

An analytic-hermeneutic history of Consciousness

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A great strength of the analytic tradition in philosophy (I count myself among it) is its affiliation with the mathematical logic of Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Gödel, and Tarski: all graduate students are forced to learn its basics, and soon come to discipline their thoughts to fit its structures. This makes for a lingua franca, an admirable prevailing level of clarity and rigor, and interdisciplinary permeability with cognate fields sharing this affiliation. These all contribute to the continuing growth and dynamism of the global analytic-philosophical research community, which shows no sign of losing steam.

But mathematical logic is not theory-neutral. Its characteristic use of *truth* as the fundamental analysans for validity and entailment reflects its origins as a tool for representing the discourse of the *natural sciences*, which aim at the truth from ‘outside’ their subject-matter. And—though this would conflict with the ‘unity of science’ (Carnap 1928/1927, Oppenheim and Putnam 1958) characteristically embraced by the analytic tradition—perhaps the discourse of the ‘human’ sciences is fundamentally different.

After all, a disjuncture between ‘naturalistic’ and ‘humanistic’ discourse—less poetically, *physical* and *mental*—is the mainstay of the continental *hermeneutic* tradition (Schleiermacher 1834/1998, Dilthey 1883/1989, Gadamer 1976, Ricoeur 1981); and for the twentieth-century anglophone non-analytic philosopher Collingwood (1933/2005, 1946/1993), the ‘relation between the sciences of the body, or natural sciences, and the sciences of the mind[] is the relation inquiry into which ought to be substituted for the make-believe inquiry into the make-believe problem of ‘the relation between body and mind’ ’ (Collingwood 1942/92, 2.49). More specifically,

the social sciences typically require [] understanding [] what actions and experience mean to a person from the inside. We can understand physics or chemistry without knowing what it is like to be an electron, but understand[ing] people [requires] understanding [] how things are for them.

The required subjective empathetic understanding [] cannot [] be arrived at solely through the methods of the natural sciences. (Harman 1990a, 262)

Aimed at ‘subjective understanding’ of ‘how things are’, ‘from the inside’, for its subject-matter—an ‘empathetic’ or ‘simulative’ pretense of *being* the subject-matter—mental discourse essentially adopts an ‘interior’ viewpoint disjoint from the essential physical-discourse ‘exterior’ viewpoint.

The fundamental apparatus of mathematical logic does not represent viewpoint contrasts, and indeed is bound to the exterior viewpoint; bells and whistles will not change it (Hellie 2016, ETM). So if the hermeneuts are correct, mathematical logic is inadequate to represent discourse about the mental. But then the strength of analytic philosophy ramifies into a weakness of the analytic

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philosophy of mind: for if we have disciplined our thoughts to fit mathematical logic, we should avoid theorizing beyond its limits—and so, about the mind.

If we neglect the warning, we will presumably find ourselves restructuring pretheoretic mental discourse to fit the limitations of mathematical logic, in a procrustean-slash-sisyphian cycle: proposing novel descriptive schemata; adding epicycles to handle mounting doubts until the complexity becomes unmanageable; standing aside out of exhaustion, awaiting the opportunity to discard the worn out schema once a novelty is proposed; . . . —For observers of the postwar analytic philosophy of mind, this may ring a bell. So perhaps there is historical and philosophical illumination in giving the hermeneuts their day in court: granting their viewpoint-shifting ‘disunity of science’ in order to narrate our trajectory as they might see it (using our own idiom, however!).

So: disunity has to go somewhere, hermeneuts say. They immediately spot our perpetual readiness to ransom the unity of science by disintegrating the mind (Place 1956; Block and Fodor 1972; Shoemaker 1975a; Block 1978, 1995; Fodor 1991; Chalmers 1996): for its valuable causal difference-making, we credit a ‘functional’ or ‘computational’ or ‘structural’ side; for the nuisance mind–body problem, we blame a ‘phenomenal’ or ‘qualitative’ or ‘experiential’ or ‘what-it’s-like-ish’ side—*Consciousness* (the ‘big-C’ is a convention from Wilson 2014 for marking a suspect philosophical transmutation of a perfectly fine ‘little-c’ concept). And the rest is a tale of a rug with an out-of-place bump.

After an initial sketch of theoretical pressures behind, and resulting from, this disintegration, I outline a sequence of four difficulties for Consciousness. Each era in a roughly ‘quindecadal’ sequence discovers the corresponding difficulty: while the reaction is constrained to protect the ‘unity of science’, variation within this constraint accounts for continuity and change across the eras. A running commentary draws philosophical morals; a pessimistic but brief conclusion points to the future.

1 Analytic hermeneutics of mind

1.1 Explanatory permeability, semantic isolation

The basic challenge for the philosophy of mind, perhaps, is to accommodate two inescapable relations between mental and physical discourse.

