

Review of: "A Calculus of Qualia"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

At first sight, the paper does not seem very promising. How could there be a calculus whose elements are so tied to the flow of our mental life? Reasoning with points and lines in geometry is alright, or with names (as suggested by Hobbes), with sentences (or propositions that can be represented objectively): all that is usual and makes sense. But qualia? How can we reason with the subjective character of sensorial experiences?

When I see a red patch, it is a specific shade of redness that I'm experiencing, may be not the same as yours (slight differences in our visual apparatus may cause differences in the quality of experience). Is a red patch on a white sheet a quale? The quale belongs to the living experience, not to the white sheet. The author speaks of a phenomenal character "engendered" by the seeing of a red patch. That's all right. Now think of the smell of fresh coffee in the morning. Could there be a calculus with smells or scents? Qualia are accessible only in first-person introspection. A red patch on a white sheet is accessible to any observer.

(1) and (3) speak of a phenomenal character. I doubt they refer to or point to a quale. (1) and (3) are not names, but definite descriptions used attributively; (2) is not a quale, but a red patch on a white sheet accessible to many. In what sense is this a "term"? To say that "(1) and (3) only point to the term in (2)" is at best metaphorical. What kind of "pointing" is that? In 2.D, the information in (2) includes the fact that it is a rectangular shape of a certain size, not only the color. In 2.G, what is on the chalkboard is not a number, but the token of a numeral. Still in 2.G, I agree that "there is *some* sense in which there are then *31 different reds* in the classroom (30 students + 1 professor)."

In (7), on the right side of the equation, I do not see in what sense there is only *one* quale. There is no color fusion (no purple patch) on the right side.

In the comment that follow (12): I don't know what the author means by "Dualism". In case of substance dualism, it is strange to search for "correlates"; so, I think the A. meant property dualism. This should be clear. (2), (7) and (9) would have the same meaning, the A. says. The whole paragraph is anything but clear to me. A red patch on a white sheet can have a meaning if there is a convention for its use. A red light in the street means *stop!* Where is the convention associated to (2)?

Well, I stop here. The paper looks a bit too weird for me. I believe there is much to be made explicit before it acquires the qualities expected of a paper ready to be published.

