

CHAPTER THREE

DREAMING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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**Introduction**

I here discuss three standard issues in recent Cognitive Science, and then proceed to tackle the much harder issue of "the hard problem" with consciousness. I believe there are more final arguments for certain positions on these issues than those that have been circulated in the recent literature. After a coverage of that literature I show (1) that Minds are not computing machines; they are mechanisms for handling the environment, not symbols of any kind, (2) that Folk Psychology can be defended by logical arguments, (3) that the "inner" is best conceived as limited to what is available to the first person through his or her proprioceptive senses, and (4) that the so-called "hard problem" of consciousness is not a problem if one removes dreaming and thinking from the notion, as in ordinary speech. In the last case I concentrate on the works of just one writer with the contrary idea, although my points, I believe, apply more widely.

**1. Minds are not Machines**

Turing was responsible for the original mathematics behind computers, and he was involved with the first generation of their physical embodiment. It has recently been realized that he was also aware of the mathematics of "unorganized machines," which prefigure Connectionism. His "organized machines," however, seemed to be able to pass the Turing Test, which challenges the idea that thinking is a specifically human process – he thought it could be done by computers, if they could perform as well as human subjects at producing verbal responses to questions. It has been pointed out in various ways how this *Nominalist* approach leaves out understanding the meaning of the computer's utterances. But there is also a logical argument, which Turing seems to have been unaware of, which conclusively backs this up. In the technical terms that logicians use,

it shows that propositional attitudes are not predicates of sentences but "operators" on propositions – in "he thinks that p" the sentence 'p' crucially is used, and not mentioned.

It was Carnap, principally, who held a Nominalist account of the attitudes: "Brown thinks that p" was then reduced to "Brown says to himself with a feeling of conviction 'p'." This seemed to solve a number of puzzles with intensional constructions. But it presumes thinkers all use the language of the reporter, and so we might be more tempted by Davidson's analysis, where "Cavemen said that fire hurts" becomes "Cavemen said something which in their language meant 'fire hurts'." But that still represents "Cavemen said that p" in terms of a relation to certain words, i.e. "Cavemen said 'q'," for some 'q', and it is that which is the principal problem. Kneale and Kneale move on to the device of "quasi-quotation," whereby "fire hurts," in the place of 'q', designates the meaning that "fire hurts," and any synonymous phrase. Just what the value of this kind of device has, over the more common designating phrase "that fire hurts," is not too apparent, however. The notion that there are "intensions" (which include propositions designated by 'that'-clauses) as well as "extensions" (i.e. ordinary physical objects) is a part of *Realist* philosophy. It is such Realism that gives a better account of the contents of mental attitudes, although one must have very clear that intensional objects exist in social space, and not some far distant "eternal" realm.

The original, and indeed only argument needed against Carnap's theory of intensional constructions was given by Church. To get from anything like "Seneca wrote 'Man is a rational animal'" to "Seneca said that man is a rational animal" (i.e. to get from direct to indirect speech) we need at least that "man is a rational animal" means that man is a rational animal. This points to the main argument against Turing's Test: that the meaning of its words is the sort of thing a computer must know, in addition to being able to utter words, if it is to approximate to being a thinking thing. It has to think about *men*, and not the word "man," and so it has to know about the semantics of a language, and not just its syntax, since that semantics is the locus of meaning. More practically it has to be occupied with what Haugeland calls "being about the world." A similar point is involved in the discussion over Searle's "Chinese Room." A man in a box manipulating pieces of paper on which there are Chinese symbols, does not know what they mean unless he can relate them to things (something his situation bars him from doing). If you take the man out of the box, and train him to associate the symbols with things, that would enable him to start to learn the meaning of them. The meaning of the symbols is then learnt through appropriate use of them, in the public world,

and so is a matter of "know-how." It is also thereby a social capacity, and nothing at all like a physical object.

Fodor, however, thinks that there are still symbols in human brain functioning which are (i) internal, and (ii) causally related to their meanings. They form "The Language of Thought," or "Mentalese," he claims. Fodor therefore is prepared to argue against Carnap that a natural language set of symbols cannot be involved, but still wants to maintain that there are some more primitive ones, innate to our functioning. How does the brain manage to get semantics from syntax (asks Dennett 1987: 61)? By "mimicking the behavior of the semantic engine through correspondences between structural regularities and semantic types." Like Dennett, Fodor therefore adopts a Compositional Theory of Meaning, to ensure these correspondencies. Devitt and Sterelny argue against Fodor by pointing to the fact that learning a public language is learning a language to think in, so it is not innate, although they grant that the higher animals, and small children might just think in Fodor's "Mentalese." Chomsky has given arguments, independently of Fodor, which tend to show that many of the rules that govern linguistic behavior are innate, and Devitt and Sterelny therefore suggest that this innate segment might be identified with Mentalese. But the rules of Chomsky's Universal Grammar are purely formal, i.e. just concern grammatical categories; they do not deal with specific concepts in those categories. So some natural language would seem to be what creatures that think do think in, *all* of the time.

