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**THE UNCONSCIOUS IN ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF MIND: SEARLE'S
DISPOSITIONAL THEORY OF UNCONSCIOUS MENTATION**

Abstract

Theories of consciousness are abundant in philosophy of mind literature, whereas theories of unconsciousness are a rarity. Searle (1991, 1992) is one of the few philosophers who provided a comprehensive proto-theory of unconscious mentation, in which he identifies unconscious mental states in terms of their dispositional causal powers to become conscious and instantiate determinate aspectual shapes, which he calls the connection principle. Searle positions his theory as a rival of Freud's and rejects the claim that deeply unconscious, non-transformational mental states exist. In that regard, his theory poses a challenge to anyone who holds psychoanalytical unconscious to be reality and who holds that occurrent unconscious states exist and have a mental ontology. This article aims to provide a critical evaluation of Searle's theory of unconscious mentation. After providing a brief overview of Searle's account, I argue that Searle provides a contradictory picture as his seven-step argumentation is constituted by irreconcilable premises. Later, I attempt to provide two different, consistent interpretations of his theory and show why each interpretation is untenable. In effect, I argue that if one interprets aspectual shapes to be retained when a state is unconscious, then the determinacy of aspectual shapes can be questioned and that aspectual shapes are not the right sort of entities to anchor the identity relationship between conscious and unconscious mental states. If, on the other hand, the unconscious mental states cannot retain their aspectual shapes, then the theory falls victim to objections utilizing continuity of psychological explanations.

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Keywords: Unconscious states, connection principle, dispositional mental states, intrinsic intentionality.

Introduction

The question “What is the nature of the unconscious mind?” has been investigated by psychoanalysts and neuro-psychoanalysts, especially those who were keen on studying psychoanalytic metapsychology (Freud, 1915; Holt, 2009; Klein, 2013; Lacan, 2017; Shevrin, 1996; Solms, 2013, 2017) and cognitive scientists (Bargh & Morsella, 2008; Kihlstrom, 2018; Winkielman & Berridge, 2004). In turn, it seems that analytic philosophers, while focusing on the problem of consciousness, neglected the unconscious (with some exceptions; Crane, 2013, 2017; MacIntyre, 2004; Searle, 1992; Smith, 1999; Wakefield, 2018). While it seems there is some growing interest in the topic as attested by the current literature (see: Berger & Mylopoulos, 2019; Berger & Nanay, 2016; Block & Philips, 2017; Brakel, 2021; Crane, 2013, 2017; Hesselmann, 2019; Hvorecký et al., 2024), it is, without much doubt, one aspect of mentality that the analytic philosophy of mind has never addressed.

In that regard, two philosophers who offered comprehensive theoretical conceptualizations on the nature of unconscious mentation in the past few decades are Searle and Crane, both of whom provide a dispositional reading of unconscious mentation. However, the similarity of their expositions ends there. While Crane argues for holism of unconscious mental states, denies neither the intentionality nor the mental nature of unconscious states and posits that his account is compatible with both psychoanalytic and cognitive unconscious, Searle offers a state-based approach, denies that unconscious states exist as mental and intentional states and puts forth his theory as a rival -and in rejection- of Freud’s theory of the unconscious. In this sense, Searle’s theory poses some challenges for anyone who believes that the ontology of the unconscious states is mental, and, in general, anyone who holds that the psychoanalytic conception of the unconscious mind is a reality. In this article, I aim to offer a critical evaluation of Searle’s theory of the unconscious mind and his ideas regarding the psychoanalytical unconscious. In order to do so, this paper is divided into three main parts.

In the first section of this paper, I introduce Searle’s formulations regarding the unconscious mind. In the second section, I provide a brief review of some critical responses (Fodor & Lepore, 1994; Gulick, 1995; Meijers, 2000; Smith, 1999, pp. 137–154) and evaluate them alongside my critique, which states that Searle’s formulations are inconsistent, which renders his theory contradictory. Accordingly, in the last section, I attempt to mend the theory by providing two non-contradictory interpretations and critically evaluate them.

Searle and the problem of the unconscious mental

Searle (1992) points out a conviction that usually goes unnoticed about the intuitive way we think about the nature of unconscious mental states; he recognizes that our naïve, pre-theoretical notion of an unconscious mental state is essentially identical

to that of a conscious mental state, except that unconscious state is not experiential. Unconscious states do not possess phenomenological qualities associated with conscious states, but our naïve model implies that they maintain their shape and have properties similar to those of conscious states, even when they are not conscious.. Searle illustrates this idea using the analogy of fish deep underwater or objects stored in a dark attic; we think do not think they lose the properties that make them the objects they are just because we cannot perceive them at a given moment. They continue their existence, just in the same way as they would if we could perceive them. The main thought behind the naïve model is that consciousness of representations is to be understood as constituting a perception-like relation, where the only difference between conscious and unconscious representations is that the unconscious ones go unseen. According to Searle (1992), just as certain parts of this naïve conceptualization are wrong, some parts capture the reality accurately. Simply put, if unconscious states are genuinely mental, they must share at least some properties (those that make a conscious state a mental state) with the conscious states. According to Searle, there are two such necessary properties. First, genuine mental states must exhibit intrinsic intentionality, and second, genuine mental states must represent the content they represent under determinate aspectual shapes, which matter to the agent. Therefore, for Searle, given that the relationship between consciousness and intrinsic intentionality is not separable, unconscious mental states are those states which are in principle accessible to consciousness. This is, in a nutshell, the definition of his “connection principle” according to which unconscious mental states are those states which are in principle accessible to consciousness. Borrowing Berger and Nanay’s (2016) terminology, let’s call these states transformational states as opposed to non-transformational states. Searle rejects that the latter category of unconscious mentation exists as mental phenomena and provides a seven-step argumentation to lay out his connection principle and the ontology of unconscious mental states according to his theory;

“1. There is a distinction between intrinsic intentionality and as-if intentionality; only intrinsic intentionality is genuine.

2. Unconscious mental states have intrinsic intentionality.

3. Intrinsically intentional states, whether conscious or unconscious, always have aspectual shape.

4. The aspectual feature cannot be exhaustively or completely characterized solely in terms of third-person, behavioral, or even neurophysiological predicates.

5. But the ontology of unconscious mental states, at the time they are unconscious, consists entirely in the existence of purely neurophysiological phenomena.

6. The notion of an unconscious intentional state is the notion of a state that is a possible conscious thought or experience.

7. The ontology of the unconscious consists in the objective features of the brain capable of causing subjective conscious thoughts” (Searle, 1992, pp. 156–160.)