One is their *explanatory permeability* with respect to one another: mental explanantes explain physical explananda, and physical explanantes explain mental explananda. Consider an example:

A man enters the room, drawing Rance’s gaze: Rance then quickly leaps to his feet, turns in a circle five times (Harman 1990a, 262), and sits back down. Why?

Well, the fact that the man has entered the room is *evident* to Rance; *recognizing* the man as the mayor, Rance *believes* that the mayor has entered the room; Rance *identifies* as a member of the Conservative Radical Alliance, which he *ritualizes* in part through salute when high CRA officials enter the room; Rance *believes* that the mayor is a high CRA official, and so *believes* that a high CRA official has entered the room, and so *proceeds under an intention* to perform the CRA salute; according to Rance’s *knowhow*, to perform the CRA salute ritual, one leaps to one’s feet, turns in a circle five times, and sits back down;

so, instrumentally to the intention to salute, Rance *proceeds under an intention* to leap to his feet, turn in a circle five times, and sit back down.

Learning this goes a long way toward dispelling the mystery about Rance's behavioral response to the sensory stimulus.

Another inescapable relation between mental and physical discourse is their *semantic isolation* from one another: between the manners in which we think about the physical and about the mental is a wide gap. Our knowledge of bat anatomy does not suffice for us to know what it is like to be a bat (Nagel 1974). Black-and-White Mary's great physical knowledge does not suffice for her to know what it is like to see a red thing (Jackson 1982). And of course states of possessing evidence are not alone: physical knowledge will not suffice for knowledge of what it is like to *know how* to persuade people to buy real estate, or to *regret* a missed opportunity, or to go forward under an *intention* to dive from a high platform, or to *identify* as Japanese, or to be *uncertain* whether Chicago is by a lake, or to have the complement of *beliefs* of a Koranic scholar—or, for that matter, to be in any of Rance's evidential, recognitional, belief, identification, ritualization, intention, or knowhow states. Thinking about a certain mental state appears to require knowing what it is like to be in it; but the latter appears not to be 'merely implicit' in physical knowledge, and to instead involve an entirely different manner of thinking. In particular, while a purely physical explanatory chain might be built tracing from Rance's initial to final state, this would remove mystery in a different way, by subsuming Rance's behavior under causal law rather than by making it rationally intelligible.

1.2 A metadualist account

A discourse is *descriptive* if it adopts an exterior viewpoint on its subject-matter, aiming for the truth about it (descriptive-discourse belief 'distinguishes possible worlds', in the well-known image: Stalnaker 1970, 1984). *Descriptivism* is the 'unity of science'-style doctrine that all discourse is descriptive. In 'metapsychology' (the 'psychology of psychology', concerned with the meaning of psychological discourse), a 'monistic' position maintains that psychological discourse is descriptive, while a 'dualistic' position denies it—*metamonism* and *metadualism*, for short.

Descriptivism requires metamonism. The contrasting broadly hermeneutic metadualism I will discuss treats mental discourse as akin to *hypothesis*, or *pretense*. More specifically, to believe that Rance intends to perform the CRA salute is to purport, *qua* Rance, to perform the CRA salute: to shift away from one's 'root' mental state and enter a hypothetical mental state, intended to serve as Rance's point of view, which harbors the intention to perform the CRA salute. (If the believer is Rance himself, the purport is 'non-strict': instead, his belief that he has the intention is just the having of it.)

Not all hypothetical discourse is mental discourse (the fictional, the conditional, 'free pretense'). What promotes a hypothesis to *purport-qua-Rance*? Assuming Rance to be 'like me in being [a] thinker[], [to] possess the same fundamental cognitive capacities and propensities that I do', 'I place myself in what I take to be his initial state by imagining the world as it would appear from his point of view and I then deliberate, reason and reflect' (Heal 1986, 13–14). Beginning

with my own mental state, I mutate it minimally until it conforms with what I take to be ‘evident’, or ‘given’ to Rance—so that it bears, as a set of basic perceptual beliefs, the salient truths about the evolving sensible qualities of, and relations between, Rance’s body, and its environment.

The account of *semantic isolation* is straightforward: belief in physical discourse is root-mental-state description, involving no pretense; nothing beyond more root-mental state description—no pretense—is implicit.

In the account of *explanatory permeability*, a central role goes to *evidence*, the ‘given’. Because evidence is both true and believed, it is available as a ‘pivot’ or ‘fixed point’ in shifting between physical and mental discourse. So if a chain of purely mental explanation, progressing within an environment of purport-*qua*-Rance, devolves to the given, it may then jump from the hypothetical mental state to the root mental state, and continue as a root-level, physical explanatory chain (Hellie 2017b).

