PHENOMENAL KNOWLEDGE IS OBJECTUAL KNOWLEDGE

By Maria Fedorova

Supervisor: Tim Crane, PhD

Submitted to Central European University

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Philosophy

Vienna 2023

But for pain words are lacking. There should be cries, cracks, fissures, whiteness passing over chintz covers, interference with the sense of time, of space; the sense also of extreme fixity in passing objects; and sounds very remote and then very close; flesh being gashed and blood spurting, a joint suddenly twisted - beneath all of which appears something very important, yet remote, to be just held in solitude.

—Virginia Woolf, The Waves

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned Maria Fedorova, hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

Vienna, Austria, 26.05.2023

Maria Fedorova

ABSTRACT

Phenomenal knowledge is knowledge of phenomenal properties of a conscious experience. In the thesis, I defend the view that phenomenal knowledge consists in direct acquaintance with phenomenal properties of a conscious experience. As such, phenomenal knowledge constitutes a *sui generis* kind of knowledge, irreducible to propositional knowledge, which can be referred to as objectual knowledge. I contend that acquaintance qualifies as knowledge insofar as it fulfils the distinguishing roles of knowledge by yielding cognitive contact with reality. The structure of my argument is as follows. In ***chapter 2***, I argue that in its present form, the propositional view of phenomenal knowledge is implausible because of its commitment to the episodic nature of phenomenal knowledge. If phenomenal knowledge is an episode in the stream of consciousness, it cannot fulfil the distinguishing roles of knowledge. Having motivated the rejection of the propositional view phenomenal knowledge, I try to block possible propositional alternatives to our understanding of phenomenal knowledge by denying its expressibility (***chapter 3***). ***Chapter 4*** attempts to vindicate the claim that acquaintance is sufficient for phenomenal knowledge. I suggest that acquaintance yields cognitive contact with reality, which I take to be a fundamental epistemic good on par with truth. As such, cognitive contact with reality can be retained in episodic memory, which allows phenomenal knowledge to fulfil the distinguishing roles of knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express gratitude to Tim Crane for his indispensable support and insights, which inspired the main argument of the thesis, Kati Farkas for spotlighting the central intuition behind the project before I did and her helpful comments on its early versions. Special thanks to participants of the 6th PLM Workshop *Language and Expression* for their objections; and Emily, Valentina, Rafal, and Stephania for invigorating discussions on the topic.

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1 Introduction

Imagine yourself meandering around the city on a sunny day. As you pass by the art nouveau buildings, the timid rays of the sun splash in the fountain. You let your mind wander: tangles of thought, flashes of blurred images are layering on the fractured pavement. Eventually, you lose sight of this myriad of experiences as they crash into each other. Yet, all of them, in confluence, make part of your stream of consciousness. Does it mean that you *know* them? If so, how do you come to know your experiences, and what is it about them that you know?

In the thesis, I investigate the nature of phenomenal knowledge. By phenomenal knowledge, I mean knowledge of phenomenal properties of a conscious experience, such as looks, feels, smells, and other sensory qualities that make part of what it's like to be a conscious minded creature. My main interest is in what *constitutes* phenomenal knowledge. According to the philosophical orthodoxy, phenomenal knowledge is a species of propositional knowledge, which consists in a mental attitude toward a proposition. Some philosophers refer to the mental attitude that is supposed to constitute phenomenal knowledge as *phenomenal belief* (Chalmers, 2003; Horgan & Kriegel, 2007). Others call it *introspective judgement* (see e.g., Gertler, 2012). Both notions amount to a conscious mental occurrence, which is concurrent with a conscious experience and has a proposition of the form 'this is what *p* is like' as its content.

In contrast to the philosophical orthodoxy, I defend a version of the non-propositional view of phenomenal knowledge. On this view, phenomenal knowledge consists in *direct acquaintance* with phenomenal properties of a conscious experience. Following Russell (1910, 1912), I define direct acquaintance as immediate presence of phenomenal properties to consciousness. I also refer to direct acquaintance as direct awareness. All these mean the same thing: to be acquainted with something means to be conscious of it (Coleman, 2019).

The aim of my thesis is to show that understanding the nature of phenomenal knowledge requires postulating a *sui generis* kind of knowledge, irreducible to propositional knowledge. In

line with the philosophical tradition, I refer to this kind of knowledge as *objectual knowledge*. Unlike Conee (1994) and Tye (2009), however, I contend that objectual knowledge only involves knowledge of phenomenal properties of a phenomenally conscious experience and does not apply to knowing people and places (see ***section 1.2***). The theory of phenomenal knowledge suggested in what follows can be thus seen as an extended version of Duncan (2020, 2021a) and Giustina (2022) (see ***section 1.3***).

Before I embark on the project, it will be helpful to situate the problem of phenomenal knowledge in its historical habitat. This will map the objectual view of phenomenal knowledge on to the discussion over the scope of genus knowledge, on the one hand, and the metaphysics of consciousness, on the other.

1.1 Kinds and hallmarks of knowledge

In the epistemological literature, propositional or factual knowledge (also known as knowledge of truths) occupies centre stage. According to the standard definition of propositional knowledge, propositional knowledge consists in a true justified belief in a proposition. Thus, on most accounts, belief is necessary for knowledge (but see e.g., Williamson, 2000; Farkas, 2015). As such, belief is not sufficient for knowledge. It must satisfy other conditions, like sensitivity or safety, for example (Farkas, 2019, p. 260). For the purposes of the thesis, these conditions are superfluous. So, I won't dwell on them any further. Instead, I am interested in the epistemic features of propositional knowledge by virtue of which it qualifies as knowledge. As Farkas puts it, if there is a *sui generis* kind of knowledge, other than propositional knowledge, it must share these epistemic features with propositional knowledge (Farkas, 2019, p. 262).

Some philosophers call the epistemic features at issue *the hallmarks of knowledge* (Hofmann, 2014; Duncan, 2020). The hallmarks of knowledge are also referred to as the distinguishing roles of knowledge (Duncan, 2020, p. 3571). According to Duncan, the hallmarks of knowledge include

reasoning, justification, evidence, praise and blame, and cognitive contact with reality. Our reasoning about a certain phenomenon depends on the knowledge we have about other things. Similarly, knowledge can be used for the purposes of justification and evidence. We present evidence based on what we know, and we justify some of our beliefs by virtue of knowledgeable theorising. Further, knowledge often bears on whether an action is blame- or praiseworthy. If I know something and act wrongfully regardless of or based on my knowledge, I will be blamed for my action more than someone who is ignorant Duncan, 2020, pp. 3571-3573). Duncan also thinks that cognitive contact with reality is a hallmark of knowledge. By putting us in cognitive contact with reality, knowledge helps us understand the world around us (Duncan, 2020, p. 3571). In ***chapter 3***, I take cognitive contact with reality outside the domain of the hallmarks of knowledge. Following Ranalli (2021), I submit that cognitive contact with reality is a fundamental epistemic good, distinct from and irreducible to truth. As we will see, this step is crucial to account for the objectual view of phenomenal knowledge, on which acquaintance plays a significant epistemic role in generating knowledge. The main question of the thesis is then whether phenomenal knowledge constitutes a *sui generis* kind of knowledge, which satisfies the hallmarks of knowledge condition, i.e., whether phenomenal knowledge is a species of objectual knowledge[1].

Objectual knowledge traces back to Russell (1910, 1912). Russell distinguishes between knowledge of truths (propositional knowledge) and knowledge of things (objectual knowledge). Objectual knowledge is constituted by the relation of acquaintance. To be acquainted with something, means to be aware or conscious of it. Put differently, objectual knowledge consists in immediate presence of objects to consciousness. On Russell's (1910, 1912) view, objectual

[1] Another possible candidate for a *sui generis* kind of knowledge is practical knowledge or knowledge-how (see e.g., Ryle, 1949; for a discussion see Farkas, 2018, 2019). This thesis does not concern practical knowledge. So, I do not engage in a discussion over it fulfilling the distinguishing roles of knowledge.

knowledge constitutes a *sui generis* kind of knowledge, irreducible to and, owing to its special epistemic security (see ***chapter 2***), more fundamental than propositional knowledge.

Russell's conception of knowledge by acquaintance has been heavily criticised in the philosophical literature. Philosophers mainly object to Russell by attributing the distinction between knowledge of things and knowledge of truths to equivocation on knowledge. To say that knowledge is acquired by the relation of acquaintance means to say that it is caused by acquaintance not that acquaintance itself constitutes knowledge (see Hasan and Fumerton, 2020).

Since Russell, however, a few philosophers (Churchland, 1989; Conee, 1994; McGinn, 2008, Tye, 2009; Hofmann, 2014; Fiocco, 2017; Coleman, 2019; Duncan, 2020, 2021a; Giustina, 2022) have tried to refine his conception of acquaintance, thereby postulating objectual knowledge as a *sui generis* kind of knowledge. Early attempts to postulate objectual knowledge as a *sui generis* kind of knowledge derive from the knowledge argument. Objectual knowledge was thus one of the focal points of the debate over the nature of the mind and, specifically, consciousness in the second half of the 20th century. Before taking the problem of objectual knowledge outside the domain of the knowledge argument, we must see how the knowledge argument captivated the philosophers' interest in it.

1.2 Objectual knowledge and the knowledge argument[2]

Objectual knowledge has a special significance for contemporary debates over the nature of the mind: it is situated in the context of the knowledge argument (Robinson, 1982; Jackson, 1982). According to the knowledge argument, the subject learns additional information about a

[2] I originally formulated a short version of the history of objectual knowledge in my final research paper for the course *The Cognitive Science of Ignorance*. To incorporate the section into the thesis, I have received a permission from the course instructor, Jonathan Kominsky. The permission is available upon request.

certain phenomenon by experiencing it for the first time, i.e., she learns about phenomenal properties of her experience or what it's like to have this experience.

