



Unconscious subjectivity

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Abstract: Subjectivity is essential to consciousness. But though subjectivity is necessary for consciousness it is not sufficient. In part one I derive a distinction between conscious awareness and unconscious subjectivity from a critique of Block's (1995) distinction between access and phenomenal consciousness. In part two I contrast two historically influential models of unconscious thought: cognitive and psychoanalytic. The widely held cognitive model does not cover, as it should, the class of "for me" mental states that remain unconscious. In particular, personalist approaches to emotion require a theory of unconscious subjectivity to handle the case of unconscious emotion.

1. Introduction

The problem of consciousness has two components: subjectivity and awareness.¹ Conscious experience is subjective in that it always has a point of view that is "for me" in a way that resists objective analysis or complete 3rd-person paraphrase (Kriegel, 2006a; Levine, 2001; Nagel, 1974). I argue that although all consciousness is subjective in this sense, not all subjective mental states are conscious since a person may remain unaware of them. In the first part of this paper I derive a distinction between conscious and unconscious subjectivity from a critique of Block's (1995) important but problematic distinction between access and phenomenal consciousness. In the second part I contrast two influential models of unconscious thought, cognitive and psychoanalytic, and argue that the current cognitive model assumes that unconscious mentation is not subjective. But any adequate philosophy of emotion requires a theory of unconscious subjectivity to handle the case of unconscious emotion.

Because the notion of unconscious thought plays a crucial explanatory role in cognitive neuroscience (and philosophy of mind generally), it deserves careful scrutiny. But the nature of unconscious mental states is rarely considered problematic. Unconscious thoughts are widely understood to be information states that cause the appropriate behaviors. In contrast, consciousness is considered a hard problem because it

exhibits features that neurocognitive mechanisms do not: consciousness is qualitative, subjective, and strongly connected with agency. These dimensions of conscious thought do not “emerge” in any straightforward sense from the swiss-army knife assortment of specialized neural mechanisms that appear in the fMRI and PET scans. Having a subjective point of view seems to transcend functional mechanisms, while what-it-is-like seems to have no function whatsoever. Roughly, consciousness resists explanation because information can always be processed without it, as any zombie will surely tell you (Chalmers, 1996 & 1998; Levine, 2001).

But there is a paradigmatic variety of unconscious thought that has much in common with the conscious states just described. Some unconscious thoughts, such as unconscious emotions, are as far beyond the scope of cognitive theory as is consciousness itself, and for much the same reasons. They have subjective character. They matter as such to a particular subject. For us as individuals, it is not just “informative” to learn of these states, as when we learn something about neuroanatomy. Rather, they have practical relevance for our life projects. It has been remarked that finding out about our unconscious motives is not just an intriguing exercise, but more like a moral obligation (Rorty, 1991, p.145).

2. Unconscious subjectivity vs. phenomenal-only consciousness

Though the idea of a first-person or “for me” mental state that is not conscious may at first appear incoherent, it is not. In this section I argue that the concept of unconscious subjectivity is an improvement on Block’s (1995) notion of phenomenal consciousness without access consciousness, or *phenomenal-only consciousness*.² The valuable core of Block’s insight is best expressed not as a distinction between access and phenomenal consciousness, but rather as a similar but not equivalent distinction between conscious and unconscious subjectivity. One key difference between the two distinctions is that on the most plausible and charitable interpretation of Block’s version, the subjectivity of a mental state is both necessary and sufficient for calling it conscious, while on the present formulation subjectivity is necessary but *not* sufficient for consciousness.

According to Block, there is a conceptual difference between phenomenal consciousness (or *p-consciousness*), and access consciousness (or *a-consciousness*). For Block, phenomenal consciousness corresponds roughly to what-it-is-like: any state of an organism such that there is something it-is-like for the organism to be in that state is p-conscious. Access consciousness corresponds (again, roughly) with known experience: any state of an organism such that the organism knows what-it-is-like is a-conscious.³ Block showed that, in principle at least, the one kind of consciousness could occur without the other.

