

**Consciousness and Inquantics:
A Collocation with Chalmers¹**

ABSTRACT. The essay proposes an inquantical reading of the problem of consciousness through a critical engagement with David J. Chalmers. While acknowledging the anti-reductionist force of the hard problem and of the zombie argument, it challenges the claim that the explanatory irreducibility of the phenomenal must entail property dualism. The decisive move consists in regressing from the “what” to inquanto, understood as the transcendental condition of determinability, and in distinguishing giving-itself-as-form from its distinctive conscious eventuation: form-action. Consciousness is thus defined as giving-itself-as-form-action, that is, as *cum-scire* or co-knowing: the unitary yet differentiated co-eventuation of determinations. This structure unfolds along the three directions of calculating, reflecting, and doing, according to an anautarchic pole that does not precede experience but individuates itself together with it.

In the human being, *cum-scire* becomes carnally concrete as a sentient tissue; phenomenation designates its manifestative aspect, whereas phenomenation indicates a possible analogical-fenestral intensification of it. References to co-consciousness, structuralism, IIT, Russellian monism, and dual-aspect monism further help situate the specificity of the proposal. Inquantics does not claim to solve the hard problem empirically, but to reformulate its syntax: the explanatory gap remains open without thereby having to be converted into an ontological gap.

Keywords: Consciousness; Inquantics; Cum-scire; Form-action; Hard problem

1. The Merit of Having Grasped the Hard Problem

Consciousness presents a singularity that no advance in the description of its correlates seems, by itself, capable of dissolving. We may come to know ever more precisely the processes by which an organism discriminates stimuli, integrates information, directs attention, reports its own states, and controls behavior. Yet a further question remains open: why is all this accompanied by experience? Why, in addition to information processing, is there also a lived experience of what happens?

¹ By *collocation* I mean a form of philosophical interlocution conducted on the basis of an author’s writings, without presupposing or simulating an actual dialogue. See Cicero 2018: IX-XIII.

This is the divide David Chalmers draws between the relatively “easy” problems of consciousness and its *hard problem* (the so-called *hard problem*, τὸ χαλεπὸν πρόβλημα)². The point is not to contrast easy and hard problems on a quantitative scale. The former may be extraordinarily difficult, but they share a form of explanation that can be specified in terms of mechanisms, functions, and causal organization. The *khalepòn*, by contrast, asks why the exercise of those functions does not take place entirely “in the dark.”

Chalmers’s initial merit lies in having prevented the problem from being solved by replacing the *explanandum*, that is, what is to be explained, with something more tractable. To explain global access to information, the reportability of an internal state, or the capacity to discriminate red from green is to explain functions that ordinarily accompany consciousness; it is not yet to explain why seeing red has a lived character. Chalmers insists on this point to the extent of making it a methodological criterion of his work: to “take consciousness seriously” is to refuse surreptitiously to identify its explanation with that of the cognitive and behavioral capacities correlated with it.³ Even if a cognitive theory accounted perfectly for behavior, it would still be possible to ask why those processes are experienced.

On this ground, the collocation with Chalmers begins by accepting his anti-reductionist demand. Experience cannot be eliminated by a more detailed description of what happens in the brain or in behavior, because its peculiar character consists precisely in the fact that a determination does not merely occur but gives itself as lived. The difference between discriminating two wavelengths and seeing red, between registering tissue damage and feeling pain, is not the difference between a less and a more complex process, but between the occurrence of a determination and its being lived.

Yet something must already be noted here that will become decisive. Chalmers’s very question contains an apparently innocent but ontologically loaded formulation: why are physical processes “accompanied” by experience?⁴ The image of accompaniment in fact sets two terms alongside one another from the

² Henceforth, for the sake of brevity, I shall refer to Chalmers’s *hard problem* by the transliterated substantivized Greek *khalepòn*, “the arduous.” On the topic, see Chalmers 1996: XI-XIII. Chalmers distinguishes questions concerning the analysis of stimuli, the integration of information, and reports of internal states from the problem of why such processes are accompanied by an “inner life.”

³ Chalmers 1996: XII: to “take consciousness seriously” means not redefining the object to be explained solely in terms of cognitive or behavioral functions.

⁴ See *ibi*: 3-5, where conscious experience is presented as that which, although known to us more directly than anything else, appears “surprising” in relation to the physical and informational description of the world.

outset: on the one hand, physical-functional processes that can be exhaustively described in the third person; on the other, experience, which, without being derivable from the former, appears alongside them as their phenomenal correlate. Chalmers does not yet presuppose dualism, but he will try to argue for it. The very syntax of the problem nevertheless risks suggesting that the physical can be completely determined *as such* before the question of the phenomenal is raised.

It is precisely here that the perspective to be developed can take up the *khalepòn* and, at the same time, radicalize it. The question would not yet be whether consciousness is reducible to the physical, but whether it is adequate to think the physical and the phenomenal as two already determined orders, one of which would have to explain, produce, or accompany the other. Chalmers's merit is to show that a description of an organism's functioning does not entail what it feels. What remains to be asked is whether this explanatory irreducibility must necessarily entail an ontological separation of the terms.

It is the zombie that brings this question to its point of greatest tension.

2. *What Does the Zombie Really Show?*

Chalmers's philosophical zombie has almost nothing in common with the undead figure of cinematic imagination. The latter generally displays conspicuous cognitive and behavioral impairments;⁵ the former, by contrast, must by definition be indistinguishable from a conscious human being in every physical and functional respect. Chalmers's "zombie twin" is molecule-for-molecule identical to him, processes the same information, responds to the same stimuli, utters the same sentences, focuses attention, and reports its internal states. Only, in the zombie none of these processes is accompanied by experience: there is "nothing it is like" to be that zombie.⁶

The argument does not require that such a being could actually exist in our universe. Chalmers in fact considers it likely that any real physical replica of

⁵ For a broad overview of the figure of the zombie in cinema and philosophy, see Cardella & Cardella 2026.

