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## A Dualist Account of Phenomenal Concepts

### Abstract

The *phenomenal concept strategy* is considered a powerful response to anti-physicalist arguments. This physicalist strategy aims to provide a satisfactory account of dualist intuitions without being committed to ontological dualist conclusions. In this paper I first argue that physicalist accounts of phenomenal concepts fail to explain their cognitive role. Second, I develop an encapsulation account of phenomenal concepts that best explains their particularities. Finally, I argue that the encapsulation account, which features self-representing experiences, implies non-physical referents. Therefore, the account of phenomenal concepts that has strong explanatory power does not explain away dualist intuitions—rather, it reinforces dualism.

### 1. Introduction

Physicalism<sup>1</sup> is confronted with well-known anti-physicalist arguments such as the knowledge argument (Jackson 1982), the explanatory gap argument (Levine 1983), and the conceivability argument (Kripke 1972; Block 1980). These arguments are based on the phenomenal character of consciousness; the distinctive what-it-is-likeness of undergoing experiences such as seeing the blue sky, tasting red wine or being in pain. In the contemporary debate, the *phenomenal concept strategy* (Stoljar 2005) is considered one of the most powerful responses to these anti-physicalist arguments. The basic idea of this strategy is to rely on special concepts—*phenomenal concepts*—to explain why we draw dualist conclusions from these arguments. Hence, the goal of the phenomenal concept strategy is to give a satisfactory account of dualist intuitions without being committed to ontological dualist conclusions.

For this strategy to work, physicalists have to elaborate the crucial particularities of phenomenal concepts and demonstrate that these features can explain away the anti-physicalist arguments in a satisfactory way. For a first approximation, we can categorize accounts of phenomenal concepts roughly along two lines (see Balog 2009, 303f.): Some accounts take the particular features of phenomenal concepts to be found in their direct reference function and construe phenomenal concepts analogously to demonstrative concepts (e.g. Horgan 1984; Levin 2007). Others focus primarily on the special mode of presentation involved in phenomenal concepts and take phenomenal concepts to be constituted by experiences (e.g. Balog 2012; Block 2007; Papineau 2002).

In this chapter, I will analyze the explanatory power of the phenomenal concept strategy with regard to Jackson's knowledge argument. In his paper "Epiphenomenal Qualia" (1982), Jackson asks the reader to imagine the brilliant scientist Mary who has complete physical knowledge of human color vision but was born and raised in an achromatic environment and has never undergone a color-experience in her life. The crucial question is what happens when Mary enjoys her very first color-experience. On the basis of this thought experiment Jackson developed the knowledge argument against physicalism which can be formulated (in a strong version that aims at non-physical *facts*) as following:

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<sup>1</sup> Physicalism can be roughly defined as the thesis that the world is entirely physical. Physicalism can be stated in terms of *facts*, which would amount to the following claim: all facts about the world are physical, or necessitated by or supervenient on physical facts. Anti-physicalism denies this claim and often points at phenomenal facts as a paradigm case of non-physical facts.

Premise P1: Mary has complete physical knowledge about human color vision before her release.

Consequence C1: Therefore Mary knows all the physical facts about human color vision before her release

Premise P2: There is some (kind of) knowledge concerning facts about human color vision that Mary does not have before her release.

Consequence C2: Therefore (from (P2)): There are some facts about human color vision that Mary does not know before her release.

Consequence C3: Therefore (from (C1) and (C2)): There are non-physical facts about human color vision. (Nida-Rümelin 2009: 3)

In a first step, after briefly considering demonstrative accounts of phenomenal concepts, I will argue that especially constitutional accounts<sup>2</sup> offer a lot for a better understanding of the knowledge argument. In a second step, I will investigate the demands that the physicalist target imposes on a physicalist interpretation of the constitutional account. I will show that the Mary-scenario cannot be explained entirely in terms of physicalist constitutional accounts that draw upon empirical research, for example by holding that phenomenal concepts involve stored sensory templates. These accounts fail to explain how phenomenal concepts can carry introspectively accessible information about the phenomenal character of experiences. In a third step, I will propose a new interpretation of the constitutional account which meets the explanatory constraints best, but involves features that imply non-physical referents. In particular, the self-representing character of the experiences involved in the concept will turn out to imply non-physical referents. In this respect the defended account of phenomenal concepts differs significantly from those put forward by Papineau (2007), Balog (2012) and Block (2007)—it strengthens the dualist intuitions instead of explaining them away.

## 2. Analysis of the Phenomenal Concepts Strategy (PCS)

The phenomenal concept strategy (PCS) is put forward by *type-B-materialists* (Chalmers 1997). Type-B-materialists grant that there is an epistemic gap<sup>3</sup> involved in anti-physicalist arguments such as the knowledge argument, the explanatory gap, and the conceivability argument, but doubt the legitimacy of drawing an ontological conclusion from epistemic premises.<sup>4</sup> To explain the epistemic gap, the defenders of the PCS rely on phenomenal concepts. As highlighted in Loar's paper "Phenomenal States" (1990/1997), the starting point of the PCS is the Fregean idea that one single ontological entity can be known under different modes of presentation. Thus, this reply can be easily formulated on the level of concepts—a move that leads to the notion of phenomenal concepts on the one hand and the notion of

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<sup>2</sup> In the following, I subsume the quotational and the constitutional accounts under the label "constitutional account", since both accounts share the idea that a phenomenal concept is constituted by an experience—but this does not entail that the constitution needs to be understood as analogous to a quotation-relation. For example, one could count Lehrer's (2012) account of exemplar concepts as a version of the constitutional account, but Lehrer explicitly rejects the idea of quotation in exemplarization.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Mary's epistemic gap is illustrated by the fact that she cannot deduce a priori a phenomenal truth from all the physical truths.

<sup>4</sup> There are various ways of cashing out the idea that Mary gains new knowledge while holding that this does not entail an ontological dualist conclusion. If physicalism is construed as a thesis about *facts*, one might think that Mary gains knowledge of a new (fine-grained) proposition that is made true by some "old" fact she already knew. If one states physicalism in terms of *truths* (i.e. all truths about the world are necessitated by the complete physical truth) then one might choose another way. For example, assuming coarse-grained propositions (e.g. sets of possible worlds or Russellian propositions), one might hold that Mary gains only a new mental representation of an "old" truth. All of these responses question the inference from the epistemic premise (Mary lacks some kind of knowledge) to the ontological consequence of the knowledge argument.

physical concepts on the other. Once these two sorts of concepts have been established, defenders of the PCS present, for example, Jackson's Mary-scenario as analogous to standard cases of co-reference. According to the defenders of the PCS, the physically omniscient scientist Mary possesses all physical concepts when being confined to her achromatic environment, but acquires a new phenomenal concept when she enjoys a blue experience for the first time. The key move is the claim that the phenomenal and the physical concept of blue-experiences pick out one and the same physical referent.