What might p-consciousness without a-consciousness amount to? Block characterized a-consciousness in terms of cognition and rationality. Access consciousness brings “inferential promiscuity,” is “poised for use as a premise in reasoning,” and “poised for the rational control of action”.⁴ This rational component can be understood as metacognition (Graham & Neisser, 2000; Koriati, 2000). A belief, judgment, or feeling is *metacognitive* if it is directed at other beliefs or attitudes of the cognizer. Having access implies that the metacognitive representation about the conscious state coheres with other beliefs in a way that is relatively robust. To access an experience, then, is to know (or

represent) what experience is being accessed. Thus access consciousness is a reflexively metacognitive form of consciousness. On this construal, access consciousness is quite similar to the traditional notion of consciousness, defined by Locke as the *awareness of what passes in one's own mind*. In contrast, p-consciousness is simply the compresence of qualitative and subjective character (Kriegel, 2006b; Levine, 2001). This Blockian definition nicely allows for the possibility that one can be in a p-conscious (and hence subjective) state without knowing it. In Locke's terminology, one might not be aware of *all* that passes in one's own mind. An example of an unaccessed phenomenal state might be the tune in my head that I don't realize is there. I later become conscious of the fact that I have been "hearing" the song for awhile. Sometimes I even wake up from sleep in the middle of a tune. And of course, there are innumerable romance stories about being in love with someone but not realizing it.

Dan Haybron (forthcoming) makes a related point. He argues that introspective judgments are highly fallible, and that as a result we are often in a state of *affective ignorance*, i.e., ignorance with respect to the character of our own experience. He concludes that cases of phenomenal consciousness without access consciousness are common in everyday life: "Our powers to assess our own happiness—and more broadly, our experience of life—are weaker and less reliable than we tend to suppose. We are . . . vulnerable to what I will call—for want of a better name—*affective ignorance*" (Haybron, p.2).

Haybron, like Block, needs to establish criteria for distinguishing reliable from bogus introspection. Nevertheless, it does seem that we can be mistaken about our own experiences. For example, chronically stressed individuals who cope with all sorts of pain, exhaustion, and so forth may not describe their condition as "stressed out." Haybron's term "affective ignorance" indicates the epistemic component to these cases. There is something it is like for these subjects, but this something is not properly known: "[Affective ignorance] would be said to occur . . . when an affective state is p-conscious but either lacks a-consciousness or is accessible to some degree, but is falsely characterized" (Haybron, p.12).

So far I have only rehearsed Block's distinction and discussed some of the ways it has been taken up by subsequent researchers. The next step is to show that what Block identified as p-only consciousness is better understood as unconscious subjectivity.

2.1. Awareness and what-it-is-like

By Blockian lights the mental states here identified are not unconscious. The class I would call unconscious yet subjective is just the class called p-conscious (or p-only-conscious) in the literature. It will be objected that the force of Block's work is to show that a mental state may be conscious despite not being accessible. So, why call these states unconscious?

Begin with the straightforward conception of conscious mental states adopted by Kriegel (2006b), among others: conscious states are states we are aware of having. Call this the *awareness conception* of consciousness. It is squarely in the Lockean tradition (but rejected by Block, see below). Contrary to Locke of course, we are not aware of all our thoughts, but that is not required. The awareness conception holds only that we are

aware of all our *conscious* thoughts. Thus, Kriegel writes: “If I were completely unaware of my experience, it would not be a *conscious* experience”.⁵ However, Kriegel immediately qualifies his use of the term of “awareness.” He compares p-only consciousness to the unfocused periphery of the visual field. If there is only peripheral awareness of p-conscious states, he argues, there is some awareness nevertheless. Kriegel thus endorses both the existence of p-only-consciousness and the intuitive definition of conscious states in terms of awareness. When he claims that conscious states are states we are aware of, the claim is not that we are focally aware of every conscious state we are in. The claim is rather that we are at least peripherally aware of every conscious state we are in.⁶

