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T. H. Huxley (1866) said 'How it is that anything so remarkable as a state of consciousness comes about as a result of irritating nervous tissue, is just as unaccountable as the appearance of Djin when Aladdin rubbed his lamp.' This is the famous 'explanatory gap'. We have no conception of our physical or functional nature that allows us to understand how it could explain our subjective experience. This fact (in a form expressed by Nagel, 1974; the term 'explanatory gap' comes from Levine, 1983) has dominated the last 20 years of discussion of consciousness. Francis Crick and Christoff Koch (1990) have famously hypothesized that the neural basis of consciousness is to be found in certain phase-locked 40 Hz neural oscillations. But how does a 40 Hz neural oscillation explain *what it's like* (in Nagel's memorable phrase) to be us? What is so special about a 40 Hz oscillation as opposed to some other physical state? And why couldn't there be creatures with brains just like ours in their physical and functional properties, including their 40 Hz oscillation patterns, whose owners' experiences were very unlike ours, or who had no subjective experiences at all? One doesn't have to suppose that there really *could be* creatures with brains just like ours who have different experiences or no experiences to demand an account of *why not?* But no one has a clue about how to answer these questions. This is the heart of the mind-body problem.

Consciousness in the sense discussed is phenomenal consciousness. 'What's *that?*', you ask. There is no non-circular definition to be offered; the best that can be done is the offering of synonyms, examples and one or another type of pointing to the phenomenon (Goldman, forthcoming). For example, I used as synonyms 'subjective experience' and 'what it is like to be us'. In explaining phenomenal consciousness, one can also appeal to conscious properties or qualities, e.g. the ways things seem to us or immediate phenomenological qualities. Or one can appeal to examples: the ways things look or sound, the way pain feels and more generally the experiential properties of sensations, feelings and

perceptual experiences. I would also add that thoughts, wants and emotions often have characteristic conscious aspects, and that a difference in representational content can make a phenomenal difference. Seeing something as a cloud differs from seeing it as a part of a painted backdrop (see perceptual content). What it is like to hear Bulgarian spoken depends on whether one understands the language.

We gain some perspective on the explanatory gap if we contrast the issue of the physical/functional basis of consciousness with the issue of the physical/functional basis of thought. In the case of thought, we do have some theoretical proposals about what thought is, or at least what human thought is, in scientific terms. Cognitive scientists have had some success in explaining some features of our thought processes in terms of the notions of representation and computation (see Block, 1990). There are many disagreements among cognitive scientists: especially notable is the disagreement between connectionists and classical 'language of thought' theorists (see COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY; CONNECTIONISM). However, the notable fact is that in the case of thought, we actually have more than one substantive research programme, and their proponents are busy fighting it out, comparing which research programme handles which phenomena best. But in the case of consciousness, we have nothing – zilch –worthy of being called a research programme, nor are there any substantive proposals about how to go about starting one. (see Baars, 1988, for an indication of how what passes for a research programme about phenomenal consciousness is just more cognitive psychology – actually a theory of a different notion of consciousness, access-consciousness, to be described below.) Researchers are *stumped*. There have been many tantalizing discoveries recently about neuropsychological syndromes in which consciousness seems to be in some way missing or defective (see Young, 1994; Baars, 1988), but no one has yet come up with a theoretical perspective that uses these data to narrow the explanatory gap, even a little bit.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE EXPLANATORY GAP

Needless to say, there are many different attitudes towards this problem, but five of them stand out. First, we might mention eliminativism, the view that consciousness as understood above simply does not exist (Churchland, 1983; Dennett, 1988; Rey, 1983). So there is nothing for there to be an explanatory gap about. Second, we have various forms of reductionism, notably functionalism and physicalism. According to these views, there is such a thing as consciousness, but there is no singular explanatory gap, that is, there are no mysteries concerning the physical basis of consciousness that differ in kind from run of the mill unsolved scientific problems about the physical/functional basis of liquidity, inheritance or computation. On this view, there is an explanatory gap, but it is unremarkable. A third view is what Flanagan (1992) calls the new mysterianism. Its most extreme form is *transcendentalism* (White, 1991), the view that consciousness is simply not a natural phenomenon and is not explainable in terms of science at all. A less extreme form of new mysterianism is that of McGinn (1991), which concedes that consciousness is a natural phenomenon but emphasizes *our* problem in understanding the physical basis of consciousness. McGinn argues that there are physical properties of our brains that do in fact explain consciousness, but though this explanation might be available to some other type of being, it is cognitively closed off to us. A fourth view that has no well-known name (see Nagel, 1974; Flanagan, 1992; Searle, 1992), holds that though there may be important differences between a naturalistic explanation of consciousness and naturalistic explanations of other phenomena, there is no convincing reason to regard consciousness as non-natural or unexplainable in naturalistic terms (see NATURALISM). This view is suggested by Nagel's remark that we are like the person ignorant of relativity theory who is told that matter is a form of energy but who does not have the concepts to appreciate how there could be chains of reference-links leading from a single phenomenon to both 'matter' and 'energy'. The explanatory gap exists – and we cannot conceive of how to close it – because we lack the scientific concepts. But future theory may provide those concepts. A fifth view could be described as deflationist about the explanatory gap. The gap is unclosable, but not because we cannot find the right physical concepts. Rather, it is unclosable because reductive explanation requires an a priori analysis of the phenomenon to be explained, and no such analysis can be given of our concepts of conscious experience. (see qualia for more on this view.)