There are broader questions behind these issues that it is best to be aware of. For instance, there are three main theories of truth: the correspondence theory (associated with Nominalism), the coherence theory (associated with Realism) and the redundancy theory. The first takes truth to be a predicate of sentences in the way we have seen; the second takes truth to be a predicate of intensional structures like propositions or meanings, again as we have seen. A sentence is true, on the first account, if it corresponds to some fact, conceived of as a structured combination of various objects and properties. A proposition is true, on the second account, if it coheres with the rest of a consistent and complete set of propositions. There is a logical difficulty for the "sentence" theories: on Tarski's account they require hierarchies of natural languages that cannot be sustained. Preferring one consistent and complete set of propositions to another is sometimes thought to be an outstanding difficulty with the second approach, but if so it can only be a personal difficulty, not a theoretical one. The third approach (sometimes called the Minimalist Theory) ostensibly suffers neither of these disadvantages, since truth is then not a predicate of anything – it "has no bearers." Instead the crucial

locution is taken to be "It is true that," which is grammatically an operator, i.e. something completed with a used sentence as in "it is true that p" rather than a name as in "'p' is true." But "it is true that p" can be easily re-phrased "that p is true," so this third theory would seem to be little distinct from the Realist theory that takes expressions of the form "that p" to refer to propositions.

Davidson used Tarski's Nominalist "T-Scheme" to link Truth with Meaning, and so with the central matter above. Tarski said that a sentence *s* is true if and only if a certain state of affairs *p* holds, for an appropriate 'p', and Davidson, with some further considerations covered, held that *s* means that *p* in those circumstances. The further considerations concern the supposed compositionality of meaning, since such intensional objects as meanings were supposed to possess the same shape as the sentences that had those meanings. Thus it is not sufficient for *s* just to be true if and only if *p*, said Davidson, but the inner structure of *s* must relate, through reference and satisfaction rules, to the structure of 'p.' Since the link between *s* and 'p' is a matter of social practice, however, knowledge of the meaning of words cannot be just a matter of being able to utter an appropriate instance of Tarski's T-scheme, such as the oft repeated: "snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white. Certainly that whole sentence involves two items with the same structure, since "snow is white" there is first mentioned, and then used. But to know the fact expressed by that instance of Tarski's T-scheme, and thereby the meaning of "snow" and "white," is instead to be competent in using these two words correctly, which is a feat that has no particular structure. As before, it is a matter of know how, and so is not a matter of being able to utter the seeming truism, or indeed any other words. Schiffer in 1987 came to this Wittgensteinian conclusion, calling it the "no-theory" theory of linguistic representation.

## 2. Defenses of Folk Psychology

Paul Churchland (also Stich) thinks that "Folk Psychology" is a rough and ready "theory" of our mental life, which will give way, shortly, to a more accurate, largely physiological "deductive-nomological" account of the same things. He is very much impressed by the history of conceptual revolutions in science, which recent research has detailed, and sees Folk Psychology, therefore, going the same way as Aristotelian Physics, Ptolemaic Astronomy, the Phlogiston Theory of Heat, and even the "witch theory" of social distress. Commonly there is "incommensurability" between the items in two theories, when one takes over from another, so the "elimination" of "belief-desire psychology" is envisaged as part of the

process. Searle admits that there is no likelihood of a "smooth reduction" of such notions as belief and desire, but insists there is no "theory" of beliefs and desires, since these "are actually experienced as part of our mental life." Moreover, many Folk Psychological laws are "constitutive" i.e. conceptual or definitional, he says, and so not empirical. So they are not even candidates for revision. We will find that Searle is right in the latter claim, but wrong in thinking that there is no theory in the area.

Before seeing that we may note that there have been several other people who have been sympathetic to Folk Psychology, while not envisioning there is a logical argument defending it. Dretske is one such supporter, for instance. He starts from the idea that citing the beliefs and desires behind some action is giving the reasons why it was done, and follows Davidson who argued that such reasons are causes (see Smith and Jones Ch XVII). Dretske's contribution is to try to give a more precise account of how such reasons become causes: they are not "triggering causes" but "structuring causes" of human behavior, he says. A similar distinction was drawn by Aristotle, between "efficient causes" and "material, formal and final causes." Dretske sees structuring causes arising through a brain state C, which represents some relevant fact F, being "recruited" as a triggering cause of some movement M in the body. Evolution sets up the causal structure, getting from C to M, Dretske claims, on account of the "content" of C, i.e. the fact F. Kim improves on Dretske, saying that what explains the recruitment is the past history of reinforcement, so it is not C's currently representing F which has brought it about that C triggers M. Dennett, somewhat similarly, draws a distinction between the rationale which may have shaped some pattern of behavior, and being able to appreciate that rationale. Birds using distraction displays, he says, are being purposeful, but do not have the necessary "higher-order thoughts" for them to be consciously acting for reasons.