The original aim of the knowledge argument was to show that physicalism is false[3]. So, philosophers, who were the first to attempt to obstruct the knowledge argument, such as Churchland (1989), Conee (1994), and Tye (2009), were driven by physicalist motivations. The claim is that the argument equivocates on knowledge. Specifically, they apply Russell's distinction between knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance to detect the argument's supposed equivocation on knowledge. Mary's knowledge of physical facts, which she acquires in a black-and-white room, is knowledge by description: it is propositional and thus can be expressed. In contrast, the kind of knowledge Mary acquires in virtue of experiencing the red colour for the first time is knowledge by acquaintance: it is non-propositional and non-truth-valuable (Churchland, 1989, p 68.; Conee, 1994, pp. 145-147.; Tye, 2009, p. 133)[4].

On the face of it, the argument from the distinction between knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintances is vulnerable to a straightforward objection. As Farkas and Crane point out, the physicalist usage of acquaintance conflicts with the ordinary sense of acquaintance (Farkas, 2019, p. 273; Crane, 2012, pp. 192-194.). Tye, for instance, believes that we are acquainted with our conscious experiences in the same way in which we are acquainted with people and places (Tye, 2009, pp. 95-96; see also Conee, 1994, p. 147 for a similar point). But, on Crane's view, our ordinary knowledge of people and places involves knowledge of truths (Crane,

[3] Crane (2019), however, disputes this interpretation of the knowledge argument. On his view, the knowledge argument is concerned with knowledge rather than metaphysics: it tells us how some knowledge can be acquired only through experience. Here, I set aside Crane's reasons for claiming that the knowledge argument fails to refute physicalism. I am interested in what kind of knowledge one acquires in virtue of being phenomenally conscious of something.

[4] Whether it is also inexpressible is contentious: Churchland argues it is (Churchland, 1989, p. 68), whereas Conee and Tye take it to be no less exotic than knowing people or places (Conee, 1994, p. 147; Tye, 2009, p. 131).

2012, p. 193). My acquaintance with Vienna presupposes that I know some facts about the city (e.g., it is the capital of Austria). Besides, Tye's notion of acquaintance, for instance, is episodic. That is, knowledge by acquaintance is restricted to conscious occurrences. For example, I know of a phenomenal property of the blue colour by acquaintance upon its immediate presence in a conscious experience of the blue colour (Tye, 2009, p. 98). But knowing people and places is not episodic, it persists through changes in consciousness (Crane, 2012, p. 193). Indeed, I do not stop knowing Vienna when I attend to another experience.

To recapitulate, there are two main weaknesses in the original attempt to postulate objectual knowledge as a *sui generis* kind of knowledge: (1) the physicalist usage of the acquaintance relation is ambiguous, i.e., it is supposed to hold for conscious experiences, people, and places; (2) even if the acquaintance relation was used in Russell's technical sense (i.e., as immediate presence of objects to consciousness), we need a separate positive argument for as to why postulate phenomenal knowledge as a *sui generis* kind of knowledge instead of denying that it is knowledge at all.

In the recent years, several philosophers have challenged the propositional treatment of phenomenal knowledge. Specifically, Duncan and Giustina put forward the following thesis: phenomenal knowledge seems to resist communicability (Duncan, 2020, p. 3564; Giustina, 2022, p. 128). If communicability is a necessary feature of propositional knowledge, it is hard to see how phenomenal knowledge can be propositional, given that it cannot be communicated to another person. Call it *the argument from incommunicability*.

As such, the argument from incommunicability is easily blocked by Farkas' objection from expressibility (Farkas, 2023). On her view, communicability is not a necessary feature of propositional knowledge. One can deny that all propositional knowledge is communicable but accept that it is expressible. Even if I fail to convey phenomenal knowledge to my interlocutor, I can nonetheless fully and perfectly express it to myself if I have had the relevant experience (Farkas, 2023).

The objection from expressibility seems to undermine the argument from incommunicability: Duncan's (2020) and Giustina's (2022) mistake is that they take communicability as a feature of propositional knowledge for granted. One of the main tasks of the thesis is to block Farkas' (2023) objection by claiming that some instances of phenomenal knowledge are inexpressible. A more challenging task is, of course, to vindicate the claim that inexpressible knowledge qualifies as knowledge at all. Here is how I plan to proceed with this.

1.3 Thesis and Plan

I began (***section 1.1***) by sketching the epistemological framework, within which the existence of objectual knowledge as a *sui generis* kind of knowledge can be postulated: if objectual knowledge satisfies the hallmarks of knowledge condition, it belongs to genus knowledge. I then specified (***section 1.2***) the historical context of the debate over the nature of phenomenal knowledge, which originates in the knowledge argument. Afterward (***section 1.3***), I spelled out the argument from incommunicability in favour of the objectual view of knowledge as proposed by Duncan (2020) and Giustina (2022) and introduced the strongest objection to the argument from expressibility (Farkas, 2023). I finished this section by outlining the scope of my contribution to the debate over the nature of phenomenal knowledge.

The aim of the thesis is to defend a version of the objectual view of phenomenal knowledge, on which phenomenal knowledge satisfies the hallmarks of knowledge condition. I argue that phenomenal knowledge is a species of objectual knowledge, which consists in direct acquaintance with phenomenal properties of a conscious experience. My understanding of the acquaintance relation is thus restricted to Russell's technical conception of acquaintance: phenomenal properties of a conscious experience are immediately present to consciousness, and the relevant presence is *epistemic*. Hence, phenomenal knowledge constitutes a *sui generis* kind of

knowledge, irreducible to propositional or any other kinds of knowledge. Simply put, acquaintance is knowledge.

It is my hope that by bridging the studies of consciousness and epistemological debates over the scope of knowledge, we can pave the way toward extending our conception of knowledge beyond propositional knowledge. Further, the objectual view of phenomenal knowledge suggested below can be seen as a basis for a theory of consciousness with an epistemic twist (*cf* McGuinn, 2008). This hope has broader social implications as far as non-propositional forms of epistemic agency are concerned (see e.g., Catala, 2020). I will pursue the aim of the thesis by first, rejecting the propositional view of phenomenal knowledge based on its implausibility and then, motivating the objectual view of phenomenal from inexpressibility, on the one hand, and non-propositional content of episodic memory, on the other.

In ***chapter 2***, I examine the plausibility of the propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge that belong to the family of theories which I call the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge. Having exposed the commitment of the approach to the episodic nature of phenomenal knowledge, I attempt to compromise it by showing that if phenomenal knowledge is episodic, it cannot satisfy the hallmarks of knowledge condition. The implausibility of the propositional-type acquaintance approach does not imply that phenomenal knowledge is non-propositional. Thus, ***chapter 3*** aims to reject the propositional treatment of phenomenal knowledge as such. I present Duncan's (2020) and Giustina's (2022) argument from incommunicability in favour of the non-propositional view of phenomenal knowledge and address Farkas' (2023) objection from expressibility to their view. I try to block Farkas' (2023) objection by considering cases, in which someone is aware of a phenomenal property of a conscious experience but fails to express her knowledge of the relevant phenomenal property to herself. In ***chapter 4***, I argue that absent expressibility, there is indeed knowledge, and this knowledge consists in direct acquaintance with a phenomenal property of a conscious experience. Following Ranalli (2021) and Duncan (2021a), I propose that acquaintance yields cognitive contact with

reality, which is a fundamental epistemic good, distinct from truth. I then suggest that the information acquired through acquaintance can be retained in episodic memory. Hence, I contend that the view of phenomenal knowledge, on which phenomenal knowledge consists in direct acquaintance with phenomenal properties of a conscious experience, presents a more plausible alternative to the existing propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge. This is because it treats phenomenal knowledge as non-episodic. As such, phenomenal knowledge satisfies the hallmarks of knowledge condition.

I should expose several limitations of the thesis from the outset. Phenomenal knowledge is a species of self-knowledge. I thus do not engage in a discussion over the nature of phenomenal properties, which are known. So, I use the term loosely and postulate no qualia or other metaphysical entities as its referents. I also do not touch upon the question of cognitive phenomenology (i.e., whether thoughts have phenomenal properties). Further, I reserve myself from making any substantive claims about the nature of various conscious experiences, such as perceptual experiences, sensations, and the like. I am committed to a form of representationalism about such experiences, but it goes beyond the scope of the thesis to argue for this view. I do, however, raise some problems concerning representationalism about awareness in the context of phenomenal knowledge in ***chapter 4***. Lastly, I set aside some broader questions concerning the scope and adequacy of introspection.

2 Phenomenal knowledge is propositional knowledge

We have established that the problem of phenomenal knowledge is intertwined with the knowledge argument (Robinson, 1982; Jackson, 1982). According to the knowledge argument, the subject learns additional information about a certain phenomenon in virtue of having a conscious experience of this phenomenon for the first time. More specifically, the subject learns what it's like for her to have this experience, i.e., she acquires phenomenal knowledge.

As far as the nature of phenomenal knowledge is concerned, we can examine the knowledge argument in five ways. First, one can argue, like Lewis (1990) and Nemirow (1990), that what Mary learns is an ability. Second, one can claim that the knowledge argument equivocates on knowledge: the kind of knowledge the subject acquires through experience is objectual. This is a standard physicalist objection to the knowledge argument (Churchland, 1989; Conee, 1994; Tye, 2009). Third, one can be skeptical about whether the knowledge argument successfully renders a metaphysical conclusion but deny that it involves the relevant equivocation on knowledge (Crane, 2019). On this view, the kind of knowledge the subject acquires through experience is propositional. What the knowledge argument shows is that some propositional knowledge can only be acquired in virtue of experience. Fourth, one can remain neutral on the question of physicalism but insist, like Crane, that the kind of knowledge one acquires through experience is propositional (BonJour, 2003; Chalmers, 2003; Fales, 1996; Feldman, 2004; Fumerton, 1995; Gertler, 2001; 2012; Horgan & Kriegel, 2007; Pitt, 2004). Finally, one can likewise set the question of physicalism aside but claim nonetheless that the kind of knowledge the subject acquires through experience is objectual (Hofmann, 2014; Fiocco, 2017; Coleman, 2019; Duncan, 2020, 2021a; Giustina, 2022).