⁶ See Chalmers 1996: 94-95. Chalmers expressly distinguishes the phenomenal zombie from the cinematic zombie: the former is physically and functionally identical to us and lacks only experience. See also Chalmers 2022: 276-287, for the discussion of philosophical zombies and their use in the argument against materialism. On the zombie argument and the relation among conceivability, possibility, and physicalism, see Kirk 2005; Balog 1999: 497-528; Block & Stalnaker 1999: 1-46; Stoljar 2001: 393-413. For a direct critique of the very conceivability of the zombie, see Marcus 2004: 477-490.

him would be conscious. What he needs is much less at the empirical level and much more at the modal one: the description of the zombie must be conceptually coherent. If we can conceive without contradiction of a world physically identical to ours and yet devoid of experience, then phenomenal facts are not implied *a priori* by physical facts.⁷

Here the argument possesses a force that it would be pointless to attenuate. Nothing is gained by denying the conceivability of the zombie by decree⁸. One may instead grant Chalmers the essential point: a complete physical-functional description of an organism does not, as such, contain a description of its phenomenal life. The zombie shows with particular clarity that no inventory of functions is logically equivalent to the claim that those functions are lived. In this respect it is not a metaphysical oddity so much as a critical device against every reduction of the phenomenal to the psychological-functional.

The issue changes when Chalmers draws a positive ontological conclusion from the negative result of the thought experiment. If a physical duplicate can be conceived without experience, then facts about consciousness are, in his terminology, further facts beyond physical facts; the world contains fundamental phenomenal properties and fundamental psychophysical laws governing their correlation with physical processes.⁹ The proposal of “naturalistic dualism” thus consists in enlarging the fundamental inventory of nature: just as electromagnetism made it necessary to introduce properties and laws irreducible to earlier mechanics, so consciousness would require new properties and new laws without thereby ceasing to belong to nature.

But it is necessary to distinguish what the zombie shows, assuming the conceivability argument succeeds, from the ontology through which Chalmers interprets that result. The zombie shows that *complete physical-functional description does not imply a priori phenomenal experience*.

⁷ Chalmers 1996: 95-99. The argument concerns logical, not natural, possibility: what matters is the conceptual coherence of the description.

⁸ From a naturalistic perspective different from the one proposed here, Perconti 2011: 12-14 has significantly observed that the conceivability of the zombie risks abstracting mental life from the functioning of a body embedded in its environment, and has also questioned the legitimacy of moving from the conceivability of the zombie to consequences that would constrain a theory of consciousness. The present collocation, however, does not make its critique of Chalmers depend on contesting the conceivability of the zombie, whose antireductionist import it instead accepts.

⁹ See Chalmers 1996: 123-128. Chalmers introduces fundamental phenomenal properties and fundamental psychophysical laws, describing the resulting position as “naturalistic dualism.”

It does not yet show, without a further step, that the fundamental inventory of reality must be articulated as

physical properties + phenomenal properties.

It is this step that must be interrogated before a structure of being articulated in terms of physical + phenomenal is taken to be inevitable.

To say that the zombie twin is my physically perfect duplicate is perfectly legitimate: it means that it does not differ from me with respect to any determination included in the physical description. What is more problematic is to assume without remainder that such physical indiscernibility exhausts the identity of what the existent is. The thought experiment stipulates in advance which determinations must remain invariant – all the physical-functional ones – and then tests whether the phenomenal can be subtracted. But the operation leaves open a question that at precisely this point becomes unavoidable: does complete identity with respect to the physically describable “what” amount to complete identity of the existent, when precisely the mode of its giving-itself has been excluded?

The point is not to insinuate that the phenomenal is secretly contained in the physical. That would be a variant of the reductionism Chalmers has already ruled out with good arguments. The question is whether physical and phenomenal are originally two classes of properties, the second of which must be added to the first, or whether their distinction presupposes a more originary structure within which something can first be determined *inquanto* something.¹⁰

The zombie would then acquire a different significance. It would not be refuted, but relocated. It powerfully demonstrates the insufficiency of an ontology of the pure “what”: we can accumulate physical and functional determinations without limit and still not have said what it is like for there to be experience. Yet precisely for this reason the zombie may indicate, despite itself, the necessity of the passage from *quid* to *inquantum* – or, in the terminology developed over time and taken up here, to *inquanto*. Not because every *inquanto* is already consciousness, but because, before asking what consciousness adds to being, we must ask according to what structure something can be determined, appear, and give itself *inquanto* such-and-such.

¹⁰ See Cicero 2026 [= *SF*], § 2: 16: “Nothing appears except *inquanto* something; nothing gives itself except within that originary bond which the *analogon*, *inquanto*, makes possible.”

3. From the “What” to *Inquanto*

The transition does not consist in replacing Chalmers’s question with a more comprehensive word, as though renaming the problem were enough to solve it. *Inquanto* is not an alternative name for a property of consciousness, nor a third region to be placed between the physical and the phenomenal. It indicates, rather, the transcendental condition of determinability: that by virtue of which something is never given as a pure “what,” but can be determined, distinguished, and thought *inquanto* something. In a formulation reached elsewhere, “the matrix of every statement lies in the syntax of *inquanto*,” and the *analogon* expressed therein can be called the “transcendental of the transcendental” precisely because it is not a content of *logos*, but the recursive condition of its articulation.¹¹

Among the different expressions of *inquanto* (*analogon*, *ontoeidos*, semi-syntax/sense-structure) and its ultrametaphorical figures (mirror, window, edge), *giving-itself-as-form* may be reserved for expressing its transcendental formality. This does not mean that every existent is itself a giving-itself-as-form. Every existent is rather a *giving-itself-as-something*, because it gives itself to that giving-itself-as-form which is *inquanto*. Givennesses are not yet “contents” prior to their giving themselves to *inquanto* as form: the very distinction between content and form becomes possible only in the determinative event of *inquanto*. In this sense, *inquanto* may be called *forma formarum*: not a supreme form alongside other forms, but that by which something can first be determined *inquanto* something. There is also the very special recursive case in which giving-itself-as-form itself gives itself *inquanto* something. Far from inaugurating a regress of forms upon forms, this recursivity attests that the syntax of *inquanto* does not exempt itself from its own determinative motility. Hence the formulation:

$$INQUANTO \simeq GIVING-ITSELF-AS-FORM.$$

The sign of quasi-equivalence is intentional: “form” does not exhaust *inquanto*, but displays one of its physiognomies. As “window” accentuates its fenestrality and “mirror” its specularity, so “form” expresses its determinative motility without hardening the determined into a self-sufficient positivity.