One illustration of Dretske's ideas concerns why a certain type of coin operates a vending machine: the value of that coin has led us to organize this causal process. But that illustration involves *our* purposes, and Dretske's aim is to "naturalize the mind" so that genetic and evolutionary processes take over from any social process. This attempt to give a natural, causal theory of mental representation, however, leads to several problems connected with misrepresentations of the natural world. The Disjunction Problem, for instance, arises because the same brain state might, through its evolution, indicate the presence of sheep in certain circumstances, but goats in some others, and so have come to represent "sheep or goat." But that makes the mistaking of sheep for goats impossible. Dretske has tried

to allow for such errors by talking of the "teleological function" of some representation, but it is hard to define just what function elements in nature have. Dennett has studied the verbal and body language of vervet monkeys, to try to discover what they are thinking. But if the monkeys are signaling things to one another, that conscious form of representation of the world is undoubtedly conventional, and learned through assimilation into their culture. So it is a matter of non-natural rather than natural meaning, in Grice's terms, and cannot support Dretske's point of view.

Dennett is another person sympathetic to Folk Psychology, although in a rather less committed way. He says that using "belief-desire psychology" involves adopting what he calls "the intentional stance." In all he distinguishes three different explanatory processes: the physical stance, the design stance and the intentional stance. When predicting the fall of a stone we would nowadays adopt the physical stance – which involves seeing no function in the stone. Aristotle thought it was part of the purpose of a stone to fall, but we no longer speak that way. On the other hand we do still bring in the notion of purpose when we talk about other things. The function of an alarm clock, for instance, could be the basis for an explanation using the design stance, and the beliefs and desires of a human the basis for using the intentional stance. The intentional stance might be used with non-humans, anthropomorphically: the alarm clock could be thought to have perceptions of the time, for instance. But how does that not mean that adopting the intentional stance towards humans still involves the pathetic fallacy, i.e. involves seeing design and purpose where there is none? Dennett was not very clear at one time. Later, however, he did toy with the idea that higher-order intentionality might be required to make some individual into a true believer. He said that the agent should be able to make his or her beliefs conscious, as is done, for instance, by telling some of them.

Dennett originally made out that adopting one explanatory stance rather than another is merely a matter of convenience, so he was once taken to be an Instrumentalist, rather than a Realist about beliefs and desires. Thus while he has defended Folk Psychology in the above way, he has denied the relevance of the physico-chemical nature, and the functional design of the body as the origin of beliefs and desires. Davidson's "anomalous monism" likewise denies there are strict psycho-physical laws. Both theorists therefore go against the picture Smith and Jones paint, of mental states having clear causal correlates: indeed, it would seem to be learned forms of expression which are their basis. Stich argues against Dennett that his neglect of the physical in connection with humans leaves us unable to say a great deal we want to say. Specifically

he has concentrated on the fact that, since an intentional system is an ideally rational system, the irrational behavior of humans is not then explained. Dennett admits there are times when we cannot make sense of ourselves, but since this is a matter of "not being able to give an account" of ourselves, the previous conscious aspect of beliefs and desires is stressed and not undermined. For in irrational behavior there is neither belief nor desire, properly: we are then mindless, and purely physical explanations of our movements must take over.

What, by contrast with Dennett and Dretske, provides a logical argument for belief-desire psychology? We saw at the start of this section that Searle was prepared to acknowledge there was such a thing, even while he believed no theory could be constructed. But he must have forgotten, or been unaware of Decision Theory, which satisfies all the requirements. It was Ramsey who first proposed that the strength of people's beliefs is measured by the "subjective probability" they attach to events. One finds the full mathematical development of this idea in Jeffrey's Decision Theory, for instance, where, in addition to beliefs being represented as probabilities, desires are represented by personal "utility functions" enabling the best possible option for an agent to be calculated. The theory provides solutions to traditional difficulties with possible-worlds analyses of belief, for instance in connection with "saturation." Kyburg calls this more illuminatingly "the principle of deductive closure," and sets out one problem with it in his discussion of The Lottery Paradox. It would seem that we can believe each of several things, while at the same time not their conjunction. But probability also obeys this rule, since two things may each be probable without their combination also being so. Likewise even inconsistent beliefs are possible, when the probability of each is  $1/2$ .

It is important to appreciate some of the historical background to fully realize the value of this approach to belief. It was Hintikka, in 1962, who formulated the first logics of belief, using the then growing science of possible worlds. This required amending certain classical rules of logic, to allow, for instance, for what might or might not exist in other worlds besides this one. Thus the rules had to be changed to accommodate the possibility that some object, *b*, should exist in one world, but not in others. Konolige, amongst several others, argues quite generally against such possible-worlds accounts, showing that this is implausible in the case of equivalent beliefs, in the case of inconsistent beliefs, and with respect to the logical consequences of beliefs. Konolige prefers a series of logical systems where there are a variety of "deduction rules" that may or may not be obeyed by different agents: rules that maintain consistency,

“saturation,” and certain varieties of introspection, for instance. But Stalnaker defends the basic assumption of possible-worlds theory – that propositions are individuated by the set of possible worlds they are true at – by reference to belief-desire psychology. So, against Konolige, a possible-worlds account must be found, and we have seen that Decision Theory gives us appropriate answers to the questions Konolige posed.