Lewis' (1990) and Nemirov's (1990) ability hypothesis goes beyond the scope of the thesis. So, I set it aside. For the purposes the thesis, I also remain neutral on the question of physicalism. I am interested in what kind of knowledge the subject acquires in virtue of being

conscious of something. Hence, the fourth and the fifth approaches to phenomenal knowledge are at the focus of the chapters to follow. Crane (2019) does not develop a propositional theory of phenomenal knowledge, and his conception of phenomenal knowledge conflicts with the existing propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge in several important respects (these are to be revealed in due course). In this chapter, I investigate the propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge. By the end of the chapter, it will become clear that in their present form, the propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge are highly implausible. As such, their implausibility does not imply that phenomenal knowledge is not propositional. But the ambition of this chapter is modest: to raise doubt about the orthodox view of phenomenal knowledge as proposed by the propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge. This, I submit, suffices to motivate an exploration of possible alternatives, such as the objectual theories of phenomenal knowledge.

The propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge draw on Russell's conception of knowledge by acquaintance. Call the family of the propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge based on the relation of acquaintance *the propositional-type acquaintance approach* to phenomenal knowledge. Following Gertler, "the hallmark of this approach is the thesis that, in some introspective judgements about experience, (phenomenal) reality intersects with the epistemic, that is, with the subject's grasp of that reality" (Gertler, 2012, p. 93). On the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge, phenomenal knowledge consists in a mental attitude toward a proposition about a conscious experience's what-it's-likeness, where the relevant mental attitude is referred to as either *phenomenal belief* (Chalmers, 2003; Horgan & Kriegel, 2007) or *introspective judgement* (Gertler, 2012). A tacit assumption behind the interchangeable usage of belief and judgement is that judgement qualifies as a species of belief. Horgan & Kriegel, for instance, make use of the notion of occurrent belief to account for this interchangeability (Horgan & Kriegel, 2007, p. 136). What explains such interchangeable usage of belief and judgement is the commitment of the propositional-type acquaintance

approach to the episodic nature of phenomenal knowledge, which I expose in this chapter. To avoid confusion, I call the mental attitude supposedly involved in phenomenal knowledge phenomenal belief.

In what follows, we will see that the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge does not hold unless phenomenal knowledge is conceived of as episodic. This commitment, however, undermines the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge. Some philosophers (see e.g., Crane, 2013, 2017) deny that judgement and belief are the same kind of states. This is because beliefs are arguably dispositional states, which means that beliefs persist over time and changes in consciousness. In contrast, judgements are episodic. They are events in the stream of consciousness that cease to exist upon changes in consciousness, i.e., once I entertain a different conscious experience (Crane, 2013, p. 163). Given this, Crane disputes the existence of conscious or occurrent beliefs. Conscious belief is supposed to be a kind of occurrence or an episode in the stream of consciousness. But to qualify as belief, it must fulfil the distinguishing role of belief — guide the subject's agency, reasoning, planning, and so forth. Fulfilling this role requires that belief persists through changes in consciousness, including its temporary loss (e.g., in deep sleep). By definition, conscious belief cannot persist through changes in consciousness. Hence, it cannot fulfil the distinguishing role of belief. Therefore, it is not belief (Crane, 2013, pp. 164-165). As Crane later points out, for the same reason, there is no such thing as conscious knowledge: it cannot fulfil the distinguishing roles of knowledge (Crane, 2013, p. 165). Below, I use Crane's (2013) dialectic to deny that phenomenal knowledge qualifies as knowledge on the propositional-type acquaintance approach.

This chapter proceeds as follows. I explain the commitment of the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge to the episodic nature of phenomenal knowledge by presenting three central claims of the approach, which rest upon the Russellian conception of knowledge by acquaintance (following Gertler, 2012). I start by analysing the claim that the relation of acquaintance plays a constitutive role in generating phenomenal knowledge. I

then turn to the second claim of the propositional-type acquaintance approach, which is that phenomenal beliefs are justified solely by the subject's conscious experiences. Finally, I scrutinise the third claim about the special epistemic security of phenomenal knowledge: phenomenal beliefs are infallible. In confluence, these three claims constitute the thesis that phenomenal knowledge is episodic. Finally, I attempt to compromise the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge by arguing that it does not carry the hallmarks of knowledge due to its episodic character.

2.1 The propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge

The propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge generally adopts Russell's conception of knowledge by acquaintance (Gertler, 2012, p. 96). One of the core features of Russell's (1910, 1912) conception of knowledge by acquaintance is the thesis that the acquaintance relation plays a constitutive role in generating knowledge. The relation of acquaintance obtains between the subject and her experience. Knowledge by acquaintance is thus thought of as *metaphysically direct* (Gertler, 2012, p. 96). It consists in the subject's direct awareness of things. Direct awareness refers to immediate presence of objects to consciousness. As such, it partly constitutes objectual knowledge.

Following Gertler, the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge departs from Russell's conception in restricting the scope of knowledge by acquaintance to phenomenal knowledge and regarding phenomenal knowledge as a species of propositional knowledge. Nevertheless, the propositional-type acquaintance approach preserves the metaphysical directness of phenomenal knowledge. In contrast to Russell, however, the relation of acquaintance obtains between the subject's phenomenal belief and her experience (Gertler, 2012, p. 96). (It is noteworthy, however, that Chalmers is an exception to this view: like

Russell, he takes the acquaintance relation to obtain between the subject and her experience (Chalmers, 2003, p. 31)).

According to Gertler, the acquaintance relation is constitutive because the subject's experience "directly supplies" the content of phenomenal belief (Gertler, 2012, p. 97). To make sense of this idea, we can characterise the constitutive role of the acquaintance relation in terms of introspective demonstratives. Since our main interest is in phenomenal knowledge, the relevant referents of introspective demonstratives in the case of phenomenal knowledge are phenomenal properties of the subject's experiences. An introspective demonstrative refers to an experience's phenomenal property. Take an experience of sharp chest pain as an example. The instantiation of a phenomenal property of sharp chest pain *constitutively* contributes to how things seem to the subject (Gertler, 2012, p. 105). That is to say, the way things seem to the subject is exhausted by what it's like for her to experience sharp chest pain. The phenomenal property of sharp chest pain grounds a demonstrative reference to this phenomenal property, which is made in a phenomenal belief of the form 'this is what sharp chest pain is like'.

The second commitment of the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge concerns justification. Following Russell (1910, 1912), knowledge by acquaintance is epistemically grounded in immediate presence of objects to consciousness. The advocates of the propositional-type acquaintance approach endorse this claim with some modifications: phenomenal knowledge is epistemically grounded in the subject's conscious experiences in the sense that phenomenal beliefs are justified solely by the subject's conscious experiences (Gertler, 2012, p. 98).

To aid our understanding of the doxastic justification of phenomenal beliefs, consider Horgan & Kriegel's notion of the attention shift (Horgan & Kriegel, 2007, p. 136). When experiencing something, we generally attend to the content of our conscious experiences rather than experiences themselves (*cf* Tye, 2002). Imagine a bee crawling up your arm. When having this experience, you attend to the bee crawling up your arm, not to, as it were, the experience's

wings-touching your-skin-what-its-likeness. In more pleasant circumstances, however, say, when you are having a perceptual experience of Pollock's *Reflection of the Big Dipper*, you might take some time to reflect on your experience. If you redirect your attention to the perceptual experience of Pollock's *Reflection of the Big Dipper* instead of the content of the experience, you come to learn what it's like for you to have the relevant perceptual experience. On the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge, you form a phenomenal belief about your experience's what-it's-likeness: 'I believe that this is what it's like to have a perceptual experience of Pollock's *Reflection of the Big Dipper*'. This phenomenal belief is solely justified by your conscious experience of Pollock's *Reflection of the Big Dipper*, and all such justification takes is for the subject to become directly aware of her experience (see also Gertler, 2012, p. 114).

Third, special epistemic security. It is well known that Russell (1910, 1912) subscribed to the view that knowledge by acquaintance is more epistemically secure and thus more fundamental than propositional knowledge. On the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge, phenomenal knowledge is indeed more epistemically secure than any other knowledge (Gertler, 2012, pp. 99). As a matter of fact, phenomenal knowledge is infallible (Horgan & Kriegel, 2007, p. 131) or, per Chalmers, 2003, p. 23, incorrigible).

Following Gertler, a certain phenomenal belief is more epistemically secure (or more strongly justified) than other beliefs if it is immune from the defeaters that other beliefs are vulnerable to or if it is immune from any defeaters (Gertler, 2012, p. 114). As Horgan & Kriegel put it, phenomenal beliefs are more epistemically secure because they are given under the bracketed mode of presentation (Horgan & Kriegel, 2007, pp. 128-129). Phenomenal beliefs are given under the bracketed mode of presentation, provided that the subject sets aside any features of her experience, such as used to classify an experience as fitting the category of pain, for example, other than phenomenal features. So construed, phenomenal beliefs are "directly tied" (Gertler, 2012, p. 96) to the subject's conscious experiences. That is to say, they are concurrent

with these experiences. The subject forms a phenomenal belief about her experience at the time when the experience occurs (Horgan & Kriegel, 2007, p. 130). For this reason, phenomenal beliefs are infallible. The subject cannot be wrong about what it's like for her to experience something when she experiences it.

That way, the advocates of the propositional-type acquaintance approach aim to address Brentano's (in Giustina, 2021) *phenomenal modification problem*. By shifting her attention to a conscious experience, the subject alters the experience they aim to grasp. Hence, what the subject supposedly learns is not about the original experience. The propositional-type acquaintance approach theorist replies to this objection by saying that phenomenal belief concerns the subject's experience at the time of the phenomenal belief formation. The subject's knowledge of an experience's what-it's-likeness is about an experience that occurs after the attention shift (Horgan & Kriegel, 2007, p. 137).