This priority is not to be understood chronologically, nor as the priority of a deeper substance. *Inquanto* does not precede determinate things as a ground

¹¹ See Cicero 2024 [= *EA*], § 26: 113-114: the syntax of *inquanto* is described as the matrix of every statement, and the primary sense of *inquanto* or *analogon*, as the “transcendental of the transcendental,” is indicated as commoning and differing at once (σύν/διά).

that would already exist on its own. It is their very determining in the double motility of commoning (σύν) and differing (διά): *syn* and *dià* do not succeed one another, but happen together. Every concrete identity is traversed by difference; every difference, in order to be a difference of something with respect to something, is already gathered within a κοινόν, a common. The *analogon* therefore does not connect terms that were initially isolated, but co-institutes the distinct and the common without reducing either to the other.¹²

From this perspective, the question of consciousness changes topology. Chalmers asks whether a complete physical description logically implies phenomenal facts. Inquantics accepts that the answer is negative, but takes one step back: what does it mean for one fact to be determined as “physical” and another as “phenomenal”? Neither is an absolute datum. A neural process is such *inquanto* a physical, causal, biochemical, functional process; a pain is such *inquanto* a painful, localized, intense experience belonging to a living being. The physical is no less inquantic than the phenomenal. Both are determinations distinguished within a syntax that is more originary than their opposition.

This does not amount to erasing their difference – quite the contrary: *inquanto* is what makes it possible to think difference without immediately turning it into separation. The ontology of the bond has already distinguished fontal binding from relation in the strict sense: the bond refers, reciprocates, relates, and brings into rapport; reference, exchange, regard, and re-measure express four structural directions whose dynamics constitute the “inexhaustible transcendental motility” of *inquanto*. The physical and the phenomenal may therefore be considered not as two blocks awaiting a bridge, but as differentiations whose very distinguishability presupposes a medium that holds them in common without confusing them. *Inquanto* is not the bridge thrown after separation; it is that by virtue of which the banks can be banks in relation to one another.¹³

At this point, however, Chalmers’s objection would be unavoidable and justified: even if it were shown that the physical/phenomenal opposition is not ontologically first, it would still not have been explained why there is expe-

¹² See *EA*² §§ 25-26: 111-114. The simultaneity of σύν/διά expresses the non-successive character of identity and difference: analogicity does not intervene after the terms, but makes their reciprocal determination possible.

¹³ See *SF* § 4: 24-25: the fontal *ligamen* “refers, reciprocates, relates, and brings into rapport” according to the directions of reference, exchange, regard, and re-measure; *inquanto* is defined as the “first speculative mover” and the “inexhaustible transcendental motility of the bond.” On the ontology of the bond, see *SF* §§ 3-4, 25-27, and already Cicero 2023 [= *SM*], § 1.

rience. The regress to the transcendental may prevent us from converting the *explanatory gap* – the non-derivability of experience from physical-functional description – too quickly into an *ontological gap* – the postulation of phenomenal properties ontologically additional to physical ones; but it does not close the former. To say that everything is determined *inquantto* something does not yet say why, in some cases, that determination is lived. If inquantics stopped here, it would offer only a different syntax of the problem.

For precisely this reason, the decisive difference cannot be formulated as an opposition between static form and dynamic form. The hyphen in “form-action” does not generically introduce action where there had previously been immobility: it names a peculiar eventuation of giving-itself-as-form, the eventuation that articulates itself as *cum-scire*, as co-knowing. Only in this sense can form-action be reserved for consciousness without making every inquantic determination conscious.

We must therefore distinguish, not primarily giving-itself-as-something from giving-itself-as-form, but the latter from its peculiar conscious eventuation. Every existent gives itself as something; yet giving-itself-as-form, to which it gives itself, does not for that reason alone eventuate as co-knowing. The question then becomes more precise: under what conditions does giving-itself-as-form, to which every existent gives itself as something, eventuate as giving-itself-as-form-action?

4. *From Giving-Itself-as-Form to Form-Action*

The proposal can now be radicalized. If giving-itself-as-form names *inquantto* itself in its determinative formality, consciousness in general should not be defined primarily by one of its directions – $\rightarrow on$, $\rightarrow before$, or $\rightarrow for$ – but by the internal passage from form to form-action. Consciousness is giving-itself-as-form in the act of its own phenomenal eventuation:

consciousness in general = giving-itself-as-form-action.

“Action” here does not mean causality, voluntary activity, or the production of form by a subject. It means *eventuation*: form does not merely determine; it happens as presence. In this sense, *form-action* is not a new ingredient of being, but a modalization of *inquantto*-form.

The very name of consciousness allows this eventuation to be determined further. In the speculative sense adopted here, the *con-* of *conscientia* can be unfolded as *cum-scire*: a co-knowing, a knowing-together. The *cum* does not gather *a posteriori* elements that were previously separate; rather, it names the

commonality within which a plurality of determinations can give itself – distinct and *insimul*, together – in one and the same conscious event.

Giving-itself-as-form-action thus means form-actional *cum-scire*: the unitary and differentiated eventuation of co-known determinations. Consciousness is not a container into which already formed contents enter; it is the co-giving of determinations in form, the happening of the distinct in the common and of the common in the distinct. For this very reason, “form-action” is not a new name for lived experience but a determination of its structure:

*consciousness = giving-itself-as-form-action = cum-scire (co-knowing).*¹⁴

The tripartition developed within general epistemology can now be traced back to this common conscious root. The form-action of co-knowing unfolds fundamentally according to three directions, not as three separate faculties but as three dominant and mutually implicated orientations of the one *cum-scire*. These directions are not extrinsic to the structure of *inquanto*: they correspond to its three transcendental declensions, already identified as equality, identity, and similarity, in which the simultaneity of *syn* and *dià* is modulated according to different relations between commonality and difference.¹⁵ In form-action-on, co-knowing takes something as information, as a discriminable, calculable, or formalizable datum; in form-action-before, what gives itself is set before knowing, up to reflection and speculation; in form-action-for, co-knowing articulates itself as a disposition toward doing, operative capacity, production, and transformation. In abbreviated form:

form-action-on → *calculative* | *mathematical* | *computational co-knowing*
form-action-before → *reflective* | *theoretical* | *speculative co-knowing*
form-action-for → *poietic* | *technical* | *transformative co-knowing.*¹⁶

¹⁴ The notion of *cum-scire* is close to, but should not be identified with, contemporary theories of phenomenal unity and co-consciousness. See Bayne & Chalmers 2003: 23-58; Dainton 2008, ch. 2: 28-50; Bayne 2010: 10-20, 167, 275. In the contemporary debate, unity is variously conceived through relations of co-consciousness among experiences or through their belonging to a single phenomenal field. *Cum-scire*, by contrast, is intended to name a co-eventuation in which differentiated plurality is not first constituted and then unified; rather, determinations give themselves as distinct in their very giving-themselves together.

