

Does heterophenomenology concede too much? Experiments on the Folk Theory of Consciousness

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Abstract

It is fairly common in the modern debates over qualia to find assumptions being made about the views of non-philosophers. It is often assumed that the concept is part of the folk theory of consciousness. In fact, even prominent skeptics about qualia will admit that their views run counter to common sense. I illustrate this by considering the work of Daniel Dennett, focusing on his standard articulation of the debate concerning his heterophenomenological method. While Dennett is often accused of not going far enough (excluding qualia from the catalog of what needs to be explained by a science of consciousness), I argue that he goes too far in accepting that folk psychological utterances should be interpreted in terms of beliefs about qualia. I support this contention by calling on the results of six empirical studies testing Dennett's theory of the folk theory of consciousness.

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