

Quining Qualia

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Qualia are a critical element when conceptualizing unfamiliar elements of life. In his book, "Quining Qualia", Daniel C. Dennett claims that the concept of Qualia, which is the different ways in which things seem to people, is not only vague but also very confusing. His main objective is to discredit the belief in the intuitive thought among the people (Dennett, 1988). Dennett uses various aspects, in which he calls intuition pumps, to demean the offending intuitions.

Dennett considers the first intuition pumps. They include "watching you eat cauliflower" and "the wine-tasting machine" (Dennett, 1988, 44). For the first intuition pump, Dennett uses an example of the same food tasting differently at varying times. His first sip of juice, he writes, tastes much better than his second sip in case where he interposes pancakes and maple syrup. According to him, people are not wrong to say or think about such things. The second intuition pump has been Dennett talking about replacing human wine tasters with a wine tasting machine. He argues that there is enough knowledge and technology to swap taste buds as well as olfactory organs (Dennett, 1988). According to him, the machine can even do better compared to humans as wine tasters. However, he writes that irrespective of the sensitivity and level of functioning the machine can have, it cannot achieve the same objectives as human tasters. He terms this as The Qualia of Personal Experience.

Drawing from traditional analysis of Qualia, Dennett suggests a number of properties that make qualia unique and aids in the readers' understanding of the message of the text. Firstly, Dennett describes Qualia as ineffable. This is because an individual cannot say, irrespective of how outspoken, cooperative, and creative one's spectators are, what they are seeing, smelling, tasting, so forth (Dennett, 1988). Also, according to tradition, qualia possesses intrinsic properties that are a part of qualia being ineffable. This makes qualia atomic and unanalyzable.

Also, qualia are private properties. This is explained by the impossibility of interpersonal comparison based on objectivity, physiology, and behavior. Dennett claims that verbal contracts are not the exclusive checks ruled. He portrays qualia as readily accessible to the awareness of an individual since they are elements of a person's experience. This means that qualia are the elements of a person's knowledge in which a person is exposed and has been acquainted. Therefore, qualia represent the mental state of an individual, which determines how they respond to situations.

Besides, Dennett continues to argue that qualia are very significant for some theorists because qualia provide a hindrance to the normal functioning of a body, or more generally, to materialism, or any third-person, objective view to the world (Dennett, 1988). According to Dennett, theorists who have a contrary opinion from the above, besides disagreeing with the arguments, and giving their point of view, have made one technical fault. He explains the error by noting down that theorists can handle qualia just fine by showing that an individual is marginally in fault regarding the state of qualia.

Dennett concludes by perceiving the theorists as outrageous and misguided. According to him, they feel that they have mistaken and, thus, hold a less vulnerable conception of qualia. Consequently, due to the tendentious nature of qualia, there is a need to consider an apparently milder alternative, which seems to be an essential move.

References

Dennet, Daniel C. "Quining qualia" *Consciousness in contemporary science*, 1988: 42-77

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