¹⁵ See *EA*² §§ 19, 24-25, where equality, identity, and similarity are articulated as three constitutive semantic directions deriving from the commoning/differing (*syn/dià*) proper to *inquanto*.

¹⁶ For the third register one could also speak, by deliberate coinage, of “artifactive” co-knowing: not merely doing, but formative-productive, capable of configuring artifacts and operative worlds. What remains decisive here is the capacity to give form by doing, in the broad sense of the Greek ποιεῖν.

Calculation, speculation, and poiesis are therefore not three faculties of consciousness: they are three fundamental directionalities of its form-actional co-knowing. Form-action-on privileges information, measurement, and computation; form-action-before, reflection, contemplation, and speculation; form-action-for, doing, projecting, and transforming. In every concrete experience, the three directions can intertwine, while one of them assumes a dominant function at a given time.¹⁷

A decisive clarification follows. Form-action-before does not define phenomenal consciousness *inquanto* such: it is one of the three directions in which *cum-scire* can unfold, and it becomes form-action-before-itself when co-knowing reflexively takes itself as its term. Consciousness in general therefore does not coincide with this reflective intensification, which is only one possible modalization of it:

self-consciousness = *reflective intensification of form-action-before*
as *form-action-before-itself*.

Every conscious form-action is also intrinsically polarized: co-knowing does not eventuate in an impersonal neutrality, but according to a pole that individuates itself with its very eventuation. This polarity does not constitute a fourth direction alongside form-action-on, form-action-before, and form-action-for; it belongs to the very structure of *cum-scire* as the anautarchic pole of differentiated co-presence. Co-knowing is therefore not “mine” because an already given I possesses it; the I gives itself as a pole precisely within the plural unity of co-knowing.¹⁸

In light of this clarification, Chalmers’s zombie, *inquanto* physical-functional duplicate, reproduces the causal and behavioral equivalents of all three directions: it computes and discriminates, acts and plans, and even reflexively reports its own states. What it lacks, by stipulation, is not one of the three formalities, but their eventuating as co-knowing.

¹⁷ See Cicero 2019/20: 4-8, where “being in form” is declined as form-on, form-before, and form-for and correlated respectively with the calculative, speculative, and poetic sides of knowing. The present notion of form-action takes these two articulations as moments of a single structure of *cum-scire*. See also Cicero 2011: 5-12; and, for the systematic development of this framework within general epistemology, Cicero, *Inquanto Knowing: Outlines of a General Epistemology*, forthcoming.

¹⁸ Anautarchic polarity must be distinguished from contemporary analyses of the subjective character of experience formulated in terms of for-me-ness, me-ness, mineness, or self-representation. See Kriegel 2009; Zahavi & Kriegel 2016: 36-53; Guillot 2017: 23-53. The anautarchic pole is neither a presupposed owner of experience nor an object represented by co-knowing; it individuates itself with the very eventuation of *cum-scire*.

The zombie thus preserves a threefold functional formality without form-actional *cum-scire*: differences are processed, integrated, and used within it, but none of this happens *inquanto* co-known. It is precisely this subtraction of the conscious event – not the loss of a single epistemic direction – that Chalmers’s thought experiment asks us to conceive.¹⁹

zombie = *threefold functional formality without form-actional cum-scire*.

The experiment thereby acquires a more exact inquantic reading. The zombie is not devoid of determination: it gives itself perfectly as something within the syntax of giving-itself-as-form. What it lacks, by stipulation, is the modality in which that form eventuates as knowing-together, as differentiated co-presence. The absence of experience is therefore formulated not as the absence of an additional ingredient but as the absence of conscious form-action.

This approach avoids identifying consciousness with self-consciousness and, at the same time, reducing it to propositional knowledge. *Cum-scire* can be pre-reflective and pre-linguistic: a pain, a color, a pressure can be co-known without the living being formulating the judgment “I know that I am experiencing them.” Reflection is a possible direction and intensification of co-knowing, not its originary condition.

The inquantic approach also avoids a faculty psychology. Calculating, speculating, and doing are not isolated powers that a subject would possess and coordinate from outside, but modes in which the same form-actional event is oriented. Consciousness therefore coincides with none of the three and yet can unfold eminently in each of them.

A possible objection concerning circularity thus loses much of its force. “Form-action” does not simply mean “lived experience”: it says that lived experience is *cum-scire*, the non-fusive unity of a plurality of determinations, and that this unity is directed as knowing-on, reflecting-before, or knowing-how-for. The empirical problem of the conditions under which a physical system realizes such eventuation remains open – and must remain so.

¹⁹ Chalmers 1996: 94-95: the zombie is physically and functionally identical to the conscious subject, but none of its processes is accompanied by lived experience.

5. *The Carnal Concreteness of cum-scire*

If consciousness is giving-itself-as-form-action, that is, *cum-scire*, the term “phenomenation” can enter the essay only as a subordinate description: it does not name the principle of consciousness, but its phenomenal manifestation. The question that now opens is how such form-action acquires concreteness in the only consciousness originally given to us and not inferred, namely our own: an embodied consciousness.

The *khalepòn* therefore remains intact on the explanatory plane. Defining consciousness as *cum-scire* does not establish under what conditions a physical system realizes such eventuation; it does, however, specify the *explanandum*: not the addition of a second phenomenal ingredient to already complete processes, but the eventuation of a plurality of determinations as differentiated co-presence in co-knowing.

Inquantics does not claim to deduce the empirical conditions of *cum-scire* from the transcendental: it does not decide which systems are conscious, when consciousness appears, or which neural structures realize it. Its task is to determine the onto-epistemological syntax of the phenomenon, leaving to the sciences the search for its concrete conditions of eventuation, without replacing the phenomenon with its functional correlates or reifying its irreducibility into a second inventory of properties.