Apart from these seven premises, of which the first five can be treated as the axioms, the sixth as a statement of the connection principle and the seventh as the conclusion, there are further fundamental notions that must be explained to grasp the whole picture Searle (1991, 1992) draws. Searle is a biological naturalist (in his words) and holds that consciousness emerges from the neurophysiological processes of brains. Consequently, he views the ontology of unconscious mental states to be fundamentally rooted in neurophysiological states of the brain. However, in explaining conscious mental states, it can be stated that Searle's theory is an emergentist theory, given that while he argues there exists a causal relationship between consciousness and its constitutive neural basis, he thinks the higher-level properties such as consciousness cannot be explained by the lower-level properties such as neural firings. According to Searle, the reason for the irreducibility stems from the aspectual shapes, which cannot be adequately captured within the confines of third-personal objective vocabulary nor be explained reductively. Accordingly, he suggests that unconscious mental phenomena are intentional phenomena which must retain determinate aspectual shapes. Thus, it follows that unconscious phenomena which can be labelled "mental" are those phenomena which are in principle accessible to consciousness given that states that have determinate aspectual shapes can be made conscious. However, since states cannot retain their aspectual shapes as unconscious states, the natural conclusion for Searle is that unconscious phenomena which constitute *mental* phenomena do so only in a dispositional sense of the term mental¹. His perspective on the matter is succinctly captured by the below-given quote:

"The overall picture that emerges is this. There is nothing going on in my brain but neurophysiological processes, some conscious, some unconscious. Of the unconscious neurophysiological processes, some are mental, and some are not. The difference between them is not in consciousness because, by hypothesis, neither is

¹ It's important to clarify what Searle means by the notion "principally accessible to consciousness". Searle does not argue that deeply repressed mental states or those states that cannot reach consciousness due to a neuropathology cease to be mental. His concept of "principally conscious" asserts that it is only necessary that a state must possess a determinate aspectual shape, hence, intrinsic intentionality. Therefore, the accessibility condition only underscores that the state in question must have all the properties to be accessible and does not really comprehend the availability of mechanisms or brain areas that are implicated in the generation of access. So, counter-arguments utilizing cases of unconscious mental states which were rendered so by certain pathological conditions do not threaten his theory (i.e. hemispheric neglect, where the damage is on the areas responsible for accessing a mental state, and not on the sensory states themselves). It is not the relational property of accessibility that underlines a state's mental nature, but whether the given state realizes the properties of accessibility intrinsically. So, what underlines the connection principle in this sense is that a state must be "in principle" accessible to consciousness, and this property of being accessible is intrinsic to the state itself, and not defined in relational terms.

conscious; the difference is that the mental processes are candidates for consciousness because they are capable of causing conscious states. But that's all. All my mental life is lodged in the brain. But what in my brain is my 'mental life'? Just two things: conscious states and those neurophysiological states and processes that—given the right circumstances—are capable of generating conscious states. Let's call those states that are in principle accessible to consciousness 'shallow unconscious,' and those inaccessible even in principle 'deep unconscious.' The main conclusion of this chapter so far is that there are no deep unconscious intentional states.” (Searle, 1992, pp. 161–162)

So, there is a sense, following these definitions, that even dispositionally conscious states (as defined by the connection principle) are not ontologically mental *qua* unconscious states. The fifth premise puts forth that “...*the ontology of unconscious mental states, at the time they are unconscious, consists entirely in the existence of purely neurophysiological phenomena.*” (Searle, 1992, p. 160). Therefore, according to Searle, all that unconscious mentality consists of is the causal powers of a state to bring about conscious states. Arguably, the adequate predicate for such states is "preconscious" rather than the "shallow unconscious"; therefore, for Searle, only those unconscious phenomena that have the property of being preconscious can exist on the mental plane. The term "unconscious," when used to refer to phenomena that are not preconscious in such a dispositional sense, refers only to some non-mental, objective neurophysiological processes. That being said, the question remains: Aren't preconscious states phenomenally speaking unconscious? In effect, Searle rejects that the psychoanalytic unconscious states have a mental ontology while maintaining that preconscious states (which Freud (1915) suggests are descriptively unconscious but are close in their shape and properties to conscious states) are mental. Preconscious states, in this sense, refer to a class of phenomenally unconscious states, which are close to the "surface", so to speak, and can be made conscious if consciousness-conferring mechanisms are directed at them. They exist as full-fledged states that have all the properties of conscious states, except the property of consciousness. Hence, the Freudian preconscious corresponds to Searle's definition of shallow unconscious since these states are thought to retain their aspectual shapes even though they are not occurrently conscious.

Searle's exact notion of the aspectual shape and his realism about intentionality also must be made explicit to grasp his position better. Searle (1992) distinguishes between as-if forms of intentionality and what he calls genuine or intrinsic intentionality. The as-if form refers to teleological or attributed intentionality, where, for instance, an object such as a rolling marble is defined as if its motion constitutes the genuine behaviour of an agent, and the direction of the rolling marble is explained by "the marble's wish to go that way". Actual or intrinsic intentionality, according to Searle, exists in cases where the entity in question has a determinate aspectual shape

independent of any possible attribution. How does Searle define aspectual shapes then?

“Every intentional state has what I call an 'aspectual shape'. This just means that it presents its conditions of satisfaction under some aspects and not others. Thus, for example, the desire for water is a different desire from the desire for H₂O, even though water and H₂O are identical. If I represent what I desire under the aspect 'water', that is a different aspectual shape from representing the same substance under the aspect 'H₂O'. What is true of this example is true generally. All intentional states represent their conditions of satisfaction under some aspects and not others; and this has the consequence that every intentional state, conscious or unconscious, has an aspectual shape.” (Searle, 1995, p. 548)

An aspectual shape refers to the manner in which an intentional state is experienced and, in that sense, constitutes the subjective character of experiences. Searle's definition of aspectual shape and its relation to intentionality resembles Frege's definition of sense and its relation to reference. In fact, Searle (1992, p. 158) provides the exact same example of the difference between *the morning star* and *the evening star* when elaborating on what an aspectual shape is. However, Searle also notes that these aspectual shapes are imbued with qualitative features of experience. Here, the most crucial formulation regarding intrinsic intentionality for our discussion is that the relationship between an aspectual shape and a neurophysiological state is such that a neurophysiological state is mental if and only if it constitutes the subvenient basis of a state which has a determinate aspectual shape. As Searle asserts, aspectual shapes are not reducible to physical processes; therefore, conscious mental states admit to a subjective ontology rather than a mere neurophysiological ontology. He offers various arguments for the irreducibility of aspectual shapes. The most obvious reason for the irreducibility follows from the definition of aspectual shapes, which is inherently intertwined with the notion of qualia. It is not unreasonable to suggest that for Searle, aspectual shapes are conceptually supervenient on qualia; however, it's also important to note that Searle does not equate aspectual shapes with qualia. When the above definition is taken into account, it follows from the quote given below that qualia and perspectivity are only partly constitutive of the aspectual shapes:

“Aspectual shape is most obvious in the case of conscious perceptions: think of seeing a car, for example. When you see a car, it is not simply a matter of an object being registered by your perceptual apparatus; rather, you actually have a conscious experience of the object from a certain point of view and with certain features. You see the car as having a certain shape, as having a certain color, etc.” (Searle, 1992, p. 157).