1.3 Pressures on metamorphism

1.3.1 The fundamental tension

The metamorphist lacks the theoretical resource of shifts of view: all discourse is descriptive, picturing the world from within the root mental state. *Explanatory permeability* is therefore analyzed as *causal interdependence*: ‘cause is the cement of the universe; the concept of cause is what holds together our picture of the universe, a picture that would otherwise disintegrate into a diptych of the mental and the physical’ (Davidson 1980b, xv). *Cognitive isolation* is analyzed in terms of heterogeneity in the logical form of descriptive discourse: of a *descriptive independence* between mental-describing and physical-describing discourse (Levine 1983). And (bracketing delicacies in metaphysics of causation) *descriptive independence* yields ‘epiphenomenalism’ (compare Jackson 1982, 133; Lewis 1988, 282–5; Chalmers 1996, 156)—against *causal interdependence*.

This *fundamental tension for metamorphism* admits three responses. An *isolationist* abandonment of *explanatory permeability* has been at best marginal (perhaps Churchland 1981): I set it to the side. A *permeabilist* abandonment of *semantic isolationism* (behaviorism, identity theory, functionalism) typically appears early in a ‘wave of reductionist euphoria’ (Nagel 1974, 435), losing its allure once the air clears. Dialectically most stable is *disintegrationism*, combining *permeabilism* and *isolationism* by postulating ‘two quite distinct concepts of mind’:

The [] *phenomenal* concept of mind[] as conscious experience, and of a mental state as a consciously experienced mental state[; and] the *psychological* concept of mind [] as the causal or explanatory basis for behavior[, on which] it matters little whether a mental state has a conscious quality or not. []

On the phenomenal concept, mind is characterized by the way it *feels*. On the psychological concept, mind is characterized by what it *does*. There should be no question of competition between these two notions of mind. Neither of them is *the* correct analysis of mind. They cover different phenomena, both of which are quite real. It is only the fact that both are called ‘mind’ that gives an appearance of competition. (Chalmers 1996, 10)

Our picture of the *mental* disintegrates into a diptych of the (explanatorily and semantically permeable) ‘psychological’ and the (explanatorily and semantically isolated) ‘phenomenal’ (‘Consciousness’)—and so then does our picture of the *world*, if not in exactly the way that worried Davidson.

1.3.2 The *unity problem*

Unfortunately, this faces the following *unity problem*. Mental explanation—*rationalization*—removes mystery by making sense of what it is like for one, by making one rationally intelligible: rationalization does not fall apart, revealing independent ‘explanatory’ and ‘what it is like’ components; instead, what it *is* to be a rationalization just *is* to be an explanation in terms of what it is like—*explanatory permeability* and *semantic isolation* are ‘unified’ in rationalization (‘it is very hard to see how to make sense of the analogue of spectrum inversion with respect to nonqualitative states’: Block 1978, 304).

Disintegrationism taken neat maintains that we picture the world as including distinct psychological and phenomenal copies of *all* mental features—for example, of knowledge how to persuade people to buy real estate. If so, we can describe circumstances in which, while Alex has both kinds of this knowhow and Fred has neither, Ruth has only the ‘psychological’ kind, and Belkis only the ‘phenomenal’ kind.

We explain Alex’s and Ruth’s success in persuading real-estate buyers, in contrast with Fred’s and Belkis’s failures, by contrasts in their psychological-knowhow: so, according to the disintegrationist, we have psychological explanations of this contrast. And yet we find cross-cutting contrasts in what it is like: what it is like for Alex and Belkis in respect of their possession of phenomenal-knowhow is the same, and contrasts with what it is like for Ruth and Fred in this respect: so Ruth’s success and Belkis’s failure are rationally unintelligible. But then we have no psychological explanation after all: a contradiction.

1.3.3 The received view

This *unity problem* is largely neglected: instead of the above ‘overlapping vocabulary’ approach, disintegrationists have generally opted for the ‘separate vocabulary’ approach exemplified by the ‘functionalism-plus-qualia’ *received view* of mental discourse, prevailing through the 1970s and 1980s and still casting a long shadow.

The received view synthesizes two components. First, a conception of *qualia* tracing to Schlick 1932/1979 and thence Russell 1910–11, as the ‘stuffing’ for the ‘structures’ built in our theories (compare Livingston 2004, chh. 2–3): phenomenal discourse encodes our ‘direct’ or ‘revelatory’ grasp (by way of an ‘ineffable’ relation of ‘acquaintance’: compare Kripke 1972/1980; Dennett 1988; Lewis 1995; Chalmers 2003; Hawthorne 2006; Stalnaker 2008, ch. 4) with these ‘intrinsic’ and ‘qualitative’ mental properties.

Unfortunately for Schlick, we do not, in fact, picture the world as containing any mental qualities. Still, this is easy to lose track of, because of what I call the *evidence conflation*. Evidence, recall, is true, believed, and concerns salient sensible qualities (including relations). The *subject-matter* of evidence, sensible qualities, is ‘given’, and the subject-matter of descriptive discourse,

but the *possession* of evidence—the harboring of ‘appearances’—is mental. Accustomed to using evidence as a pivot between viewpoints, we easily ascribe aspects of one side to the other, treating sensible qualities as mental and appearances as described: boundaries between the sides thus eroded, they blur into one as the archetype of *qualia*—qualities serving as appearances, both mental and given.