Since defenders of the PCS aim to explain anti-physicalist arguments, they grant that phenomenal concepts cannot be deduced a priori from physical concepts. In other words, the phenomenal concepts Mary gains from her first color-experiences are *conceptually isolated* (Carruthers & Veillet 2007) from all other concepts she had before. Thus, defenders of the PCS must explain why phenomenal concepts are conceptually isolated from physical ones, despite the fact that they pick out the same alleged physical referents. Those who undertake the PCS point to important particularities of phenomenal concepts to provide such an explanation. Hence, according to those who defend the PCS, no metaphysical entities, such as non-physical properties, have to be invoked to explain Mary's new knowledge. It suffices to highlight the uniqueness of phenomenal concepts. Obviously, the crucial argumentative step of this strategy is to elaborate the decisive particularities of phenomenal concepts.

## 2.1. What the Knowledge Argument Teaches Us about Phenomenal Concepts

In the following, I confine myself to the knowledge argument because a careful investigation of Jackson's thought experiment helps to illustrate the crucial particularities of phenomenal concepts best. The key issue is the following: what happens when Mary leaves her achromatic environment, enjoys her very first color-experience, and thereby acquires a new concept, providing the foundation of her new knowledge?

In a first step, the knowledge argument illustrates the special acquisition condition of phenomenal concepts. Given the premises of the argument, the physically omniscient scientist possesses all physical concepts but is not able to deduce the relevant phenomenal concepts. Since Mary acquires a phenomenal concept when undergoing her first color-experience, the conceptual isolation of phenomenal concepts can be explained by the special acquisition condition: a person can gain a new phenomenal concept only under the condition of attentively undergoing the relevant experience.<sup>5</sup>

In a second step, the knowledge argument teaches us that Mary makes epistemic progress because of her first color-experience. A wide range of arguments have been developed to explain this epistemic step. Some hold that rather than acquiring new propositional knowledge, Mary only acquires some new abilities, such as the ability to remember,

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<sup>5</sup> It is subject to discussion whether this acquisition condition should be formulated as a necessary condition. One might, for example, think that Mary can gain a phenomenal concept of orange experiences by combining her phenomenal concept of red experiences and her phenomenal concept of yellow experiences and, hence, without necessarily undergoing an orange experience. A possible rejoinder is the following: in the case that this imaginative combination of *phenomenal* concepts should turn out as successful, Mary would create an instance of an orange experience and this would provide the basis for her new phenomenal concept. Unfortunately, for the lack of space, I cannot pursue this issue in detail here. So I just want to point out that this consideration has no impact on the knowledge argument, since Mary had no color experiences at all in her achromatic room.

Also Dennett (2007) formulated an argument against the view that undergoing an experience is a necessary condition for gaining a phenomenal concept by invoking Swamp-Mary's possession of phenomenal concepts. If one agrees with Dennett, no epistemic progress has to be explained in the Mary-scenario—it could be the case that Mary already possesses phenomenal concepts in her achromatic environment. This paper is not aimed at responding to this consideration. Thus, I confine myself to note that defenders of the PCS grant that the scientist makes epistemic progress by attentively enjoying her very first color-experience, and that she can acquire the corresponding concept only on the basis of this experience. This is what Balog labels the "Experience Thesis" (Balog 2009: 299), and defenders of the PCS commit themselves to this special acquisition condition.

recognize, and imagine color-experiences (Lewis 1988; Nemirow 2007). Others (e.g. Tye 2009) hold that Mary only gains new knowledge by acquaintance, which Tye deems object-knowledge.

In contrast, defenders of the PCS do not rely on different sorts of knowledge but rather focus on the concepts involved. The following examples illustrate the scientist's epistemic progress formulated on the level of concepts: Mary can use her new phenomenal concepts to think new thoughts such as "R (where the term "R" expresses the phenomenal concept of a red experience) is what it is like to look at red tomatoes!" By deploying these new concepts, the scientist can make new introspective judgments such as "Oh, I like R more than the experience I had when looking at the achromatic TV-screen!" Moreover, the subject possessing the concept can use it to recognize or imagine the relevant experience. Accordingly, the second particularity of phenomenal concepts can be stated as follows: phenomenal concepts play a specific cognitive role—they carry information<sup>6</sup> about the phenomenal character of experiences, and they make this information introspectively available to the subject possessing the concept.

To sum up, according to the knowledge argument, Mary's newly acquired phenomenal concepts exhibit two crucial particularities: they possess special acquisition-conditions and they play a unique cognitive role. Next, I analyze the question of whether physicalist accounts of phenomenal concepts can explain these two particularities in a satisfactory way.

## 2.2. Physicalist Accounts of Phenomenal Concepts

In recent literature, sophisticated physicalist accounts of phenomenal concepts have been developed.<sup>7</sup> One of the earliest versions of phenomenal concepts and the locus classicus for the PCS is Loar's *direct recognitional account* (1990/1997). Loar argues that phenomenal concepts refer directly to phenomenal properties (which are taken to be physical properties), and the very same phenomenal properties constitute the modes of presentation involved in the concepts. Other, subsequently developed accounts focus on one of these two features of phenomenal concepts.<sup>8</sup>

Theories that take phenomenal concepts as involving phenomenal properties are the constitutional accounts (Papineau 2002; Balog 2012) and accounts that concentrate on the distinct conceptual role of phenomenal concepts (Hill and McLaughlin 1999). These versions often draw on empirical research to explain away dualist intuitions. For example, Papineau (2007) holds that phenomenal concepts involve stored sensory templates analogous to perceptual concepts. Hill and McLaughlin suggest that distinct cognitive faculties are associated with physical and phenomenal concepts and, hence, no distinct reference-fixing properties need be invoked to explain away the anti-physicalist arguments.

Other accounts focus on the *direct reference* of phenomenal concepts to avoid different reference-fixing properties being involved in phenomenal and physical concepts. For

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<sup>6</sup> Philosophers like David Lewis (1988) may argue that in claiming that the phenomenal concept carries information, I have already given the game away to the anti-physicalist. Hence, I want to point out that I am using the notion of "information" here in a very weak sense. At this stage of my argument, I leave it open whether this notion implies that Mary gains new information or simply gains "old" information carried in a new way.

<sup>7</sup> For an anti-physicalist approach to phenomenal concepts see Chalmers (2003, 2007) and his notion of "direct pure phenomenal concepts".

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, for the lack of space, I can only give a rough categorization of the extensive literature on phenomenal concepts and I have to leave several details and accounts aside. More detailed characterizations of the numerous sophisticated accounts of the PCS can be found, e.g. in Balog (2009).

example, the causal-recognitional accounts (e.g. Tye 2003)<sup>9</sup> as well as demonstrative accounts (e.g. Horgan 1984; Levin 2007) concentrate on the direct reference function.