But Kriegel's analogy between p-only consciousness and peripheral perception doesn't fit well with the awareness conception of consciousness he and I share. Recall: p-consciousness occurs when there is something it-is-like for the subject, while a-consciousness is consciousness that is metacognitively known. On the awareness construal, this epistemic requirement is expressed by saying that access occurs when the subject is *aware of* what-it-is-like. On this approach, the idea of p-only consciousness is that there can be mental states in which the subject is unaware of what-it-is-like *despite there being something it-is-like*. Even within the traditional Lockean approach to consciousness, the claim is true and interesting. But it is not equivalent to the Blockian claim, outlined above, that there can be mental states that are “conscious despite not being accessible.” If it is insisted, with Kriegel, that we really are aware of these states, albeit peripherally, then they are access conscious states after all (“peripherally access conscious”?) and Block's work is completely lost. By hypothesis, however, we are unaware of p-only states. And since consciousness consists in states we are aware of, p-only states are not conscious states. This means there is a perfectly robust sense in which there can be unconscious subjectivity, namely, the mental processes there is something it-is-like to have, while we remain unaware of having them. So although Block has picked out an important category with the notion of p-consciousness, his analysis is hampered by his rejection of the awareness conception. It is better to call these states “subjective” rather than either “p-conscious” or “peripherally conscious”.⁷

Why does Block reject the awareness conception? That is, why does he hold not only that we may not be aware of all our own thoughts, but further, that we may not even be aware of some *conscious* thoughts? The first reason is polemical. Part of Block's purpose was to criticize empirical approaches to consciousness by arguing that introspection only reveals what is access conscious and so cannot discover the facts about phenomenal consciousness. One of his primary targets was Baars' (1997b, 2002) method of *contrastive analysis*, in which awareness is treated as a variable. Taking the subject's awareness or unawareness of a stimulus as an empirical measure of its conscious or unconscious status, the contrast between the two conditions can provide data regarding the function of consciousness. The behavioral consequences of consciously perceived input can be compared to those of stimuli that are either masked or below threshold intensity. This elegant and powerful experimental design has proven very useful to cognitive scientists. In this way, Baars notes, the phenomenon of semantic priming has been well documented. But the method depends on the awareness conception of consciousness. By identifying a form of consciousness independent of awareness, Block hoped to show that the problem of consciousness is empirically intractable. By replacing

Block's distinction with a cleaner distinction between consciousness and subjectivity, however, the awareness conception can be conserved and the contrastive method restored. Cognitive neuroscientists will not be required to explain subjectivity itself before they can study consciousness as a psychological variable. Yet at the same time the important core of Block's point is also affirmed—as a conceptual issue about subjectivity rather than about consciousness.

In place of the awareness conception, Block holds consciousness to be a “mongrel,” a cross-breed of two distinct concepts, access and phenomenal. Neither of these corresponds exactly with the awareness conception, since awareness includes elements of both epistemic access and phenomenal character. Above I argued that awareness is roughly allied with Block's notion of access since phenomenal-only consciousness is consciousness without awareness. Nevertheless, access in his sense must be something “less” than awareness because it can lack phenomenal quality in a way that awareness, intuitively, cannot.

This is worth considering more carefully. An access-only mental state would not only be a case of *metacognition* without phenomenal quality (a mundane possibility), but further, it would be a case of *consciousness* without phenomenal quality. Block proposed “superblindsight” as a hypothetical example. In superblindsight, phenomenologically “blind” subjects would retain independently reliable access to visual information, which they could use to guide intentional behavior in the rational, knowledgeable way characteristic of access consciousness. Granting for the moment that this form of consciousness could occur, there must then be something else (other than phenomenology) to distinguish these access-only states from *non-conscious* functional states. If not, it begins to look like the appellation “consciousness” is not merely mongrel but really arbitrary. I don't think Block is using the idea arbitrarily. Beneath their mongrel nature, there is something his two concepts of consciousness have in common—something less than awareness—that distinguishes them from subpersonal, non-conscious neurocognitive mechanisms and processes. The natural candidate here is subjectivity. Presumably, even access-only consciousness is accessible *for someone*. To deny this would leave Block with the absurd claim that consciousness can occur, not only without awareness and without phenomenology, but also without a subject who has the consciousness. A more plausible and charitable interpretation is that he takes subjectivity to be both necessary and sufficient for consciousness of whatever type. Thus, any state of an organism such that the state is subjective (i.e., any “for me” mental state) is a conscious state, and any information state that is not subjective is not conscious. By now it may be clear why I hold, in contrast, that subjectivity is necessary but not sufficient for consciousness.