The second argument Searle provides for the nonreducible nature of the aspectual shapes is that they cannot be discerned from behaviour or neurophysiology alone, even if we had complete neuroscience (Searle, 1992). His artillery in defending this explanatory claim for irreducibility mainly consists of Quine's (1960) postulations for indeterminacy of translation. Searle (1992) discusses the relevance of the indeterminacy of translation in his reply to an objection to his connection principle, which he notes is due to Ned Block. The objection states that Searle's connection principle renders the existence of an intentional zombie an impossibility. Searle's response is concurring and endorsing that zombies cannot possibly exhibit intrinsic, thus genuine intentionality. He argues that there is no matter of fact about which determinate aspectual shapes a zombie's seemingly intentional states would represent their content under. He writes that if a zombie is seeking water, and in fact, could even utter that it is seeking water and not H₂O, Quine's indeterminacy of translation would still make it impossible for us to discern or decide on the true nature of the zombie's alleged intentionality.

While I believe that the indeterminacy of translation is deeply connected to the challenge of reducing the mental to the physical and to the problem of other minds, I do not see how it relates to the denial of zombies' potential possession of intrinsic intentional states at all, and I think this supporting argument must be refuted before moving on to the deeper discussion. Essentially, Searle's position is that zombies could not have aspectual shapes and, therefore, their brain states could not generate intrinsic intentionality. This, however, is not an argument but a stance regarding the nature of zombies. Discussing Quinean indeterminacy of translation in this context seems misleading. Searle, in his differentiation between as-if intentionality and intrinsic intentionality, acknowledges that the former is teleological and attributed. However, the ability to attribute as-if intentional states to a being with genuine intentionality does not inherently affect the ontology of this being's actual intrinsic mental states. Similar to the case of the zombie, it is difficult to ascertain under what aspectual shape a human being seeking water represents their mental state, as we lack epistemic access to their intentional states. So, it is also challenging to discern under which determinate aspectual shapes conscious beings are seeking water. However, this does not necessarily imply that the person lacks a determinate aspectual shape under which water is represented to them. The Quinean notion of indeterminacy of translation is applicable to beings with intrinsic intentionality and primarily relates to the problem of epistemic access regarding others' minds, rather than a problem of their ontological existence. Searle's definition of intentionality "as intrinsic" stems from his belief that brains, as biological organs, are capable of generating genuine intentionality and consciousness through their causal powers alone. Therefore, his objection utilizing the principle of indeterminacy of translation, which relates to uncertainty about which attributed intentional state corresponds to the alleged intentional state of the zombie fails. The indeterminacy of translation highlights an epistemic problem, not necessarily an ontological one. The confusion between the two is unexpected of Searle. Obviously, he does not wish to grant that

the zombie brain would be capable of realizing intrinsic intentionality because his definition of intentionality hinges on the definition of consciousness. So, in essence, Searle provides no argumentation for this conviction, and his arguments for the rejection of the objection have nothing to do with Quine². Therefore, I think Searle's defense can be rejected. Anyhow, even if it turns out that zombies truly possess unconscious intentional states, it remains uncertain whether this would be enough to disprove Searle's ideas about the unconscious mind.

The contradiction

There have been numerous objections raised against Searle's dispositionalist account of the unconscious mental, particularly regarding his attribution of merely objective and not subjective ontology to neural states capable of generating certain unconscious phenomena (Dunlop, 2000; Fodor & Lepore, 1994; Gulick, 1995; Meijers, 2000; Smith, 1999, pp. 137–154). I discuss some parts of these responses below as they relate to my objections. What is interesting about these objections is that they seem to be targeted at different interpretations of Searle's position. Differences in interpretation stem from the contradictory premises Searle posits. Searle's second and third premises establish that unconscious mental states ought to display genuine intentionality and have aspectual shapes. On the other hand, his fifth and seventh premises deny mental ontology and subjectivity to unconscious states and institute that the ontology of unconscious mental states consists only of third-personal, neurophysiological facts and that unconscious states are mental only in a

² Note that Van Gulick also raises a similar objection to Searle and suggests that Quine's principle of indeterminacy of translation has little to do with Searle's position on the intentional zombies. However, Van Gulick wrongly asserts that the reason why the Quinean argument does not work in this case is that he thinks a functionalist analysis can provide one with enough knowledge to ascertain under which aspects a person represents a mental state. Since assuming functionalism means that organisms' causal organization and relevant behaviour are directly linked with the functional organization they have, Van Gulick thinks there will be measurable differences in the organism (be it behaviour or some other measure) when they represent content under different aspectual shapes. Even if one grants functionalism to be true, it still need not be the case that 1) two different aspectual shapes must lead to measurable differences (that would depend on the specifics of the functional organization) and 2) two identical states in terms of their functional roles, must necessarily represent their content with the same aspectual shape, given it is not a tenet of functionalism that functional states must have a determinate aspectual shape. Also, note that Searle's criterion that aspectual shapes must matter to the agent does not amount to there being functional differences associated with the aspectual shapes necessarily. It is entirely possible for Searle that two things can be represented under different aspects without measurable functional differences. The only functionalist objection here can be that since Searle associates mental states with brain states, there should be differences in the brain states of the organism, which again only holds if Searle was endorsing reductionism and a type identity thesis between mental states and brain states instead of emergentism.

dispositional sense. When his fourth premise, namely the premise which argues that aspectual shapes cannot be reduced to third-personal, neurophysiological ontology, is taken with the fifth, sixth and seventh premises, this gives rise to the interpretation that Searle effectively denies that unconscious states exist as mental states. On the other hand, if the fourth premise is taken with the second and the third, it looks as if Searle is allowing unconscious states to exist as mental states. Searle thinks the connection principle, which is stated in his sixth premise, solves this contradiction and writes:

“The notion of an unconscious intentional state is the notion of a state which is a possible conscious thought or experience. There are plenty of unconscious phenomena, but to the extent that they are genuinely mental they must in some sense preserve their aspectual shape even when unconscious, but the only sense that we can give to the notion that they preserve their aspectual shape when unconscious is that they are possible contents of consciousness.” (Searle, 1991, p. 57)

This, however, does not solve the contradiction given that the fifth premise reads, *“But the ontology of unconscious mental states, at the time they are unconscious, consists entirely in the existence of purely neurophysiological phenomena.”* If all there is to unconscious states is a purely neurophysiological ontology when these states are unconscious, it cannot be the case that they retain their aspectual shapes when unconscious. If, on the other hand, unconscious states can retain their aspectual shapes when they are unconscious, then it seems more is needed to explain their ontology than just third-personal neurophysiological terminology since the fourth premise suggests that the nature of the aspectual shapes cannot be reductively explained by neurophysiological terminology due to the fact that states with aspectual shapes admit to a subjective ontology.

