

Define a 'quale', giving some examples of qualia. What is the philosophical interest of the notion of a quale?

-Define a 'quale'.

If I ask myself the question 'What is a quale?' the short answer that I can give is a 'Value'. It is the way that each person translates this world; they receive information via their perception channels and then translate it subjectively. Another meaning for me of a quale is that, since we all have our own historic memory in our memory bank, when we receive information from the world outside us we try to map the relation between this information with what we already hold in our memory bank. It is the process that happens after we receive the information and before we register it to our memory.

-Giving some examples of qualia.

Traditional Chinese culture used to hold different beliefs and practices regarding colour. For example, they translated the meaning of the colour red as good fortune. Every important event in life should use the colour red as the main colour theme of the ceremony. In this way, it will bring good luck to the participants. The colour white, on the other hand, means bad fortune and can bring bad luck. The tradition of Thai culture used to have different beliefs and practices with colour as well. For example, the colour white symbolizes good fortune, purity and cleanliness for the Thai. We often use the colour white as the main theme of every important event in our life. At the shopping mall, I may prefer to buy a white chair for my new house. Chinese people may prefer a red chair rather than a white one. Culture can play a major role and significantly influence us. The way that everybody around us interprets each piece of information before memorizing it can affect us. In other words, it can affect our quale since we are part of the community that we live in.

-What is the philosophical interest of the notion of a quale?

The question that I want to ask myself is 'Is a quale related to a physical or non-physical part of our body?' I remember the Bruce Willis movie 'Color of Night'. Bruce Willis plays a psychologist who has a painful and tragic experience in his past. This tragic event affects him by making him unable to see the colour red anymore. He is able to see a grey colour instead of a red colour. How can his painful experience affect his ability to interpret the colour red? How can it affect his qualia? This example can represent the case where a quale is related to a non-physical part of our body.

The next example will show that a quale may relate to a physical part of our body. If I grew up with my family's ice-cream shop, I always ate ice-cream every day, so since I was young, the sweet taste of ice-cream always registers in my memory. My friend, on the other hand, grew up with his family's noodle soup shop. He used to eat noodle soup every day. The salty taste of noodle soup always registers in his memory. If we both go outside to eat the pizza at the shopping mall together. Neither of us have much opportunity to eat pizza. I may judge the taste of this pizza to be 'too salty' while my friend may judge it to be 'too sweet'. This is because my friend and I are used to interpreting the taste of food differently. We can interpret the taste of the same food in a different way.

Bruce Willis's character in the movie 'Color of Night' (who can't see the colour red) may be able to realize that when he sees his blood it is actually the colour red instead of grey. His previous experience before his tragic event can tell him this. But is he still able to map his

feelings, memory or experience (that he already maps with the colour red) to the colour grey instead? We learn to map every input (that we receive from the environment around us) with what we already register in our memory. We map the picture of a snake with the feeling of fear in our memory. It isn't easy to change and may need time to change. One day Bruce Willis's character in the movie may be able to map his grey colour picture to his previous red colour's experience and meaning. If he takes enough time and patience, he will slowly change and accept this.