Dennett (1988) argues for eliminativism. He uses a thought experiment about two coffee tasters, Chase and Sanborn. Both liked Maxwell House coffee when they started, and both dislike it now. But they tell very different stories about what happened. Chase says that he has become more sophisticated; he used to like the taste of Maxwell House, but he no longer does. Sanborn is equally certain that he can remember what the coffee used to taste like, but he still thinks that that original taste is a great taste: the source of *his* change, he says, is a change in his perceptual apparatus, perhaps his taste buds. He no longer *gets* that nice old taste when he drinks Maxwell House. Dennett points out that either Chase or Sanborn (or both) might be wrong because of changes in their *memories* of the tastes. For example, perhaps Maxwell House coffee still tastes exactly the same to Sanborn as it always did, but his memory of what it used to taste like has slowly, imperceptibly changed over time. So Sanborn's current dislike of Maxwell House could be traced to a memory change plus a change in his standards with no change at all in his perceptual machinery. Further, Dennett

points out, their reports are consistent with a variety of combinations of partial or total changes in memory, aesthetic standards and perceptual machinery.

It is not easy to see how this example is supposed to support eliminativism, but I would reconstruct the main argument as follows:

- (1) Suppose phenomenal consciousness exists, that is, there are real phenomenally conscious properties.
- (2) Then there can be a fact of the matter as to whether Chase and Sanborn are right.
- (3) But if there are real phenomenally conscious properties, they are transparent.
- (4) However, only an expert, say a neurophysiologist who can examine the brains of Chase and Sanborn, could tell whether their memories, aesthetic standards and current conscious qualities on drinking Maxwell House have changed.
- (5) The fact that we cannot rely on the testimony of Chase and Sanborn themselves shows that phenomenally conscious qualities are not transparent.
- (6) From (3) and (5) we can deduce that there are no real phenomenally conscious qualities.

Once we actually set out the argument, it is easy to see what is wrong with it: for (3) and (5) to both be true, there must be an equivocation on 'transparent'. The fact that it is possible that the stories Chase and Sanborn believe are wrong shows only that their memories could be wrong, and that an expert might be able to tell them that. But no advocate of transparency of phenomenal consciousness ought to suppose that *memories* of conscious states are literally *incorrigible*. There are a variety of ways of understanding 'transparent' in which it plausibly applies to phenomenally conscious qualities of my states *when I am having those states*, and these senses would make (3) true without making (5) true. (see [Flanagan, 1992](#), for reconstructions and rebuttals of other arguments for eliminativism.)

OTHER CONCEPTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Thus far I have been talking about phenomenal consciousness. But there are other concepts of consciousness – cognitive or intentional or functional concepts of consciousness – that are often not distinguished from it, and it is common for deflationists or reductionists about phenomenal consciousness to tacitly slide from phenomenal consciousness to one or another of these cognitive or intentional or functional concepts (see [Dennett, 1991](#), and my review, [Block, 1993](#)). I will mention three such concepts of consciousness: self-consciousness, monitoring-consciousness and access-consciousness.