Searle seems to maintain that beliefs, when they present themselves as conscious thoughts, retain their aspectual shapes and that dispositional states can be counterfactually thought of as states which would instantiate determinate aspectual shapes if they were conscious. His dispositional theory of unconscious states essentially rests on this notion because when something is unconscious and does not retain its aspectual shape, Searle would say all that exists are some neurophysiological processes. The fact that dispositional states can instantiate certain aspectual shapes is established by his third premise: *“Intrinsic intentional states, whether conscious or unconscious, always have aspectual shapes”* (Searle, 1992, p. 157). Therefore, it is of utmost importance that a neurophysiological state has some determinate aspectual shape linked to it if we are to suggest that this neurophysiological state constitutes a genuine mental state. This is what Searle’s dispositionalism entails. The ontology of the unconscious mind is mental only in the sense that it has dormant causal powers to give rise to consciousness. However, Searle writes at the end of his article that:

“What is left of the unconscious? I said earlier that our naive pretheoretical notion of the unconscious was like the notions of fish in the sea or furniture in the dark attic of the mind. They keep their shapes even when unconscious. But now we can see that these pictures are inadequate in principle because they are based on the idea of a constant mental reality that appears and then disappears. But the submerged belief, unlike the submerged fish, can't keep its conscious shape when unconscious; for the only occurrent reality of that shape is the shape of conscious thoughts. The naive picture of unconscious states confuses the causal capacity to cause a conscious intentional state with a conscious state itself, that is, it confuses the latency with its manifestation.” (Searle, 1992, p. 173)

Here, it seems Searle states that unconscious mental states are not mental at all when unconscious because they cannot retain their aspectual shapes; therefore, unconscious mental states, when unconscious, cannot be deemed mental. Their ontology consists of neurophysiological phenomena in the form of causal powers. Confusing latency with manifestation in this sense corresponds to confusing states which are dispositionally conscious (thus unconscious) with occurrent, therefore conscious mental states. Thus, the second and third premises are effectively rejected here. It begs the question, then, how is Searle's belief that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris genuinely mental when it is unconscious? What is the difference between such beliefs and the beliefs that are generated on the spot? If the claim is that the ontology of unconscious mental states is to be understood as *a given state's causal capacity to give rise to a conscious mental state*, then it seems both beliefs are generated on the spot. Formed beliefs also have this causal capacity, in which case, the distinction is undermined. It is also unwarranted to call unconscious states mental in this sense since they are only dispositionally mental. As the following paragraph shows, however, Searle argues that out of the four potential notions of unconscious mentation he designates, two are mental, at least in the sense that they are potentially conscious:

“Second, there are Freudian cases of shallow unconscious desires, beliefs, etc. It is best to think of these as cases of repressed consciousness, because they are always bubbling to the surface, though often in a disguised form. In its logical behavior the Freudian notion of the unconscious is quite unlike the cognitive science notion in the crucial respect that Freudian unconscious mental states are potentially conscious. Third, there are the (relatively) unproblematic cases of shallow unconscious mental phenomena that just do not happen to form the content of my consciousness at any given point in time. Thus, most of my beliefs, desires, worries, and memories are not present to my consciousness at any given moment, such as the present one.” (Searle, 1992, p. 173)

Therefore, the main criticism against Searle's position is that it rests on contradictory premises. As said, the second and third premises assert that

unconscious states have intrinsic intentionality and retain their aspectual shapes, which contradict the fifth and the seventh premises. It is not clear how the contradiction is solved by the connection principle (the sixth premise), given that the connection principle does not explain how it would be possible for unconscious mental states to retain their aspectual shapes as there is a clear difference between a conscious state and a dispositionally conscious state. When Searle asserts that Freudian cases of repressed unconscious states and shallow unconscious states are mental, he only means that these states are as if -mental when they are unconscious and mental when they are conscious, given that they form mere dispositions to give rise to conscious mental states.

Van Gulick also thinks the main problem with Searle's account is with the apparent contradiction, but he also criticizes the idea that aspectual shapes are determinate. For Van Gulick, the trouble is that Searle (1992) asserts both that "*Intrinsic intentional states, whether conscious or unconscious, always have aspectual shape.*" and that "*The aspectual feature cannot be exhaustively or completely characterized solely in terms of third-person, behavioral or even neurophysiological predicates*". According to Van Gulick (1995), the problem arises from the fact that intentional states need not, and in certain cases, cannot represent their content under rigid and specific aspectual shapes. Van Gulick illustrates this by comparing his very particular desire for a very specific dish, alongside a specific brand of wine that is produced in a specific year, with a cat's desire for a fish, suggesting that the latter wish may not be represented under a rigidly determinate aspectual shape. The idea is that intentional states can represent their contents with less determinacy than Searle asserts (i.e. I can desire a glass of merlot from Juhasz winery, produce 2018, I can desire some red wine, and then again, I can desire some beverage). The example is particularly interesting because a cat does not necessarily have the mental capacity to differentiate among fish species, at least in the manner that human beings can. Therefore, according to Van Gulick, the initial assertion that postulates mental states, whether conscious or unconscious, always have determinate aspectual shapes fails to hold because intentional states can be represented without determinate aspectual shapes. However, if it is conceded that aspectual shapes need not be rigid, then the second assertion, which states that aspectual shapes cannot be characterized by third-personal, behavioural or neurophysiological predicates fails because it appears that aspectual shapes, in this loose sense, can be explained by third-personal, functionalist terms according to Van Gulick (1995).