I start by briefly recalling why some philosophers think that demonstrative accounts cannot satisfactorily explain away dualist intuitions. Especially, demonstrative accounts that do not rely on a specific mode of presentation involved in the concept are taken to face numerous problems. A general problem of demonstrative accounts is highlighted by Chalmers (2003). He argues that Mary gains a demonstrative concept of the phenomenal character of her experience, but she also acquires what he calls a “pure phenomenal concept” of the same property, which involves a phenomenal mode of presentation. The point is that it is cognitively significant for Mary to find out that these two concepts co-refer. Thus, a pure phenomenal concept cannot be reduced to the demonstrative one. Tye (2009: 51) criticizes demonstrative accounts along another line: according to him, the puzzling question of how a brain state can be identical with a phenomenal state does not seem to be captured by the question of how a brain state can be identical with “*this*”. Balog (2009) also criticizes accounts that concentrate on the direct reference function of phenomenal concepts. According to her, these accounts leave too much distance between the concept and the experience, so that the problematic scenario of a basic application of a phenomenal concept in absence of the experience becomes conceivable.

In the next section, I will add to these considerations a new argument for the importance of the special mode of presentation involved in a phenomenal concept to capture the dualist intuitions. I will concentrate on the question of how a phenomenal concept can carry introspectively accessible information about the phenomenal character of experiences. I will argue that this question can neither be answered by pure demonstrative accounts nor by those physicalist constitutional accounts that deny the importance of a *specific* mode of presentation involved in the concept.

Here are some preliminary remarks to clarify the crucial notions that will be involved in my argumentation:

First, I take phenomenal concepts to be mental representations that can be constituents of thoughts. This means that I am not identifying concepts with modes of presentation. However, I think that a mode of presentation is involved in a phenomenal concept and that this is crucial. Note that this does not mean that I take phenomenal concepts as having modes of presentation in the sense that there could be Fregean cases of two modes of presentation of one single phenomenal concept. Rather I think that phenomenal concepts are mental representations that have modes of presentation as a constituent, i.e. properties that constitute the way the concept presents the referent to the subject. Thus, a specific mode of presentation is necessarily tied to a specific phenomenal concept.

Next, I want to point out that here I confine my analysis to *basic applications* of phenomenal concepts, i.e. phenomenal concepts which are applied from the first person perspective to occurrent experiences. This is because my investigation aims at shedding light on the *referents* of phenomenal concepts and does not aim at giving a full account of phenomenal concepts, including their non-basic applications.<sup>10</sup>

A final note on the notion of “phenomenal character”: there is something it is like for a subject to undergo an experience. What it is like to undergo an experience is commonly called

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<sup>9</sup> For Tye’s current position on phenomenal concepts, namely, that there are no phenomenal concepts which meet the physicalist requirements, see Tye (2009).

<sup>10</sup> When we think about experiences of other persons (or, as some philosophers hold, also in the case of thinking about our own future or past experiences), phenomenal concepts are applied in a non-basic (or “derivative”) way. There are different ways of fleshing out the relation between basic and non-basic applications of phenomenal concepts. On a weak interpretation, non-basic applications depend on previous experiences; on a stronger interpretation non-basic applications depend on previous basic applications of phenomenal concepts.

its “phenomenal character”. Hence, phenomenal characters are properties that are instantiated by experiences. It is plausible to assume that an experience has a specific phenomenal character essentially, i.e. if it had another phenomenal character it would be a different type of experience. I want to emphasize that I am not using the notion of “*phenomenal* characters” to presuppose that these are non-physical properties. At the beginning of my investigation, I leave open the possibility that the phenomenal characters might turn out to be physical properties, although the final outcome of my analysis will be that they are non-physical.

### 2.3. Physicalist Demands and Problems of the PCS

As noted before, pure demonstrative accounts of phenomenal concepts are taken to face various problems. The next question is: do physicalist constitutional accounts of phenomenal concepts face problems as well? I will analyze Papineau’s account as an exemplar of constitutional accounts that meet the physicalist demands. However, I think that the outcome of my analysis generalizes to all accounts that neglect the importance of the phenomenal mode of presentation involved in a phenomenal concept.

Defenders of the physicalist constitutional account claim that the explanatory particularities of phenomenal concepts can be found in their special nature. For example, Papineau (2002) developed a constitutional account suggesting that phenomenal concepts embed experiences just as quotation marks embed words. According to this view, the structure of the phenomenal concept can be described as follows: *this experience* ----, where the blank is supposed to be filled with an actual experience or a copy of an experience.

Recently Papineau (2007) made some changes to his description of phenomenal concepts, abstaining from the demonstrative aspect built into the concept. But he maintains that his current view of phenomenal concepts

(...) retains one crucial feature from my earlier quotational-indexical model, namely, that phenomenal reference to an experience will deploy an instance of the experience, and in this sense will *use* that experience in order to mention it. (123)

This view has it that phenomenal concepts *use* experiences. Papineau draws upon an empirical thesis about perceptual concepts to flesh out his version of phenomenal concepts:

We can think of perceptual concepts as involving stored sensory templates. These templates will be set up on initial encounters with the relevant referents (...). For the perceptual concept to be deployed, the relevant stored sensory template needs either to be activated by a match with incoming stimuli or to be autonomously activated in imagination. (118)

On this view, phenomenal concepts turn out to be just special cases of perceptual concepts:

Phenomenal concepts (are) simply a further deployment of the same sensory templates, but in this case used to think about perceptual experiences themselves rather than about the objects of those experiences (122)

So the idea that a phenomenal concept uses an experience is described in a purely physicalist manner:

Think about what happens when a phenomenal concept is exercised: Some stored sensory template is activated and is used to think about an experience. (123)

Obviously, Papineau does not concentrate on the mode of presentation involved in the concept anymore. He rather invokes the special vehicle that realizes the concept in order to explain its uniqueness. The use-mention function shall explain why phenomenal concepts are

conceptually isolated. Since the phenomenal concept uses an experience, one has to undergo the relevant experience first to acquire the concept. Mary, locked up in her achromatic environment, is not able to store the relevant sensory template and, hence, cannot acquire or deploy the phenomenal concept. This is supposed to be a consequence of the special nature of phenomenal concepts—namely, their use-mention-function—rather than an indication of the non-physical nature of the referents.

Let me analyze the explanatory power of this account. Recall that in order to explain the Mary-scenario satisfactorily, I imposed two explanatory constraints. A theory of phenomenal concepts, besides being able to explain their conceptual isolation, must also offer an account of their cognitive role. I think that Papineau is able to explain the conceptual isolation of phenomenal concepts by fleshing out their special acquisition conditions and by pointing at the special vehicles that realize the concepts.

But can this model explain the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts as well? More precisely, can an account of phenomenal concepts that concentrates on their neural vehicles and leaves their mode of presentation aside explain how phenomenal concepts are able to carry the relevant information and make this information introspectively accessible to the subject? My main worry is that every model of phenomenal concepts that leaves the mode of presentation aside fails in explaining the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts. A detailed analysis of Papineau's account will reveal the crucial problem.

First, note that on a physicalist account, the experience that is used in the phenomenal concept has to be understood as a *physical* item. For example, the stored template that is activated in deploying the concept is understood by Papineau as a neural template.

Second, what sort of *usage* of this neural template does Papineau have in mind? I think that the right way is to think of the neural template as a *part* of the concept.<sup>11</sup> This interpretation can easily explain how a phenomenal concept comes to carry the relevant information.<sup>12</sup>

Third, according to Papineau the template constitutes the phenomenology involved in a phenomenal concept, but it does not fix the reference. Rather the reference is fixed by the causal origin of the concept and by the sort of information attached to the concept. Note that a *phenomenal* concept accumulates information about *experiences*, i.e. according to Papineau information about the neural template.