The problem of phenomenation must, however, at this point be brought back to its carnal concreteness. In our ordinary experience, *cum-scire* is sentient flesh: it does not possess a body as its support, but eventuates carnally as a sentient intertwining of co-known differences²⁰. In *Sapienza muta* I called “sentient flesh” the simultaneously transcendental and concrete form of presence, insisting on the mutual model of sensing(-itself)/sensed(-itself): no knowing and no cognition can give itself apart from it. In the lexicon refined here, that qualification does not assign flesh the rank of the ultimate transcendental, which belongs to *inquanto*, but rather names the originary concreteness in which human *cum-scire* eventuates. Phenomenation does not occur merely in a bodily (*Körper*) or corporeal (*Leib*) support; it happens carnally.²¹

²⁰ For a naturalistic perspective that combines the irreducibility of the phenomenal aspect of consciousness with its concrete bodily rootedness in the physical and social environment, see Perconti 2011: 129-130. The thesis proposed here nevertheless differs from it at a decisive point: flesh designates the concreteness of human *cum-scire*; it does not thereby constitute a causally sufficient explanation of its eventuation.

²¹ See *SM* § 13: 109-111. “Sentient/sensed flesh” there designates the mutual paradigm of sensing and sensing oneself; on p. 111 it is defined as the simultaneously transcendental and

Flesh, moreover, means tissue – and not only in an anatomical sense.²² Tissue is a differentiated plurality that is not first dispersed and then joined: it exists in its intertwining, in the simultaneity of continuity and discontinuity, belonging and divergence. In this respect it by no means offers a biological derivation of the transcendental, but a concrete figure of that simultaneity of σύν/διά in which *inquanto* has been thought as commoning and differing at once. Flesh is tissue because the distinct remains distinct precisely in the common that lets it be with another; and the common is not an external envelope, but the very intertwining of the distincts.²³

The figure of tissue here acquires a further determination. In co-knowing, *cum* does not designate a sum: as in tissue, plurality is not first dispersed and then reunited, but gives itself in the very intertwining of differences. In human experience this *cum* is carnal: sensing and sensing oneself are concrete modes in which determinations co-eventuate without losing their distinctness.

The *quale* can now also be defined more rigorously. Since consciousness is not exhausted by the reflective direction of form-action-before, the *quale* must be thought more originally as a co-known difference in form-action: red, warmth, pleasure, or pain are not merely operative differences, but determinations that happen as co-known within the plural unity of *cum-scire*. The *quale* is therefore not an already formed content received by co-knowing, but a difference that gives itself *inquanto* such in its very co-eventuation:

quale = co-known difference in form-action.

We can therefore formulate the point more cautiously: consciousness does not supervene on flesh as though flesh were simply its material support; in

concrete form of presence, and it is stated that no knowing or cognition can give itself apart from flesh.

²² In the lexicon adopted here, flesh coincides neither with *Leib* nor with *Körper* as distinguished by the phenomenological tradition, nor with a union of the two, which would still be abstractly conceived as a composition of already constituted terms. The reference to tissue first retains a literal sense: at the histological level, the human organism is constituted by the combination of four fundamental types of organic tissue: epithelial (epidermis and mucous membranes, linings and glands), connective (including bone, cartilage, adipose tissue, and blood), muscular, and nervous (brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerves, retina). Organic tissue is an organized set of living cells and, depending on the case, extracellular matrix, whose differentiations contribute to the specific functions of the organism. “Flesh,” however, does not here designate the simple sum of these tissues, but their living, sentient, and reciprocally articulated being: it is from this tissual concreteness, and not by mere metaphorical transposition, that the term can acquire its speculative scope.

²³ See *EA*² § 26: 113-114, where the primary sense of the *analogon* is formulated as the “commoning and differing at once (or σύν/διά) of everything that is.”

human experience, phenomenation happens carnally. Flesh is not the transcendental of consciousness – *inquanto* remains that – nor does it produce form-action: it is the concrete place in which giving-itself-as-form eventuates, in the human living being, as *cum-scire*. Sensing and sensing oneself express its originary mutuality, without first separating the sensing from the sensed:

*sentient flesh = concrete tissue of human form-actional cum-scire.*²⁴

Here, too, the distance from the panpsychist direction in which Chalmers, consistently following his informational hypothesis, is willing to move becomes clear. *Inquanto* can be called universal only in a transcendental and recursive sense: it is the condition of thinkability even of its own possible determination *inquanto universal*. The very predication of universality therefore falls back within the syntax of *inquanto* that makes it possible.²⁵ Yet this universality of *inquanto* – and thus of giving-itself-as-form as one of its expressions – does not entail the universality of form-actional *cum-scire*. That every existent gives itself as something to giving-itself-as-form does not mean that such giving eventuates as co-knowing.

The thermostat in Chalmers's example²⁶ makes the distinction particularly clear. Its states realize functional equivalents of what, in *cum-scire*, is directed as form-action-on and form-action-for: the system discriminates a difference and translates it into a response. Nothing, however, authorizes us to infer that such operations eventuate as co-knowing. The passage from a processed difference to a co-known difference is exactly what the transcendental does not decide and what the problem of consciousness leaves to empirical research.

The emphasis on the carnal does not authorize us to turn biology into a new metaphysical criterion. Chalmers connects the principle of organizational invariance with the possibility of different substrates; inquantics can now leave

²⁴ On the centrality of flesh and embodiment in the phenomenological tradition and in embodied and enactive perspectives, see Merleau-Ponty 1964: 170 ff.; Henry 2000, Part II, §§ 16-32; Varela, Thompson & Rosch 2017; Thompson 2007. In the present essay, however, "flesh" designates neither the ultimate transcendental of consciousness nor a biologically necessary metaphysical condition of every possible consciousness, but the tissual concreteness in which human *cum-scire* eventuates.

²⁵ The universality of *inquanto* is itself inquantic: *inquanto* can be called universal only *inquanto* it constitutes the condition of thinkability of its own being called universal.