### 3. The Inner by way of Proprioception

Science is nowadays seen as a form of social behavior related to progressive paradigms of observation and technology. The progression from discursive Philosophy of Mind towards Cognitive Science could also be seen in similar social terms, as a system of thought entering the scientific arena – if it was to come off. But there are maybe some barriers to producing a determinate science of cognition. Thus Flanagan (following James) identifies four central features of “conscious mental life” that would have to be explained: purposefulness, intentionality, consciousness, and privacy. Haugeland identifies the problem of how mind interacts with matter, the problem of the physical relevance of meanings, and the problem of the testability of mentalistic processes: thoughts, it seems, cannot be observed. Of course, even if there remain some problems, there are already some impressive developments in Cognitive Science: chess playing computers, music composition programs, and even creative “lateral thinkers,” as well as voice and facial recognition systems. The latter in part reflect a paradigm shift within Cognitive Science itself, from the symbol-system style of “artificial intelligence” to “connectionism,” which is the more neural-like “parallel distributed processing.”

Parallel Distributed Processing is a modeling of some of those aspects of neural development in the brain that, through evolution or social education, set up “dynamical systems.” Specifically, the wiring in the brain comes to transfer various sensory inputs into appropriate motor output. Connectionism is the major current alternative to the Symbolic Paradigm in Cognitive Science, though Fodor thinks it cannot match it on “systematicity” and “productivity.” It is related to Turing’s “unorganized machines,” mentioned before, and it works against the classical Representational Theory of Mind. That is because it sees the mind as primarily concerned with skills of certain sorts – “know-how” rather than “knowing that” – although one such skill may well be the manipulation of symbols. Those symbols in that case – against Fodor – are essentially external ones such as words, and numerals, although, when we learn to do sums in our heads, we can mentally simulate the external numerals we



would otherwise be working with. Clark calls this "leaning on the environment," and Dennett has recently come to see we likewise "lean on our bodies," i.e. that our neural processing is not abstract calculating, but relies on features of our physical make-up, even things like our size and shape. Environmental items such as these are what Dreyfus has focused on as the Frame Problem for traditional AI.

Some of these developing ideas echo earlier ones in Wittgenstein. One feature of Wittgenstein's philosophy which has been supported by recent cognitive science is his theory of universals. His "paradigms and resemblances" account has returned as the theory of prototypes, in Connectionism. This account of concepts places them squarely as socially relative, (though see here Sandra Egege's contribution to this volume), which underpins the whole of Wittgenstein's philosophy of meaning: a word's meaning is its function or role in a learned "language game." That rules out internal representations, which go the same way as mental images. According to Wittgenstein, mental images cannot be intrinsically meaningful but would need to be publicly used, in some way, to gain a sense. Wittgenstein, because of this denied that perception is mediated, so there are no "sense data" which are immediately perceived, like "the look of" a thing. But, on more general grounds, he was not a Cognitive Scientist, if "science" means physical science, rather than social science. The "endpoint" of explanation is at the level of ordinary lived experience, for Wittgenstein. Thus, in particular, creatures with minds must have bodies – and human bodies, too.

Smith and Jones present Descartes' older argument in which he makes out that he is not his body. Descartes says that he can imagine he lacks a body, but not that he lacks a mind, since the very process of imagining requires a mind. Against this Smith and Jones point out that Mrs. Thatcher could imagine the Prime Minister does not exist, while not imagining that she herself did not exist, even while she is the Prime Minister. So an entirely parallel argument seemingly is fallacious. Contemporary Cartesians of different kinds, such as Searle, McGinn, and Chalmers, would still hold that consciousness is an inner "first person" state, so some of reality is subjective, and we need an ontology of private entities. But Smith and Jones declare "the inner object theory of experience is a disaster." They only show, in the present writer's opinion, that it requires a proper account, from within a Physicalist perspective, of how we experience the inner objects. I shall show, below, that attention to a neglected aspect of our cognitive functioning, namely proprioception, can provide this. Advancing a non-inner object theory of experience, Smith and Jones follow Armstrong in saying that "in perceiving we acquire

beliefs about the world," and think that it is not a decisive objection that this theory "leaves out the essential experiential character of perception." But clearly, because of the volume of opposition to this idea, some account of the private character of experiences must be brought in, and proprioceptive sensings of the subject's own body prove to be the necessary features to attend to, since they are themselves "private," in exactly the right way, for each individual. The tradition has perhaps simply forgotten that one's body is an equal part of "the world."