The crucial question is: How can a concept that is partly constituted by a neural template facilitate the specific information about experiences that Mary lacks in her achromatic environment?<sup>13</sup> The demands imposed by physicalism are to cash out the concept in physical terms. This generates a problem for the defender of the physicalist constitutional account. Obviously, the relevant information is not information about a neural template *under a descriptive mode of presentation*, since Mary could know this in her achromatic environment.

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<sup>11</sup> I see two options to interpret the claim that a concept uses a neural template. On the first interpretation, this claim is intended to capture just a *simultaneous occurrence* of concept and neural template. Thus, the template is not part of the phenomenal concept, and hence it is not the *concept* that carries the relevant information. What carries the information is the template which is only contingently connected to the concept. Moreover, on this reading it is unclear how a neural template can make the relevant information accessible to the subject possessing the concept. The second way to go is to think of the neural template as a *part* of the concept. This interpretation evades the problem of explaining how the concept comes to carry the relevant information.

<sup>12</sup> For example on Dretske's (1981) account, a regular co-occurrence might suffice to account for information. Contrary to this, I will argue that a more intimate link between concept and experience is needed to explain the concept's cognitive role of carrying the relevant information and making it accessible to a subject. Moreover, I will argue that scenarios in which a basic phenomenal concept is applied in the absence of its referent should be ruled out by an adequate account of phenomenal concepts—but this seems to be conceivable if there is no constitutional link between the phenomenal concept and the experience.

<sup>13</sup> Levine (2007) argues as well (but in a different way than I will propose hereinafter) that the physical presence of the represented experience within the concept does not explain its cognitive presence.

Nor is it information about a neural template *under a physical mode of presentation*, since Mary could have seen this neural template under a physical mode of presentation in her achromatic environment—for example in another person’s brain whilst he is looking at something blue. But this would not help her in figuring out what enjoying a blue experience is like. So the relevant information concerns *what it is like to have that neural template activated*. Thus, the activation of the neural template used by the phenomenal concept has to involve the right *phenomenology* for the concept to carry the relevant information and to provide the basis for phenomenal knowledge. To acknowledge the importance of the right phenomenology tied to the phenomenal concept amounts to the claim that the mode of presentation involved in the concept is crucial.

In contrast to my analysis, the physicalist Papineau denies the importance of the phenomenal mode of presentation involved in the concept:

On my account, phenomenal concepts do indeed refer because of their cognitive function, not because of their phenomenology and therefore other states with a different or no phenomenology (...) would refer to the same experiences for the same reasons. I see nothing wrong with this. (2007: 125)

On my view, there is something wrong with this account of phenomenal concepts. The reason is that—in contrast to other sorts of concepts—a *phenomenal concept* can fulfill its cognitive role only if the experience which partly constitutes the concept involves the right phenomenology.

At this point one might object that Papineau just states that the phenomenology is irrelevant for the *reference* of phenomenal concepts and not for their cognitive role. Papineau thinks that the reference of a phenomenal concept is fixed by its cognitive function rather than by the mode of presentation involved. But he also holds that the cognitive function of a phenomenal concept is to accumulate information about *experiences*. What sort of information about experiences is at stake? The Mary-scenario illustrates that the relevant information is information about *the phenomenal character of experiences*, i.e., according to Papineau, it is information about what it is like to have the neural template activated. Thus, to claim that Mary gains a new phenomenal concept that could be given under another phenomenology (i.e. involving the activation of another neural template), or even under no phenomenology at all, does not do justice to the epistemic situation the knowledge argument illustrates. What is at stake is a phenomenal concept that carries information about a specific phenomenal character of an experience and that makes this information accessible to the subject possessing the concept. Mary might possess concepts like those suggested by Papineau.<sup>14</sup> The important point is that these concepts cannot be the ones we are looking for, namely phenomenal concepts that explain Mary’s epistemic development. We are looking for phenomenal concepts that facilitate information about the phenomenal character of experiences and, hence, involve a specific phenomenal mode of presentation.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For example, perceptual concepts can be like that. What it is like to have a specific neural template activated might not be reference-fixing in the case of concepts that refer to external objects. But phenomenal concepts refer to *experiences*. Experiences have their phenomenal character essentially. Thus, the mode of presentation involved in a *phenomenal* concept is crucial for the referent, i.e., if a phenomenal concept uses the phenomenal character of blue experiences to present its referent, then the referent is a blue-experience.

<sup>15</sup> A motivation for the view that a specific phenomenology involved in a phenomenal concept is irrelevant for its reference can be the commitment to the *transparency thesis*. Papineau (2007: 124) explicitly points out that his theory can account for the transparency thesis, since on his account deploying a perceptual concept referring to a bird and deploying a phenomenal concept referring to a bird-experience will involve the same phenomenology. The reference of these concepts is determined by what sort of information is attached to the experience that is used—if it is bird-appropriate information, then it will turn out as a perceptual concept; if it is information about bird-*experiences* then it will turn out as a phenomenal concept. Accordingly, defenders of the



I want to illustrate the claim that phenomenal concepts have to involve a specific mode of presentation to carry the relevant information and to make this information introspectively accessible by elaborating a reduction ad absurdum: on Papineau's account there is a contingency in the relation of concept and its phenomenology. The phenomenology involved in the concept could vary without the concept varying and viceversa. This model not only leads to implausible scenarios but also to false judgments. Let us imagine for the sake of a reductio ad absurdum a possible world in which Mary possesses a phenomenal concept of blue experiences tied to the phenomenology of an orange experience (but referring to blue experiences). According to Papineau, there is nothing wrong with this scenario. The problem is the following: an account of phenomenal concepts that does not link the phenomenal mode of presentation involved in the concept to its referents cannot explain their cognitive role of delivering the information about a specific phenomenal character of an experience. Imagine that Mary tries to find out if blue experiences belong to unique or to binary hue experiences in her phenomenal color space. If she uses her phenomenal concept of blue experiences, which is tied to the phenomenology of an orange experience, to figure this out, she might end up with the introspective judgment that blue experiences belong to phenomenal binary hues. This seems at least to be an undesirable result.

Further implausible scenarios are close at hand. For example, we can imagine a possible world in which a phenomenal concept of blue experiences is tied to the phenomenology of a tickle. Also in this world, the phenomenal concept is supposed to carry information about the phenomenal character of blue experiences and to make this information introspectively available. Moreover, in cases in which the phenomenal concept involves no phenomenology at all, it remains completely mysterious how one could make *any* introspective judgments about the phenomenal character of the experience at all, using these concepts. In this case, Mary would be no better off than she was in her achromatic environment looking at neural activations of another person's brain.

Hence, the claim that Mary might gain a new *phenomenal* concept (which may constitute her new phenomenal knowledge) even if the concept is tied to no phenomenology at all remains mysterious. Thus, we have found strong reasons for the following claim: no account of phenomenal concepts that fails to posit an intimate link between the phenomenal modes of presentation involved in the concepts and their referents can successfully explain the Mary-scenario. Thus, we have to search for an alternative account of phenomenal concepts pointing at specific features that can explain these concepts' cognitive role in a satisfactory way.

