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“What Mary’s Aboutness Is About”

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Abstract The aim of this paper is to reinforce anti-physicalism by extending the “hard problem” to a specific kind of intentional states. For reaching this target, I investigate the mental content of the new intentional states of Jackson's Mary.

I proceed in the following way: I start analyzing the knowledge argument, which highlights the “hard problem” tied to phenomenal consciousness. In a second step, I investigate a powerful physicalist reply to this argument: the *phenomenal concept strategy*. In a third step, I propose a constitutional account of phenomenal concepts which captures the Mary-scenario adequately, but implies anti-physicalist referents. In a last step, I point at the ramifications constitutive phenomenal concepts have on the constitution of Mary's new intentional states. Therefore, by focusing the attention on phenomenal concepts, the so-called “hard problem” of consciousness will be carried over to the alleged “easy problem” of intentional states as well.

Keywords Physicalism—Knowledge Argument—Phenomenal Concepts—Intentional States—Narrow Mental Content—Easy Problem

1 Introduction

One key-issue in contemporary philosophy of mind is the question if consciousness can be reduced to a physical phenomenon or if it resists a physicalist reduction. In the 20th century the idea of reducing consciousness to some other (in the broadest sense) *physical* phenomenon flourished: Gilbert Ryle (1949), for example, famously attempted to reduce mental states to dispositions to act. This behaviourist program was followed by the development of the identity thesis. Philosophers like Ullin T. Place (1956), John J. C. Smart (1959) and Herbert Feigl (1967) stressed the idea of mental states being identical to brain states using the Fregean (1892) distinction of sense and reference and, hence, offering an explanation of the intuition of distinctness of mental states and brain states. Philosophers such as David Lewis (1966,

1972), who combined the identity thesis with the idea of causal roles being indispensable in the analysis of mental states, prepared the ground for functionalism—the thesis that mental states are functional states defined by their causal roles and, hence, multiple realizable (see for example Putnam 1967, Shoemaker 1981). These developments in the last century gave the upshot to a variety of different interpretations of the reductionist or—since the reduction predominantly aimed at a physicalist one—*physicalist* idea. The crucial point for this paper is that besides some difficulties within these physicalist theories itself, most anti-physicalist criticism was based on the fact that these accounts fail to capture *phenomenal consciousness*.

The notion of *phenomenal consciousness* refers to mental states which are characterized by a certain quality, a “what-it-is-likeness” (Nagel 1974), to undergo them. Paradigmatic examples are sensations like pains or itches, emotions like anxiety or joy and perceptions like seeing the blue sky, smelling a rose or hearing a bell ringing. Clarence I. Lewis (1921) introduced the term “qualia” to stand for what he called “the recognizable characters of the given”. In contemporary philosophy, this term is widely used when referring to phenomenal consciousness and pointing at its constitutive aspect—sometimes without making explicit if this term is supposed to refer to the phenomenal state itself or to the properties of these states. In the following I will use the term “qualia” to refer to phenomenal *properties* of mental states.

The phenomenal aspect of consciousness, which is often taken to be constitutive of the mental, raises serious troubles for physicalist theories of consciousness. Well-known thought-experiments like Frank Jackson’s knowledge argument (1982), Ned Blocks (1980, 2002) and other’s work on the conceivability of philosophical zombies (Kripke 1972, Nagel 1974, Chalmers 1996, 2002) or Joseph Levine’s explanatory gap (1983, 2001) highlighted the problem that every physicalist analysis of consciousness leaves its phenomenal aspect out. Regardless, if a theory calls the attention to the behavior, to the specific biochemical or neurological make-up of a subject or in a more abstract manner to the functional role of the subjects’ mental states, it always fails to explain why this is connected to the specific qualia the subject experiences when undergoing the relevant mental state.

Given this, David Chalmers labeled qualia as “the hard problem of consciousness” (Chalmers 1995) suggesting that other aspects of consciousness such as the *intentionality* of mental states, how sensory inputs gets processed, the explanation of cognitive functions etc. could be easier captured by a physicalist analysis. Therefore, physicalism—which can be roughly defined as the thesis that the world is entirely physical and that all truths about the world are necessitated by the complete physical truth—nowadays is still confronted with anti-

physicalist arguments based on phenomenal consciousness, respectively qualia. The outcome of these arguments is an anti-physicalism which holds that there exist at least phenomenal *properties* which cannot be reduced to physical properties and that hence the world is not entirely physical. On this view, not all truths about the world are necessitated by physical truths. Importantly, paradigmatic cases for such truths would be truths about phenomenal states. Therefore, intentional states usually play a minor role (if any) in defending anti-physicalism.