These three commitments of the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge constitute its core claim, which is that phenomenal knowledge is episodic. If the acquaintance relation plays a constitutive and not merely causal role in generating phenomenal knowledge, it must directly supply the content of phenomenal belief. For the acquaintance relation to directly supply the content of phenomenal belief, phenomenal belief must be solely justified by the subject's conscious experiences. The subject's phenomenal belief is solely and more strongly justified by her conscious experiences, granted phenomenal belief is concurrent with the subject's conscious experiences. For phenomenal belief to be concurrent with the subject's conscious experience, it must itself be an episode in the stream of consciousness. If phenomenal knowledge consists in phenomenal belief, then phenomenal knowledge is an episode in the stream of consciousness. Below, I argue that such understanding of phenomenal knowledge is highly implausible because if phenomenal knowledge is episodic, it cannot qualify as knowledge.

2.2 Phenomenal knowledge is not knowledge

As we have learnt from the previous section, the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge regards phenomenal knowledge as consisting of phenomenal belief about an experience's what-it's-likeness. Notably, the nature of the underlying mechanism of phenomenal knowledge acquisition — the acquaintance relation — has received much attention. This is unsurprising: provided that phenomenal beliefs are justified in virtue of the subject's direct awareness of her experience, our understanding of phenomenal knowledge rests on our understanding of consciousness (take Horgan & Kriegel's (2007) self-representationalism about consciousness as an example). Less has been said about the metaphysics of phenomenal belief. The propositional-type acquaintance approach theorists seem to take it for granted that there are mental phenomena that can be referred to as phenomenal beliefs. Crane (2013), however, begs to differ.

Crane's (2013, 2017) central thesis is that all beliefs are unconscious dispositions. Among various mental phenomena, there are episodes or occurrences in the stream of consciousness: images, flashes of memory, daydreaming, and, crucially, thoughts (e.g., judgements). There are also dispositions or, if you will, standing states that are unconscious like beliefs or desires.

Crane defines believing something as taking something to be the case. It is different from taking something to be the case in perception. Just like with other mental occurrences, the existence of the latter is limited to a conscious episode of perceiving. In turn, dispositional mental features are such that they persist through changes in consciousness (Crane, 2013, p. 164). Take the belief that wolfsbane causes the paralysis of the cardiac muscles as an example. To believe in the deadly effects of wolfsbane means to be disposed to act accordingly: you will (hopefully) wear gloves whilst harvesting the plant, refrain from consuming a dish that contains wolfsbane or, if you are unfortunate enough to be poisoned with one, try counteracting it with an antidote.

We can contrast phenomenal beliefs with paradigmatically dispositional beliefs in terms of persistence. Phenomenal belief is occurrent and thus ceases to exist once you redirect your attention toward some other experience. Philosophers refer to beliefs of the kind as conscious or occurrent beliefs. Occurrent belief is Crane's main target: he believes that it does not qualify as belief because it fails to fulfil the distinguishing role of belief. As opposed to occurrent beliefs, dispositional beliefs persist through changes in consciousness. Evidently, this feature is not merely contingent on Crane's definition of belief in dispositional terms but depends on the functional role belief plays in our lives. According to Crane, beliefs guide the subject's agency, reasoning, and planning. Having acquired a belief, the subject retains it in her memory and brings the belief to her mind when needed. That is, she learns some facts about the environment to respond to and act on it accordingly. Crucially, the subject's beliefs would not be action-guiding if they went out of existence with change in consciousness. An example can clarify the idea: if the subject's belief that the fire is hot were never retained in her memory, she would continue to burn herself every time she encountered fire in experience. Hence, for belief to play its functional role, it must persist through changes in consciousness (Crane, 2013, pp. 164-165).

Crane's (2013) reasons for rejecting the existence of occurrent belief must be clear by now. Occurrent beliefs are supposed to be occurrences or episodes in the stream of consciousness. So, occurrent beliefs cease to exist once there is a change in the subject's consciousness. Crane defines belief in terms of its functional role. Belief's functional role consists in being action-guiding. Belief can fulfil its functional role only if it persists through changes in consciousness. Occurrent belief does not persist through changes in consciousness. Therefore, occurrent belief cannot fulfil the function role of belief. Therefore, occurrent belief is not belief. Extending this line of reasoning to phenomenal belief, if phenomenal belief is supposed to be occurrent belief, then it is not belief (Crane, 2013, p. 165).

Crucially, Crane applies his observations concerning belief to knowledge. He says:

> "But people do not lose knowledge in any sense simply because they think about something else, or lose consciousness. So for the same kinds of reason that belief cannot be an occurrence, knowledge cannot be an occurrence either" (Crane, 2013, p. 165).

Put differently, we tend to think of knowledge as fulfilling the same functional role that belief does: it organises our behaviour and reasoning. For this reason, Crane argues, we scarcely talk of conscious knowledge. Conscious knowledge cannot be action-guiding because we would lose it if consciousness changed.

I agree with Crane in denying the existence of conscious knowledge. Conscious knowledge indeed fails to carry the hallmarks of knowledge. Following Duncan, knowledge is something we reason with, something that provides justification and evidence (Duncan, 2020, pp. 3571-3573). Granted, these are the hallmarks of knowledge, does conscious knowledge, in our case, phenomenal knowledge, as understood on the propositional-type acquaintance approach, carry these hallmarks?

I contend that phenomenal knowledge so construed fails to fulfil the distinguishing roles of knowledge for the same reason conscious belief fails to be action-guiding on Crane's (2013) account. Take reasoning. Sound reasoning presupposes knowledge. You learn something new by reasoning based on what you already know: if you know x based on y and z, you know y and z. Clearly, you must retain your knowledge of y and z to use it in your reasoning about x, and your knowledge of x can only be retained if it persists through changes in consciousness. Analogously, with justification and evidence.

Hence, phenomenal knowledge as conceived on the propositional-type acquaintance approach fails to satisfy the hallmarks of knowledge condition. This, I submit, makes the propositional-type acquaintance approach an implausible theory of phenomenal knowledge. Note well: I do not yet claim that phenomenal knowledge is non-propositional. This is the task of the chapters to follow. What I claim here is simply that the propositional-type acquaintance

approach is self-defeating insofar as it regards phenomenal knowledge as episodic. Thus, we must either abandon the idea that phenomenal knowledge is propositional, or that it is episodic, or, as a matter of fact, both. In the next section, I will present some compelling reasons for denying that phenomenal knowledge is propositional, thereby paving the way toward treating it in objectual terms. My last task will be to defend the view that phenomenal knowledge conceived of as objectual knowledge can be regarded as non-episodic and thus fulfilling the distinguishing roles of knowledge.

3 Phenomenal knowledge is not propositional knowledge

The propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge regards phenomenal knowledge as consisting in a phenomenal belief toward a proposition of the form 'this is what it's like to experience *p*'. The subject's phenomenal belief about her experience's what-it's-likeness is concurrent with an experience itself: this is what makes it solely justified by virtue of the subject's acquaintance with her experience. In the previous chapter, I argued that because phenomenal knowledge must be episodic on the propositional-type acquaintance approach, it fails to satisfy the hallmarks of knowledge condition. I will come back to this question in the next section. For the purposes of the present chapter, it suffices to say that phenomenal knowledge must indeed be non-episodic to qualify as knowledge, and phenomenal knowledge defined in objectual terms can meet this constraint (see ***chapter 4***). The main task of this section is to cast doubt on whether the kind of knowledge we acquire in virtue of experiencing something is a species of propositional knowledge. Below, I attempt to motivate the rejection of the propositional treatment of phenomenal knowledge and suggest instead that it belongs to a different kind of knowledge, — objectual knowledge — irreducible to propositional knowledge.

Philosophers who dispute the propositional treatment of phenomenal knowledge have different motivations for postulating it as a *sui generis* kind of knowledge. Some (e.g., Tye, 2009; Churchland, 1989, Conee, 1994) posit phenomenal knowledge as a species of objectual knowledge to block the knowledge argument (Robinson, 1982; Jackson, 1982). More recently, Duncan (2020) and Giustina (2022) have been advancing some independent reasons for rejecting the propositional view of phenomenal knowledge: phenomenal knowledge seems to resist communicability. On their view, communicability is a necessary feature of propositional knowledge. If I know that *p*, I must be able to fully transmit my knowledge of *p* to my interlocutor. This condition, however, does not hold for phenomenal knowledge. Unless my

interlocutor has had the corresponding experience, my knowledge of the experience's what-it's-likeness is incommunicable. Hence, this knowledge is non-propositional. Or so the argument from incommunicability goes.

In what follows, I spell out the argument from incommunicability and address Farkas' (2023) objection from expressibility. According to this objection, even if I fail to convey phenomenal knowledge to my interlocutor, I can nonetheless fully and perfectly express phenomenal knowledge to myself. As such, this knowledge is propositional. In this chapter, I attempt to counteract the objection from expressibility by denying genuine expressibility of phenomenal knowledge. I thus defend the following claim: some instances of phenomenal knowledge are neither communicable nor expressible. In conjunction, incommunicability, and inexpressibility of phenomenal knowledge, give us compelling reasons for postulating objectual knowledge a *sui generi*s kind of knowledge to account for phenomenal knowledge.

3.1 The argument from incommunicability[5]

The argument from incommunicability can be reconstructed thus:

P1 All propositional knowledge is communicable.

P2 Phenomenal knowledge is incommunicable.

C Therefore, phenomenal knowledge is not propositional.

[5] This and the following sections were initially partly developed as part of the final research paper for the course *The Cognitive Science of Ignorance*. To incorporate the section into the thesis, I have received a permission from the course instructor, Jonathan Kominsky. The permission is available upon request.

It is noteworthy that Duncan (2020) and Giustina (2022) assume the truth of *premise 1* without further consideration and focus solely on defending *premise 2*. In the section to follow, we will see why taking *premise 1* for granted is fatal for their argument. Here, however, I restrict myself to the defence of *premise 2*.

Duncan (2020) and Giustina (2022) define propositional knowledge in terms of belief. Thus, by saying that phenomenal knowledge is not propositional, they mean that phenomenal knowledge does not entail belief. Duncan (2020) and Giustina (2022) attempt to refine Russell's conception of the acquaintance relation, by pinpointing an *epistemic asymmetry* that obtains between someone who has had a certain experience and someone who has not. The defence of *premise 2* thus consists in an argument to the best explanation: accounting of the epistemic asymmetry requires that we regard phenomenal knowledge as non-propositional.