Chalmers (2007) reaches a similar conclusion as the outcome of his master argument. He argues that any version of the PCS has to fail because of the following dilemma: either we can conceive of a possible world in which  $P \ \& \ \sim C$  holds (=the complete physical truth about the universe holds, but a thesis about phenomenal concepts does not)—then phenomenal concepts are not physically explicable. Or we cannot conceive of a possible world in which  $P \ \& \ \sim C$

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transparency thesis (e.g. Harman 1990; Tye 2002; Crane 2003) might hold that Mary's new experience represents properties of external objects. Hence, on this account the phenomenology is not necessarily tied to the referent of a phenomenal concept, since it is not seen as a property of an experience anymore.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze the merit of the transparency thesis. I think that experiences *can* represent the external world, but they also can represent themselves. Here I am concerned with the latter case. The following scenarios illustrate that the phenomenal character is a property instantiated by an experience. Imagine Mary who is exposed to a flash of red light that fills her whole visual field. Or consider that a neurologist evokes a red experience in her, by manipulating her brain. Also well-known examples that point to blurry vision, where the experience itself, not the objects of experience, is experienced as blurry, challenge the transparency thesis. I think that these cases illustrate that Mary acquires a new phenomenal concept that refers to the *phenomenal character of her experience*. Since experiences have their phenomenal character essentially, an account of phenomenal concepts that do not involve specific phenomenal modes of presentation, fails in explaining their cognitive role.

holds—then phenomenal concepts cannot explain our epistemic situation with regard to phenomenal experiences. Therefore, according to Chalmers, accounts of phenomenal concepts that are physically explicable are too “thin” to explain our epistemic situation, whereas “thick” accounts that meet this explanatory constraint are not explicable in physical terms.

In what follows I will argue for a stronger conclusion. To Chalmers’ conclusion, namely, that the explanatory accounts cannot be explained in physical terms and hence do nothing to deflate anti-physicalist arguments, I will add that those phenomenal concepts that have the explanatory power imply non-physical referents. So the difference between Chalmers’ argument and the one put forward hereinafter is the following: while in Chalmers’ view, a physicalist could still hold that phenomenal concepts are not themselves physically explicable but that they are nonetheless compatible with physicalism, I argue that an account of phenomenal concepts that explains our epistemic situation satisfactorily is *not* compatible with physicalism.

### 3. The Encapsulation Account of Phenomenal Concepts

In the previous section, I argued that no account of phenomenal concepts that fails to posit an intimate link between their modes of presentation and their referents can successfully explain the Mary scenario. Thus, we need a new account of phenomenal concepts. In this section, I will develop the *encapsulation account* that meets both explanatory constraints imposed by the particularities of phenomenal concepts.

A brief reminder of the two explanatory constraints: the first desideratum concerns the special acquisition condition of phenomenal concepts. Phenomenal concepts cannot be deduced a priori from physical concepts and, hence, are conceptually isolated. In accordance with defenders of the PCS, I think that a new phenomenal concept can be acquired only under the condition of attentively undergoing an experience. The second explanatory constraint concerns the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts. When Mary attentively looks at the blue sky and thereby acquires a phenomenal concept of blue experiences,<sup>16</sup> she makes epistemic progress. This epistemic progress is explained by the cognitive role of the phenomenal concept: the phenomenal concept carries information about the phenomenal character of blue experiences and makes this information introspectively available.

In the following, I will present the encapsulation account of phenomenal concepts that does justice to both explanatory constraints. First, I will extend the analysis of the conceptual isolation of phenomenal concepts by offering an explanation as to why phenomenal concepts have this particular acquisition condition. Second, I will argue that the proposed account can also explain the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts in a satisfactory way.

Physicalist defenders of the PCS grant that one has to undergo an experience to acquire a phenomenal concept. This way of formulating the acquisition condition needs to be spelled out in more detail. In order to acquire a new phenomenal concept one has to attend to the experience and to discriminate it from all other current experiences. I am assuming that primitive discrimination can be accomplished in a nonconceptual manner.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the act of

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<sup>16</sup> Here I am describing what happens to Jackson’s Mary. As Lehrer (2012) suggests, one could imagine Mary having undergone a stroke and, hence, still being able to have experiences though lacking all her conceptual capacities. Therefore, undergoing an experience might not be a sufficient condition for gaining a phenomenal concept. In this paper, I leave it open if having an experience is a sufficient condition for acquiring a phenomenal concept; the important point here is that having an experience is a *necessary* condition.

<sup>17</sup> Note that I do not claim that occurrent experiences are always discriminated in a nonconceptual manner. I just think that primitive discrimination does not depend on possessing a concept and *can* be accomplished nonconceptually.

attentive discrimination is the *basis* of a process that yields a phenomenal concept. The account of phenomenal concepts that I offer is inspired by Lehrer's (2011, 2012) account of conceptualization in what he calls the process of "exemplarization". I take the experience the person attentively discriminates to be conceptualized in a special manner. Following Lehrer, I hold that in conceptualization the experience is used to mark a distinction between what is included in the reference class of the phenomenal concept and what is not. The experience can play this role because it exhibits its phenomenal character, i.e. the referents of the phenomenal concept have exactly those features that the experience exhibits. Hence, when acquiring a new phenomenal concept we first are undergoing a non-conceptual experience that, due to attentive awareness, is discriminated from the other current experiences. Next, because the experience exhibits its phenomenal character, we can conceptualize the experience.<sup>18</sup>

This interpretation of the concept acquisition process sheds light on the *nature* of phenomenal concepts. When Mary is attentively aware of her new experience, this process of attentive discrimination combined with the experience's role to mark a distinction between what is included in the reference class and what is not by exhibiting its phenomenal character, leads to a new phenomenal concept that *encapsulates* the experience itself. What I label as *encapsulation* is based on the idea that the experience itself is the core of the phenomenal concept.<sup>19</sup> This constitutional link between experience and concept explains how the reference of the phenomenal concept is fixed: namely, due to the experience's role to directly exhibit the referents of the concept.

Given the constitutional link between experiences and phenomenal concepts, the encapsulation account has to provide an answer to the following question: what distinguishes the experience from the concept encapsulating it? To a first approximation we can say that the concept has a structure and cognitive role that outruns the encapsulated experience. The important point is that the concept implies a generalization about the phenomenal character of the experience that enables the subject to distinguish what falls under the concept and what does not.<sup>20</sup> So the generality of the phenomenal concept is what distinguishes it from the non-conceptualized experience. Moreover, the subject possessing the concept can use it to think new thoughts, to make new judgments, etc. For example, she can think "R is my favorite experience!" or "The experience caused by looking at ripe tomatoes is R". In short, the possession of the phenomenal concept enables the subject to attribute a phenomenal property to something. All this cannot be done solely by having an experience—a concept has to be formed which encapsulates the experience and uses it to display its referent.