The relation between subjectivity and consciousness is not biconditional. But certainly, if a mental state is *not* subjective then it is not conscious. It cannot be p-conscious because subjectivity is written into the definition. Recall: p-consciousness is the compresence of qualitative and subjective character, according to Kriegel (2006b) and others. And such a non-subjective state cannot be *a-conscious* either, for that would require consciousness without a point of view and would render a-only consciousness equivalent to other information processes. Thus it can be affirmed that subjectivity is a necessary condition for any type of consciousness. But the inference may not be made

that if a state *is* subjective then it is conscious, because on the traditional awareness conception the possibility remains that the subject may not be aware of their state (since they may not know of it). So there is an essential role for subjectivity in consciousness, but the two notions are not equivalent. Kriegel's argument for the other half of the biconditional is as follows: if a mental state is beyond my awareness then it is not a mental state "for me" and hence it is not subjective.⁸ But this simply equates "for me" with awareness, which is precisely what is at issue and which neglects the epistemic component of awareness. While it is clear that we must be at least peripherally aware of all *conscious* states, why must we be even peripherally aware of every *subjective* state?

A word about what I am not arguing for. I am not arguing that unconscious subjectivity is independent of consciousness in the sense that there could be zombie-subjects with no consciousness whatever. I take no position on this issue here. Rather, conscious subjects can also have unconscious subjectivity. So, though it may be that for every point of view there is consciousness, not every mental state *for* that point of view need be conscious. If it is agreed that the subjective self is a complex system that is not unitary and transparent, the basic point is clear: some unconscious thoughts, such as unconscious emotions, are quite like paradigmatically conscious ones. On a Blockian analysis, these thoughts are said to be "p-only-conscious" or perhaps "un-a-conscious." But they are better understood in terms of unconscious subjectivity, inasmuch as they are distinguished from nonconscious subpersonal processes on the basis of their subjective character.

The first half of this paper has criticized the assumption that all subjectivity is conscious. One reason researchers might make this assumption is that its equivalent contrapositive formulation, that all unconscious thought is non-subjective, is widely adopted by cognitive neuroscientists. Though the first version of this claim is sometimes implicit or disguised, as the analysis of Block's work has illustrated, the second version is often explicit. In the next section, then, I turn to this second version and examine the relation between subjectivity and *unconscious* thought.

3. The incompleteness of the cognitive unconscious

Two general models of unconscious thought may be distinguished: *cognitive* and *psychoanalytic*. Several observers including Patricia Kitcher (1992) have argued that the notion of unconscious thought is the primary theoretical insight that cognitive science has preserved from Freud, and further, that cognitive science is the ultimate realization of Freud's research program. Contemporary researchers in affective neuroscience such as Joseph LeDoux (2002) and Antonio Damasio (1999, 2003) explicitly adopt the cognitive model. But the cognitive approach to the unconscious is quite different from its psychoanalytic counterpart. The two models do not mark out identical sets of phenomena. Because there are unconscious emotions with "for me" subjective significance, an exclusively cognitive or biofunctional model is not sufficient. Although Freudian metapsychology was largely unsuccessful, Freud's lasting contribution was that subjective thought is often unconscious. Any model of unconscious thought that excludes subjective states is incomplete.

The *cognitive unconscious* is constituted by the machinery that underlies the mind.⁹ Consider a few of the processes involved in conducting a conversation:

distinguishing the stream of words from background noise; parsing the soundstream into phonetic and morphemic structures; applying semantic and pragmatic models to the sentence as a whole; filling in gaps in the discourse. In understanding even the simplest spoken language, we perform these and other complex information functions automatically and without conscious control. Many of these processes are not merely unnoticed, they are beyond notice. Introspectively, we cannot tell how or when they take place.