(1) *Self-consciousness* is the possession of the concept of the self and the ability to use this concept in thinking about oneself. There is reason to think that animals or babies can have phenomenally conscious states without employing any concept of the self. To suppose that phenomenal consciousness requires the concept of the self is to place an implausible intellectual condition on phenomenal consciousness. Perhaps phenomenally conscious states have a *non-conceptual* content that could be described as 'experienced as mine', but there is no reason to think that this representational aspect of the state exhausts its phenomenal properties. After all, if both my experience as of blue and my experience as of red are experienced as mine, we still need to explain the difference between the two experiences; the fact, if it is a fact, that they are both experienced as mine will not distinguish them. (The 'as of terminology is intended to preclude cases in which red things don't look red.)

(2) *Monitoring-consciousness* takes many forms. (The source of these ideas in the philosophical literature is [Armstrong, 1968, 1980](#); See also [Lycan, 1987](#); [Rosenthal, 1986](#); [Carruthers, 1989](#).) One form is 'Internal scanning', but it would be a mistake to conflate internal scanning with phenomenal consciousness. As [Rey \(1983\)](#) notes, ordinary laptop computers are capable of internal scanning, but it would be silly to think of one's laptop as conscious. Rey favours supposing that internal scanning is sufficient for consciousness, if there is such a thing, and so he concludes that consciousness is a concept that both includes and precludes laptop computers being conscious, and hence that the concept of consciousness is incoherent. But even if we acknowledge 'internal scanning consciousness', we should drop the idea that internal scanning is sufficient for *phenomenal* consciousness, and so we get no incoherence.

Another form of monitoring consciousness is that of accompaniment by a higher-order thought. That is, a conscious state is one that is accompanied by a thought (grounded non-inferentially and non-observationally) to the effect that one is in that state. I favour a liberal terminological policy, and so I have no objection to this idea as a concept of consciousness. But I do object to the idea ([Rosenthal, 1986](#)) that phenomenal consciousness should be identified with

higher-order-thought consciousness. One way to see what is wrong with that view is to note that even if I were to come to know about states of my liver non-inferentially and non-observationally – as some people just know what time it is – that wouldn't make the states of my liver phenomenally conscious (see [Dretske, 1993](#)). Another objection is that phenomenal consciousness does not require the intellectual apparatus that is required for higher-order thought. Thus, the identification of phenomenal consciousness with higher-order thought shares the over-intellectualism of the identification of phenomenal consciousness with self-consciousness. Dogs and babies may have phenomenally conscious pains without thoughts to the effect that they have those pains.

A distinction is often made between *state consciousness*, or intransitive consciousness –and *consciousness of*, or transitive consciousness (Rosenthal, 1986). For example, if I say I'm nauseous, I ascribe a kind of intransitive consciousness to myself, and if I say I am now seeing something as a mosquito, I ascribe transitive consciousness. The higher-order thought view purposely collapses these notions. According to the higher-order thought view, a conscious state (intransitive consciousness) of mine is simply a state that I am conscious of (transitive consciousness), and consciousness of is simply a matter of accompaniment by a thought to the effect that I am in that state. So what it is for a state of mine to be conscious (intransitively) is for it to be accompanied by a thought that I am in that state (see [Rosenthal, 1986](#); [Carruthers, 1989](#)).

This intentional conflation has an element of plausibility to it, which can be seen by comparing two dogs, one of which has a perceptual state whereas the other has a similar perceptual state plus a representation of it. Surely the latter dog has a conscious state even if the former dog does not! Quite so, because consciousness *of* brings consciousness with it. But it is the *converse* that is problematic. State consciousness makes less in the way of intellectual demands than consciousness of, and so the first dog could be conscious without being conscious of anything.