### 3.1. Self-Representation: the Key to the Encapsulation Account

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<sup>18</sup> I want to highlight that using Lehrer's account of *conceptualization* on the basis of experiences for spelling out the encapsulation account does not mean that I buy wholesale into his account of exemplarization. Importantly, I think that only self-representing experiences can constitute a phenomenal concept. In contrast, Lehrer holds that exemplarization is not restricted to experiences. In Fürst (2012), I argue in detail that Lehrer's notion of exemplarization faces serious problems when it is not confined to self-representing experiences.

<sup>19</sup> Balog (2012b), Block (2007), and Chalmers (2003) defend accounts of phenomenal concepts that share the structure of the here advocated encapsulation. Where Balog and Block think that such an account is compatible with physicalism, Chalmers holds that the content of "direct phenomenal concepts" is not conceptually reducible to the physical or functional. In the following, I will argue that if the encapsulation account is spelled out in detail, it has more explanatory power than the physicalist accounts and it will turn out to be *incompatible* with physicalism.

<sup>20</sup> Lehrer (2011, 2012) argues that the experience in the concept can be used to mark a distinction between the entities that fall under this concept and those that do not. This way of fleshing out what makes the phenomenal concept encapsulating an experience to a *concept* is borrowed from Lehrer.

In this section, I will start spelling out the decisive feature of the encapsulated *experience* in detail. Subsequently, I will analyze the consequences that the decisive feature of the encapsulated experience has on the *concept*.

My main claim is that experiences, which are encapsulated in a concept and fulfill the role of displaying the referents of the concept by exhibiting their phenomenal character, are *self-representing*.<sup>21</sup> Self-representation is sometimes held to account best for conscious experiences. (See e.g. Kriegel 2004, 3, 153f.; Levine 2006, 177f.) A reason for this claim can be stated as follows: conscious experiences are states we are aware of being in. Awareness includes representation. And, according to defenders of self-representational approaches to consciousness, conscious states are not represented via other (higher-order) states but rather are represented by themselves. So we can say that self-representing experiences exhibit two features: first, they represent themselves directly, without any separate mode of presentation involved.<sup>22</sup> Second, the self-representing character of experiences explains our awareness of them.

The first feature explains how an experience can be conceptualized in a way that yields a phenomenal concept as suggested on the encapsulation account: an experience that represents itself can be encapsulated in a phenomenal concept and thereby fix the concept's reference by *directly* exhibiting the referents.

The second feature elucidates why I think that self-representation is the basis for the encapsulation account. The explanatory structure in the concept forming process is the following: self-representation explains our awareness of the experience, and the attentive awareness of the experience is a condition for forming a concept that encapsulates the experience.

Most importantly, the self-representational character of experiences does not only explain how a phenomenal concept can be formed—it also explains how the concept can play its cognitive role. Recall that the cognitive role of a phenomenal concept is to carry information about the phenomenal character of experiences and to make this information introspectively accessible to the subject. First, because the encapsulated experiences are self-representing, they directly display the referents of the concepts. Thus, the encapsulated experience enables the concept to carry the relevant information. Second, the self-representing experience allows us to be aware of it, which explains how the information carried by the concept is introspectively accessible to the subject. Therefore, the self-representing character of experiences can account for the special formation process of phenomenal concepts as well as for their cognitive role.

Next, I will analyze the structure of the *concept* that encapsulates the experience. The self-representing character of the experience has particular consequences for the concept.

First, it guarantees the direct reference of the concept formed on the basis of the experience. Since there is no separate mode of presentation involved, the phenomenal concept picks out its referent directly.

Second, the reference of a phenomenal concept is fixed by the mode of presentation involved in the concept that contains an instance of the concept's referent. Since the reference of phenomenal concepts is fixed by their internal constitution and not by external factors, phenomenal concepts are rigid, viz. they pick out the same referent in all possible worlds. Recall that we were looking for an account that links the mode of presentation involved in a phenomenal concept intimately to its referent. Constitution guarantees such intimate link.

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<sup>21</sup> For a historical discussion of the notion of self-representation see Brentano (1874) and Meinong (1899). For a contemporary discussion of self-representation see, for example, Kriegel & Williford (2006) and Lehrer (2004, 2006, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Of course, besides this, they can also represent properties of objects of the external world.

Given the internal constitution of phenomenal concepts, the problematic scenarios developed in section two—i.e. Mary employing a phenomenal concept of blue experiences but that is tied to the phenomenology of an orange experience or to no phenomenal experience at all—are ruled out.

Moreover, the encapsulation account evades also a closely related problem that is typically faced by demonstrative versions of phenomenal concepts. As Chalmers (2007) and Balog (2012) point out, on demonstrative accounts, one can imagine the experience picked out by a phenomenal concept and currently demonstrated as having a different character. I have argued that this scenario is also conceivable on those constitutional accounts that do not concentrate on the mode of presentation involved in the concept (e.g. Papineau's account). Notice that this worrisome scenario is avoided by phenomenal concepts that encapsulate experiences. Such concepts necessarily yield information about the specific phenomenal characters of experiences and pick out the very same referents in whatever context they are exercised.

I argued that phenomenal concepts encapsulate self-representing experiences. This account has strong explanatory power.

It explains the conceptual isolation of phenomenal concepts. Moreover, by offering an account of the concept formation process, it adds an explanation as to why phenomenal concepts have these special acquisition conditions.

Most importantly, the encapsulation account also meets the second explanatory constraint and accounts for the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts. The encapsulation of the experience explains how the concept carries the relevant information. The self-representing character of the encapsulated experience explains why the relevant information is introspectively accessible. Once the cognitive role is explained by an account of phenomenal concepts, an explanation of the epistemic progress one makes because of the new concept acquisition is close at hand. The encapsulation of a self-representing experience in the phenomenal concept explains, for example, how Mary can think new thoughts such as “I like Yves-Klein-blue experiences more than light-blue experiences!” Since the experience itself is a constitutional part of the phenomenal concept, she can compare the two experiences by deploying the relevant concepts.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, the encapsulation account does justice to the intuition that, for example, a phenomenal concept of a red experience necessarily facilitates information about the *phenomenal character of red experiences*. The encapsulation provides what we were looking for, namely an intimate link between the mode of presentation involved in phenomenal concepts and their referents. Thus, the worrisome scenarios discussed in section two are ruled out.

I conclude that the encapsulation accounts provides the best account of the uniqueness of phenomenal concepts— their conceptual isolation as well as their cognitive role.

### **3.2. The Dualist Consequences of the Encapsulation Account**

In the previous section, I presented an account of phenomenal concepts featuring the encapsulation of self-representing experiences, and I argued that this account has strong explanatory power.<sup>24</sup> Next, I will investigate the ontological consequences of the encapsulation account of phenomenal concepts.

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<sup>23</sup> The encapsulation account also offers some elucidation regarding phenomena like the following: someone vehemently refusing to talk about a painful experience undergone in the past, or someone eager to talk about her feelings towards a new love. Because the employed phenomenal concepts encapsulate relevant experiences, one will be eager to discuss pleasant experiences and disinclined to relate painful memories.