The second component of the received view is a *functional* conception of rationalizing discourse developed by Putnam (1960) and Davidson (1963), as pertaining to the abstract causal structures bridging sensory stimulation and behavioral response: all consideration of rationalizing matters is assigned to psychological discourse, which conveys an ‘indirect’ or ‘occlusive’ grasp of its subject-matter, by way of a ‘mode of presentation’ specified in ‘causal-structural’ or ‘functional’ terms, our familiarity with which is implicit in our endorsement of ‘folk psychology’. *Descriptive independence* results from the logical gap between relations of acquaintance and functional modes of presentation.

By segregating the concerns of phenomenal and psychological discourse, the received view is able to deflect the unity problem: rather than picturing the world as including distinct psychological and phenomenal copies of *all* mental features, that holds for *none*. In particular, knowhow is exclusively psychological, never phenomenal. But then *descriptive independence* does not predict that Belkis’s and Ruth’s phenomenal-knowhow is misaligned with their explanatory knowhow—avoiding the consequence that their actions are rationally unintelligible, and, in turn, the contradiction.

2 Historical overview of ‘Consciousness’

The received view is not, ultimately, satisfactory. Arguably, the story of ‘folk psychology’ is far less plausible than its simulationist competitor (Heal 1986)—but I set this aside in order to focus on the phenomenal (‘Consciousness’) region. The literature here, as I will narrate, has been driven by four difficulties, coming to prominence in the following chronological order.

First, the *conflation problem*: Schlickean mental qualities result from the *evidence conflation*. Warnings in Ryle 1949 are successively mutated beyond recognition in Place 1956, Smart 1959, and Lewis 1966, opening the door to qualia in Nagel 1970 and Kripke 1972/1980; rediscovered in a weakened form in Harman 1990b and weakened still further in Tye 1992, the outcome is contemporary *representationalism*.

Second, the *semantic problem*: *semantic isolation* results from metadualistic shifts of view, not acquaintance. Part of the *conflation problem* is a special case, accounting for the previous era’s mutations; the general problem is raised tentatively by Nagel 1974 and disarmed in Jackson 1982.

Third, the *ineffability problem*: losing any explanatory role, qualia are pushed out of ordinary discourse, becoming ‘ineffable’ (Shoemaker 1982). From the occlusion of the *conflation problem* and disarming of the *semantic problem* came an increasingly freewheeling conceptualization of qualia (Shoemaker 1975a,b; Block 1978; Levine 1983): ineffability was thus neglected as a problem until Dennett 1988 and Lewis 1988, but soon then became foundational to the qualia-toppling

conflation problem revival in Harman 1990b.

Fourth, the *separation problem*: it is implausible, and ultimately unsustainable, to separate rationalizing discourse from the reach of *semantic isolation*. Once representationalism supplants the received view, this difficulty is quickly noticed (Siewert 1998; Horgan and Tienson 2002; Chalmers 2004).

For the metadualist, the *semantic problem* is most fundamental: its datum is that mental discourse is not descriptive, in direct conflict with metamonism. Bound to the *semantic problem*, metamonists choose between the ‘overlap’ and ‘separatist’ variants: separatists avoid the *unity problem* by shouldering the *separation problem*; the received-view strategy here faces the *conflation problem* and then the *ineffability problem*. While dropping qualia for representationalism resolves the *conflation problem*, and then the *ineffability* and *separation problems*, the resulting overlap-disintegrationism runs back into the *unity problem*.

3 Ushering in qualia (the *conflation problem*: to 1970)

3.1 Ghostbusting

Monumental, wild, subtle, and enigmatic, Ryle’s *The Concept of Mind* (Ryle 1949) is the foundational work of the literature. Though long thought an ‘analytic behaviorist’ *permeabilist*, Ryle is no metamonist, elsewhere denying the universality of descriptive discourse (Ryle 1950, 250–2: compare Livingston 2004, 4.I–III). Instead, Ryle presses the *conflation problem* against the Schlickean approach: labeled the ‘official doctrine’ (Ryle 1949, 11), its image of mental ‘stuffing’ in a physical ‘structure’ is derided as the ‘dogma’ of the ‘ghost in the machine’ (15–16): a ‘philosopher’s myth’, to be dissolved by ‘rectify[ing] the logic of mental-conduct concepts’ (16).

Ryle presses the *conflation problem*. On the *subject-matter* side comes *nonmental*: ‘there is nothing ‘mental’ about sensations’ (204): sensation is unnecessary for mentality or even ‘consciousness’ (‘if by ‘stream of consciousness’ were meant ‘series of sensations’, then from a mere inventory of the contents of such a stream there would be no possibility of deciding whether the creature that had these sensations was an animal or a human being; an idiot, a lunatic or a sane man’: 204–5); and it is insufficient (‘a person can be said to be unconscious of a sensation, when he pays no heed to it’: 157; compare Rosenthal 1986, Block 2011).