The vast majority of psychological processes are of this variety. These subpersonal mechanisms are the special province of cognitive science. With the aid of neuroimaging techniques, researchers are making strides toward mapping information processes onto the brain structures that instantiate them. Though cognitive psychologists once insisted that they were concerned only with a mid-level functional architecture that was independent of physiology, now the primary task for cognitive science is the identification of particular neural mechanisms with information processes. Computational functions first defined in terms of information theory are now seen as biofunctional mechanisms, underwritten by natural selection. The general goal is now to show how the ensemble of these neurocognitive mechanisms causes behavior. Thus, cognitive psychology has become cognitive neuroscience. The neurocognitive unconscious can be characterized as a ‘bottom up’ approach to mind. It aims to show how experience and behavior are caused by brain processes. Since it aims at an exclusively causal explanation, its theoretical posits must be free of any subjective or first-person import. The cognitive unconscious is offered as a causal explanation of how there come to be conscious subjects. To avoid circularity, this explanation cannot advert to subsystems of the brain that have the very subjective properties it seeks to explain (Dennett, 1975, pp.170-171; Noe, 2006, p. 21). This is at once the virtue of the cognitive model and its limitation. It is a virtue because it simplifies the model by off-loading subjectivity into the domain of consciousness, ensuring that information theory can be safely applied. The hard problem and the explanatory gap are symptoms of this tactic, but it has been undeniably effective to lump subjectivity under the heading of consciousness in order to proceed with cognitive modelling of unconscious processes. There is an immediate limitation, however. The unconscious mental states mentioned in cognitive models must not be subjective, but some unconscious mentation *is* subjective. Thus, the cognitive model does not cover the entire domain of unconscious thought. Subjectivity leaks into the unconscious arena.

But there is another historically prominent approach which may be characterized as ‘top-down’ rather than bottom-up. The *psychoanalytic* model defines unconscious thoughts with respect to conscious ones. It uses psychological concepts rather than information science and neurophysiological concepts. But sometimes the same language appears in both models, giving the mistaken impression that they refer to the same thing. The term “representation” is a case in point. For cognitive scientists, a representation is a syntactically defined data structure in an information system. Neuroscientists use “representation” in a similar way to mean a trace in the brain. In these uses of the term, a representation is a subpersonal (or third-person) element that need not be available to consciousness, even in principle. For the psychoanalytic and phenomenological traditions, however, a representation is a first-person thought that can in principle become conscious. The retinal image, for example, is a representation only in the former,

cognitive sense. It is an image *in* me but not an image *for* me. I cannot see my retinal image. Contemporary cognitive theorists tend to think of unconscious emotions in the same way. An unconscious emotion is conceived as a third-person causal process in the head that helps to explain behavior. The psychoanalytic model is top-down in that it begins with the conscious subject *for* whom the emotion is unconscious, and then digs for the meaningful experience that makes sense in the context of the subject's life. I use "representation" primarily in its cognitive sense, and mark the psychoanalytic sense with the qualification "subjective" or "for me."

Psychoanalytic theory is often referred to as *depth psychology*. Freud (1925) captured this idea by way of analogy with an old toy—a writing pad in which the top layer may be wiped clean but the traces remain in the layers beneath. The psychoanalytic unconscious is the domain of embodied personal meaning that, like immediate consciousness, is part and parcel of subjectivity. Freud's most important thesis was that subjective thought is often unconscious. At least implicitly, then, the psychoanalytic framework distinguishes between conscious and unconscious subjectivity. This distinction has been obscured in the subsequent development of cognitive science.

3.1. Unconscious emotions and depth psychology

Unconscious emotions are better understood in terms of the general psychoanalytic model than under the cognitive rubric. This is because emotional psychology consists not only in "representations" in the cognitive sense, but also involves first-person interpretive elements. Roughly, emotions always matter, and mattering is always mattering for some subject. Unconscious emotions, if they are to count as emotions at all, must be subjective in much the same way that conscious emotions are subjective. They must matter to a conscious individual. Although the particulars of Freud's metapsychology are obviously outdated in a variety of ways, a concept like that of the psychoanalytic unconscious—call it the *subjective unconscious*—is still important for philosophy of mind.

This contrast between the two models of unconscious thought can be related back to the first part of the paper to reveal a three-way distinction between conscious emotions, unconscious emotions, and non-subjective neurodynamic drives. This analysis of emotion closely approximates the classification scheme developed by Lambie & Marcel (2002). They begin by distinguishing two levels of emotion experience. In the first, most familiar variety of emotion, the subject is aware of it and able to report it in some degree. In the second case, there remains something-it-is-like but the subject may not recognize all the aspects of the emotion even though it may be expressed in behavior. This category of emotion recalls Haybron's notion of affective ignorance. Lambie & Marcel then distinguish these two kinds of emotion experience from a third category they call "emotion states," which are strictly nonconscious neurocognitive representations or processes.