²⁶ See Chalmers 1996: 293-300. Chalmers seriously considers the hypothesis that elementary experiences are associated with extremely simple systems, including the thermostat; the extension explicitly leads toward a possible form of panpsychism.

that possibility open without anticipating the empirical answer. If a non-biological consciousness existed, the question would therefore not be whether it possessed a material equivalent of flesh, but whether and how it realized a tissue structurally analogous to that which flesh concretizes in human experience: an order in which differences are not merely processed, but co-eventuate as co-known.²⁷

Current large language models (LLMs) offer, from this standpoint, a particularly instructive case, without being identifiable tout court with Chalmersian zombies. They are not physical-functional duplicates of human beings, but can realize, to varying degrees, functional equivalents of the three directions of co-knowing: they discriminate and articulate information ($\rightarrow$ on), can even formulate self-referential and apparently reflective reports ($\rightarrow$ before), and can produce and articulate operational sequences, especially when integrated into agentic systems ($\rightarrow$ for). Yet this last case shows the insufficiency of the functional criterion: the fact that a system can linguistically report its own “states” does not yet establish that such differences eventuate for it as co-known. With respect to *cum-scire*, current LLMs therefore do not constitute confirmed zombies, but epistemically indeterminate cases: they render the distance between the functional equivalence of form-action and its conscious eventuation concretely interrogable²⁸.

The notion of phenomenation can moreover be connected with the fenestrality already attributed to *inquanto*. Elsewhere *inquanto* has been described as both specular and fenestral: not a cold form, but the medium in which appearing gathers itself without exhausting that from which it comes. Conscious form-action can be thought as a specific intensification of this fenestrality: not an inner window through which a subject would look at copies of the world, but the opening in which the world manifests itself to an anautarchic pole; in the human being, that pole is embodied. The subject does not stand behind the window, but individuates itself with its opening.²⁹

²⁷ See *ibi*, ch. 7: 247 ff.: according to the principle of organizational invariance, what matters for consciousness is abstract causal organization, realizable in different physical substrates; see also ch. 9: 309 ff., esp. 320 ff., for the defense of strong AI.

²⁸ On the problem of the possible consciousness of current LLMs and, more generally, of artificial systems, see Chalmers 2023; Butlin et al. 2026: 488-501; Milinkovic & Aru 2026: art. 106524. Although they proceed from markedly different perspectives on the relevance of the biological substrate and the computational transferability of the conditions of consciousness, these contributions show, for different reasons, the insufficiency of linguistic or functional sophistication alone as a conclusive criterion for attributing phenomenal experience.

²⁹ See *SF* § 2: 16-17: *inquanto* is described as both specular and fenestral, a medium in which epiphany and exaphany – that is, appearance and sudden atomonality (from *atomon*,

At this point, phenomenation and phenoumenation should be distinguished. If I call *phenomenation* the phenomenal eventuation of giving-itself-as-form as *cum-scire*, then *phenoumenation* will be that phenomenation in which the manifest, without ceasing to manifest itself, remains analogically and fenestrally open to the unmanifest, which it cannot resolve into itself. Phenoumenation therefore does not add a noumenon to phenomenation, nor does it transform the unmanifest into a second content of consciousness; rather, it names the opening of manifestation beyond every claim to self-sufficiency. Not every phenomenation is phenoumenation; the latter constitutes a possible fenestral intensification of the former.³⁰

In light of this distinction, the metaphor of the window too can be relocated with greater precision. The window figures the manifestation of consciousness; form-action-before constitutes one of its directions. Neither exhausts *cum-scire*. Form-action is more originary than the fenestral figure because it names the very eventuation of giving-itself-as-form; fenestrality says how such eventuation can open a space of manifestation without presupposing a subject already positioned behind it.

“Phenomenation” thus designates the manifestative side of form-action, not its principle. The difficulty of the *khalepòn* still lies in understanding under what conditions giving-itself-as-form eventuates as *cum-scire*; the path through flesh, however, specifies its concreteness: in the human being, the conscious event is a sentient tissue of co-known differences. The difficulty remains intact on the explanatory plane, but the syntax now developed allows us to interrogate Chalmers’s proposals concerning organization and information more precisely.

Greek ἄτομον, “what is indivisible”) – can gather without the appearing thereby losing its provenance from the unmanifest.

³⁰ For attempts that are close, though not equivalent, to thinking manifestation together with an irreducible dimension of non-manifestation, see Heidegger 1986: 399; Merleau-Ponty 1964. *Phenoumenation*, in the sense proposed here, does not indicate the phenomenalization of a noumenal or hidden entity; rather, it names the fenestral opening of manifestation to that which, in manifesting itself, is not exhausted by what becomes manifest.

6. *Beyond the Double Aspect of Information*

The constructive part of Chalmers's theory comes closer to this requirement than the zombie argument initially suggests. In the chapter devoted to consciousness and information, he observes that the structure of experience and the structure of awareness can be described through the same space of differences. An informational state is realized physically in brain processes and phenomenally in experience; the "double-aspect principle" thus proposes a systematic connection between the two domains. This is not yet reduction: information initially functions as a construct capable of linking physical properties and phenomenal properties already assumed to be fundamental.³¹

The move is theoretically important. After separating the physical from the phenomenal in order to show the insufficiency of reductionism, Chalmers seeks a structure capable of traversing them. The principle of structural coherence strengthens this intuition: the relations of similarity and difference that organize experience have a counterpart in the functionally available differences of cognitive organization. The same informational space thus seems to offer a common form without erasing the duality of realizations.³²

Structural coherence therefore touches a point particularly close to inquantics: experience and cognitive organization are not linked by identities of content, but through correspondences of differences and relations. Yet it remains a coherence between structures: it says why the order of discriminations can mirror the order of experience, but not yet why those differences eventuate as *cum-scire*, that is, *inquanto* co-known.³³

Here the inquantic collocation can become more precise. The notion of information is already structurally analogical: an informational state is such only within a field of differences, alternatives, similarities, and oppositions; a

³¹ Chalmers 1996: 283-287. In the "double-aspect principle," the same information space is realized phenomenally in experience and physically in the cerebral substrate; information thus functions as a construct connecting the two domains.

³² See *ibi*: 287-288. The principle of structural coherence establishes a systematic correspondence between the structure of experience and that of awareness, both describable as realizations of the same informational space.