On the *possession* side comes *expressive*: ‘appearance’-discourse expresses possession of perceptual evidence (‘Talking about looks, sounds and smells [] is already talking about common objects, since it is applying learned perception recipes for the typical appearances of common objects to whatever one is trying to make out at the moment’: 219; compare Hellie 2010, 107, Hellie 2011, 159–60); yielding the *special semantic problem*: such discourse does not descriptively encode acquaintance with ‘appearances’ or ‘representational properties’ (compare Hellie 2013, 314n7).

3.2 Absence of heed

Rectification complete, Ryle exits the stage: this theoretical quietism soon proves a vulnerability, facilitating misinterpretation by Ryle's metamethodologically-inclined students, Place and Smart (compare [Livingston 2004](#), 4.IV–V).

Place's 'The concept of heed' ([Place 1954](#)) frames Ryle as an analytic behaviorist: locally, for the alleged rationalizing subregion, the right view ('in the case of cognitive [] and volitional concepts[,] an analysis in terms of dispositions to behave [] is fundamentally sound': 44): this local *permeabilism* sets a paradigm ('any theory [] is compatible with a dispositional analysis of mental states other than experiences' [Lewis 1966](#), 102n8; 'functional[] or intentional states[] could be ascribed to [] automata [] that experienced nothing': [Nagel 1974](#), 436; 'beliefs seem to be supervenient on functional organization in ways that qualia are not': [Block 1978](#), 304; 'Dividing and conquering—concentrating on intentionality and ignoring consciousness—has proved [] remarkably successful [] so far': [Fodor 1991](#), 12).

But, rejecting an imputed 'dispositional analysis of consciousness and heed concepts generally' (254), 'The concept of heed' goes on offense. (1) Asserting the negation of *nonmental (insufficiency)* ('to have a sensation itself entails paying at least some heed to the sensation'; 'Sensations, as we have seen, do not exist independently of our consciousness of them': 250, 252), and apparently thinking of sensations as bundling in their own heedings, Place extracts a vicious regress from the dispositional analysis ('to be disposed to react to a sensation therefore would be to be disposed to react to one's consciousness of that sensation': 252). (2) While on the dispositional analysis, 'it should be logically impossible for us to describe *what it is like* to be conscious of something', we instead do so 'continuously' (252, my emphasis); a dispositionalist simulacrum of the *expressive* treatment is brushed aside (253). Behaviorism out, the 'identity theory' secures *explanatory permeability* (255).

The sequel, 'Is consciousness a brain process?' ([Place 1956](#)) goes on defense, addressing *semantic isolation* ('I am not claiming that statements about sensations and mental images are reducible to or analyzable into statements about brain processes, in the way that 'cognition statements' are analyzable into statements about behavior': 44–5), with a broadly 'verificationist' story of the modes of presentation ('it would be necessary to show that the introspective observations reported by the subject can be accounted for in terms of processes which [] have occurred in his brain': 48). Residual concern is attributed to a 'phenomenological fallacy' (49), where a 'green after-image' is literally green: Place sidesteps the *special semantic problem* by mutating *expressive* ('when we describe the after-image as green[], we are saying that we are having the sort of experience which we normally have when[] looking at a green patch of light': 49).

Soon afterward, Smart's 'Sensations and brain processes' seeks to present the doctrine of [Place 1956](#) 'in a more nearly unobjectionable form' ([Smart 1959](#), 141n1). Where Place *attacks* Ryle on *nonmental*, Smart just ignores the distinction between the sensation and the 'heeding' or 'consciousness' of it, offering as examples of 'states of consciousness' 'visual, auditory, and tactual sensations, [] aches and pains' (142). Treating *semantic isolation* moves Smart further from the *special semantic problem*, mutating *Place-expressive* into the famous 'topic-neutral' analy-

sis: ‘When a person says, ‘I see a yellowish-orange after-image’, he is saying something like this: ‘*There is something going on which is like what is going on when [] I really see an orange*’ ’ (149).

3.3 Ghostbusting goes bust

The chain of transmission runs next through David Lewis’s still agenda-setting ‘An argument for the identity theory’ (Lewis 1966), in which Smart 1959-like rhetoric and Putnam 1960-like apparatus are filtered through Lewis’s career-guiding, Carnap (1928/1927, 1947/1956)-tinged metamorphism (Hellie 2017a).

Mutating *Smart-expressive* (via ‘elaboration and generalization’: Lewis 1966, 102) swaps Schlickean acquaintance for ‘analytic functionalist’ modes of presentation (‘the definitive characteristic of any experience as such is its causal role’: 102); the path back to *nonmental* is obliterated by replacing ‘consciousness’ or ‘heed’ or ‘sensation’ with the Carnapean ‘experience’. On behalf of analytic functionalism comes *explanatory permeability*, put up to *descriptive interdependence* (‘it inherits the behaviorist discovery that the (ostensibly) causal connections between an experience and its typical occasions and manifestations [have] analytic necessity’: 103); a concluding nod to ‘the dualism of the common man’ (106) exhausts Lewis’s attention to *semantic isolation*—until Lewis 1983b.