The aim of this paper is to reinforce anti-physicalism. To reach this aim I will start with the phenomenal aspect of consciousness, proceed with an analysis of phenomenal concepts and elaborate in a last step the impact of these special concepts on the constitution of intentional states. Therefore, by focusing the attention on phenomenal concepts, the so-called “hard problem” of consciousness will be carried over to the alleged “easy problem” of intentional states¹ as well.

I shall proceed as follows: I will start investigating Jackson’s famous anti-physicalist knowledge argument and analyze a powerful and in current literature vividly discussed physicalist reply to this argument: the so-called *phenomenal concept strategy* (Stoljar 2005). In a second step, I will propose a constitutional account of phenomenal concepts which captures the knowledge argument adequately, but which implies anti-physicalist referents. Finally, I will extend the results of my investigations to the *intentional states* of Jackson’s Mary.

2 Qualia Challenging Physicalism: The Knowledge Argument

In his 1982 article “Epiphenomenal Qualia” Jackson invented the famous thought-experiment of the brilliant scientist Mary, who is supposed to be physically omniscient. Mary dedicated her studies to human color-vision and, hence, knows all there is to know from a physical standpoint about seeing colors. Importantly, Mary has been born and raised in an achromatic environment and, therefore, never had the possibility to undergo any color-experience in her life. In the next step of the argument, Jackson asks the reader to imagine that one day Mary

¹ More precisely, the easy problems according to Chalmers “(...) concern the explanation of cognitive *abilities* and *functions*. To explain a cognitive function, we need only specify a mechanism that can perform the function.” (Chalmers 1996, 202) In the following, I will investigate the cognitive function of phenomenal concepts and mental content of conscious intentional states.

can leave her black-and-white room and sees for the first time the blue sky. The crucial question is the following: What happens at the very moment when Mary enjoys her first color-experience? Does the brilliant scientist gain knowledge about some new fact concerning human color-vision? On the basis of this thought-experiment Jackson developed an argument against physicalism which can be formulated in a strong way as follows:

- “1. Mary knows all the *physical facts* concerning human color vision before her release.
2. But there are *some facts* about human color vision that Mary does not know before her release.

Therefore

3. There are *non-physical facts* concerning human color vision.” (Nida-Rümelin 2009, 3)²

3 A Reply: The Phenomenal Concept Strategy

In the last more than 20 years various ways of responding to the argument have been put forward. Some deny the very second premise (for example, Dennett 1984, 2007; Churchland 1989) that Mary learns something and claim that Mary has “deviant”³ knowledge. Others are willing to grant Mary’s epistemic development and try to deal with it within a physicalist framework in different ways: Some famously hold that Mary gains no new propositional knowledge but just an *ability*, namely to remember, recognize and imagine color-experiences (Lewis 1988, Nemirow 2007), whereas others (Loar 1990/1997; Horgan 1984) believe that in this scenario there is no new factual knowledge involved because Mary learns just a new mode of presentation of a previously known, old fact. Out of the latter move developed the so-called *phenomenal concept strategy* which nowadays is often considered as the most powerful response to Jackson’s argument. The locus classicus for this strategy is Brian Loar’s paper “Phenomenal States” (1990/1997) which is based on the Fregean idea of co-referential terms that involve different modes of presentation. Obviously, starting with modes of presentation, one can easily shift this argumentation on the level of concepts. The key-idea of this reply to the knowledge argument then can be formulated along the following lines: All that happens when Mary enjoys her first color-experience is that she gains a new *concept* of, for example, blue-experiences. This new, *phenomenal concept* adds to the physical concept about blue-experiences she already had before, when being confined to her black-and-white room. Importantly, these different concepts pick out one and the same referent. Hence, the

² For various ways of formulating the knowledge argument see Nida-Rümelin (2009) and Ludlow et al. (2004).

³ For this label and a critical discussion see Alter (2008).

Mary-scenario is treated analogously to standard cases of co-reference. Since this reply is put forward as an attempt to save physicalism, the referent of the new phenomenal concept is supposed to be physical; for example a brain state. Therefore, defenders of the phenomenal concept strategy grant that there is an epistemic and conceptual gap involved in the Mary-scenario, but they deny that this implies an ontological gap as well.