While I think that this objection captures something important about the nature of intentionality, I think it ultimately fails because it rests on a misunderstanding about what exactly a determinate aspectual shape is. Van Gulick seems to think the determinacy of aspectual shapes pertains to the determinacy of mental content. However, for Searle (1992), it is not that consciousness can be explained by intentionality, but the opposite; intentionality itself is a feature of consciousness. This suggests that aspectual shapes relate deeply to qualitative features of

experience, not just to their contents. It is, therefore, misplaced to assert that in a given particular mental episode, that mental episode does not have a determinate aspectual shape (represent their content under some aspects and not others) regardless of how non-specific or fuzzy the content may be. As mentioned, Van Gulick claims that given that mental content can be vague, aspectual shapes need not be determinate. Determinacy, on the other hand, relates to the aspectual shapes under which mental contents are revealed. Consider the example of desire: I can generically desire a meal (or simply to eat when I am hungry), or I can desire a pizza with specific toppings. In the first case, it is not entirely clear what I wish for, and there are many candidate contents. In the second case, there is a very specific content my desire is directed at. However, each mental episode here has its own determinate aspectual shape. Desiring something vague (i.e. the object of desire is vague) has its own phenomenology attached to it, and a mental state in which I desire vaguely to eat represents the contents it represents (though they may be non-specific) under very determinate aspectual shapes. Here, the problem lies in Van Gulick's approach, which, much like Fodor and Lepore's (1994), interprets Searle's premises and idea of aspectual shapes through a functionalist lens and then equates the objects or the contents of mental states with their aspectual shapes. According to Searle, however, mental content only partly determines the aspectual shape; qualitative features of the experience also play a role. In fact, I can think of a non-specific black cat and represent it visually in two distinct episodes quite distinctly (hence represent more or less the same content under different aspectual shapes). In this sense, representing something vague is different from vaguely representing something. The determinacy of aspectual shapes could be undermined if the latter was the case, not the former. It must be mentioned, however, that if aspectual shapes could be reduced to the content of the mental states, then Van Gulick's objection holds. Because then it becomes possible to define aspectual shapes in terms of their functional roles, even if the subjectivity of the mental state cannot be reductively explained. Determinacy of aspectual shapes, in this sense, can be loose, meaning mental states need not feature determinate aspectual shapes if their contents can be indeterminate. If that is the case, then one can claim unconscious states do not cease to be mental when they do not have determinate aspectual shapes. Nonetheless, the fact that Van Gulick's criticism of the determinacy of aspectual shapes misses its target does not solve the contradiction between Searle's premises.

If the contradiction cannot be solved, then perhaps it is possible to provide two different interpretations of Searle's theory that have internal consistency, one where the unconscious states retain their aspectual shapes, and one where they do not. So, according to the first interpretation, aspectual shapes are retained even when states are unconscious in a dispositional, counter-factual sense, in which case the neural configuration subserving the unconscious state can be deemed mental if it could potentially instantiate a conscious thought with a determinate aspectual shape. According to the second, unconscious mental states are really as-if mental when unconscious, and aspectual shapes are not retained when the state is unconscious

(even if the state could instantiate determinate aspectual shapes if it were conscious). I think the latter interpretation is the correct interpretation of Searle because he stresses in all his related writings that the ontology of the unconscious mind is the ontology of third-personal neurophysiology (Searle, 1991, 1992, 1994). He also suggests that the problem with our understanding of the unconscious mental stems from confusing latency with manifestation, which, it seems, could only mean that unconscious mental states, when latent, do not have aspectual shapes; therefore, they are not mental at all *qua* unconscious states. The unconscious phenomena, according to this interpretation, are not occurrent phenomena, and the unconscious mind is nothing but a storage of causal capacities. Interestingly, various criticisms Searle's theory had drawn are directed at different interpretations, namely Fodor and Lepore (1994) direct their criticism at the first interpretation, whereas Dunlop's (2000) and Meijer's (2000) arguments seem to target the latter reading. Unfortunately for Searle, I think both accounts face fatal criticisms.

Interpretation #1: Mental states retain their determinate aspectual shapes when they are unconscious

Fodor and Lepore (1994) quote Searle as saying, "*Intentional states, conscious or unconscious, have aspectual shapes...*" (Searle, 1992, p. 161) and note that if Searle held that unconscious states were not genuinely intentional, then it would not be possible to explain why I put sugar in my morning coffee if I did not hold the belief that sugar will sweeten the taste of my coffee in an occurrent manner (meaning consciously), simply because unconscious beliefs, in this case, could not constitute intentional causes. Therefore, it is evident that Fodor and Lepore (1994) reject this reading and interpret Searle as stating that some unconscious mental states display genuine intentionality even when unconscious and retain their aspectual shapes. Contrary to Fodor and Lepore (1994), I do not believe this interpretation is correct, as Searle rejects the idea that the ontology of unconscious states is subjective when they are unconscious. However, interestingly, their paper and objections are the only ones Searle responded to (see; Searle, 1994); therefore, this interpretation must be dealt with. According to this interpretation, the second and the third premises survive the contradiction; thus, unconscious states retain their aspectual shapes when unconscious and display intrinsic intentionality, just as conscious mental states.

To propose that those unconscious neurophysiological states which possess causal powers to induce conscious states are also mental when unconscious, one must establish some form of type or token identity relationship between a conscious and an unconscious state's intentional content, which can be expressed counterfactually (i.e. if the state S were conscious, it would represent X content consciously). My contention is that the same type of beliefs can have different aspectual shapes in different mental episodes, thus I think that beliefs need not have determinate aspectual shapes as long as their token identity can be established. Indeed, the only viable approach to sustain the assertion that mental states exist as dispositional states

while retaining their aspectual shapes is by establishing a counterfactual dependence wherein an unconscious belief is considered mental if and only if the corresponding brain state would consciously generate token identical aspectual shapes when the individual is in a given brain state.

Fodor and Lepore (1994), in their critique of Searle's connection principle, attempt to articulate and substantiate Searle's claim of dispositionality through a similar counterfactual dependence relationship. They suggested that certain brain states actualize token mental events, wherein the identity of mental content is established through the identity of mental kinds. Mental kinds refer to beliefs or mental representations, where they are type identical to themselves if they retain the same content, and they are token identical in differing conscious episodes. For instance, beliefs remain beliefs and not desires, and all variations of beliefs belong to the same mental kind. The same principle applies to object representations. My mental image of the Eiffel Tower is token identical to itself in different mental episodes because it represents the same kind of content. Similarly, my belief that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris is token identical to itself in varying episodes where I am conscious and unconscious of that belief.

Fodor and Lepore (1994), in their critique, demonstrate that it is conceivable for a token identical state, which manifests itself in two episodes (one conscious and one unconscious), to possess the same mental content, yet to differ in their causal powers when unconscious and conscious. Hence, these token identical states fail to be identical in any meaningful sense because, according to Fodor and Lepore, if the given states differ in their causal powers (not in terms of instantiating the same token identical state, but in terms of affecting other mental states), this would imply their ontology to be distinct. Accordingly, my unconscious belief that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris differs significantly from my conscious belief of the same mental kind because they interact differently with the functional organization of my mind when conscious and when unconscious. Searle (1994) rebuts this objection on the grounds that the argument endorses a functionalist understanding of causation, where mental states are defined in terms of their functional causal powers rather than the causal powers of the brain to instantiate conscious mental states. Searle's objection is cogent, as Fodor and Lepore's objection, much like Van Gulick's (1995), hinges on the notion that what renders a mental state identical to itself is its functional relationship to other mental states, which Searle's theory is incompatible with, but is also immune to, given that it is not a theory that is supposed to be compatible with functionalism.