Now to the epistemic asymmetry. Philosophers like simple examples (my reasons for making this remark will become clear in due course). So, let's consider an example of pain, following Giustina (2022, pp. 9-10). Recall the experience of sharp chest pain from the previous chapter. Suppose I try to describe my experience of sharp chest pain to another person. Merely saying that something is painful is, of course, not very informative. I can deploy a range of concepts associated with pain to aid the description: the pain is searing, agonising, burning, and so forth. I can also compare my experience of pain to other sensations like itching or numbness. I thereby transmit the information about my experience of sharp chest pain in a series of propositions. Correspondingly, my interlocutor acquires some propositional knowledge about my experience. It does not mean that she knows everything there is to know about my experience of sharp chest pain, however (Giustina, 2022, p. 11).

According to Giustina, one piece of information is missing from the description: what it's like to experience sharp chest pain. On the face of it, no amount of propositional knowledge that I can transmit to my interlocutor suffices to provide an exhaustive description of my experience. My interlocutor would only grasp the experience fully if she became acquainted with

it herself (Giustina, 2022, p. 11). A more complicated example can be useful here. Consider someone in deep grief. Suppose her friend wants to console her and asks to describe her experience of grief to better understand it. A folk intuition tells us that no matter how many propositions the subject utters, her friend won't be able to grasp the experience of deep grief unless she experiences it herself. Hence the epistemic asymmetry between a person who has experienced something and a person who has not.

Duncan's (2020) example of the myriad of perceptual experiences that occur when one enters a restaurant makes a similar point. Imagine yourself walking into a restaurant. As you do, you immediately see a multitude of objects and properties: people, tables, chairs, colours, and shapes. You notice the waiter's facial expression, the colour of your friend's shirt; you taste a scallop as you bite into it. Just like in the case of pain, you can try to describe your experiences to the interlocutor: describe the scallop's taste as fishy; the colour of your friend's shirt as of an avocado shade; the facial expression of the waiter as a tiny bit grumpy (Duncan, 2020, p. 3559). As Duncan notices, however, you won't be able to fully express[6] what you see: neither the taste, nor the myriad of shades of colour, nor the multitude of successive facial expressions (Duncan, 2020, p. 3577). Yet, if it were propositional knowledge that you acquire in virtue of perceptual experience, you would easily transmit what you see to the interlocutor. But the fine-grained properties of our perceptual experiences seem to evade the subject's propositional grasp.

Duncan's (2020) and Giustina's (2022) make substantive use of Dretske's (1981) distinction between different formats, in which a certain piece of information can be carried out. Suppose the window at your flat has been broken. Your landlady texts you and says, 'you window is broken'. The information about your broken window is conveyed to you in a digital

[6] It should be noted that Duncan's (2020) usage of the notion of expressibility is somewhat ambiguous. In some cases, what he seems to mean by expressibility is communicability. In others, he seems to mean that knowledge of things cannot be expressed in declarative sentences, which is not the same as to say that it cannot be communicated to the interlocutor. I will discuss the second meaning in the next section.

format. Now imagine that your landlady sends you a picture of your broken window instead. In the picture, you can see the magnitude of the damage, what exactly has been broken, and so forth. This information is of an analog format. On Dretske's view, an analog format is more determinate than a digital format because it gives you a full idea of the situation (in Giustina, 2022, p. 10). Analogously, Giustina suggests the interlocutor acquires phenomenal knowledge of an experience of pain by having an experience of pain. The information about phenomenal properties of a conscious experience so obtained is of an analog form (Giustina, 2022, p. 11). Similarly, Duncan argues that propositions have a digital format, whereas the information about the fine-grained properties that our perceptual experiences capture are of an analog format (Duncan, 2020, p. 3575). Acquaintance with a conscious experience thus fills the epistemic gap between someone who has had the experience and someone who has not, by presenting the latter with the relevant information in an analog and not digital format.

In sum, Duncan and Giustina argue that the epistemic asymmetry between the speaker and the interlocutor is best explained by the constitutive role of the acquaintance relation. Contrary to what the opponents of Russell's conception of knowledge say, phenomenal knowledge is not *caused* but *constituted* by direct awareness of a conscious experience. By being directly aware of my experience, I come to know a phenomenal property of a conscious experience non-propositionally. As opposed to the propositional-type acquaintance approach, however, the acquaintance relation is constitutive not of the content of my phenomenal belief but of the perspective I assume on my experience.

It is noteworthy that Duncan and Giustina do not deny that the subject can ultimately acquire propositional knowledge of her experience's what-it's-likeness (see e.g., Giustina, 2022, p. 14). The important thing is that one does not have to. My acquaintance with my experience constitutes an epistemic achievement in its own right insofar as it fills in the epistemic gap between me and another person who has had the experience at issue. In the next section, I will

try to show that in some cases, the subject, in fact, cannot form propositional knowledge of the kind, and hence her phenomenal knowledge can only be treated non-propositionally.

3.2 The argument from inexpressibility

As I mentioned in the previous section, the argument from incommunicability rests on the assumption that propositional knowledge is necessarily communicable. If I know a certain proposition, I must be able to transmit it to my interlocutor. Since a proposition of the form 'this is what it's like to experience *p*' is incommunicable to the interlocutor unless she has experienced *p*, my knowledge of a phenomenal property of experience *p* must be non-propositional.

Farkas' (2023) first step in trying to block the argument from incommunicability is thus to deny *premise 1*. Not all propositional knowledge must be communicable, and that phenomenal knowledge is incommunicable does not imply that it is not propositional insofar as it can be expressed. A proposition of the form 'this is what it's like to experience *p*' is perfectly expressible to the speaker who has experienced *p*. Incommunicability does not mean inexpressibility. If phenomenal knowledge is expressible in this way, then it qualifies as propositional knowledge. To elucidate, phenomenal knowledge is such that it must be given under a certain mode of presentation, i.e., acquired through experience. The knowledge so acquired is entirely propositional: 'I know that this is what *p* is like' or 'I know that this is what *p* looks like'. The speaker cannot transmit her knowledge to the interlocutor unless the given mode of presentation is also available to them. If it is available, i.e., the interlocutor has had a certain experience, there is no epistemic asymmetry: both understand what it means to say, 'this is what *p* is like' (Farkas, 2023). Farkas' (2023) objection from expressibility coincides with Crane's (2012, 2019) analysis of the knowledge argument: Mary acquires propositional knowledge 'that this is what it is like' *in virtue of* experiencing something for the first time (Crane, 2012, pp. 196-197, 2019, p. 29).

In this section, I attempt to respond to Farkas' (2023) objection twofold. First, I argue that even granted, a specific mode of presentation of phenomenal knowledge is available for both conversationalists, the epistemic asymmetry might not be mitigated. Second, I present some counterexamples that undermine the expressibility of phenomenal knowledge. My main task is to show that these counterexamples compromise genuine expressibility of some instances of phenomenal knowledge either because (1) 'this', as a demonstrative, in 'this is what *p* is like' fails to pick up *p* from the stream of consciousness; or (2) concept that would stand for *p* does not exist. I thus formulate the argument against the propositional treatment of phenomenal knowledge in terms of inexpressibility to motivate the postulation of a *sui generis* kind of knowledge, — objectual knowledge — to account for phenomenal knowledge.

In the reminder of this section, I will be using slightly more complicated examples than that of pains or colours, thereby disclosing my preceding remark about simple examples. Suppose both the speaker and her interlocutor have had a certain experience, i.e., phenomenal knowledge of this experience is available to them under the required mode of presentation. If Farkas (2023) is right, then both the speaker and her interlocutor must be able to fully communicate phenomenal knowledge about their experiences to one another, provided that these experiences have occurred.

Imagine now that two conversationalists want to share their experiences of sexual assault. Both can adequately employ the concept of sexual assault to grasp their experiences. They can also successfully refer to phenomenal properties of these experiences with a demonstrative 'this'. Does it, nonetheless, follow that they can fully transmit their phenomenal knowledge of these experiences to each other? They will surely be able to describe the disturbing events in a series of propositions: the circumstances, under which these events happened, their perpetrators, and so forth. They may understand each other better than someone who has not been through something like this. They may even exercise more empathy toward one another. Yet it seems like there still will be an epistemic gap between them, owing to the particularity of the two

experiences. Apples may taste alike. Forms of sexual assault do not. Thus, on the face of it, the availability of a certain mode of presentation does not in itself rule out the epistemic asymmetry. In other words, it does not guarantee perfect communicability.

Keeping this limitation in mind, let's consider possible counterexamples to expressibility of phenomenal knowledge. The claim I defend below is the following: not only does not the subject have to acquire propositional knowledge of phenomenal properties of a conscious experience. The subject, I submit, cannot have propositional knowledge of phenomenal properties of a conscious experience in a number of cases.

(1) *This* is what p is like: the case of grief. Imagine someone in deep grief over loosing someone dear to them. Upon experiencing grief, she may learn how it affects her everyday life: her decisions agency, and social interactions. This knowledge is arguably propositional. A person can express it to herself by observing what has changed. She might not be able, however, to express what it's like to experience grief for the following reason. Like moods, such as depression, grief is all-encompassing as far as a person's experience is concerned. Every other conscious occurrence, be it a perceptual experience of a certain colour or a feeling of anxiety, is enveloped by grief. I perceive the world through a grid of grief. The question is then whether an experience of grief is expressible by virtue of demonstrative reference, given that this experience is, as it were, attached to other experiences. Given this, a person would fail to pinpoint a specific phenomenal property that corresponds to her experience of grief, because 'this' refers to virtually any experience in this case.