(3) *Access-consciousness* does not make the intellectual demands of self-consciousness or higher-order-thought consciousness, and for that reason, reductionists about phenomenal consciousness would do better to identify phenomenal consciousness with access-consciousness. A state is access-conscious if, in virtue of one's having the state, a representation of its content is (a) inferentially promiscuous, i.e. freely available as a premise in reasoning, and (b) poised for rational control of action and (c) poised for rational control of speech. One can speak of both states and their contents as access-conscious. My claims about access-consciousness have been criticized in [Flanagan \(1992, p. 145–6\)](#), in [Searle \(1990; 1992, p. 84\)](#), and improvements suggested in [Davies and Humphreys \(1993b\)](#). There are three main differences between access-consciousness and phenomenal consciousness that ought to be acknowledged by those of us who are realists about a non-intentional, non-functional, non-cognitive notion of consciousness. First, it is in virtue of its phenomenal content (or the phenomenal aspect of its content) that a state is phenomenally conscious, whereas it is in virtue of its representational content or the representational aspect of its content that a state is access-conscious. Second, access-consciousness is a functional notion, but phenomenal consciousness is not. If you are a functionalist about phenomenal consciousness, it would be very natural to identify it with access-consciousness. Note that I deny that the concept of phenomenal consciousness is functional, but I acknowledge the empirical possibility that the scientific essence of phenomenal consciousness is something to do with information processing (see [Loar, 1990](#)). Third, access-consciousness applies to state tokens, or rather tokens at times, but phenomenal consciousness is best thought of as a feature of state types. Let me explain. The following inscription, 'teeth', that you just read contains five letter tokens, but of only three letter types. There is a token of the type *dog* in my office, but the type *dog* itself is an abstract object that doesn't exist anywhere in space-time. Here is why access is a matter of tokens at times: a single token state might be access-conscious at one time but not another, because of changes in information flow in the system, just as my keys are accessible at some times but not others (when I lose them). (And any actually accessible token might not have been accessible.) But a token of a phenomenal type is necessarily phenomenally conscious – it can't become non-phenomenally conscious without disappearing altogether. In other words, access-consciousness – but not phenomenal consciousness – is a functional notion – and a single token can change function (both actually and counterfactually).

A good way to see the distinction is to note cases of one without the other. Consider a robot with a computer brain that is behaviourally and computationally identical to ours. The question arises as to whether what it is like to be that robot is different from what it is like to be us, or, indeed, whether there is anything at all that it is like to be that robot. If there is nothing it is like to be that robot, the robot is a zombie. If zombies are conceptually possible, they certainly illustrate access-consciousness without phenomenal consciousness. But there is widespread opposition to the conceptual coherence of zombies (see [Shoemaker, 1975, 1981](#); [Dennett, 1991](#)). So for illustrating access-consciousness without phenomenal consciousness, I would rather rely on a very limited sort of partial zombie. Consider blindsight, a neurological syndrome in which subjects seem to have 'blind' areas in their visual fields. If the experimenter flashes a stimulus to one of those blind areas, the patient claims to see nothing at all. But if the experimenter insists that the

subject guess, and the experimenter supplies a few alternatives, the blindsight patients are able to 'guess' reliably about certain features of the stimulus, features having to do with motion, location, direction, and they are able to discriminate some simple forms (Weiskrantz, 1986; Young, 1994). Consider a blindsight patient who 'guesses' that there is an 'X' rather than an 'O' in his blind field. The patient has no access-consciousness of the stimulus (because, until he hears his own guess, he cannot use the information freely in reasoning or in rational control of action), and it is plausible that he has no phenomenal consciousness of it either. Now imagine something that does not exist, what we might call *super-blindsight*. A real blindsight patient can only guess when given a choice among a small set of alternatives ('X' / 'O', horizontal/vertical, etc.). But suppose (apparently contrary to fact) that a blindsight patient could be trained to prompt himself at will, guessing what is in the blind field without being told to guess. Visual information from the blind field simply pops into his thoughts the way that solutions to problems sometimes pop into ours or (to use an example given earlier) the way some people just know what time it is without any special perceptual experience. The super-blindsight patient says there is something it is like to see an 'X' in his sighted field, but not in his blind field, and we believe him. This would be a case of access-consciousness without phenomenal consciousness, a sort of partial zombie.

Here is an example of the converse of the zombie cases, namely phenomenal consciousness without access-consciousness. It appears that some areas of the brain specialize in reasoning and rational control of action, whereas other areas subserve sensation. If a person's brain has the former areas destroyed, he is unable to use the deliverances of the senses to rationally control action, to reason or to report sensibly, but he can still have experiences. Such a person has phenomenal consciousness without access-consciousness.

Here is a different sort of example. Suppose that you are engaged in intense thought when suddenly at midnight you realize that there is now and has been for some time a deafening pounding noise going on. You were aware of the noise all along, but only at midnight were you consciously aware of it. That is, you were phenomenally conscious of the noise all along, but only at midnight did you become access-conscious of it. The period before midnight illustrates phenomenal consciousness without access-consciousness. 'Conscious' and 'aware' are roughly synonymous, so it is natural to use one for the period before midnight, and both for the period after midnight when there are two kinds of consciousness present.