<sup>24</sup> The following objection might be raised against a constitutional account of phenomenal concepts: if the experience is a constitutional part of the phenomenal concept, how can proponents of this thesis account for

One may think that the proposed account of phenomenal concepts encapsulating experiences is similar to the physicalist constitutional account, which also has it that phenomenal concepts are constituted by experiences. It isn't. There are several differences between these accounts, and these differences have important ontological consequences regarding the referents of phenomenal concepts. Most importantly, physicalist constitutional accounts aim at a *physicalist* explanation of anti-physicalist puzzles. Hence, they have to explain the conceptual isolation and the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts in a way that does not introduce non-physical entities.

In section two we noticed that Papineau meets the physicalist requirement in a first step, when he introduces neural templates as the vehicles of phenomenal concepts. The second step in a successful physicalist account of phenomenal concepts consists in giving a *physicalist* account of how a neural template can be part of a phenomenal concept and how it can yield introspectively accessible information about the phenomenal character of experiences. This attempt fails because the physicalist move to point at neural templates involved in phenomenal concepts does not suffice to explain how the concepts can facilitate the relevant information. To facilitate the relevant information, the phenomenal concept has to involve the right phenomenal mode of presentation. Thus, the outcome of my analysis was the following: accounts of phenomenal concepts that deny a constitutional link between the phenomenal mode of presentation involved in the concept and its referent—i.e. pure demonstrative accounts as well as Papineau's account—cannot reach the explanatory target of the PCS.

Contrary to Papineau's model, there exist physicalist constitutional accounts that acknowledge the importance of the phenomenal modes of presentation involved in phenomenal concepts. For example, Loar's (1990/1997) direct recognitional account, Hill and McLaughlin's conceptual role account (1999) as well as Block's (2007) constitutional account all utilize the phenomenal mode of presentation to explain the uniqueness of phenomenal concepts. The outcome of my analysis so far is that this is exactly the right path to an account of phenomenal concepts that has strong explanatory power. But, I will argue, the physicalist cannot take this path.

Let me explain. The appeal to the mode of presentation involved in a phenomenal concept has to be spelled out in detail to explain the concept's cognitive role. The self-representing character of the experiences provides such an explanation. But granting the self-representing character of the encapsulated experience turns out to be problematic for the physicalist. In order to see this, we need to notice that defenders of the PCS grant that the experiences involved in the concepts do not seem physical.<sup>25</sup> From this, I will first infer that experiences seem non-physical, and then argue that experiences *are* non-physical.

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Mary's true thought involving a phenomenal concept that she is currently not having a red experience? Note that my considerations aim at basic applications of phenomenal concepts, viz. applications of phenomenal concepts to occurrent experiences. I find it highly plausible to hold that on a *basic application of a phenomenal concept*, Mary cannot truly think she is currently not having a red experience. But I am open to different accounts of what sort of concept of red experiences she can employ to truly think this thought. For example, some philosophers (Balog 2009; Papineau 2007) answer this question by pointing at *derivative* applications of phenomenal concepts that do not imply an occurring experience and are used in the true thought mentioned before.

<sup>25</sup> Some representationalists (for example, Hill (forthcoming)) react to the fact that experiences seem non-physical in the following way: they claim that, besides our intuition to the contrary, we need to introduce a distinction between the appearance and the reality of experiences. Their main claim is that representations explain the appearances of experiences. Hence, the non-physicality is taken to concern only the seeming (representation) and not the reality of experiences. It is easy to see why this explanatory move does not succeed in the case of the encapsulation account: on the encapsulation account, the representing item represents in terms of the represented one. If the non-physicality concerns the representation and the representation is constituted by the represented item, the non-physicality also applies to the represented item.

I start by considering an objection that targets my claim that experiences that do not seem physical, do seem non-physical. One might point out, following Armstrong's (1968) argumentation illustrated by the "headless woman illusion", that "the experience does not seem physical" doesn't entail that "the experience seems non-physical." I do not think that this objection applies to self-representing experiences.

Let me start pointing out a disanalogy between Armstrong's original example and the case of experiences. Note how Armstrong states his argument:

"What the example shows is that (...) it is very natural for human beings to pass from something that is true: "I do not perceive that X is Y", to something that may be false "I perceive that X is not Y". (Armstrong 1968: 48)

On the first interpretation, the example is intended to show that there may be Xs that are Y but which are not perceived as being Y. In other words: one might falsely pass from a statement about how X *seems* to a statement about the *nature* of X. Thus, the fact that the example is put in terms of "perceiving"—a success word—is crucial. Note that in our case we are concerned with how an experience *seems*. "Seeming" is not a success word, and we do not intend to infer something about the ontological nature of experiences; i.e. we do not infer that experiences *are* not physical. Hence, there is no room for a scenario that parallels the headless woman illusion.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the headless woman illusion, the entailment in the experience-case remains at the level of seemings and does not pass to the ontological nature of the thing. So the inference from "an experience does not seem physical" to "an experience does *seem* non-physical" cannot be in the same sense fallacious as the original Armstrong case.

Next, one might admit the disanalogy, but object that the Armstrong example is open to a second interpretation that does not focus on "perceiving" as a success word. Rather it concentrates on the illegitimate shift of the scope of negation. This second interpretation also applies at the level of seemings and amounts to the following claim: an experience can fail to seem physical, because it seems something else, say Z, and from that one cannot conclude that it seems non-physical. I admit that this is a possible scenario for many cases of representations. However, I think that experiences are a special case. There are two possible ways to argue for the conclusion that the experience seems non-physical.

First, when we reflect on the ontological status of an occurrent experience by explicitly considering two possibilities—physicality or non-physicality—the experience does not seem physical. Therefore, from the statement "X does not *seem* physical" and the additional consideration whether X seems physical or non-physical, we can conclude that "X *seems* non-physical".

Second, even if we do not consider the physicality of the experience explicitly, we can see that the experience seems non-physical. The reason is that the experience does not seem physical because it seems Z, where seeming Z is such that it entails *seeming non-physical*. (Let me emphasize that we are not looking for a seeming that entails that something *is* non-physical. The question is rather if there is a seeming that entails that something *seems* non-physical) Note that such Z would add also a further explanation as to why experiences do not seem physical.

I think that there is such a decisive seeming that is part of every experience. It is the subjective character of an experience (Nagel 1974). Experiences are necessarily experienced

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<sup>26</sup> One might try to construe the "seeming" case as *structurally* analogous to the original Armstrong case. To do this, a seeming/reality distinction has to be introduced also on the level of seemings. I think that this is problematic, for it does not make sense to say that there are experiences that fail to seem Y, but their real *seeming-nature* is Y. Experiences might have a hidden ontological nature, but it is implausible to hold that they have a hidden *seeming* that goes beyond the way that they seem to us. (Some philosophers doubt this. For example, on Lycan's higher-order theory (1997: 758): "(...) a second-order monitor could break down and make a first-order state seem to seem to me in a way that the state does not in fact seem to me".)

from the first person perspective. Thus, every experience, regardless if it is a blue experience, pain experience, or tasting red wine experience, is constituted by appearing as a subjective one. I take the fact that the subjective character of an experience seems inseparable from how an experience seems to us, to generate the widely accepted intuition of distinctness.<sup>27</sup> States that are accessed from a first person perspective and hence subjective *seem* fundamentally distinct from those that are accessible from a third person perspective and hence objective. Physical states are taken to belong to the latter class, which *seems* fundamentally distinct from the former, subjective class. The upshot is when a state seems subjective, it *seems* non-physical.<sup>28</sup> Hence, the first outcome of my analysis is that the experience which is encapsulated in a phenomenal concept and constitutes its mode of presentation seems non-physical.