³³ The distinction introduced here significantly intersects with the recent "structuralist turn" in consciousness studies. See Fink, Kob & Lyre 2021; Lyre 2022; Fink & Kob 2024: 112-129; Kob 2025. These approaches distinguish, in different ways, the structural individuation of contents from the question of what makes them conscious. Inquantics shares the view that structural correspondence alone is insufficient, but locates the difference at the level of giving-itself-as-form and its eventuation as giving-itself-as-form-action, rather than thereby postulating a further mechanism that produces consciousness.

difference informs because it counts in relation to other differences and within a certain configuration. But precisely for this reason, information is not ordinary enough. For there to be information, something must be determinable *inquanto* different, similar, relevant, transmissible. The informational presupposes the syntax of *inquanto*. Within the acquired tripartition, information first realizes a functional equivalent of the direction $\rightarrow on$, corresponding to equality, where it discriminates, commensurates, and formalizes differences; it can functionally articulate itself according to $\rightarrow before$, corresponding to identity, when a system takes its own states as objects; and according to $\rightarrow for$, corresponding to similarity, when informational differences orient performances, productions, and transformations. But precisely because $\rightarrow on$, $\rightarrow before$, and $\rightarrow for$ become directions of *cum-scire* only in their conscious eventuation, information alone constitutes none of them. It can describe the structure, transmission, and even operative self-reference of differences without yet accounting for their co-eventuation as co-known.

The distinction between form and form-action allows the critique to be drawn more sharply. Information already belongs to the articulation of giving-itself-as-form: it presupposes determined differences, relations, selections, and possibilities of transmission. Yet conscious form-action does not follow from this formality. Chalmers's double aspect offers a correlation between realizations, but does not explain under what conditions an informational structure can eventuate as *cum-scire*:

*information = articulation of giving-itself-as-form $\neq$ form-actional cum-scire.*³⁴

In light of this, the limit of information appears even more clearly. "A difference that makes a difference" excellently describes the selective efficacy of a state within a causal network; it does not yet say that the difference is co-known. Information can become, within *cum-scire*, a determination of a form-action-on; but in the zombie the same articulation remains, by hypothesis, pure functional efficacy. In the zombie scenario, the quantity of information need not change; what changes is the mode of its eventuation, because *cum-scire* is absent.

³⁴ The emphasis on differentiated unity may recall Integrated Information Theory (IIT), but the convergence is limited. See Albantakis et al. 2023. IIT begins from axioms concerning the essential properties of experience and infers postulates intended as necessary and sufficient conditions that the physical substrate must satisfy; such postulates should make it possible, at least in principle, to establish whether a system is conscious, to what degree, and in what way. Inquantics, by contrast, does not identify *cum-scire* with integrated information and, above all, does not claim to deduce from the transcendental structure of *inquanto* the empirical conditions of its conscious eventuation.

The distance becomes clear when Chalmers asks whether information itself should be taken as fundamental. If every causal relation realizes information and the double-aspect principle is extended without restriction, experience then tends to spread to the simplest systems and, in prospect, to rocks and electrons. Chalmers acknowledges that this amounts to a form of panpsychism, while regarding it as one possible way of specifying naturalistic dualism.³⁵ After what emerged in connection with the thermostat, the point can be formulated more precisely: the universality of informational difference does not license the leap to the universality of *cum-scire*. Inquantics can therefore accept the diffusiveness of information without converting it into the diffusiveness of experience.

Even more suggestive is the metaphysical version Chalmers sketches in the following pages. Physics, he observes, individuates states through the network of their relations and remains silent about their intrinsic nature; phenomenology, by contrast, concerns the inner aspect. Hence the slogan according to which “Experience is information from the inside; physics is information from the outside.”³⁶ At this point the distance from inquantics narrows but does not disappear. Inside and outside are still two aspects of the same informational state; *inquanto*, thought in its transcendental function, instead prompts us to ask what makes the very articulation inside/outside possible and prevents it from being transformed into two self-sufficient sides. Yet Chalmers’s “from the inside” does not coincide with form-action-before: the former designates the intrinsic aspect of an informational state; the latter one of the three directions of *cum-scire*, the reflective, theoretical, and speculative one. Nor is the “inside” equivalent to the polarity of co-knowing, which individuates itself with the conscious event itself.

From this point of view, “information from the inside” remains a description of aspect; “form-action,” by contrast, names an event, and *cum-scire* makes explicit its unitary-plural structure. The difference is subtle but decisive: the inside can be thought as the side of an already constituted structure; co-knowing, instead, says the co-eventuation of determinations *inquanto* co-known, that is, their happening together without fusion in the same conscious event.

There is in fact no “intrinsic” absolutely withdrawn from determination: even what we call intrinsic is such *inquanto* distinguished from and related to an extrinsic.³⁷ Likewise, information is not a *tertium* capable of reconciling

³⁵ See Chalmers 1996: 297-300.

³⁶ See *ibi*: 301-305, esp. 305: from the perspective of a “double-aspect ontology,” physics considers informational states according to external relations, phenomenology according to intrinsic nature.

³⁷ This is a decisive point of divergence both from Russellian monism and from some contemporary formulations of dual-aspect monism. On the former, see Alter & Nagasawa 2012:

two regions; it is already a determinate modality of their commoning-and-differing. In inquantic terms, the advantage of the double aspect can therefore be preserved while giving up the reification of information: what the physical describes from the outside and what, in the conscious living being, eventuates as *cum-scire* are different articulations of the same determinative event, not two substances and not two copies.

This reformulation does not render superfluous the psychophysical laws sought by Chalmers. An empirically adequate theory of consciousness will still have to establish rigorous regularities between physical organizations and configurations of experience. But such laws would not be called upon to build an ontological bridge between originally separated domains; rather, they would describe the concrete conditions under which determinate physical organizations are correlated with the eventuation of *cum-scire*. Information would remain a valuable indicator of structural correspondences, not the ultimate foundation of consciousness.

7. Neither Reductionism nor Dualism: An Inquantic Theory of Consciousness

At this point a positive formulation can be attempted, provided that “theory” does not mean a claim to close by speculative means what remains open to empirical research. An inquantic theory of consciousness begins from Chalmers’s recognition of the irreducibility of the phenomenal, but suspends its immediate conversion into property dualism. The fact that experience is not deducible from a complete physical-functional description shows that the phenomenal cannot be replaced by the functional; it does not yet show that it must be a second layer of reality added to a first, self-sufficient layer.