This tripartite distinction usefully maps the relation between the cognitive model of unconscious thought and its psychoanalytic counterpart. The psychoanalytic model covers the second of these three types of emotion, while the cognitive model covers the third. For my purposes, the three categories may be readily characterized in terms of the presence or absence of subjectivity and conscious awareness, as discussed in part I above. In Lambie & Marcel's first category of emotion experience there is conscious awareness

(and hence subjectivity too); in the second category there is subjectivity without consciousness; and in the third there is no subjectivity (and hence no consciousness either).¹⁰ Depth psychology concerns thoughts that are beyond or beneath conscious awareness, but which nonetheless enjoy status as contents of subjective experience.

At this point an example is in order. I relate a story about a friend from graduate school. I noticed an odd pattern in his behavior. Every day as he walked to campus, he took a circuitous route that added several minutes to the trek. One day as we walked together, I pointed out this odd behavior, which he had not previously noticed. He soon realized that he had been unconsciously avoiding his old neighborhood. He now noticed that he had negative feelings about that area. When I asked him why he said he didn't know, but that he simply preferred the long way round and that he didn't like to walk past the old house. Later, as we walked on further, he recounted an episode that he considered to be "ancient history." A few years before his house in that neighborhood had been burglarized. We were puzzled—both about why he had not thought of it immediately, and also why that event should affect his peripatetic habits the way it evidently did. The next time we met, he immediately told me that he had been giving quite a bit of thought to the burglary and the unconscious avoidance behavior. Among the things stolen that day was a custom built electric guitar, an heirloom he had recently inherited from his late older brother. It was one of the few things left of him, and utterly irreplaceable. Now the loss of the guitar had become a symbol for the "loss" of a brother. Furthermore, my friend explained that he had never wanted to think about his brother's death, and felt bad about it in a variety of ways. Now years later, he realized that he was avoiding the symbolic site of loss without any occurring awareness of doing so.

Notice several things about the example: First, although neurocognitive mechanisms enter into the causal explanation of the behavior, they do not shed light on its meaning or the reason for it. Second, the reason for the behavior was a full-blooded emotion with idiosyncratic first-person content, a belief-desire structure, linguistic and symbolic mediation, and practical import for my friend's personal life. Third, this reason was potentially available to him all along, but was not accessed as the reason. Fourth, his experience at the time of the behavior was emotionally laden, though he remained unaware of it. In light of all this, it seems that this kind of unconscious emotion belongs in the second category distinguished above, rather than the third. It is an example of unconscious subjectivity.

3.2. Unconscious emotion and cognitive neuroscience

Contemporary neuroscientists emphasize unconscious emotions in pursuit of a neurobiological and evolutionary explanation that identifies emotions with activations in the midbrain—primarily though not exclusively the amygdala and the periaqueductal grey (LeDoux, 1998 & 2002; Damasio, 1999 & 2003). Not surprisingly, Joseph LeDoux approaches both emotion and the self from within the cognitive model of the unconscious. He writes:

Cognitive science was successful because it figured out how to study the mind without getting bogged down in questions about subjective experience. The trick was to treat the mind as an information processing device rather than as a place where experiences occur. . . [And the] processing approach is, in fact, directly

applicable to the study of emotion. (LeDoux 2002, p. 205).

On the next page LeDoux defines emotion as “The process by which the brain determines or computes the value of a stimulus” (LeDoux, 2002, p.206). LeDoux elaborates on this definition by saying that other aspects of emotion that have been taken as constitutive by psychologists and philosophers alike, such as feeling or intending, are inessential. His goal is to use an information processing conception of emotion as a basic element in his neurocognitive model of the self. Thus, he characterizes the self as a synaptic structure: “You are your synapses. They are who you are” (LeDoux, 2002, p. 324).¹¹ His account of the self and emotions, then, fits perfectly with the cognitive model of unconscious thought here described.

But while I might agree that your synapses are what you are, I will not agree that your synapses are who you are. In contrast to LeDoux’s brand of cognitive neuroscience consider that the point of psychoanalysis is, like that of reflection more generally, the development of one’s character. It asks the question: “What sort of person am I?” (Rorty, 1991, pp. 152-3). It is a qualitative self-interpretation that involves assuming a subjective point of view on one’s thoughts and world. The answer to the question “what sort of person am I?” is not discoverable from facts about the brain alone.¹²

To see this, consider a prominent theory that tries to combine the cognitive model of unconscious thought with the sort of personalism about emotions I have in mind. Martha Nussbaum (2001) adopts a neo-stoic approach on which emotions are understood as judgments about personal flourishing (*eudaimonia*). Her view has many strengths, one of which is this: Nussbaum holds that although the existence of unconscious emotions indicates that there is no necessary phenomenological condition for emotion types, nevertheless unconscious emotions still retain their subjective status (2001, pp. 61, 64, 147). Accordingly, Nussbaum is at times sympathetic to some form of depth psychology, but one that is free of problematic Freudian baggage such as the theory of repression (2001, pp. 71, 181).