There were several traditional ways in which experience was handled within Physicalism. Central-State Materialism identified mental states entirely with neural states; Functionalism identified mental states with certain causal roles. Explicating the latter idea, Smith and Jones say that an internal activity such as humming a tune, or doing arithmetic in one's head, counts as doing such if it has sufficiently many of the same causes and effects as doing it publicly. As a result, however, we could all be silicon robots, it seems, or be replicated in a "China-body," which is a vast conglomeration of individual people all combining to operate like the brain. Putnam ruled the latter possibility out by rejecting decompositions into other sentient beings, but that does not rule out "homuncular decomposition" as Sterelny, and Dennett have shown. Homuncular decomposition merely requires having parts that are progressively less and less sentient. Smith and Jones consider the protest that pains are identified purely by their phenomenological "feels," but fear that admitting those would bring in the possibility of inverted, or even absent "qualia."

To believe in inverted qualia, or absent qualia in the first place requires having some arguments for the existence of qualia, which are the qualitative aspects of experience, the "raw feels." Arguments regarding these have centered on explicating "knowing what it is like." Thus Jackson has described a learned physiologist Mary who has inoperative color sensors, yet who knows all there is to be known, scientifically, about colors – and even about which things have which color. When her color sensing is restored, Jackson argues, she comes to have more knowledge than she had before – knowledge of what colors are like. Nagel, instead, considers knowing what it is like to be a bat, and argues that, although we can get quite a way towards this if we have developed an echo location capacity (like blind people do), still any extrapolation is incompletable and schematic. Lewis (following Nemirow) replies to Jackson by saying that what extra knowledge Mary gains is simply know-how, i.e. Mary acquires the ability to tell colors using her sense organs the normal way. Jackson has recently come round to something like this opinion himself.

One especial difficulty with color experiences, which directly leads to

judgments of their subjectivity, is the fact that no one feature of the environment would seem to be picked out by "red." That has been taken to be just part of some biological irrelevance, by the objectivist Dretske. He says that we only have a need to make certain discriminations in the world, and so our color judging system often is allowed to judge things in the world look the same, when they are not, because this does not matter to our functioning. Dretske's view of color therefore involves it being a "primary quality" in Locke's terms, and so not part of "the inner." What he forgets is the deep personal aspect of our experience in connection with colors. It is important to realize that it is not a superficial matter what color we are seeing, since color does have a very extensive, bodily effect on us. At the theoretical level that helps to rule out the possibility of different people having unpredictably different color experiences while behaving the same way, and so it settles problems with "inverted qualia," "absent qualia," etc. But at a more practical level it must be remembered, for instance, that interior designers are very well aware of the effect of blue, of red, of green, etc. when, for instance they choose different color schemes for different work and play environments. The choice contributes extensively to our psychological welfare, and it is therefore that welfare that matters to us, not directly the features of the external world that have the various effects. "The Inner," because of this, is properly taken to be concerned with "secondary qualities" i.e. qualities not of external objects themselves but instead of the way we experience those things.

Pains, and other bodily sensations, are secondary qualities, in this sense. In their case the objective thing experienced is damage to, or malfunctioning of the agent's own body. Individuals have a range of sense organs for knowing about their own body, collectively named the "proprioceptive" senses, while other people than the agent, of course, have to use their external senses, such as sight and hearing, to observe the same things. Being off balance, for example, is one thing we can sense using an organ in the ear; and we know the location of our limbs through the large kinesthetic apparatus distributed about our body. The crucial distinction involved in this, between what is experienced and how it is experienced, comes out most clearly in Ducasse's theory of phenomenal states because of his grammatical distinction between alien and cognate accusatives. Waving a greeting is not like waving a flag, he says, since the greeting is merely a manner of waving, and not an external thing waved. Likewise feeling a pain is not like feeling a pin, since the pain is a kind of feeling, and not the direct object of it. It is characteristically some damage to our body that we experience, through the painful way we experience that damage, using our C-fibers, or whatever the specifics are among our

proprioceptive senses. But, of course, others can witness the damage, even though they must use other senses than their own proprioceptive senses as a means to do so. A further important distinction in this area is therefore between experiencing pain, and knowing that someone is in pain. Everyone, and not just the subject, can have the latter knowledge, but only the subject, of course, is doing the experiencing. As we saw with Mary, there is thus no fact that is "subjective," only a means of knowing some fact, and thus there are no grounds for any philosophical doubts about the possibility of public knowledge of exclusively private data – the "problem of other minds."

#### 4. Dreaming of Consciousness

Upon waking up we come to an awareness of our surroundings. It is like in the children's game of "hunt the thimble" where the thimble is in plain view, but one does not immediately see it. The process of coming to this judgment Dennett describes as a matter of Multiple Drafts – "drafts," first of all, because getting something into consciousness is getting it into a position where it can be reported on, and "multiple" because it is from various discriminatory processes that one assembles the report. But before that judgment there is no distinct state or event: the thimble seeming to be in a certain place, to one. Hence there is no "Cartesian Theatre," the events in which are read off by an inner viewer. There is no reality to conscious experience independent of the effects of the various "vehicles of content" (words) on subsequent action: phenomenological space is simply constituted by the beliefs of the (outer) subject. The point is highlighted in the case of blind sight. The blind sight subject, who makes good guesses about how things are without having fully functioning eyes, is certainly conscious to some extent, and learns the relevant things through his eyes, but what he produces can only be said to be drafts, and not full reports.