4 The age of qualia (the *semantic problem*: 1970–1982)

4.1 The return of Schlick

Analytic functionalism would be soon afterward taken up by Putnam (1967) and Armstrong (1968) (compare Dennett 1969; Harman 1973)—a short-lived reign of *permeabilism*, inevitably renewing attention to *semantic isolation*.

Resistance to the Schlickean strategy for interpreting *semantic isolation* as *descriptive independence* had come from Ryle’s *conflation problem*—by now off the stage: thanks, ironically, to Place, Smart, and Lewis. Ready to stage for a Schlickean revival, its foundational metamonomistic semantical program (Carnap 1942, 1947/1956) had seen a decade of great technical progress (Kripke 1959; Montague 1960, 1970; Lewis 1970). Interpretation of *semantic isolation* again in need, Schlickeanism and *descriptive independence* come roaring back, now framed with great sophistication.

Descriptive independence predicts the coherence of phenomenal permutation across functional constancy, whether by varying phenomenal characterization (‘spectral inversion’) or withholding it entirely (‘zombies’): neoSchlickeans, bound to the metamonomist interpretation of *semantic isolation* as *descriptive independence*, widely purport to intuit this coherence (Nagel 1970, esp. 396–7, 397n2, 401–2, 402n4; Kripke 1972/1980, 148–53; and also Block and Fodor 1972; Kirk 1974; Shoemaker 1975a,b).

4.2 Palace rebellion

While Nagel (1970) was a pioneer neoSchlickian, his protean ‘What is it like to be a bat?’ (Nagel 1974) works to strip away theory, elaborating *semantic isolation* ‘en plein air’ (rather than interpreted as *descriptive independence*), via attitudes toward *what it is like* (precursors: Ryle 1949, 56–7, 175; Farrell 1950, 181–8, esp. 183; Place 1954, 252; Smart 1959, 150–1). Implicit in the discussion is the (*general*) *semantic problem*.

At the apparent crux, Nagel announces—surprisingly, perhaps—‘my point[] is not that we cannot *know* what it is like to be a bat’ (442n8). Instead—more surprisingly still, perhaps—the central point is revealed as *metadualism*: ‘even to form a *conception* of what it is like to be a bat’ ‘and a fortiori to know what it is like’, ‘one must take up the bat’s point of view’ (442n8). But Nagel’s early metamorphism pushes back (‘My realism about the subjective domain in all its forms implies a belief in the existence of facts beyond the reach of human concepts’: 441; lamenting being ‘unequipped to think about [] experience [] without taking up the point of view of the experiential subject’, Nagel issues ‘a challenge to [] devise [] an objective phenomenology not dependent on empathy or the imagination’: 449), yielding an unsettled, roiling trajectory.

4.3 Order restored

Jackson’s ‘Epiphenomenal qualia’ (Jackson 1982), worried at this instability, restores order (‘despite my dissociations to come, I am much indebted to [Nagel 1974]’; ‘the emphasis changes through the article’: 131n10), collapsing the pretheoretic *semantic isolation* back into the neoSchlickian *descriptive independence* in three moves.

(1) The *semantic problem* is suppressed, using fresh work on self-location to misinterpret, and then marginalize, Nagel’s ‘point of view’ talk (‘No amount of knowledge about Fred, be it physical or not, amounts to knowledge ‘from the inside’ concerning Fred. We are not Fred. There is thus a whole set of items of knowledge expressed by forms of worlds like ‘that it is *I myself* who is ...’ which Fred has and we simply cannot have because we are not him’—‘Knowledge *de se* in the sense of [Lewis 1979]’: 132, 132n11); (2) ignorance of what it is like becomes unspecificity in descriptive belief (‘there is something *about* his experience, a property of it, of which we were left ignorant’: 132); (3) the meaning of ‘qualia’ is enriched: alongside existing neoSchlickian resonances, it now applies to the subject-matter of the above unspecificity (a ‘qualia freak’ thinks ‘there are certain features of the bodily sensations especially, but also of certain perceptual experiences, which no amount of physical information includes’: 127; prefigured by Block 1978, 281). Ignorance of what it is like despite physical belief—*semantic isolation*—becomes uncertainty about qualia despite physical belief—requiring *descriptive independence*.

The palace rebellion suppressed, confidence in the theoretical architecture of the age plateaus in its manifesto: Levine’s ‘Materialism and qualia: The explanatory gap’ (Levine 1983) propounds *descriptive independence* laid bare of surrounding clutter (downstream metaphysics; details of thought experiments; nuance in the conception of the physical or functional; backstopping Schlickian doctrine; terminological or conceptual stability in ‘qualia’-discourse).