Another illustration of phenomenal consciousness without access-consciousness derives from a famous experiment by George Sperling. Sperling (1960) flashed arrays of letters (e.g. 3-by-3) to subjects for 50 milliseconds. Subjects typically said that they could see all of the letters, but typically could report only about half of them. Were the subjects right in saying that they could see all of the letters? Sperling tried signalling the subjects with a tone. A high tone meant that the subject was to report the top row, a medium tone indicated the middle row, etc. If the tone was given immediately after the stimulus, the subjects could usually get all the letters in the row, no matter which row, but once they had named those letters they could get no others. The experiment is taken by psychologists to indicate some sort of raw visual storage, the 'Visual icon'. But I have a different interest, the question of what it is like to be a subject in this experiment. My own experience is that I see all or almost all the letters – other subjects report the same thing (Baars, 1988, p. 15). And I would say I see them as 'N', 'J', 'B', etc., as specific letters, not just as blurry or vague or non-specific letters. I (and others) cannot report much more than a single row. So subjects are phenomenally conscious of all (or almost all) the letters at once, but not access-conscious of all of them at once. In sum, one can be phenomenally conscious of more than one is access-conscious of.

The two cases I've mentioned of phenomenal consciousness without access-consciousness are also counterexamples to the higher-order thought theory of phenomenal consciousness. If the subject has no access to the phenomenal state, he can't think about it either. Before midnight, I have a phenomenally conscious state caused by the noise but no thought to the effect that I am in such a state. And in the Sperling experiment, I am phenomenally conscious of all or almost all the letters, but since I can't access all the letters at once, I can't represent them all at once (except as letters).

Akins (1993) has argued against the distinction between a phenomenal and a representational aspect of experience. She keys her discussion to Nagel's (1974) claim that we cannot know what it is like to be a bat, challenging the reader to imagine that what it is like to be a bat is just what it is like to be us – only all those experiences represent totally different things. Correctly, she says that you cannot imagine that. That is because, as I mentioned earlier, representational differences of a certain sort make a phenomenal difference. What it is like to hear a sound as coming from the left is different from what it is like to hear a sound as coming from the right. And what it is like to hear Bulgarian depends on whether one speaks the language (see Goldman, 1993; Da vies, forthcoming; Peacocke, 1992; Tye, forthcoming a). But from the fact that some representational differences make a phenomenal difference, one should not conclude that there is no distinction between the representational and the phenomenal. Note, for example, that representational differences of the sort that obtain between me and my twin on Putnam's twin earth needn't make a phenomenal difference. Further, there are phenomenal states that aren't at all representational, orgasm for example.

Further, two distinct phenomenal contents can overlap representationally, for example a visual and a kinaesthetic representation of one's hand moving. Note that the point is *not* just that there is a representational overlap without a corresponding phenomenal overlap (as is said, for example, in [Pendlebury, 1992](#)). That would be compatible with the following story: phenomenal content is just one kind of representational content, but these experiences overlap in non-phenomenal representational content. The point, rather, is that the phenomenal qualities are themselves representational; the *as of motion* is part of the two phenomenal contents, two phenomenal contents that themselves overlap representationally, but the two phenomenal contents represent the same thing via different phenomenal qualities.

IS 'CONSCIOUSNESS' AMBIGUOUS?

I have distinguished a number of different concepts of consciousness, phenomenal consciousness, self-consciousness, monitoring consciousness and access-consciousness. Am I saying that the word 'conscious' is ambiguous? I don't think that the different concepts of consciousness I have mentioned indicate a straightforward ambiguity; for example, you won't find a straightforward distinction among any of these concepts in a dictionary. (Though some dictionaries mention self-consciousness separately.) I would rather say that 'conscious' (together with 'aware', 'experience' and other words similarly used) *should* be ambiguous. An analogy: [Kuhn \(1964\)](#) points out that Aristotle failed to distinguish between average velocity and instantaneous velocity, and made a crucial mistake because of this conflation. There is no ambiguity in 'Velocity' or 'speed' in ordinary English, but the seeds are there, and a distinction is needed for some purposes. My own view on the empirical linguistic question as to what 'consciousness' means is that it is a cluster concept. Consider the concept of a religion, a cluster concept that involves belief in a supreme being, a moral code, rituals, sacred objects, a special plane of experience, etc. There can be (and often are) religions that lack any one or two of these (see [Alston, 1967](#)). The cluster in the case of 'consciousness' involves phenomenal consciousness, access-consciousness, self-consciousness, monitoring-consciousness, and perhaps other elements. The problem is that these elements are so different from one another that failure to distinguish among the different elements can lead to serious confusion. An undifferentiated 'conscious' works well for most purposes, but for serious thinking we need conceptual clarification. (Of recent books on consciousness, the ones I've noticed that distinguish phenomenal consciousness from other notions are [Lycan, 1987](#); [Flanagan, 1992](#); and [Davies and Humphreys, 1993a](#).)