What is required here is a metapsychological framework designed to handle unconscious subjectivity. But instead, Nussbaum explicitly embraces the cognitive model of unconscious thought, stipulating that she uses the term “cognitive” to refer to information processing and nothing more (2001, p.23) This enables her to cite LeDoux, among others, in support of her view (2001, p.114). Nussbaum assumes that the cognitive model remains allied with her eudaimonistic philosophy of emotions. But her account of personal flourishing conflicts with LeDoux’s stated method of not getting “bogged down” in questions about subjectivity. There is a slippage between the non-subjective causal processes adverted to in the cognitive model and the critical notion of eudaimonia central to her account. Insofar as eudaimonia is the reflective project of an embodied subject, it is indeed essential to emotion. But if “flourishing” just refers to the relative fitness of a neural mechanism in a past reproductive environment, it is inadequate to her larger eudaimonistic (i.e., personalist) philosophy.

4. Conclusion

The assumption that all subjectivity is conscious is unwarranted. Philosophical psychology requires a conceptual space for unconscious subjectivity. Levine (2001) argues that the real hard problem of consciousness regards subjectivity, and concludes that "a way to put the problem . . . is just this: how could anything like a point of view exist?" (p.177). I agree that subjectivity remains a conceptual issue. But progress can be made by distinguishing subjectivity from conscious awareness, and recognizing that the former is necessary but not sufficient for the latter. This will render unconscious subjectivity useful for personalist philosophy of emotion, and at the same time preserve an empirically tractable conception of consciousness as awareness.

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Notes

1. Thanks to Timothy Bayne and Hans Muller for thoughtful criticism of prior drafts of this paper.
2. Thanks to Bill Robinson for the term “p-only consciousness.”
3. Several other contemporary researchers draw related distinctions among ways of being conscious or between different senses of “consciousness.” Cf. Levine (2001); Kriegel, (2006a); Rosenthal (2000); Baars (1997b).
4. Block (1995), p. 231. Block clarifies that this should be relative to the capacities of the type of animal in question. He also says that even poor reasoning is sufficient (p.277).
5. Kriegel (2006b), p.5. cf. Lycan (1996).
6. Kriegel (2006b), pp.5-7. See also Kriegel (2004).
7. Burge (1997) has similarly argued that there may be states that are phenomenal but not conscious. Also, Rosenthal (2000 and elsewhere) has argued for the existence of unconscious thoughts comparable to the unconscious subjectivity advocated here.
8. Kriegel (2006b) p.28.
9. See, e.g., Lakoff & Johnson (2000) for a full discussion of this notion.
10. My version of this three way analysis differs from theirs in two ways: First, since I am primarily interested the relation between awareness and subjectivity, I explicitly call the second category “unconscious yet subjective,” while Lambie & Marcel’s goal is simply to delineate various kinds of emotions. Second, in my view subjectivity is necessary for emotion so I would prefer not to call the third category “emotion states” as they do, since they are not properly emotions at all.
11. At one point LeDoux refers to the self as “the totality of the living organism” (2002, p. 26). But this directly conflicts with the rest of his book, the primary thesis of which is fairly expressed in the title: *The Synaptic Self*.
12. Rather, social narratives must be picked up and mediated through 1st-person imagination. While psychoanalysis is widely known as the “talking cure,” it can also be characterized as the archaeology of imagination. See, Boothby (2001) pp.134. Further, it may be noted that depth psychology does not simply represent a dualistic Cartesian leftover. Freud explicitly placed his work in the historical lineage of Copernicus and Darwin, quipping that the ego is not even master of its own house. But unlike modern astronomy, Freud did not replace the celestial gods with mere stones. The questions asked by psychoanalysis are still questions about subjectivity.