5 The decline and fall of qualia (the *ineffability problem*: 1983–1990)

5.1 Ineffability embraced

Attention to the *conflation problem* leads to careful discrimination of the *subject-matter* and *possession* of evidence; that constraint lifted, the hybrid discourse of ‘qualia’ constructed by the neoSchlickeans rushes ahead with terminological wild abandon, folding in ‘what it’s like’ thanks to Jackson’s redefinition. Levine 1983 is an opulently festooned museum of period terminology (*subject-matter*: ‘pain’, ‘sensations of warmth and cold’, ‘sensation of pain’; *possession*: ‘the feeling of pain’, ‘having the feeling of pain’, ‘how pain feels’, ‘the feel of pain’, ‘feeling like pain’, ‘how it feels to be in a state’; *point of view*: ‘what it’s like to be in pain’ or ‘be in certain mental states’ or ‘have one’s C-fibers fire’; *experience*: ‘experience of pain’, ‘the particular way a qualitative state is experienced’, ‘essential features of qualitative sensory experiences’, ‘experiencing what it’s like to be in pain’; *conscious*: ‘being conscious’, ‘the phenomenon of consciousness’, ‘conscious experience’; *qualia*: ‘(visual/sensory) qualia’, ‘the qualitative side (character) of pain’, ‘having qualia’, ‘visual quality’, ‘the qualitative character of pain’ or of ‘C-fiber firing’; ‘phenomenal properties of pain’ or ‘associated with heat’).

Compounding the obstacles to interpretation radiating from this indiscipline, Schlickean doctrine itself demands obscurity of its proponents. Pretheoretically, all mental discourse is explanatorily permeable, so if all explanation is causal and all causal discourse is semantically permeable, there is no residue of pretheoretic mental discourse fit to account for *semantic isolation* (‘lessons couldn’t help’: Lewis 1988, 281). NeoSchlickeans acknowledge this: compare Shoemaker (1975b, 7) on *subject-matter* qualia: ‘It is far from clear that we can make sense of the notion of someone having a sensation phenomenally just like pain which he does not find unpleasant or distressing, and which he responds to in the way other people respond to tickling sensations. Because this raises rather special problems, I shall say no more about pains and tickles and the like in this paper’; and Shoemaker (1975a, 281) on *possession* qualia: ‘someone’s being appeared-blue-to [requires] that he be in the qualitative state that is, in him at that time, associated with visual stimulation by blue things[.]. But [] then being appeared-blue-to will not itself be a qualitative state[,] if spectrum inversion is possible’.

So qualia-discourse is *essentially neologistic* (compare Lewis 1995, 326). Acknowledging this, the neoSchlickeans embrace *disintegrationism* about the apparent ordinary language expressions used in qualia-discourse: despite appearance, they are used with an extraordinary ‘phenomenal sense’ (Shoemaker 1975a, 300–1, 1975b, 28–30; compare Jackson 1977; Lewis 1980; Shoemaker 1982, 365; Block 1995).

5.2 Mustering revanchists

Jackson’s redefinition notwithstanding, *semantic isolation* does not require neoSchlickean qualia. Still, the redefinition was successful enough that, by the late 1980s, analytic functionalists would

wage a revanchist campaign through attacks on qualia.

Dennett (1988) presses the *ineffability problem*, worrying that the unfamiliarity of qualia leaves it underdetermined how to cross-identify them (233–4), a conflict with neoSchlickean acquaintance (229); Lewis (1988) thinks the ineffability of qualia ‘peculiar’ (280–1): each pins qualia on pretheoretic opinion, and concludes celebrating the restoration of analytic functionalism through the transcendence of confusion (Dennett 1988, 227; Lewis 1995, 329).

The paper achieving the revanchist aim, however, is Harman’s ‘The intrinsic quality of experience’ (Harman 1990b)—by acknowledgement, a rehearsal of age-old wisdom (‘I will say little that is original and will for the most part merely elaborate points made many years ago’: 245).

The *ineffability problem* backstops Harman’s defense against *descriptive independence*: namely, refusal to comprehend which properties are addressed in the neoSchlickean spectral inversion thought-experiment (260). Regarding the theory-independent *semantic isolation*, however, little solace is available within the parameters of this chapter (‘it is unclear to me whether any satisfactory response is possible on behalf of’ those who understand descriptive discourse in terms of truth-conditions: 257; although a response I find obscure is sketched within a ‘functionalism that refers to the functions of concepts’: 257).

Fortunately, this unpromising treatment of the compelling objection to analytic functionalism is overshadowed by Harman’s revival of the *conflation problem*, attacking *subject-matter* qualia with *nonmental* (‘you do not experience any features as intrinsic features of your experience’; ‘the only features there to turn your attention to’ are external qualities: 251), yet another *expressive*-mutation attacks *possession*-qualia (a belief about appearances is ‘aware[ness] of an intentional feature of [] experience: [] that [] experience has a certain content’: 251)—yet again overlooking the *special semantic problem*.