For this strategy to work—and not to count as just postulating the physical nature of blue-experiences—invoking phenomenal concepts has to be explanatory powerful. What needs to be explained is why Mary, despite her physical omniscience, is not able to deduce a priori the new phenomenal concept from the whole amount of physical concepts concerning human color-vision she had before. As the knowledge argument demonstrated, the conceptual isolation of phenomenal concepts is such that even *complete* physical knowledge does not help in acquiring phenomenal concepts—obviously, this is a striking phenomenon that calls out for explanation. Most defenders of the phenomenal concept strategy take this particular feature of phenomenal concepts to be explained by their special *acquisition conditions*: Phenomenal concepts can only be acquired by undergoing the relevant experience. Since Mary never had the possibility to enjoy the relevant color experience in her achromatic room, she simply could not gain a phenomenal concept of, for example, blue-experiences. Therefore, pointing at this uniqueness of phenomenal concepts is supposed to suffice to explain the Mary-scenario and to avoid any ontological anti-physicalist consequences of the argument.

Importantly, an elaborated account of phenomenal concepts cannot stop here by just pointing at their special acquisition conditions. An analysis of the nature of phenomenal concepts is needed as well. In recent literature different accounts of phenomenal concepts have been developed: Some explain the uniqueness of phenomenal concepts by relying on their *direct-reference-function* such as the *demonstrative accounts* (Horgan 1984, Perry 2001, Levin 2007) or Michael Tye's (2003) *causal-recognitional* account. Others put more emphasis on the *mode of presentation* of these concepts such as some versions of the *quotational* (Papineau 2002) or *constitutional* accounts (Chalmers 2004; Lehrer, this volume) of phenomenal concepts.

4 The Constitutional Account of Phenomenal Concepts

My argumentation will be primarily concerned with the idea that the mode of presentation and the experience plays the crucial role within an analysis of phenomenal concepts. Therefore, I will confine myself to just sketching one difficulty faced by demonstrative accounts, which deny that these concepts are facilitated by a presentation of the experience. Exactly this difficulty will turn out as a strong motivation for defending a constitutional account. Levin (2007), for example, takes phenomenal concepts to be inner demonstratives without any mode of presentation involved. One problem of this account is the following: Standard demonstrative concepts typically refer to the item currently demonstrated at and, hence, their referents differ from one use to another. Therefore, the demonstrative phenomenal concept itself does not carry the relevant information to explain the Mary-scenario. Raffman (1995) calls this the “differentiation problem” because in introspecting such demonstrative concepts a subject could not differentiate which concept she is currently employing.⁴

Since, this paper is not aimed at working out in detail the advantages and the difficulties each account of phenomenal concepts has, in the following I will confine myself to investigate the idea of a *constitutional account of phenomenal concepts*. The reason for choosing this account is the following: Besides having special acquisition conditions, phenomenal concepts also play a *specific cognitive role*—namely, to carry information about phenomenal experiences⁵ and to make this information introspectively accessible to the subject possessing the concept. Exactly this specific cognitive role of phenomenal concepts explains Mary’s new epistemic capacities (such as that after her release she can entertain new thoughts as the following one: “I like Yves-Klein-blue-experiences more than grey-experiences.”). Therefore, every account of phenomenal concepts that aims at explaining the knowledge argument also has to explain how phenomenal concepts can carry the relevant information and how they can make this information introspectively accessible to the subject.

According to my view, the question how a concept can play this particular cognitive role is best answered by individuating phenomenal concepts by their mode of presentation. (In Fürst, (MS) I argue in detail for this claim). Why? The basic idea of a constitutional account of phenomenal concepts is the following: When Mary leaves her black-and-white room and enjoys her very first blue-experience, this experience becomes a *constitutive part* of the phenomenal concept she thereby acquires. Obviously, if the experience is a constitutive part

⁴ For a possible way of dealing with this problem, see for example Papineau (2002). Interestingly, in his (2007) Papineau also refrained from the idea that there is a demonstrative aspect build into phenomenal concepts.

⁵ I want to use the notion “phenomenal experiences” here in a neutral sense. At this point I leave it open, if phenomenal experiences are ontologically physical or non-physical states.

of the concept, in every instance of employing the concept the experience is present⁶ as well and therefore the relevant cognitive role is easy at hand.