There are other reasons why this objection fails. Simply, if one establishes the identity relationship based on the state's functional role, then the identity relationship cannot be established between two conscious states that have the same mental content either since functional roles a mental state can play depend on the other concurrent mental states. My conscious belief that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris can play different functional roles depending on the context of the situation and my aims in utilizing this belief. If one attempts to form the identity relationship of this belief

in conscious episodes according to the potential, or dispositional functional or causal roles, then there is the problem that such state can play almost an infinite amount of such roles. It is not clear, for instance, that my general desire for food can be distinguished from my desire for a very specific type of food in terms of the state's functional role in different scenarios. I can be in a state where I desire strawberries, and I can be in a state where I desire fruits non-discriminately. In each case, if given strawberries, I will be disposed to eat them. Likewise, my belief that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris could discourage me from going to Paris in a given context, as well as encourage me to go to Paris in another. If the functional roles are identified in terms of their dispositional causal powers, it is a problem how to distinguish them. If they are identified with occurrent states, then it is not possible to establish the token identity of the state depending on the possible functional/causal roles a state can play.

That being said, I believe that Fodor and Lepore's (1994) objection indirectly highlights an important problem with Searle's theory. They express the main issue with the identity relationship as if it pertains to the causal structure in functionalist terms. In other words, Fodor and Lepore presume that the identity relationship between unconscious and conscious mental states would hold otherwise (i.e. if the functional roles were identical). The issue is that when I am contemplating my belief that *leaves begin to fall off the trees in autumn*, it indeed presents itself to me under a certain aspectual shape. Typically, I enjoy walking in the park and the sound leaves make with each step. However, if I have had some wine and there is gloomy music playing in the background, reminding me that the summer is ending and the autumn is approaching, the aspectual shape of my belief alters significantly. I do not think this point requires much argumentation to be granted. It is not clear how aspectual shapes would be strictly determinate of the belief states they are associated with, given that conscious states are particular occurrences. My belief that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris does not have the exact same aspectual shape in its conscious instantiations between T_1 and T_2 given that the aspectual shape clause not only pertains to intentional content but also the perspectival and phenomenal qualities associated with that state, which are subject to alterations depending on further concurrent thoughts. Searle does not offer an explanation regarding what anchors the identity relationship between determinate aspectual shapes to hold in different conscious episodes.

As mentioned, in order to establish that my belief is the same across different episodes, we must treat belief states as mental kinds, as Fodor and Lepore (1994) suggest. Therefore, we might say the identity of beliefs lies in their *content* and not in their potential *functional* role; my belief that *leaves fall in autumn* is the same belief in different episodes because it is type identical to itself in different episodes. However, in each episode, it is realized by a token identical aspectual shape. One might propose that belief states do not form kinds and that each particular aspectual shape under which I represent the same belief content constitutes a different belief. Yet, this presents a significant problem in terms of the continuity of our diachronic identity. *Bats are mammals* is a belief that I have held since childhood, yet because

I learned more about bats and mammals in general, and my cognitive and conceptual capabilities developed, I do not represent this belief now under the same aspects I did as a child.

Searle, on the other hand, locates the identity relationship to the determinacy of the aspectual shapes. An unconscious state is dispositionally mental if and only if it has a determinate aspectual shape associated with it, and that determinate aspectual shape is defined by the subjective properties the mental state would display if it were a conscious state in a counterfactual sense. However, conscious beliefs, in this sense, cannot remain constant, given that consciousness is an occurrence, and that is why Fodor and Lepore quite correctly think that the belief states must be type identical to themselves when conscious and unconscious (because they cannot be token identical). Therefore, one criticism of Searle's theory is that it is not clear how he can establish the identity of a mental state across time if he thinks the link that establishes the identity relationship between unconscious and conscious mental states is the identity of the determinate aspectual shape across time. Qualitative aspects are necessarily variable between conscious episodes because 1) consciousness is occurrent, and each occurrence is particular to itself, and 2) how a mental state is represented in consciousness depends on the wholistic stream of consciousness (antecedent and precedent mental states).

So, if Searle argues that what realizes the identity of a mental state diachronically or in different states of consciousness/unconsciousness is only the Fregean sense, then Van Gulick's criticism regarding the determinacy of aspectual shapes holds. If Searle argues that the determinacy of aspectual shapes relates also to the subjectivity of conscious episodes, then it is not clear how he can establish the identity of mental states across time. If the determinacy of aspectual shapes relates to the qualitative features of mental states, it is not clear how unconscious mental states can retain their determinate aspectual shapes as dispositional, non-occurrent states. As mentioned, this is because it depends on further mental content that features in the conscious stream under which aspectual shapes the dispositional neural states would represent their mental content. The subjective/phenomenal character of a mental state depends ontologically on its instantiation, which is an occurrence, and therefore, the same content can have distinct phenomenal qualities associated with it at T_1 and T_2 . So, if unconscious mental states are defined by their dispositional causal powers to give rise to aspectual shapes, then it is not clear how a dispositional neural state can be associated with a determinate aspectual shape given that the same neural state, depending on the concurrent neurophysiology, can represent the same content under different aspectual shapes.

Interpretation #2: Unconscious states cannot retain their aspectual shapes when unconscious

On the opposing side, Dunlop (2000) and Meijer (2000) have both argued that because Searle's theory ultimately suggests that states cannot retain their aspectual

shapes when unconscious, the unconscious mind depicted by Searle cannot contribute to our psychological explanations. I think this is the correct interpretation of Searle, according to which the fourth, fifth and seventh premises prevail over the second and third premises. Thus, all there is to the unconscious mind is some third-personal, neurophysiological facts. The main flaw of this interpretation is that it causes gaps in our psychological explanations. For instance, when I am voting, I am not consciously considering my belief that the election of a certain candidate will be beneficial for the future of Turkey; instead, I am focused on practical tasks like marking the correct box on the ballot paper while avoiding getting ink on my hands. However, if my belief about the candidate's worthiness is not considered mental when I am unconscious of it, we encounter difficulties in explaining my voting behaviour using psychological terms. If I enter the voting booth and mark a paper due to my neurophysiological predispositions, this explanation neither coheres with our conscious psychological reality nor with the science of psychology. According to Searle, unconscious processes can only be considered intentional in a teleological sense if they do not retain their aspectual shapes, thus rendering them as-if mental. Their ontology remains that of neurophysiological processes; according to Searle, there is no mental activity involved. So, the problem is that assuming beliefs or other mental phenomena cannot retain their mentality when unconscious leads to discontinuities in our explanations.