Searle does not think of consciousness as a relation to the world in this way, but as an item in it. Hence, for him, not all of reality is objective, since some of it is subjective. This is because, he says, pains, for instance, are always someone's pains, and in a tighter way than legs are always someone's legs. He also wants to say that one cannot observe someone's subjectivity – not even one's own. For if we try to observe our consciousness, we only observe what we are conscious of. Searle's position, therefore, is more advanced than many others in the area. For instance, he argues against "introspection" and also "privileged access" and "private inner space," taking them all to be attempts to illicitly introduce observation again. He also argues against two other notable

subjectivists, Nagel and McGinn. Nagel, for instance, says we can always conceive there to be no pain in someone's body, whatever the physiology shows, but Searle replies that such imagining may just arise through ignorance. McGinn believes that it is impossible in principle to understand the link between mind and body, but Searle denies there is any such link, since consciousness is just a feature of the brain, he says, like liquidity is of water.

What mixes Searle up, I believe, is principally his inclusion of dreaming and thinking as forms of consciousness. This idea, of course, has a considerable, honored pedigree within academic philosophy, even while it goes contrary to the conclusion we reached before about the mind being about the (public) world. Descartes explicitly included dreaming and thinking in his understanding of consciousness, and this definition is present in other present day writers besides Searle, such as Chalmers. Descartes thought the mind was always conscious, since consciousness was, for him, an eternal, Aristotelian substance defining the mental. More specifically, there are many passages in both *The Discourse on Method*, and *The Meditations* where Descartes takes dreaming to be a mental activity, during which we may have thoughts and conceptions, and make true or false judgments. Norman Malcolm, in the first chapter in his book *Dreaming*, finds passages not only in Aristotle himself, but also in Kant, Moore, Russell, Freud, and several contemporary psychologists that are in line with this Cartesian notion.

These writers have difficulty with what has come to be called "the hard problem," and so with reconciling their understanding of consciousness with contemporary science. But a quite different definition of consciousness was given by noted members of the post-WWII Oxford Movement, such as Austin and Ryle who were teachers of, or influences on Dennett. There are even signs of this idea in some of their continental contemporaries, such as Sartre, and Heidegger. On the post-WWII Oxford understanding, dreaming and thinking are forms of *unconsciousness* – both involving merely imagining oneself seeing and hearing things, the former occurring while asleep, and the latter while awake, but drawing one's attention away from one's surroundings.

That means that the "hard problem" does not arise with the Oxford notion, which shows it is expressly the inclusion of dreaming and thinking within the realm of consciousness that brings in problems about a scientific understanding of this mental state. Indeed, it would be difficult to understand what horses were, if they, too, included fictional and imagined beasts. If Pegasus were taken to be a horse, then naturally there

would be trouble formulating a scientific genetics, and a consistent biology etc. If horses can have wings, then where is science?

We find Searle's confusion in his recent review of Nicholas Humphrey's book, *Seeing Red*, where he gives the following definition:

By "consciousness," I mean those states of sentience or feeling or awareness that begin when you wake up from a dreamless sleep and continue on throughout the day until you fall asleep again, or otherwise become unconscious. Dreams are also a form of consciousness.

It might seem that Searle has made a blunder here, since the definition implies that dreams occur between the time one wakes, and when one falls asleep or otherwise becomes unconscious. So dreams occur while one is awake, by this account. The point is partly cleared up in earlier formulations, for instance, in *The Mystery of Consciousness* (p. 5) there is the following, significant change to the above wording:

..."consciousness" refers to those states of sentience and awareness that typically begin when we awake from a dreamless sleep and continue until we go to sleep again, or fall into a coma or die or otherwise become "unconscious." Dreams are a form of consciousness, though of course quite different from full waking states. Consciousness so defined switches off and on. By this definition a system is either conscious or it isn't, but within the field of consciousness there are states of intensity ranging from drowsiness to full awareness. Consciousness so defined is an inner, first-person, qualitative phenomenon.

What is noticeable here, however, apart from the relaxation introduced by the addition of "typically," is the strange repetition of waking "from a dreamless sleep." So maybe Searle includes dreams because he thinks that moves from a dreamless sleep to dreaming involve a form of waking, and in that way a muted, or reduced form of consciousness. If so, this must come from a singularity in Searle's own idiolect, since the normal use for "waking" does not include "dreaming." The point Searle has in mind, however, could easily be expressed in normal English quite straightforwardly, without any such confusion. Indeed, at another place in the same book (p. xii) we find Searle saying "... consciousness, our ordinary states of sentience and awareness when we are awake, as well as our states of dreaming when we are asleep...."