In literature there exist various sophisticated ways of fleshing out the idea that the experience is part of a phenomenal concept. For example, Papineau (2002, 2007) and Balog (forthcoming) developed a so-called “quotational account” that takes phenomenal concepts to be *quoting* experiences. In this case the idea is that the experience is *used to mention* it. I will not analyze the differences between Papineau’s and Balog’s quotational account and the proposed constitutional account in detail here (since I do it elsewhere (Fürst 2009 and MS)), but I want to mention two crucial points:

First, contrary to the proposed constitutional account, Papineau takes in his (2007) quotational phenomenal concepts not to be individuated by their *mode of presentation*, but rather by the neural *vehicle* which realizes the concept in the brain. The second point is even more important: Papineau as well as Balog are defenders of a *physicalist* phenomenal concept strategy and, consequently, take the experience which becomes part of the concept to be a *physical* state; for example a “neural template” (Papineau 2007, 123).

I think that those models which point at the use-mention-function of phenomenal concepts can indeed offer some explanation of the conceptual isolation of Mary’s new concepts. But, as argued above, to deal with the knowledge argument within a physicalist framework, more explanatory work is required. Next, I will argue that solely a non-physicalist interpretation of constitutional phenomenal concepts can also explain the scientist’s epistemic development after her release and, hence, the Mary-scenario in an adequate way.

5 The Referents of Phenomenal Concepts

To sum up the outcome of my analysis at this stage of argumentation: Phenomenal concepts are invoked to explain anti-physicalist arguments such as Jackson’s knowledge argument. If these particular concepts are supposed to explain Mary’s epistemic development adequately, they have to play a specific cognitive role. This cognitive role is best captured by an account

⁶ The following objection might be raised against every constitutional account of phenomenal concepts: If the experience is a constitutive part of the phenomenal concept, how can proponents of this thesis account for Mary’s true thought involving a phenomenal concept *that she is currently not having a red-experience*? In answering this question a distinction is often made between *basic and derivative* (applications of) phenomenal concepts (Balog 2009, Papineau 2007), where the latter do not imply an occurring experience and are used in the true thought above. I will not pursue this issue here, since for my present argumentation it suffices to have *some* phenomenal concepts (so-called “basic applications” of phenomenal concepts) to be constituted by occurring experiences.

of phenomenal concepts which combines two explanatory claims: First, undergoing the relevant experience is a necessary condition for acquiring phenomenal concepts. Second, phenomenal concepts are constituted by the very experience they refer to and they are individuated by their mode of presentation.

The reason for individuating phenomenal concepts by their mode-of-presentation rather than by the vehicle which realizes the concept, is the following: A phenomenal concept has to involve the *right phenomenology* to play its cognitive role, namely, to carry information about color-experiences and to yield phenomenal knowledge. This feature of phenomenal concepts explains why Mary can make introspective judgments of the form “I prefer my Yves-Klein-Blue-experience to my grey-experience”: The phenomenal mode directly presents to Mary the Yves-Klein-Blue-experience, respectively the grey-experience, and enables her to compare these two experiences introspectively. Therefore, the mode of presentation should be analysed as intimately tied as possible to the concept.⁷

The key-idea of my argumentation is that a detailed analysis of the acquisition process and the cognitive function of phenomenal concepts can shed some light on their referents. When Mary acquires a new phenomenal concept because of her very first blue-experience, the following happens: The scientist attentively discriminates this blue-experience from all other current experiences—a process, which yields a phenomenal concept referring to this particular experience. Hence, what happens in acquiring a new phenomenal concept is a conceptualization in presence of the experience. The process of attentive discrimination implies giving the experience itself a conceptual structure and, hence, leads to the forming of a phenomenal concept which is constituted by the experience itself. The constitutional account I have in mind is close to Lehrer’s notion of “exemplarization”: “The role of referring to an experience by exhibiting what the experience is like makes the experience part of the concept or representation that cannot be filled by a word.” (Lehrer, this volume) As Lehrer (2006 and this volume) demonstrated convincingly, this account can explain a wide range of puzzling epistemic phenomena such as why such concepts cannot be gained by description, why knowledge based on them is ineffable etc.