(2) This is what *p* is like: the case of missing concepts. Our experiences seem to outnumber the concepts we are in a possession of for expressing what it's like to have these experiences. It is noteworthy that Giustina makes a similar point by means of a thought experiment, in which she imagines the possibility of creatures who, owing to their nature, cannot describe their experiences in a propositional form (Giustina, 2022, p. 16). There is no need, I submit, in thought experiments of the sort. As Duncan points out, it is unlikely that we would

find a concept for every shade of blue, or every facial expression on another person's face, to express our perceptual experiences in declarative sentences (Duncan, 2020, p. 3577). Furthermore, we can make use of the notion of hermeneutical injustice. Consider cognitive disability. Some cognitively disabled persons, for instance, lack linguistic capacities to express or convey their experience to themselves and others. Others struggle with the absence of the relevant concept to capture their experiences. But surely, they know of their experiences in some sense by virtue of being conscious of them. Likewise, some concepts (like sensory overload, for example) are notoriously deficient when it comes to expressing neurodivergent experiences as being somehow different from ordinary experiences.

One may object that there is no knowledge in the case of missing concepts: a person who experiences something that she fails to bring under a concept is, as it were, epistemically deficient. Setting aside various ethical considerations as to why this interpretation might be problematic, the objection itself is, I contend, question-begging insofar as it rests on the assumption that the knowledge one acquires in virtue of experiencing something is knowledge caused but not constituted by acquaintance. What the objection ultimately says is: direct awareness of a certain experience is insufficient for phenomenal knowledge. Yet this is exactly the question under Duncan's (2020) and Giustina's (2022) investigation. Hence, to argue that there is no knowledge because it is merely a conscious experience is to beg the question against the subject matter of the ongoing debate.

Given **(1)** and **(2)**, the advocates of the propositional treatment of phenomenal knowledge must accommodate these examples to fit the expressibility claim. *The argument from inexpressibility* of phenomenal knowledge can be formulated as follows:

P1 All propositional knowledge is expressible.

P2 Phenomenal knowledge is inexpressible.

C Therefore, phenomenal knowledge is not propositional.

The main objective of the last section was to defend *premise 2* of the argument from inexpressibility. Hopefully, I have succeeded in convincing the reader that some cases of phenomenal knowledge resists expressibility and communicability. In conjunction, the absence of these harborus skepticism concerning the propositional nature of phenomenal knowledge. In what follows, I will discuss the question of whether knowledge that is neither communicable nor expressible qualifies as knowledge at all. I thus will argue that phenomenal knowledge understood as objectual knowledge, i.e., consisting in direct awareness of a conscious experience, satisfies the hallmarks of knowledge condition.

4 Phenomenal knowledge is objectual knowledge

The objectual theories of phenomenal knowledge rest on the claim that phenomenal knowledge resists communicability. According to the argument from incommunicability, an epistemic asymmetry occurs when someone who has had a certain experience tries to transmit her knowledge of a conscious experience to someone who has not had this experience. A propositional description of a conscious experience leaves out the information about its phenomenal properties. Doubtless, however, you know what it's like for you to experience things. If propositional knowledge is necessarily communicable, your knowledge of phenomenal properties of a conscious experience must be non-propositional. Or so Duncan (2020) and Giustina (2022) argue.

The argument from incommunicability takes communicability of propositional knowledge for granted, which makes it subject to Farkas' (2023) objection from expressibility. As Farkas puts it, even if some propositional knowledge is incommunicable, it can nonetheless be perfectly expressible to the subject of experience. Arguably, some propositional knowledge, such as phenomenal knowledge, requires a specific mode of presentation, i.e., the experiential mode of presentation. If this mode of presentation is available, the subject acquires propositional knowledge about phenomenal properties of a certain experience. Put differently, if the subject has had an experience of pain, she will be able to form a mental attitude toward a proposition of the form 'this is what pain is like' (Farkas, 2023).

In the previous chapter, I tried to cast doubt on expressibility of some instances of phenomenal knowledge in response to Farkas' (2023) objection. As I argued, there can be experiences that resist expressibility either because the subject fails to make a reference to a phenomenal property of a certain experience with the use of a demonstrative or because the relevant concept under which the subject could bring her experience does not exist. The examples include experiences of grief and fine-grained properties of perceived objects, and cases

of hermeneutical injustice, such as experiences of cognitively disabled persons. It seems uncontroversial that in these cases, the subject is directly acquainted with phenomenal properties of her experiences. Likewise, it is uncontroversial to claim that the relation of acquaintance is necessary for some propositional knowledge about these experiences. What is contentious is whether the relation of acquaintance is sufficient to constitute a *sui generis* kind of knowledge, irreducible to propositional knowledge.

Below, I attempt to address this question by defending the view that the relation of acquaintance satisfies the hallmarks of knowledge (Hofmann, 2014; Duncan, 2020; for a critical discussion see Farkas, 2019). The second chapter presented the case against the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge. Following Crane (2013), I tried to show that because the propositional-type acquaintance approach regards phenomenal knowledge as episodic, phenomenal knowledge falls short of the distinguishing roles of knowledge, such as reasoning, evidence, and justification. On the propositional-type acquaintance approach, phenomenal knowledge consists in a phenomenal belief that must be concurrent with a conscious experience. A phenomenal belief is a conscious occurrence. If phenomenal knowledge is episodic, it cannot, by definition, persist through changes in consciousness. If phenomenal knowledge consists in a phenomenal belief, it is episodic. Hence, it cannot persist through changes in consciousness, i.e., it is never retained. If phenomenal knowledge is never retained, it cannot fulfil the distinguishing roles of knowledge. If so, phenomenal knowledge is not knowledge. This makes the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge highly implausible. In this chapter, I hope to pave the way toward the objectual view of phenomenal knowledge, on which phenomenal knowledge satisfies the hallmarks of knowledge condition by way of its retention in episodic memory.

The main claim of this chapter is thus: propositional knowledge yields truth, whereas objectual knowledge yields cognitive contact with reality, and by yielding cognitive contact with reality, it fulfils the distinguishing roles of knowledge. The structure of my argument goes as

follows. First, I present Ranalli's distinction between two fundamental epistemic goods — truth and cognitive contact with reality — in terms of *the problem of special value of experience*: other things being equal, we tend to value experience over other sources of knowledge, such as testimony (Ranalli, 2021, p. 131). Ranalli argues that the best solution to the problem of special value of experience is to postulate cognitive contact with reality as a fundamental epistemic good on par with truth (Ranalli, 2021, p. 132). I contend that postulating cognitive contact with reality as a fundamental epistemic good requires that we treat experience as a species of objectual knowledge (Duncan, 2021a). Following Duncan (2021a), experience plays a positive epistemic role in generating knowledge, and the best explanation for this positive epistemic role is that experience is a kind of knowledge. Second, I suggest that the objectual view of phenomenal knowledge allows for it to be non-episodic: the information about phenomenal properties of a conscious experience can be retained and used for the purposes of reasoning, evidence, and justification, through episodic memory (Hopkins, 2014, 2021).

To avoid any confusion over the interchangeable usage of the acquaintance relation and experience, let me remind the reader that, on Russell's view, "to say you are acquainted with x implies that you are conscious of x" (Coleman, 2019, p. 50) and, following Block's (1995) definition, phenomenal consciousness is experience. On the view advocated below, objectual knowledge consists in direct acquaintance with things. Since the most plausible candidate for objectual knowledge is phenomenal knowledge, we can translate this claim to the following: objectual knowledge consists in direct acquaintance with phenomenal properties of experience.

4.1 Special value of experience

Let's start the argument with a less controversial premise. According to Ranalli, we value some sources of knowledge over others. Specifically, there seems to be a shared preference of experience over testimony (Ranalli, 2021, p. 131). Granted experience and testimony are equally

reliable in yielding true justified beliefs, experience, as a source of knowledge, has more value than testimony. The equal reliability of experience and testimony underlies the problem of special value of experience. From the epistemological point of view, it is not obvious why prefer experience over testimony if both equally reliably grant the achievement of truth (Ranalli, 2021, p. 136). Arguably, the same holds for propositional knowledge: if propositional knowledge is the sole fundamental epistemic good insofar as it yields truth, there is no obvious reason to prefer a conscious experience of perceiving Frankenthaler's *Blue Bellows* over knowing a series of propositions about the piece. The problem of special value of experience is thus a problem of explaining our preference of experience, from the epistemological point of view (Ranalli, 2021, p. 136).

Ranalli (2021) argues that the best explanation of special value of experience derives from cognitive contact with reality. By cognitive contact with reality, he means "a kind of conscious relation or non-propositional awareness of objects, properties, or states of affairs" (Ranalli, 2021, p. 133). Thus, the claim is that experience yields two fundamental epistemic goods: truth and cognitive contact with reality. In addition to learning true propositions about things, we learn of things themselves as they are presented in a conscious experience. Ranalli's main target is thus the view that truth is the sole fundamental epistemic good (T-monism, as he calls it) (Ranalli, 2021, p. 135).

As Ranalli puts it, for the T-monist, any other epistemic properties, which have epistemic value, are valuable only relatively to the promotion of truth. If we take the problem of special value of experience seriously, however, T-monism becomes dubious: based on our preference of experience over other sources of knowledge, an asymmetry in epistemic value occurs between someone who has had a conscious experience of p and someone who has been told by a reliable informant that *p*. If T-monism is true, however, this should not be the case. Granted, truth is the only fundamental epistemic good, no asymmetry in epistemic value is supposed to occur in the cases described above. Yet, there is an asymmetry, and, on the face of it, it seems to originate

from the idea that cognitive contact with reality is distinct from truth (Ranalli, 2021, pp. 136-138).

On Ranalli's view, the T-monist has three possible replies to this objection (Ranalli, 2021, p. 141). First, she can claim that cognitive contact with reality has no epistemic but eudemonic value. But, as Ranalli argues, it does not follow from the fact that cognitive contact with reality is eudemonically valuable that it is not epistemically valuable too. Likewise, that cognitive contact with reality is in some cases is eudemonically worthless does not imply that it is epistemically worthless too. Some of our experiences are rather dreadful, and yet we resist the temptation to plug ourselves into an experience machine. This seems to be indicative of the non-eudemonic preference of cognitive contact with reality (Ranalli, 2021, pp. 143-145).