6 After qualia (the *separation problem*: from 1990)

6.1 Attention to representation

Pioneering neoSchlickeans were, unsurprisingly, unimpressed, embracing the *ineffability problem* to deflect the *conflation problem* (‘Harman’s appeal to introspection [*nonmental*] is an error in philosophical method’: Block 1990, 73; from Shoemaker 1991: ‘the awareness we have of the intentional content of our experiences[] involves an awareness of qualia’: ‘none of the expressions [of] ordinary language [] ascrib[e] qualia’: 521; ‘concepts of [] qualia[] are theoretical concepts’: 521); and to rebut Harman on *semantic isolation* (from Block 1990: ‘Harman’s refutation of the inverted spectrum depends on rejecting the distinction [] between qualitative and intentional content’: 59; ‘the qualia realist says [Black-and-white Mary] acquires knowledge involving qualitative contents in addition to the intentional contents. This is the crux of the matter, and on this, Harman[]is silent’: 75).

But many new theorists would flock to Harman’s exorcism of the *evidence conflation*. According to these *representationalists*, (1) some mental properties are targets for ‘turning attention on’ or

‘introspection’ (with the neoSchlickeans; but fitting ill with *nonmental* and not Harman’s claim); (2) these targets are representational properties (against the neoSchlickeans; with *nonmental* but mutating *Harman-expressive*: ‘I am introspectively aware that I am undergoing a *visual experience* with a certain content[. This [] is [] felt []—it is given in introspection’: Tye 1992, 166; compare: Carruthers 2000; Byrne 2001; Kriegel 2002; Tye 2002; Chalmers 2004; Jackson 2004; Zahavi 2005; Siewert 2004; Levine 2006; Speaks 2009).

The metadualist demurs, raising the *general semantic problem* against (1) and the *special semantic problem* against (2).

6.2 The significance of representationalism

Bringing along the Place 1954-style paradigm of the rational-as-permeable, the first wave ‘reductive’ representationalists (Tye 1992, 1995, Dretske 1995, Lycan 1996, Byrne 2001) would trumpet the demise of *descriptive independence*. Of course, these ‘reductive representationalists’ had no more hope than their precursor analytic functionalists. Jackson’s redefinition was soon undone, as the pretheoretic explanandum, *semantic isolation*, was cut loose from its fallen theoretical explanans, qualia (Chalmers 1996, 377n38; Warfield 1999; Vinuesa 2000).

Representationalism would outlast its reductive origin: where the theoretical power of qualia collapses to a singularity (the *ineffability problem*), representation is the staff of philosophical theory. Facing up to the *separation problem* in the years around 2000, a ‘phenomenal intentionalism’ emerged (Siewert 1998; Horgan and Tienson 2002; Chalmers 2004), absorbing and centralizing strands of research that long stood aside from the received view to address first-order, pretheoretic explananda concerning representation and rationality (Evans 1982, Peacocke 1983; Snowdon 1980/1; Searle 1983). The received-view austerity regime lifted, philosophy of mind would rebuild links with neighbors (epistemology: Pryor 2000; metasemantics: Chalmers 2004, 2006), and germinate novel endogenous subliterations (Martin 2002, Siegel 2004; Hellie 2005, Morrison 2016; Phillips 2010, Lee 2014; Siegel 2006, Logue 2013). (Space prohibits exploring challenges here from the outstanding *semantic* and *unity problems*: compare Hellie 2014, 2017b).

6.3 The future for metamorphism

A laconic remark by pioneers of phenomenal intentionalism is striking: ‘separatism’—received-view separation of the phenomenal and the intentional—‘has been very popular in philosophy of mind in recent decades, and is still widely held’ (Horgan and Tienson 2002, 520).

Well yes. For although separatism creates the *ineffability* and *separation problems*, it is also the crucial bulwark from the *unity problem* faced by overlapping-vocabulary disintegrationists, rooted in the *descriptive independence* analysis of *semantic isolation*: still facing the *semantic problem* and thus committed to that analysis, phenomenal intentionalists must confront the *unity problem*.

Preliminary gestures have been made. Spectral inversion thought-experiments have been recast on behalf of ‘narrow content’ for phenomenal-intentional states of evidence about color (Chalmers 2004, sections 5–8), and extended to certain further sensible qualities (Thompson 2009); a few

widely-discussed cases of ‘reference’ in belief-content (natural kind terms, proper names, deictic nominals) have received comparable treatment (Horgan and Tienson 2002, 528–9). It remains to be seen, however, whether these treatments can be extended to cover the totality of mental discourse.

Having now for some time enjoyed the benefits of liberation from the received view, phenomenal intentionalists should address this cost: metamonists should hope they do so with vigor.

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