However, contrary to Lehrer, who prefers to remain agnostic about ontology (Lehrer 2006, 419), I want to extend these thoughts about phenomenal concepts, by investigating the *ontological impact* of such a constitutional account. In other words: Besides elaborating the idea that experiences can become constituents of a very particular sort of concept, I am

⁷ The reason for this demand is that just some co-occurrence of the mode of presentation and the concept would not suffice for the *concept itself* to carry the necessary information. Therefore, a constitutive link is required.

interested in the consequences this phenomenon has for fixing the referents of phenomenal concepts.

Interestingly, in the case of an account which links concept and experience in a constitutive manner, the reference of the concept cannot be seen as independent of the inner structure of the concept which in turn explains the cognitive role. But the inner structure of a concept which is individuated by its mode of presentation and which is constituted by a token of an experience to refer to experiences is the following: The core of the concept is an experience, which is *self-presenting*. This is an obvious consequence of the role the experience-token plays. Decisively, if this constituent of the concept is self-presenting, then there is no separate mode of presentation involved. Therefore, contrary to some physicalist suggestions (for example Loar 1997), phenomenal experiences cannot be seen as just a mode of presenting neural states anymore. Moreover, if the introspected item serves as its own mode of presentation, it does reveal its essence. At this point it should be noted that, exactly for this reason self-presentation paradigmatically is a mark of phenomenal entities, where a distinction between presented and presenting item cannot be made.⁸ Accordingly, the self-presenting referents of phenomenal concepts turn out to be in fact non-physical ones—namely, irreducible *phenomenal* experiences.

Further consequences of fleshing out the inner structure of constitutional phenomenal concepts are the following: Since the reference of phenomenal concepts is fixed by their particular internal constitution and not by external factors, these concepts pick out their referents directly and necessarily. Again, this is in perfect accordance with the cognitive role of phenomenal concepts I described above.

To sum up: The self-presenting character of the experience, which constitutes the phenomenal concept, offers an account of how a subject can have introspective access to the relevant information the concept carries. But note that the explanatory features of the experience involved in the concept give the constitutional account defended here an ontological bite: Since the explanation recurs to the notion of self-presentation it has *anti-physicalist* consequences. Therefore, a constitutional account which relies on the self-presenting character of the constituents and, hence, the anti-physicalist nature of their referents, provides the ground for a better understanding of the knowledge argument. Obviously, according to the advocated account the physicalist target of the phenomenal concept strategy cannot be reached anymore.

⁸ For the claim that in the case of phenomenal states appearance and reality collapse see for example Kripke (1972).

6 The Impact of Phenomenal Concepts on Intentional States:

Extending the Hard Problem

The outcome of my analysis of the phenomenal concept strategy is the following: Since phenomenal concepts are invoked to explain away the dualist intuitions underlying anti-physicalist arguments, we shall impose specific explanatory constraints on accounts of phenomenal concepts. I chose the knowledge argument for elaborating an account of phenomenal concepts which can explain their conceptual isolation and their cognitive role in a way that describes the Mary-scenario adequately. It turned out that such an account takes self-presenting experiences as constituents of phenomenal concepts and, hence, points towards non-physical referents. Therefore, the phenomenal concept strategy fails in reaching the physicalist target to explain away the “hard problem” which is tied to phenomenal consciousness and highlighted in the knowledge argument.

But this is not the whole story. Next, I will focus on the so-called “easy problem”, viz. explaining intentional states—in particular, how sensory inputs perform a cognitive role—within a physicalist framework. An analysis of intentional states involves the subject, the attitude-type, the content and the (maybe not existing) object at which the state is directed. Elsewhere (Fürst 2008) I argued in detail that every attitude-type of intentional states is co-constituted by a specific phenomenology which enables the subject to distinguish different attitude types of intentional states even if they are directed at the same object.⁹ But in this paper I am more interested in a particular sort of *content* of intentional states, namely the mental content of conscious intentional states¹⁰ involving *phenomenal concepts*. In other words: Next, I will investigate the ramifications of the constitutional account of phenomenal concepts for an analysis of *mental content of intentional states*.