There is a depth problem with Searle's understanding of consciousness, however, that these verbal quibbles over his manner of definition pass over. For the strangeness, and variability of Searle's language shows that his notion, repeated in the above terms throughout

much of his career, is definitely at odds with the normal notion. Even if we were to say, in line with the last quotation, that Searle's notion of consciousness comprises waking states and such non-waking states as dreaming, then, while we would have overcome the verbal infelicity of Searle's odd usages of "sleep" and "waking," we would still have defined a problematic notion. For in normal English there is a further close connection between being awake and being conscious, making someone who is dreaming not only not awake, but also not conscious.

Care must be taken at this point with, for instance, suggestions that, upon waking up, one finds there was some noise, or bright flash, that had been incorporated into the final stages of the dream in some way. First it is just an hypothesis remaining to be proved that such external elements are so incorporated, but more fundamentally there would have to be a much more general transformation of external material into the dream for it to be the case that dreaming as a whole was some form of reduced cognition in this way. Freud was notable for having constructed a theory of "dream work" that supposedly transformed the "latent content" of the dream (real events in history) into the dream's "manifest content" (imaginary events which seem to occur). But few, these days, would follow Freud in this area, or even attempt to construct an improved theory of anything like the same kind – indeed just the reverse (see Dennett 1991, Ch. 1). Of course, if the contrast between dreaming and waking experiences was in any way like the contrast between, for example, seeing or hearing something indistinctly, as in a fog or at a distance, and seeing or hearing something quite clearly, because it was in plain view nearby, then saying that dreaming was not a form of consciousness might still seem to be drawing a rather arbitrary distinction. So we must look more closely at the ordinary notion, before we can locate the specific error there is in Searle's.

It was in the period of "ordinary language philosophy," naturally, that we find an academic tradition more in tune with ordinary speech. As is well known, Ryle said, for instance (*The Concept of Mind* pp. 160-1):

I shall argue that consciousness as so described, is a myth (...). The radical objection to the theory that minds must know what they are about, because mental happenings are by definition conscious, or metaphysically self-luminous, is that there are no such happenings; there are no occurrences taking place in a second-status world, since there is no such status and no such world and consequently no need for special modes of acquainting themselves with the denizens of such a world.

But what was the specific reason for Ryle's rejection of the Cartesian conception of dreaming? Here one must remember, also, that he had

explicated Descartes by saying:

The states and operations of a mind are states and operations of which it is necessarily aware, in some sense of "aware," and this awareness is incapable of being delusive. The things that a mind does or experiences are self-intimating, and this is supposed to be a feature which characterizes these acts and feelings not just sometimes but always. It is part of the definition of their being mental that their occurrence entails they are self-intimating. If I think, hope, remember, will, regret, hear a noise, or feel a pain, I must, *ipso facto*, know that I do so. Even if I dream that I see a dragon, I must be apprised of my dragon-seeing... (p. 158).

So the central argument that bears on the present issue is the general one against sense data, mental images, and what some would call "qualia" (c.f. Slater 1995). Quinton put it best in his "The Problem of Perception:"

The mistake lies in the identification of what appears to be the case with our sense-experience. We always know what appears to be the case. So it is appearances, not objects, that we really perceive. But what else are these appearances but our current sense-fields, our sense-experience? The three forms of words: "this appears to be  $\phi$ ," "there is a  $\phi$  appearance," "there is a  $\phi$  sense-datum" are held to be equivalent in meaning. I shall argue that a statement of what appears to be the case is rarely a description of our sense-experience and is normally a modified, guarded claim about what *is* the case, expressing an inclination to believe something about objects. The ostensible firmness of these assertions is a consequence not of their referring to a class of private, given, entities, but rather of the modesty of the claim they make (p. 31).

The closeness of the relevance of this matter to our present concerns is that Searle has said (Searle 1997 p. 121-2):

... I gave an example of an intuition about consciousness that has been refuted by neurobiology: the common-sense intuition that our pain in the arm is actually located in the physical space of the arm. But the very existence of my conscious states is not similarly a matter for my intuitions. The refutable intuitions I mentioned require a distinction between how things seem and how things are, a distinction between appearance and reality. But where the existence of conscious states is concerned you can't make the distinction between appearance and reality, *because the existence of the appearance is the reality in question*. If it consciously seems to me that I am conscious then I am conscious.

So Searle, amongst other things, is committed to saying that, since, upon waking up, dreamers often report the appearance of various sounds



and sights the previous night, therefore they were indeed truly conscious of some sounds and sights, during that time, i.e. when asleep. The fact that the reporter of the dream, at the following breakfast, might be insistently told by their partner "There was no dragon; you were just dreaming" is then disvalued, with the first-person point of view being taken to have more weight than any more public, second or third person point of view.

The problem with this idea, though, is even a logical one, since it is an elementary theorem of Epistemic Logic that it is not possible that  $Ka(p$  and  $\neg Kbp)$  unless  $a$  and  $b$  are different. If  $a$  and  $b$  were the same then the implication would be both that  $Kap$ , and that  $Ka\neg Kap$ , when the latter itself entails  $\neg Kap$  and so a contradiction. Thus there are things that are true about someone that that person cannot know about himself – only someone different can know. In the specific case where 'p' is "b is dreaming," we therefore see that the fact that  $b$  cannot tell that he is dreaming (since the appearance of a dragon might be indistinguishable from a real sight of a dragon, from the first-person point of view), does not mean that some other person,  $a$ , cannot know both that  $b$  is dreaming, and that  $b$  is himself ignorant of this.