The further conclusion that the experience *is* not-physical is independently supported, namely by the self-representing nature of the experience. Self-representation is a mark of entities which do not give rise to a distinction between the representing and the represented item. In this case, we do not have to search for the represented item; it is right there, in the representation. Note that an X, that represents itself, can do this in various ways. It can do this via one of its properties, say Z, and nonetheless fail to display another of its (maybe essential) properties, say Y.

This is the main line that the defenders of the physicalist constitutional account advocate: the self-representing experience simply does not represent itself in terms of its fundamental nature—it has a hidden physical nature that is not part of the representation.<sup>29</sup> I grant that an experience can represent itself in different terms than those of its fundamental nature (Y), say via Z, and fail to display Y. However, an experience cannot represent itself in terms of a property that *contradicts* its fundamental nature, i.e., the experience cannot represent itself as being non-Y, while it's hidden nature is Y. In the case of self-representation this would amount to the claim that an experience is both Y and non-Y. Therefore, a self-representing experience that represents itself as being non-physical can have a lot of other properties that are not part of the representation, but physicality cannot be among those hidden properties. My conclusion is that a self-representing experience that seems non-physical cannot be physical.

This dualist outcome can be put also in another way, by utilizing Block's (2007) distinction between the cognitive mode of presentation and the metaphysical mode of presentation. The former is seen as a property of the representation and the latter is seen as a property of the

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<sup>27</sup> Papineau (2007: 135) states the intuition of distinctness as follows: "It seems undeniable that most people have a strong intuition of mind-brain-distinctness—an intuition that pains are something extra to brain states, say. This intuition (...) persists even among those (like me) who are persuaded (...) that dualism must be false." Note that he explicitly holds that "[the intuition of distinctness] is not an intuition of apparently contingent truth (...) but simply a *direct intuition of falsity*." (2007: 134 [my emphasize]) Papineau thinks that the direct intuition of falsity of physicalism can be explained by the joined exercise of a phenomenal and a physical concept. I argued that his account fails in its attempt to explain away dualist intuitions. But I think there is another, more natural, explanation for the "direct intuition of falsity of physicalism" at hand, namely, that experiences seem subjective and, hence, non-physical.

<sup>28</sup> One might object, following Loar (1997: 610), that "there is no incoherence in the thought that the "subjectivity" of a phenomenal quality is identical with an objective physical-functional aspect of that property." I want to emphasize again that I am not claiming that the subjective character implies non-physicality. I just hold that seeming subjective implies *seeming* non-physical.

<sup>29</sup> One example of this explanatory move is found in Hill (forthcoming): "It is necessary to explain how it is possible to grasp X experientially without appreciating its identity with Y. It is normally possible to provide such an explanation by invoking some sort of appearance/reality distinction. Thus, we might distinguish between X itself and a property that serves as the mode of presentation for X. Or, if there is no other property that serves as the mode of presentation for X, (...) then we might distinguish between X-as-it-is-in-itself and X-as-it-is-represented by an experiential representation".



referent. Block argues that different cognitive modes of presentation do not require different metaphysical modes of presentation and, hence, no property dualism follows from the fact that an experience can be cognitively presented in different ways.

According to my analysis, in the case of phenomenal concepts, an instance of the referent is part of the concept and constitutes the concept's mode of presentation. Therefore, the property of the cognitive mode of presentation does not only fix the reference, it also *is* a property of the referent. This property is not represented as a physical one. On the additional assumption that we either consider the physicality of the property explicitly or we focus on the subjective character of the property, we can conclude that it is represented as a non-physical one. It might be the case that the referent has *further, hidden*, properties that are not part of the cognitive mode of presentation. But the cognitive mode of presentation cannot exhibit a property that *contradicts* the metaphysical mode of presentation. Therefore, physicality cannot be part of the metaphysical mode of presentation of the referent of a phenomenal concept. In short: experiences cannot be physical.

The upshot is that the structure of phenomenal concepts is not neutral with respect to the ontological nature of their referents. The explanatory feature of the experience involved in the concept—its self-representing character—gives the encapsulation account an ontological bite. Therefore, the physicalist faces a dilemma:

If she denies the importance of the mode of presentation involved in the concept, as demonstrative accounts as well as Papineau's (2007) account do, she cannot explain the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts satisfactorily.

But if she explains the cognitive role by defending a constitutional account that involves the phenomenal mode of presentation (as e.g. Block (2007) does), then, according to my argumentation, she also has to accept that *self-representing* experiences constitute phenomenal concepts. Once granted that there is no separate mode of presentation involved, the experience cannot be seen as just a mode of presenting a physical referent. In particular, it cannot be seen as a mode of presenting a physical referent in terms *other* than it really is. Thus, the physicalist will end up with non-physical entities being the direct referents of phenomenal concepts. Obviously, in the latter case the physicalist target of the PCS can no longer be reached.

#### 4. Conclusion

The physicalist attempt to reduce consciousness is challenged by anti-physicalist arguments based on the phenomenal character of mental states. The PCS is often seen as a powerful contemporary response to these arguments. My analysis targets new insights on phenomenal concepts and their consequences for the problem of consciousness.

I demonstrated that, in accordance with the PCS, the new concepts involved in the Mary-scenario differ in several significant respects from any other concept-type. Jackson's knowledge argument teaches us that phenomenal concepts are conceptually isolated and have very special acquisition-conditions. I combined this with another outcome of the Mary-scenario, namely that phenomenal concepts play the cognitive role of carrying introspectively accessible information about the phenomenal character of experiences. These two insights from the knowledge argument capture the particularities of phenomenal concepts best, and they require an explanation.

First, I argued that the existing physicalist accounts cannot meet both explanatory requirements. Second, I presented an account of phenomenal concepts that can explain both particularities of phenomenal concepts in a satisfactory way. To establish this account, I argued that phenomenal concepts are structured in a very particular way—they encapsulate

self-representing experiences. In a third step, I demonstrated that the self-representing experiences best explain the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts. In a last step, I argued that in the case of self-representation, the representation cannot display properties that contradict properties of the represented item. Since self-representing experiences seem non-physical, we can conclude that the referents of phenomenal concepts are non-physical.

Hence, the encapsulation account of phenomenal concepts not only has strong explanatory power. Because the reference of a phenomenal concept is determined by its inner constitution involving self-representing experiences, it also implies dualist consequences. To conclude, the account of phenomenal concepts that explains their uniqueness satisfactorily cannot be used to explain away our dualist intuitions. Rather, it reinforces dualism.

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