In fact, most of our behaviour is influenced by beliefs, thoughts, desires, or other mental states that operate unconsciously. This objection can be extended to all automatic actions. When I walk somewhere, for instance, I am not consciously deliberating about the direction and the initial mental state that has the content that gives purpose to my actions constantly. However, if one were to deny that this state is mental in nature when it becomes an unconscious state, it raises the question of how to account for the agency and intentionality of my behaviour. Simply accounting for it with third-personal, neurophysiological terminology would seem inadequate, as it would imply a disconnection from my conscious, intentional states as a sentient being. Arguably, however, the majority of our behaviours as agents either rely on thoughts that were once conscious or unconscious beliefs of a generic kind, which are then carried out by unconscious automatic processes. I concur with Meijers (2000) and Dunlop (2000) that such unconscious beliefs or states cannot be readily dismissed as non-mental without introducing a discontinuity into our explanations. Freud (1915), when addressing the issue of the existence of unconscious mental processes as justified and theoretically necessary in the first section of his metapsychological manuscript titled "The Unconscious", notes that there are gaps in our consciousness as exemplified by parapraxes, dreams and in general our everyday psychology, which must be accounted for via psychological explanations. The mental nature of the unconscious mind, in this sense, is important not only for acts but also for explaining the chain of conscious thoughts. Consciousness itself, according to Freud, yields evidence for the existence of further unconscious mental states, given that, in certain cases, there seems to be no correlation between

precedented and antecedent mental states in our everyday psychology. Ideas that are worked on unconsciously can suddenly pop into our consciousness, seemingly out of nowhere. This problem cannot simply be solved by attributing a third-personal ontology to unconscious states because doing so paves the way for the continuity problem explained above. If unconscious states do not exist on the mental plane, we need to formulate a causal interaction between conscious (and ontologically mental) states and unconscious (and ontologically physical) states, which is, in essence, mental-on-physical interactionism. This, on the other hand, would conflict with Searle's general stance on the ontology of consciousness because interactionism is neither compatible with emergentism nor with biological naturalism. It is redundant to argue that instantiations of some neural states give rise to the instantiation of conscious states, which are not reducible to their neural bases, while also holding that some other neural states causally interact with these non-reducible mental properties without giving rise to emergent properties themselves.

One could, of course, try to suggest that unconscious states interact with conscious states only through their neural bases. Hence, there is only physical-on-physical interaction. However, then, the gaps in our conscious thoughts cannot be explained by mentalistic vocabulary at all. When I am voting, there really are no mental reasons for my behaviour but some physical reasons that lead me to do so, which affected the emergent mental properties by affecting their neural bases. Also, note that this view conflicts with emergentism; if these unconscious states do not have emergent properties themselves but still affect the emergent properties, it is not clear why they are "different states" themselves and not constitutive parts of the physical phenomena that give rise to the emergent properties. This is because the emergent properties are determined by all the physical interactions that make such emergent properties possible. Therefore, one cannot claim that unconscious states affect the emergent properties by affecting their neural bases: Emergent properties are supervened by the entire neural bases and the physical interactions that give rise to them, therefore it does not make to claim that a neural state is in fact a further state, that does not give rise to emergent properties but affects them through interacting with their causal bases, because if a neural state affects the contents of the emergent mental state, it is conceptualized as a part of the emergent states neural bases itself. One cannot be an emergentist but also argue that neural bases of these emergent properties can be separately evaluated from other neural states which causally affect these emergent properties given that emergent properties cannot be reduced to their neural bases; hence, it is impossible to find out which neural states give rise to certain conscious properties and which states do not if these neural states are causally linked to each other. If one could do that, that would disprove emergentism. Therefore, the only way for the emergentist to argue both that there exist unconscious states which only have physical properties and that these states causally affect the emergent properties of the conscious states, without themselves constituting the supervenient bases of these emergent properties, is through assuming physical-on-mental interactionism. Hence, the main problem with this

reading is that it either leads to physical-on-mental interactionism to explain not only human behaviour but also our chain of thoughts that occur consciously or that it causes deep problems regarding the continuity of our scientific and lay explanations regarding our intentional act as mental phenomena.

Perhaps one way to redeem the theory is to interpret Searle as if he is allowing for occurrent unconscious mental states to exist. Is such a reading even possible? Searle (1992) defines unconscious states as those which are dispositionally conscious and explains the difference in terms of manifestation and latency. Accordingly, it is implied that he thinks unconscious states are dispositional states. However, it is possible to argue that the clause “*dispositions to give rise to certain conscious aspectual shapes*” need not mean that the state itself exists in an ontologically dispositional manner. Unconscious occurrent states can be defined as using the same counter-factual stratagem as “*states which, if were conscious, would give rise to certain determinate aspectual shapes*”. So we locate the counter-factual relationship to hold between conscious mental states and *occurrent* unconscious mental states, as opposed to *dispositional* states. This interpretation, if possible, also saves the theory from the criticism that was provided in the previous part, namely that it is impossible to form the identity relationship between an unconscious and a conscious state based on the aspectual shapes they would instantiate if the unconscious states are defined as dispositional states, given that the subjective character of the determinate aspectual shapes depend on the conditions under which the states become occurrent. Note that, even if we grant this interpretation to Searle and agree that his clause that “*unconscious mental states are those states which are dispositionally conscious*” extends to occurrent unconscious states, if we also have to retain that “*all there is to the ontology of unconscious states is objective facts*”, then this does not save the theory from objections utilizing the discontinuity arguments. That being said, if the first interpretation, which argues that aspectual shapes can be retained when states are unconscious, is granted, it looks like the theory can be defended.

The main problem with this reading is how Searle ontologically defines the occurrence of conscious mental states and their respective neural bases. As Smith (1999, p. 140) notes, Searle (1992) does not define the relationship between neural states and conscious states in terms of a supervenience relationship, which holds between properties, but he does so in terms of causation:

“My conclusion is that once you recognize the existence of bottom-up, micro-to-macro forms of causation, the notion of supervenience no longer does any work in philosophy. The formal features of the relation are already present in the causal sufficiency of the micro-macro forms of causation.” (Searle, 1992, p. 126)

However, Smith (1999) also notes that when Searle’s definition of micro-to-macro forms of causation is made explicit, it is clear that what he means by causation is plain instantiation because Searle’s emergentism is based on the premise that macro-

level properties cannot be reductively explained at the micro-level. Smith notes on this matter that:

“It is now obvious that Searle's ambiguous use of the concept of causation gives him the conceptual slack that he needs to reach his conclusion. If we say that mental events are caused by neural events, while forgetting that Searle treats instantiation as a form of causation, it is easy to conclude that the neural states of the sleeping man are simply failing to realize their dispositional powers. However, if we bear in mind that 'causation' includes instantiation, unconsciousness need not be an obstacle to the instantiation of mental functions, and Searle fails to justify his conclusion that one possesses only dispositions toward mentality while unconscious.” (Smith, 1999, p. 143)

