if arguments in this chapter sound, we would have more reasons to believe that Dennett's formulation of consciousness thesis flawed.

⁶⁵From experiments with mice, for instance, induced malfunctioning of certain genes caused mother rats to desert or not properly attending to their young (Ridely 1999: 215).