Second, the T-monist can adopt a form of deflationism (see e.g., Zagzebski, 1996) about cognitive contact with reality, thereby denying that cognitive contact with reality has any special epistemic value on the grounds that it is reducible to truth. Truth yields cognitive contact with reality because truth just is cognitive contact with reality. To say that we have cognitive contact with reality amounts to saying that true justified beliefs accurately represent reality (Ranalli, 2021, p. 150). However, on Ranalli's view, the deflationist view of cognitive contact with reality fails to accommodate one of the central features of cognitive contact with reality, i.e., that cognitive contact with reality is a contact-involving relation. The acquaintance relation is essentially (i.e., existence-entailing) a relation between the subject and the objects presented in experience (Ranalli, 2021, p. 151). As Faulkner would put it, both relata constitute the acquaintance relation (Faulkner, 2022, p. 666). True justified belief falls short of this feature. So, the deflationist response to the problem of special value of experience fails too.

Third, following Ranalli, the T-monist can say that experience appears more valuable because it provides more information than testimony and thus promotes more truth (Ranalli, 2021, pp. 154-155). This response rests on Dretske's (1981) distinction, familiar to the reader from the previous chapter, between different ways of encoding information, i.e., digitally, and

analogically. Experience encodes information in an analog format. If so, then experience contains more information about a certain phenomenon than its digital representation (Ranalli, 2021, p. 156). As Ranalli points out, nevertheless, information encoded analogically can be in principle fully translated to the digital format. It is noteworthy that Dretske (1981) himself concedes this point (Ranalli, 2021, p. 156-157).

Let's grant (*pace* Ranalli, 2021) that these three responses exhaust possible ways of defending T-monism. An attractive alternative then is to deny T-monism and accept Ranalli's claim that experience renders a distinctive fundamental epistemic good (over and above truth), i.e., cognitive contact with reality (Ranalli, 2021, p. 162). Indeed, consider the knowledge argument. Unless cognitive contact with reality is postulated as a fundamental epistemic good, experience of seeing red for the first time brings about no cognitive change in Mary. She might have as well stayed in a black-and-white room, exploring the nature of red through a reliable book. If cognitive contact with reality is a fundamental epistemic good, it explains why Mary's experience of red reveals red in a new light, and why this experience is epistemically valuable (Ranalli, 2021, pp. 139-140). Notably, on this interpretation, it makes sense to talk about Mary's learning something new about a certain phenomenon only granted knowledge that she acquires is non-propositional. And this variable is missing from Ranalli's formula: he does not develop a separate account of objectual knowledge aside from briefly mentioning it in his discussion of the kind of knowledge experience possibly yields in virtue of cognitive contact with reality (Ranalli, 2021, p. 133). His definition of cognitive contact with reality in relational terms, however, requires that we posit experience as a species objectual knowledge.

We can, I take it, plausibly eliminate this gap by considering Duncan's objectual explanation of *the epistemic oomph of experience* (Duncan, 2021a). According to Duncan, the epistemic oomph of experience refers to the positive epistemic role experience plays in generating knowledge. To be sure, that experience has epistemic oomph does not mean that we can come to know something only through experience. Rather, it means that in our coming to

know something through experience, experience plays a positive epistemic role. The problem of the epistemic oomph of experience is the problem of explaining the nature of this positive epistemic role (Duncan, 2021a, pp. 1-3).

Following Duncan, there are at least four possible ways of explaining epistemic oomph. One is to say that experience plays a causal role, i.e., it contributes to the generation of knowledge by causing it (Duncan, 2021a, p. 3). On Duncan's view, however, this view is untenable as far as epistemic oomph of experience is concerned. Surely, experience can cause some knowledge. But attributing it a causal role does not suffice to explain how it plays a significant epistemic role (Duncan, 2021a, p. 3). One can also argue that the epistemic role of experience consists in justifying beliefs. As Duncan notes (*pace* Byrne, 2016), however, given other sensory and cognitive processes involved in the acquisition of knowledge, the subject can have justified beliefs without experience (Duncan, 2021a, pp. 3-4; *cf* Block, 1995).

Further, Duncan considers Byrne's (2016) proposal, which is to suggest that beliefs partly constitute experience (Duncan, 2021a, pp. 6-7). But, on Duncan's view, even though experiences are often accompanied by beliefs, experiences are different mental phenomena (Duncan, 2021a, p. 6). Indeed, recall the discussion from ***chapter 2*** of mental occurrences and mental states. Second, Byrne's account fails to accommodate the "phenomenal datum", which was our starting point. On Duncan's view, the question is what explains how looks, feels, and the like, play a positive epistemic role in generating knowledge. For Byrne, it seems like these phenomenal features do not play any such role: belief does. Hence, Byrne's solution misses the target (Duncan, 2021a, pp. 6-7.).

Duncan proposes the following alternative: treat experience as a kind of knowledge, — objectual knowledge. On this view, experience plays a significant epistemic role: it is essential for some knowledge. Necessarily, if the subject had not had certain experiences, she would not have had the relevant knowledge (Duncan, 2021a, pp. 7-8). Duncan's strategy avoids the problems of the previously considered alternatives. Take the problem of there being true justified beliefs

without experience. As Duncan puts it, that cannot be true for experience as a kind of knowledge. If experience is knowledge, it cannot be, trivially, the case that this knowledge is acquired absent experience (Duncan, 2021a, p. 8). Unlike Byrne (2016), Duncan's account explains the phenomenal datum: our looks, feels, and smells are epistemically significant insofar as they constitute objectual knowledge (Duncan, 2021a, pp. 8-9).

In confluence, Ranalli's (2021) and Duncan's (2021a) approaches to the problem of special value of experience (and I take the epistemic oomph of experience to be an instance of the problem) pave the way toward regarding the relation of acquaintance as plausibly constitutive of objectual knowledge based on it yielding cognitive contact with reality. The argument from cognitive contact with reality, I submit, only does half the job, however. Recall that to qualify as knowledge, objectual knowledge must be non-episodic, and, per Ranalli's definition, cognitive contact with reality amounts to a conscious relation, which makes it episodic (Ranalli, 2021, p. 133). My final task in this chapter is to see whether phenomenal knowledge meets this constraint on the objectual account.

4.2 Objectual knowledge is non-episodic

To remind the reader, the central problem of the propositional-type acquaintance approach, which I identified in ***chapter 2***, was the problem of the episodic character of phenomenal knowledge. The propositional-type acquaintance approach is implausible because of its commitment to the claim that phenomenal beliefs that constitute phenomenal knowledge are concurrent with experience. Phenomenal knowledge so defined cannot fulfil the distinguishing roles of knowledge and, therefore, does not qualify as knowledge. Unless phenomenal knowledge is retained (i.e., persists through changes in consciousness), it cannot guide our agency and reasoning, serve as justification or evidence for other beliefs. This motivated the investigation of the alternative to the propositional theories of phenomenal knowledge: the

objectual view of phenomenal knowledge, on which phenomenal knowledge consists in acquaintance with phenomenal properties of a conscious experience. The objectual view of phenomenal knowledge should be shown plausible, granted, on this view, phenomenal knowledge fulfills the hallmarks of knowledge condition, and it can only be the case if phenomenal knowledge is non-episodic.

Thus far, I have argued that the acquaintance relation provides cognitive contact with reality in contrast to justified true belief, which yields truth. Unless, however, phenomenal knowledge, which results from acquaintance with phenomenal properties of a conscious experience (i.e., cognitive contact with reality), is somehow retained, it cannot satisfy the hallmarks of knowledge condition. Below, I attempt to show that phenomenal knowledge can be non-episodic, and a possible way to conceive of its non-episodic nature is by virtue of episodic memory. Notice, however, that my appeal to episodic memory is very limited. For the purposes of the thesis, I do not engage in a discussion over what episodic memory is, i.e., whether it is a kind of imagining or a *sui generis* kind of state. I do, nevertheless, make use of some insights about the relationship between episodic memory and knowledge from the view that episodic memory is at least partly constituted by mental imagery, which I, following Langland-Hassan, (2023) take to be less of a controversial matter.

If phenomenal knowledge is non-episodic, it persists through changes in consciousness. For phenomenal knowledge to persist through changes in consciousness, it must be retained. Following Hopkins, to remember something is to retain information (Hopkins, 2014, p. 313). Philosophers commonly distinguish between semantic memory and episodic memory. Episodic memory refers to remembering the subject's past experiences. The information, which the subject retains in episodic memory, is thus acquired through experience.

Like Hopkins, one can say that the subject's past experiences causally constrain or control acts of episodic remembering (Hopkins, 2014, p. 314). It can, however, also involve something like experiential imagining, i.e., imagining of experiences, such as visual experiences,

sounds, feelings, smells, and the like. Notably, experiential imagining is also involved in imagining how certain experiences would feel like if we had them (see e.g., Ferran, 2023). Hopkins (2014, 2021) advocates a view of the sort. He argues that experiential imagining allows the subject to represent her past experiences to herself (Hopkins, 2014, p. 314). I set aside the details of his theory. What interests me is his rejection of the view that episodic memory is a source of knowledge: he believes that episodic memory is an *expression* of knowledge (Hopkins, 2014, p. 321).

According to Hopkins, if the subject represents to herself, by virtue of experiential imagining, things to be a certain way, she must already know how they were. So, on Hopkins' view, remembering must be not a source but expression of knowledge insofar as it requires that the subject already has the relevant knowledge (Hopkins, 2014, p. 321; *cf* Russell, 1921).

Hopkins' distinction between dispositional and occurrent forms of episodic memory can be illuminating here (Hopkins, 2014, p. 322). In the dispositional form, the subject's memory of experiencing a certain phenomenon persists through changes in consciousness. In the occurrent form, an act of episodic remembering manifests a memory disposition when the subject recalls a conscious experience. On Hopkins' view, the occurrent form of episodic memory amounts to an expression of knowledge (Hopkins, 2014, pp. 322-323). As such, an act of occurrent episodic remembering represents the subject's experience of, say, sharp chest pain to have been a certain way and thus manifests a memory disposition, which the subject has acquired having experienced a sharp chest pain. A memory disposition qualifies as knowledge, whereas its manifestation in an act of occurrent episodic remembering is an expression of this knowledge. A memory disposition has a memory image as its content and not belief. This, Hopkins says, calls for the postulation of other kinds of knowledge, which do not consist in belief (Hopkins, 2014, p. 322).