Obviously, the existence of mental content is hard to pin down. Mental content seen on a traditional Fregean account (Frege 1993) is abstract and, hence, we are confronted with the problem of explaining our grasping of it. The sort of mental content I will be concerned with

⁹ The issue of phenomenal intentionality (see e.g. Kriegel (forthcoming)) has received much discussion recently. In most cases it is argued that qualia have an impact on intentional states by focusing on the attitude-type of intentional states (e.g. Strawson (1994)). Horgan and Tienson (2002) and Pitt (2004) explicitly hold that the attitude type of intentional states is partly constituted by its phenomenal character. Even if I take the attitude-type to be partly constituted by qualia as well (Fürst 2008), my concern here will be the mental *content* of intentional states involving phenomenal concepts.

¹⁰ The term “intentionality” is of scholastic origin, but was made explicit in the writings of Franz Brentano (1874). Focusing on the particularity of intentionality that mental states can be directed at nonexistent objects Brentanos scholar Kazimierz Twardowski (1894) famously introduced a distinction between the *intentional object* at which the state (or act) is directed and the *mental content* of an intentional state.

is not abstract in this Fregean sense. The reason why is that it involves constitutional phenomenal concepts and, hence, according to my analysis above, it is partly phenomenally constituted. Obviously, the defended account of phenomenal concepts is aimed against the externalist view widely held in literature (see for example Putnam 1975; Burge 1979; Dretske 1981; Millikan 1984) that the reference of a concept is not narrowly determined, but rather fixed by external factors. My argumentation above aimed at demonstrating that the reference of a *phenomenal concept* is determined by its inner constitution involving non-physical experiences.¹¹

The crucial question is: What are the implications of my analysis for Mary's new intentional states involving phenomenal concepts? After her release Mary could think: "I believe that my Yves-Klein-blue-experience correlates with brain state x" by thinking of her Yves-Klein-blue-experience in terms of a phenomenal concept. If we agree that the content of the intentional state is composed of the concepts involved, then the uniqueness of the phenomenal concept described above "infects" the content. Therefore, phenomenal concepts being constituted by non-physical experiences offer a strong reason for accepting a mental content, which is narrow in the sense that it is at least partially constituted by non-physical entities.

Decisively, this is in perfect accordance with the knowledge argument: When it comes to Mary's new intentional states, narrow mental content is indeed the relevant issue. All "external" knowledge, which can be conveyed by description, the brilliant scientist already had at hand. What Mary gains, when being released, is knowledge about the subjective, phenomenal character of color-experiences. It is knowledge about *what-an-experience-is-like*. Therefore, Mary's new intentional states include how she *represents* the relevant content to *herself*—namely, by using a phenomenal concept. Exactly, this way of representing the content to herself explains the *cognitive role of the concept*—and, hence, also of the *mental content*—and its *function* in Mary's mental life.

If my argumentation goes along the right lines, this leads to serious consequences for a physicalist treatment of consciousness: The twofold and alleged clear distinction of mental states which can be characterized as an "easy problem" and those which confront the physicalist with a "hard problem" is not justified anymore. In other words: Since non-physical experiences turn out to be a constitutive part of mental content involving phenomenal

¹¹ A clarification: I do not deny that a causal environmental chain leads to a phenomenal experience, but the experience itself is not *constituted* by externalist causes. (For a similar view see Horgan & Tienson (2002)). Since phenomenal concepts are constituted by phenomenal experiences and the inner constitution determines their reference, they resist externalist treatments.

concepts, the alleged “easy problem” of consciousness ends up being a “hard problem” as well.

7 Conclusion

Finally, I want to return to the framework of my argumentation to highlight the importance of the results: The physicalist attempt to reduce consciousness is challenged by anti-physicalist arguments based on the phenomenal aspect of mental states, the so-called “hard problem”. The physicalist phenomenal concept strategy is often seen as the most powerful contemporary response to these arguments. In this paper I aimed at shedding new and important insights on phenomenal concepts and their consequences for physicalism.

In a first step, I demonstrated that an account of phenomenal concepts which meets the explanatory constraints imposed on such theory, takes phenomenal concepts to be constituted by self-presenting experiences and, hence, to refer to non-physical referents. In a second step, I analyzed the impact of such an account on an analysis of mental content and, therefore, on the physicalist treatment of intentional states and their functions—the alleged “easy problem”. Finally, it turned out that to invoke phenomenal concepts fails in saving physicalism, which is challenged by anti-physicalist arguments based on the phenomenal aspect of mental states. But this has not been the whole story. Moreover, and importantly, due to their impact on the mental content of conscious intentional states and hence on the alleged “easy problem”, instead of strengthening physicalism phenomenal concepts even confront it with new and extended problems.

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