It is clear, of course, as was said before, that many of the points made above apply much more widely. I have chosen Searle, in the main, to represent the largely American tradition that has grown up since the 1970s, but which harks back to much earlier times, and Ryle and Quinton to represent the Wittgensteinian period, in between. But clearly other figures could be mentioned, as well. Sartre, for instance, has many things to say about the imagination that bear against the notion of inner images, and his view of thinking was that it was, in part, an intentional act of withdrawing from awareness of the world, and so "negating" it. Austin, also, was a notable critic specifically of Ayer's notion of sense-data, in *Sense and Sensibilia*; and Dennett has followed Ryle in many ways. Chalmers, in *The Conscious Mind*, has expressed opinions similar to Searle's, although even more extreme, about the problem that the private notion of consciousness poses for modern science.

But the more Wittgensteinian notion does not have the same kind of problem with science. If consciousness consists in simply *being awake*, to one degree or another, then it is merely a relation to the public world. Certainly there is the intransitive expression "he is conscious," but that is just a quantified form of the transitive expression, i.e. it is "he is conscious of something," where the "things" involved are external, physical objects and events of a quite straightforward sort. In the case of dreams there are no such external objects, and so despite claims by dreamers to have seen and heard things in their dreams, one has to tell them there is just the

appearance of this, and not the reality of it. Indeed, “You were dreaming” surely says just that. As a result, because its objects are public, we can clearly measure the extent of the “conscious of” relation by the usual, well rehearsed, scientific means. As Wittgenstein said (*Philosophical Investigations* §416):

Well, expressions like “I see,” “I hear,” “I am conscious,” really have their uses. I tell the doctor “Now I am hearing with this ear again,” or I tell someone who believes I am in a faint “I am conscious again,” and so on.

It is all just so ordinary, and so normal. So where is the problem? The problem comes, I believe, from consideration of other cases that are, or have been, difficult to accept as falling into the general pattern, and which, in fact, do not fall into that pattern. These are cases that fall, in Quinton’s terms, into the category of sense experiences rather than the category of appearances. Maybe we can accept that dreams, pictorial images, and verbal imaginings are “not there,” but what about redness, and our pains? We now know there are illusions in these areas, thus we now know, as Searle reminded us above, that pains cannot be located where we may think they are in the body. Also, as Humphrey, amongst many others, has pointed out, there is no intrinsic physical property of red objects that would be redness in the world – a point discussed before. In contrast with the case of the content of dreams, though, we nevertheless surely still want to say that we see redness, and feel pains, and want to do so with a certainty that is undeniable.

It is here where Humphrey’s new book is such an advance. For it shows how seeing redness is quite unlike seeing a figure in a dream (see Slater 2001 for comparable points about pains). Humphrey, in line with the conclusion reached in section 3, wants to say that when “seeing red” we are merely experiencing *in the external world* whatever varied physical properties cause certain specific happenings *in our bodies*. None of the external physical properties, however they may vary from case to case, are themselves redness, as objectivists like Dretske would maintain. Instead, by attributing the word “red” to the external object we are collecting together properties with the same effect on us. So redness is not even a disjunctive, first-order property of certain external objects, but rather a second order property of their properties: their properties have the property of causing certain specific sensations in us. It is the same as when we call a variety of things and events “saddening” – although I am not entirely in favor of Humphrey’s coinage “redding” to mark the similarity. Another close parallel concerns heat, since both high temperatures and high humidity are experienced as “hotness” – because of their “hotting” of

us, so to speak. The important point, however, is the epistemological one. For in calling something hot, there is no way that we can be making a misjudgment about some first-order, intrinsic property of what is called "hot": the fact that *something* is making us hot can be known from inspection of oneself alone, and so "incurably." Of course, the causal effect upon us of something in the world is something that others can witness as well (solving traditional philosophical problems about color inversion, as before), so we only have "privileged access" to the effect because we are more present to it, and have special, proprioceptive senses that enable us to learn, in our own case, what is going on.

It characterizes the post-Wittgensteinian, as well as the pre-Wittgensteinian cultural tradition in philosophy, that discriminations such as that above, between dreams and redness, are eschewed. In fact there is a collection of very disparate things the non-Wittgensteinians have always lumped together as "the inner," and without the refinement and discrimination that Ryle, for example, so notably showed in separating out the many facets of the mind, dreams too easily become perceptions, and perceptions themselves become all of a one with bodily sensations like heat, and pain. The irony is that Searle's teacher at Oxford was Austin, and Searle, of course, drew much from him with respect to his theory of Speech Acts. But the particularity of Austin's thought in connection with sense data must have been a mystery to his pupil. It is just that, I reckon, that has made consciousness such a mystery for Searle: the lack of delicacy and subtlety that conflates even categorically different things.