CONFLATIONS

There are two notable sorts of trouble writers get into by not making these distinctions. One is to be found in [Jaynes \(1976\)](#) and [Dennett \(1986, 1991\)](#). These authors allege that consciousness is a cultural construction – Jaynes even gives its invention a date: between the events reported in the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. They seem to be talking about phenomenal consciousness, but if one accepts a notion of phenomenal consciousness as distinct from the cognitive and functional notions I have described, the idea that consciousness was invented by the ancient Greeks is ludicrous. If there is such a thing as phenomenal consciousness as distinct from the cognitive and functional notions I have described, surely it is a basic biological feature of us. The same is true for access-consciousness, which is the best guess as to what Dennett is usually talking about. Obviously, our ability to access information from our senses is genetically programmed. And I would say the same for most forms of monitoring. What Jaynes and Dennett ought to be saying is that there is no such thing as phenomenal consciousness as distinct from the other consciousnesses. They ought to be reductionists or eliminativists about consciousness. The conflation is especially silly in Jaynes, where it is obvious that 'consciousness' in the sense in which it is supposed to have been invented by the Greeks is something like a *theory* of consciousness in roughly the phenomenal sense. (see [Dennett, 1986](#), for a defence of Jaynes.)

Another type of problem has nothing to do with reductionism or eliminativism. Consider, for example, [Searle's \(1992\)](#) reasoning about a function of consciousness. Searle mentions Penfield's description of petit mal epilepsy patients who are 'totally unconscious', but nonetheless continue their activities of walking or driving home or playing a piano piece, but in an inflexible and uncreative way. Searle says that the lack of consciousness explains the lack of flexibility and creativity, and so one of the functions of consciousness is to add powers of flexibility and creativity. Searle is talking about the function of *phenomenal consciousness*, but he gives no reason to think that the petit mal patients lack *that* kind of consciousness. The patients don't cope with new situations very well, but they show every sign of normal sensation. For example, Searle describes the epileptic walker as threading his way through the crowd. Isn't there something it is like for him to see, say, a red sign, which he knows to turn right at? What is most obviously deficient in these patients is not phenomenal consciousness, but cognitive and functional consciousnesses. [Penfield \(1975\)](#) does say that the patients are 'totally unconscious, but he appears to have some sort of monitoring consciousness in mind, not

phenomenal consciousness. In another publication, [Searle \(1990\)](#) criticizes the idea that there is any access–sense of consciousness, saying that the idea that there is such a thing confuses ‘what I would call peripheral consciousness or inattentiveness with total unconsciousness. It is true, for example, that when I am driving my car “on automatic pilot”, I am not paying much attention to the details of the road and the traffic. But it is simply not true that I am totally unconscious of these phenomena. If I were, there would be a car crash’ (p. 635). Note the contradiction. In one place, he says that a ‘totally unconscious’ epileptic can drive home, and in another place he says that if a driver were ‘totally unconscious’ the car would crash. In the first place, he is thinking of total lack of phenomenal consciousness (combined with some degree of access–consciousness), whereas in the second, he is thinking of a total lack of access–consciousness (or both types of consciousness).

A variant on this mistake is found in the writings of many authors, including [Flanagan \(1992\)](#), who argues that since a thirsty blindsight patient will make no move towards a water fountain in his blind field, and since phenomenal consciousness of the water fountain is missing, phenomenal consciousness must have a function in initiating action. But in the blindsight patient, access–consciousness and monitoring consciousness of events in the blind field are *also* missing. We can explain why the blindsight patient does not move towards the water fountain by noting that with the missing access–consciousness, the content of the perceptual state is not available for rational control of action. (I don't have the space to argue here that in general we need not appeal to the missing monitoring consciousness to explain this phenomenon.) There is no need to appeal to the missing phenomenal consciousness, even if Flanagan is right that phenomenal consciousness is missing. (And if phenomenal consciousness is not missing in blindsight, we have a different fallacy–like the Searle mistake just pointed out.) The main error here is to transfer by conflation an obvious function of access–consciousness to phenomenal consciousness.

See also [CONTENT](#); *An Essay on Mind* section 2.2; [PAIN](#); [SENSATIONS](#); [SUBJECTIVITY](#).

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