Here, it is apparent why Searle's theory cannot allow or account for occurrent unconscious mental states, and also why his idea of dispositional unconscious fails. If a mental state occurs, given Searle's definition of causation, it realizes the neural properties which are necessary and sufficient for consciousness of the state to occur. In essence, if one conceptualizes the relationship between neural states and conscious states in terms of emergentism and instantiation, then the activity of the neural bases of mental state necessarily gives rise to consciousness of the related mental state³; micro-to macro level causation implies that the consciousness is intrinsic to mental states themselves, which is realized by their instantiation. In this sense, consciousness is not a relational or extrinsic feature of mental states. This is why an occurrent unconscious is an oxymoron according to Searle's theory because it takes consciousness to be intrinsic to the occurrence of the mental state itself. Accordingly, instantiation of aspectual shapes necessarily subserves the instantiation of consciousness; the only sense unconscious states can exist as mental is if they are dispositional states, not states which are occurrent and retain their aspectual shapes in a dispositional sense. Therefore, it is not possible for an unconscious state to instantiate an aspectual shape, which is defined in terms of their subjective ontology, and somehow not feature in consciousness. As dispositional states, however, unconscious states cannot retain their aspectual shapes, according to Searle, which then gives rise to the continuity problem. In this theory, it is not clear how to account for the existence of occurrent unconscious states. Note that theories which define the

³ Especially so given that Searle defines the accessibility condition to be intrinsic to the state, hence it is not possible to argue that unconsciousness of the state can be explained by the state not being accessed. If Searle held that accessing is what makes a state conscious then we could grant that states can be occurrent, instantiate aspectual shapes, yet remain unconscious. If, however, the aspectual state clause (hence the consciousness of the state) does not depend on whether it is accessed or not, then it is not possible to assert that instantiations of mental states do not necessarily lead to their consciousness, given that according to Searle, instantiation of micro-level properties at the level of states is what gives rise to the consciousness of that state and imbue them with their aspectual shapes.

relationship between consciousness and mental states in relational terms, and argue that consciousness is an extrinsic property can account for the mental nature of unconscious states and allow them to retain their causal powers and phenomenal properties as unconscious states (i.e. Higher-Order Theories, Global Workspace Theory etc. see; Baars, 1988, 2005; Lycan, 1995, 1997; Rosenthal, 2002).

If, on the other hand, the theory accounts for only dispositional states to be unconscious, then it is not clear why it should not be rejected given the abundant evidence regarding the existence of occurrent unconscious states. Searle can argue that these are not mental states. However, this does not save his position because, according to him, an occurrence of a mental state necessarily constitutes the instantiation of mental and, therefore, conscious properties associated with that state (given micro-to-macro causation is really instantiation and not causation). Numerous independent researchers, on the other hand, have demonstrated clear effects of subliminal priming and other kinds of unconscious manipulations on the behaviour and psychology of the person in general (Almeida et al., 2008; Amores & Maes, 2017; Bargh et al., 1996; Capa et al., 2011; Karremans et al., 2006; Snodgrass et al., 2014). It is a major problem for any theory of mentation and consciousness if these effects cannot be accounted for in mentalistic terms, and it seems Searle's theory of unconscious mentation cannot be mended due to how it defines the relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness. There is also the case of unconscious visual perception which can be induced by many methods (Breitmeyer, 2015). While debate is ongoing regarding whether such cases of subliminal processing of visual information constitute genuine cases of perception (Berger & Mylopoulos, 2019; Block & Philips, 2017; Brogaard, 2011; Peters et al., 2017), what is problematic for Searle's account is not if such cases constitute mental and personal processes, but if such states are content-bearing and intentional. As long as such states are content-bearing, which they clearly are, then they are occurrent intentional states. However given that Searle's theory cannot account for such cases since it conceptualizes the consciousness relationship to be intrinsic to the instantiation of mental states, it is not clear in what sense it is a theory of unconscious mentation. Therefore for the second interpretation, it seems both the continuity argument and the theory's inability to explain unconscious content-bearing states that are occurrent are fatal.

Remnants of Searle's theory of the unconscious

Searle begins his piece by demonstrating that our naïve notion of the unconscious mind is untenable and dismisses it from consideration. However, the alternative picture he paints is contradictory. Searle cannot maintain that all there is to unconscious mental states are dispositional powers of neural states to cause conscious states, which are explicable by third-personal terms, and simultaneously hold that unconscious mental states retain their aspectual shapes. It appears that Searle is fundamentally dismissive of the type of unconscious that, if denied mentality, would create gaps in the continuity of both our folk psychological and

scientific explanations. Overall, Searle's criteria for aspectual shapes are so stringent that they preclude mentalistic explanations of unconscious phenomena. These shortcomings suggest that his notion of unconscious mentality as dispositional, causal neurophysiological powers falls short of encompassing and explaining the nature of the unconscious mind without contradiction.

That is not to say that the naïve picture was correct, nor to suggest that Searle is wrong in all respects. I believe Searle (1992) was correct in proposing that unconscious but mental phenomena must share something in common with conscious and mental phenomena, namely, that each phenomenon must be intentional in some way. However, any theory that attempts to explain intentionality with consciousness will face problems in accounting for the existence of occurrent, intentional unconscious states (see also Phenomenal Intentionality Theory (PIT), and some attempts to deal with the problem unconscious states cause within the framework (Bourget, 2010; Horgan & Tienson, 2002; Kriegel, 2011).

I hope to have demonstrated that if the contradiction is dissolved by interpreting the theory as allowing for aspectual shapes to be retained by mental states when they are unconscious, then the theory fails, because it is not possible to put forth a meaningful way to establish the identity relationship between occurrent (conscious) and dispositional (unconscious states), and even between conscious states across time, given that determinateness of aspectual shapes is what anchors the identity relationship. This is because aspectual shapes are defined not only in terms of Fregean senses but also with phenomenal qualities. Therefore, since conscious occurrences are particulars, and dispositional states can realize an infinite number of aspectual shapes as dispositions, the identity relationship does not hold diachronically between mental states. If on the other hand, the identity relationship is established by assuming a type identity between the contents of mental states, which are token identical in different occurrences, then the aspectual shapes cannot be described as “determinate” and the theory becomes susceptible to both Van Gulick’s and Fodor and Lepore’s functionalist objections.

If the second interpretation is defended, which, in my opinion, is the correct interpretation, then Searle’s theory falls victim to the objections from the continuity argument. It was also shown that since Searle formulates the relationship between the neural bases of mental states and their consciousness in terms of instantiation, and thinks consciousness is an intrinsic property of mental states, his theory cannot account for occurrent unconscious phenomena, in which case Searle has no intelligible way to explain the evidence for the existence of occurrent unconscious states which are content-bearing, provided by research in cognitive psychology and psychoanalytic theory.

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