Hopkins' (2014) account of episodic memory helps us better understand how objectual knowledge can be conceived of as non-episodic. Suppose the acquaintance relation enables

cognitive contact with reality. On this view, if objectual knowledge consists in acquaintance, it yields cognitive contact with reality. Analogously, a true justified belief enables truth, and granted, propositional knowledge consists in a true justified belief, it yields truth.

Let's assume, following Crane (2013, 2017) that beliefs are unconscious dispositions. This allows beliefs to fulfil their distinguishing roles, such as action-guidance, reasoning, justification, and so forth. Similarly for propositional knowledge. As Crane puts it, judgements, as conscious occurrences, figure in belief formation and belief manifestation (Crane, 2013, pp. 165-166). When I make an accurate judgement about something, I come to form and retain a certain belief. Take the judgement that fire causes burn as an example. When I encounter fire for the first time, and burn my hand having tried to touch eat, I make a judgement, 'fire causes burn', thereby plausibly coming to form a belief about fire. The belief about fire is dispositional in a sense that upon retention of the information it contains, I will act accordingly (e.g., I won't try and touch fire again). I can also reason with this belief or justify my agency by virtue of it, say, when I explain why there is a burn on someone else's hand or why I prevent a child from touching fire. This is a paradigmatic example of knowledge fulfilling some of its distinguishing roles.

The same seems to hold for to the acquaintance relation if we consider it through the lens of episodic memory. Let's consider an experience of a sensory overload as an example to echo the cases of inexpressible phenomenal knowledge found in cognitive disability. When the subject is put in cognitive contact with reality by experiencing sensory overload from the noise produced by the crowd, she comes to retain this experience as a memory disposition. In this case, the acquaintance relation functions similarly to judgement. The subject forms objectual knowledge of the phenomenal property of sensory overload by being directly acquainted with her experience. Assuming that dispositional episodic memory of this experience is analogous to dispositional belief, its manifestation consists in an act of occurrent episodic remembering of the experience of sensory overload, which presumably involves a sort of experiential imagining, such

as imagining a feeling. The act of occurrent episodic remembering of the subject's experience of sensory overload is an expression of objectual knowledge of the phenomenal property of this experience, which has a mental image as its content.

So construed, phenomenal knowledge seems to successfully fulfil the distinguishing roles of knowledge. If I can bring my episodic memory of the experience of sensory overload to my mind by virtue of mental imagery, I can reason with it and use it for the purposes of justification and evidence. For example, the episodic memory of the experience of sensory overload disposes me to avoid the settings, which would otherwise produce a similar effect. It thus alters my decision-making processes and can serve as evidence for some of the beliefs I have about my experience.

I have argued that on the objectual view, it is possible to treat phenomenal knowledge in non-episodic terms by virtue of episodic memory. On the view I have suggested, phenomenal knowledge consists in acquaintance with phenomenal properties of the subject's experience. Cognitive contact with reality, which acquaintance yields, can be retained in the form of dispositional episodic memory and brought to the subject's mind in an act of occurrent episodic remembering. An act of occurrent episodic remembering is an expression of objectual knowledge, i.e., the subject's cognitive contact with reality. So defined, phenomenal knowledge is non-episodic and, therefore, satisfies the hallmarks of knowledge condition.

Space permitting, I would like to address some possible objections to the objectual view of phenomenal knowledge as proposed in this paper.

Objection 1: The propositional view of phenomenal knowledge can be likewise accommodated in terms of episodic memory to fulfill the hallmarks of knowledge condition. The information about phenomenal properties of a conscious experience that the subject retains in dispositional episodic memory is propositional, and the relevant manifestation of the memory disposition is a judgement, which has a proposition of the form 'this is what *p* is like' as its content.

Reply 1: I do not deny the possibility of an alternative propositional theory of phenomenal knowledge, which would regard phenomenal knowledge as non-episodic. A basis for such a theory can be found in Crane (2012, 2019). However, one must then also address the problem of special value of experience in a way, which would be compatible with T-monism. Otherwise, the propositional view theorist would ignore the core of my argument, which, based on Ranalli's (2021) account, postulates cognitive contact with reality as a fundamental epistemic good.

Objection 2: If phenomenal knowledge is non-episodic, acquaintance does not suffice to constitute phenomenal knowledge. On the objectual view, when the subject has a visual experience of a white lily in front of them, she is supposed to acquire objectual knowledge of the lily's colour by virtue of simply being acquainted with it. Imagine that later, someone asks the subject what the lily's colour was, and the subject fails to recall the colour. If acquaintance suffices for knowledge, the subject's visual experience of the lily's colour qualifies as knowledge. But then it must have been retained. This seems to be a counterexample to the objectual view.

Reply 2: Like belief, acquaintance must satisfy additional conditions to qualify as knowledge. One can, for instance, adopt the propositional view's condition of epistemic credulousness (Gertler, 2012) or treat acquaintance involved in the acquisition of phenomenal knowledge as a kind of focal inner awareness, which requires that the subject shifts her attention from objects of her experience to an experience itself (Horgan & Kriegel, 2007). Indeed, merely having a visual experience of a white lily does not suffice to acquire knowledge of phenomenal properties of this experience. To achieve phenomenal knowledge, the subject must carefully and purposefully attend to her experience. Still, however, it is noteworthy that the objection touches upon a serious problem for the objectual view, which is that it seems like what the subject retains in episodic memory of her experiences goes beyond acquaintance as such. If so, this brings us back to the starting point of the discussion: acquaintance may be a source of knowledge, but it does not itself constitute knowledge. I do not yet have a satisfactory response to this problem.

For the purposes of this thesis, it suffices to say that the objectual view theorist might have to bite the bullet and argue instead that objectual knowledge consists in dispositional episodic memory.

Objection 3: The relation of direct acquaintance is a notoriously ambiguous term, which calls for an anti-representationalist interpretation owing to its role in arguments for naïve realism about perception. As such, it makes the objectual view an untenable position for the philosophers, who conceive of perception in representationalist terms.

Reply 3: True, naïve realists rely heavily on acquaintance in their attempt to establish a direct relation between the subject and the objects of perceptual experience. But, as indicated in the introduction, phenomenal knowledge is self-knowledge, and the relation of acquaintance, as deployed in this thesis, does not concern a relation between the subject and objects of her experience but the subject and phenomenal properties of her experience. Accounting for metaphysics of the objects, which are given in experience, goes beyond the scope of the objectual view. It is, nevertheless, important to bear in mind that this does not exempt the objectual view from the ambiguity of the notion of acquaintance as such. If one intends to develop the objectual view any further, one must give a plausible account of consciousness, and, if this account is to be representationalist, acquaintance needs to be replaced with a term, which does not presuppose a direct relation.

5 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that phenomenal knowledge consists in direct acquaintance with phenomenal properties of a conscious experience. This conception of phenomenal knowledge promotes the postulation of objectual knowledge as a *sui generis* kind of knowledge, irreducible to propositional knowledge.

I started the thesis by examining the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge. As I tried to show, because of its commitment to the central features of the Russellian conception of knowledge by acquaintance, such as the constitutive role of the acquaintance relation, justification by conscious experience, and special epistemic security, the propositional-type acquaintance approach is dubious. It construes phenomenal knowledge as episodic, which makes it a conscious occurrence, and as such, phenomenal knowledge cannot fulfil the distinguishing roles of knowledge. Hence, it does not qualify as knowledge. Having motivated the rejection of the propositional-type acquaintance approach to phenomenal knowledge, I presented the argument from incommunicability as proposed by Duncan (2020) and Giustina (2022) and showed that the argument can be blocked by Farkas's (2023) objection from expressibility. I attempted to counteract the objection from expressibility by considering examples of phenomenal knowledge, which resist expressibility.

My final task was to argue for the view that direct acquaintance with a conscious experience constitutes knowledge of phenomenal properties of a conscious experience. I defended the following claim: propositional knowledge yields truth, whereas objectual knowledge yields cognitive contact with reality, and by yielding cognitive contact with reality, objectual knowledge fulfils the distinguishing roles of knowledge. I introduced Ranalli's distinction between truth and cognitive contact with reality in terms the problem of special value of experience (Ranalli, 2021), thereby postulating cognitive contact with reality as a fundamental epistemic good, distinct from truth. I argued that postulating cognitive contact with reality as a

fundamental epistemic good requires that we treat experience as a kind of knowledge (Duncan, 2021a). I then suggested that phenomenal knowledge can be non-episodic, and the information about phenomenal properties of a conscious experience can be retained in episodic memory and used for the purposes of reasoning, evidence, and justification. Based on Hopkins' (2014, 2021) Inclusion View of episodic memory, I proposed that occurrent episodic remembering is an expression of objectual knowledge.

More needs to be done to develop a plausible objectual theory of phenomenal knowledge. I do not expect to convince the reader that there are no propositional alternatives to the objectual view as proposed in this paper. It is my hope, however, that by considering possible problems for the objectual view suggested here, I have paved the way toward future directions of research in this area, such as: (i) what is the relationship between episodic memory and phenomenal knowledge, and are some acts of episodic remembering entirely non-propositional?; (ii) what are the other conditions, beside acquaintance, that objectual knowledge must satisfy to count as knowledge?; (iii) is acquaintance with phenomenal properties direct, and if so, in which sense, if not, how else should we conceive of it?; (iv) can acquaintance with phenomenal properties be naturalised? These are the questions to be addressed by any theorist of objectual knowledge.

Bringing this thesis to a close, phenomenal knowledge is ultimately a means of achieving self-other understanding. It takes an exercise of attentive introspective observation. One must, as it were, immerse oneself in one's own stream of consciousness to disentangle the web of blurred images, echoes of inner dialogue, felt emotions, and striking colours of the outer world. For experiences, words are sometimes lacking. Yet, you know of them. Or so I argue.

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