The first principle is transcendental: nothing is a pure “what”; every existent gives itself as something to *giving-itself-as-form*, which is one expression of *inquanto*. The second concerns consciousness in general: it is *giving-itself-as-form-action*, that is, *cum-scire* or co-knowing, the unitary and differentiated co-eventuation of determinations. The third concerns its fundamental unfold-

67-95; Goff 2017; on the latter, see Atmanspacher 2024. Russellian monism tends to supplement the structure and dynamics described by physics with an intrinsic nature or quiddities that would constitute their underlying ground and bear relevance to consciousness; dual-aspect monism may instead posit a psychophysically neutral domain from which the mental and the physical emerge as aspects. *Inquanto* is neither an intrinsic quiddity nor a psychophysically neutral substrate; it names the transcendental arch-structure within which even the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic can first be determined.

ings: form-action-on, form-action-before, and form-action-for, corresponding to the three transcendental declensions of *inquanto* – equality, identity, and similarity – and, on the epistemic plane, to the registers of calculating, reflecting, and doing.³⁸ The fourth concerns polarity: every *cum-scire* eventuates according to an anautarchic pole that individuates itself with it. The fifth keeps open the empirical question of the concrete conditions under which such form-action is realized.

The conceptual hierarchy is therefore as follows: *inquanto* is not consciousness, and *giving-itself-as-form* is one formal expression of it; every existent gives itself as something to such formality; consciousness is its peculiar eventuating modalization as form-action; *cum-scire* names its structure of co-knowing; the three directions →on/→before/→for articulate its principal epistemic modes. Anautarchic polarity belongs to the very structure of the conscious event; phenomenation designates its manifestative side, while phenoumenation names a possible analogical-fenestral intensification of it; self-consciousness is the reflective intensification of form-action-before. In the human being, finally, *cum-scire* becomes concrete carnally:

inquanto $\simeq$ *giving-itself-as-form*;
consciousness = *giving-itself-as-form-action* = *cum-scire*.

Physical and phenomenal thus emerge as distinct without being separated. Their non-identity must be preserved, because a third-person description is not equivalent to first-person experience; but their distinction does not oblige us to think them as ontological regions alien to one another. With due caution, the figure of *distinctive communion* could be applied here:³⁹ the concrete unity of the conscious existent does not erase the two registers, and their difference does not break the unity within which alone they can be determined. Neither reductive monism, then, nor additive dualism.

Chalmers's zombie thus finds a more precise placement. As a physical and functional duplicate it remains conceivable if one accepts the following modal argument: if a physical duplicate without experience can be conceived without

³⁸ The tripartition finds, without any claim that this grounds it epistemologically, a significant resonance in the Italian lexicon: *conto* – *contezza* – *racconto*. *Conto* refers to calculation and counting; *contezza*, “knowledge, cognition,” belongs to a different etymological line traceable to *cognitus*; *racconto*, derived from *raccontare* and thus from *contare*, brings counting back to narrative configuration, to poietic making. The convergence is therefore lexical and speculative rather than genealogically unitary: calculation – reflection – poiesis find an echo respectively in *conto*, *contezza*, and *racconto*.

³⁹ On the notion of “distinctive communion,” see *SF* § 2: 18 n. 7; § 4: 23–24 n. 11; § 27: 148–150.

contradiction, then it is logically possible; and if it is logically possible, physical facts do not necessarily imply phenomenal facts. Inquantics has no need to deny this. The zombie functionally reproduces all the articulations we observe in the conscious subject, including self-referential ones. What is missing, by stipulation, is their being co-known, their eventuating as *cum-scire*:

zombie = *threefold functional formality without form-actional cum-scire*.

Chalmers's subtraction therefore concerns not a single epistemic form, but the conscious mode of giving-itself. The zombie gives itself perfectly as something within the syntax of giving-itself-as-form and reproduces the physical-causal isomorphism required by the thought experiment; what, by hypothesis, does not occur is the peculiar eventuation of giving-itself-as-form as form-action, that is, as knowing-together in which differences give themselves *inquanto* co-known.

In this sense the *explanatory gap* remains, but its status changes. It should not be interpreted as the void between two inventories of properties; rather, it is the problem of understanding under what conditions a physical-functional organization can constitute the concrete condition within which giving-itself-as-form eventuates as co-knowing. Neuroscience can investigate the necessary forms of organization and dynamics; philosophy determines what, in this context, "being conscious" means: giving oneself as form-actional *cum-scire*.

Chalmers's naturalistic dualism also retains a decisive merit here: it refuses the idea that anti-reductionism must hand consciousness over to the supernatural and insists that experience belongs fully to nature. Inquantics can share this requirement and radicalize it. If consciousness is the peculiar eventuation of *giving-itself-as-form* as *cum-scire*, it is not an exception inserted into the world from outside: it is a possibility of the very way in which the world determines itself, without the transcendental and recursive universality of *inquanto* entailing the universality of consciousness. In the human being, as we have seen, such eventuation becomes concrete carnally, as a tissue of differentiated co-presence in co-knowing; whether it can also be realized in other substrates remains an open question for empirical research.⁴⁰

The preceding distinctions can now be condensed into a single defining formula. Phenomenation, phenomenation, anautarchic polarity, and reflexive

⁴⁰ See Chalmers 1996: 126-128. "Naturalistic dualism" expands the repertoire of fundamental properties and laws without abandoning a wholly natural and scientifically compatible conception of consciousness.

self-consciousness are not further constituents alongside the conscious event, but articulations and intensifications within it:

CONSCIOUSNESS = GIVING-ITSELF-AS-FORM-ACTION = CUM-SCIRE (CO-KNOWING)

The strength of the formula lies precisely in not adding a second principle to *inquanto*. If *giving-itself-as-form* is one expression of *inquanto*, consciousness is its eventuating modalization as co-knowing. *Cum* expresses its non-fusive unity; *scire*, its character as knowing; form-action, the conscious eventuation of form. Within this unity, calculating, reflecting, and doing can emerge as fundamental directions without dissolving the differentiated unity of *cum-scire* in which, when conscious, they are articulated.

It is Chalmers's merit to have prevented experience from being dissolved into its functions. Inquantics attempts the further step of showing that, in order to preserve its irreducibility, there is no need to convert the explanatory gap into an ontological gap; rather, we must think the eventuation of *giving-itself-as-form* as *cum-scire*. The *khalepòn* remains *khalepòn*; the hard problem remains hard. But it is no longer without a positive speculative syntax.

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