

Structure of Consciousness

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On Consciousness

“Consciousness is life itself.”

- **Wittgenstein**
 - “Consciousness is the central fact of specifically human existence because all our other aspects of our existence – language, love, humor, and so on would be impossible without consciousness.”
- **John Searle**

Consciousness as a Concept

- “To understand the concept of consciousness we do not need to define or to describe it, but to recognize what is involved in saying that someone is conscious; what is important is not a description, but an understanding of the significant of the concept.”
 - **Paul Johnston**

Searle on Kant

- **Consciousness related to space and time**
- A) experience of objects are temporally extended
- B) stream of consciousness
 - **Phenomenological time does not exactly match with real time.**

About *the other mind*

- The category of the ***other people***

Capacity for assigning a special status to other loci of consciousness

Is biologically based and

Is a Background presupposition of all forms of collective intentionality.

Structure of consciousness

- Finite Modalities
- Unity
- Intentionality
- Aspectuality
 - Subjectivity
- Conceptual connection
- Background

Conti...

- Familiarity
- Overflow
- Center and Periphery (field of consciousness)
- Boundary Condition
- Mood
- Pleasure and unpleasure

Finite Modalities

- “Human consciousness is manifested in strictly limited number of modalities. In addition to the five senses of sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing and the sixth senses of ‘balance’, there are bodily sensations and the stream of thought.”
- Searle (1992:128)

Unity

- Conscious states come to us as a part of unified sequence
- **Horizontal Unity and Vertical Unity**
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Vertical Unity

- **Conscious experience**
- **Toothache, Rose in the vase, fragrance of tooth paste, sitting on the sofa, etc.**

Horizontal Unity

- Experience of thought and action
- **Saying** – meaning – **acting**
- **Binding problem in neuroscience**
- **Kant on Transcendental Unity of Apperception**

Intentionality

- “For large number of cases, the consciousness is indeed a consciousness of something, and the ‘of’ in ‘consciousness of’ is ‘of’ of intentionality.”
 - Searle (1992: 130-131)
- **Psychological Mode**
- **Direction of Fit**

Perspectival and Aspectual

- “My conscious experiences, unlike the objects of the experiences, are always perspectival. They are always from a point of view. Perspective and points of view are most obvious for vision, but of course they are features of our sensory experiences as well.”
(Searle 1992: 131)

Aspectuality

- “All intentionality is aspectual. Seeing an object from a point of view, is seeing it under certain aspects and not others.”
- **Subjectivity**
- What it feels like to me or ...to bat ?

Conceptual Connection

- Connection between **consciousness** and **intentionality**
- “only a being that could have conscious intentional states could have intentional state at all, and every unintentional state is potentially conscious.” (Searle 1992: 132)

The Figure-Ground, Gestalt Structure

- Gestalt psychology tells us perceptual experiences come to us as figure against a background.
- E.g. The background of seeing books against table

Aspects of Familiarity

- “The aspects of familiarity comes in varying degrees: it is a scalar phenomenon. At the top of the familiarity scale are the objects, scenes, people and sights of my ordinary, everyday life. Lower down are strange scenes in which objects and people are nonetheless easily recognizable and categorizable by me.” (Searle 1992: 135)

Aspects of familiarity

Feeling of familiarity

Acts of recognition (Wittgenstein)

Feeling of my own body (inner sense of bodily parts and a feeling of myself.

Overflow

- **Imaginary aspects of thoughts**
- Thoughts are indefinitely connected, expression of a content sometimes overflows and spill over certain other content of thoughts

Center and Periphery

- “Within the field of consciousness, we need to distinguish between those things which are at the center of attention and those that are at the periphery. We are conscious of very large number of things that we are not attending to or not focusing our attention upon.” (Searle 1992: 138)

Boundary Conditions

- Human consciousness is bound by
- Spatio-temporal and socio-biological location
- **Location of the being**
- Situatedness related to one's state of consciousness.

Mood

- “A mood, by itself, never constitutes the whole content of a conscious state. Rather the mood provides the tone or colour that characterizes the whole conscious state or sequence of conscious states.” (Searle 1992: 140)

Pleasure and Unpleasure

- “Remember that we are considering the whole of conscious states, a slice out of the stream of consciousness big enough to have the unity and coherence I am trying to describe. For such a chunk, it seems to me there is always a dimension of pleasure and unpleasure.” (Searle 1992:141)