

URIAH KRIEGEL

IS INTENTIONALITY DEPENDENT UPON
CONSCIOUSNESS?

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ABSTRACT. It is often assumed that consciousness and intentionality are two mutually independent aspects of mental life. When the assumption is denounced, it usually gives way to the claim that consciousness is somehow dependent upon intentionality. The possibility that intentionality may be dependent upon consciousness is rarely entertained. Recently, however, John Searle and Colin McGinn have argued for just such dependence. In this paper, I reconstruct and evaluate their argumentation. I am in sympathy both with their view and with the lines of argument they employ in its defense. Unlike Searle and McGinn, however, I am quite attached to a naturalist approach to intentionality. It will turn out to be somewhat difficult to reconcile naturalism with the notion that intentionality is dependent upon consciousness, although, perhaps surprisingly, I will argue that McGinn's case for such dependence is compatible with naturalism.

1. INTRODUCTION: DEPENDENCE RELATIONS BETWEEN
CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTENTIONALITY

The mental features two remarkable aspects: intentionality and consciousness. Intentionality is the property in virtue of which a subject's mental state is *directed at*, or is *about*, something other than itself. Consciousness is the property in virtue of which there is *something it is like* for the subject to be in that mental state.¹ In the short history of the philosophy of mind, intentionality and consciousness have often been treated as mutually independent. Call this the *Independence Assumption*. One way to formulate the Independence Assumption is in terms of the following pair of theses:

- (1) The fact that a mental state M is intentional does not entail any (non-disjunctive, non-necessary) facts regarding consciousness.



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- (2) The fact that a mental state *M* is conscious does not entail any (non-disjunctive, non-necessary) facts regarding intentionality.^{2,3,4}

The Independence Assumption can be construed as the conjunction of (1) and (2).

Support for the Independence Assumption has been eroded in recent years. The erosion of (2) has been especially prominent: many philosophers have argued that a subject's mental state is conscious when, and only when, the subject instantiates a certain intentional structure. Thus, according to the representational theory of consciousness (defended, e.g., by Dretske and Tye), if a mental state *M* is conscious, then *M* must have a certain specific kind of intentional content.⁵ The representational theory claims, then, that:

- (3) The fact that *M* is conscious entails the fact that *M* has intentional content of kind *K*.

This is incompatible with (2), since the fact that *M* has intentional content of kind *K* is a (non-disjunctive, non-necessary) fact regarding intentionality.

Similarly, according to the higher-order monitoring theory of consciousness (defended, e.g., by Armstrong and Rosenthal), if *M* is conscious, then *M* must be itself the intentional object of a higher-order intentional state.⁶ This theory claims, then, that:

- (4) The fact that subject *x*'s mental state *M* is conscious entails the fact that *x* has another mental state, *M**, such that *M** is intentionally directed at *M*.

Which is, again, incompatible with (2), since the fact that *x* has a mental state *M** that is intentionally directed at *M* is a (non-disjunctive, non-necessary) fact regarding intentionality.

Both the representational and higher-order monitoring theories attempt a reductive account of consciousness in terms of intentionality, and therefore imply the falsity of (2). But a reductive account of consciousness in terms of intentionality is not *required* in order to falsify (2). It is possible to hold, for instance, that even though *M*'s consciousness is not *exhausted* by *M*'s intentional content, it nonetheless necessarily *involves* an intentionality.⁷ Such a view is also incompatible with (2).

Although many philosophers accept today the dependence of consciousness on intentionality, few think that, conversely, or inversely, intentionality is dependent on consciousness. At the same time, arguments to this effect *have* been advanced by a handful of philosophers. In this paper, I reconstruct and evaluate two such arguments, due to John Searle (1992, ch. 7)⁸ and Colin McGinn (1988).⁹ These arguments are sometimes quite complex (as in the case of Searle) and sometimes turn on subtle phenomenological observations (as in the case of McGinn). The challenge will be twofold, then: to extricate clear lines of argument from the texts, and to clarify the basic observations and distinctions behind them. On the way, I also want to get clear on just what the dependence of intentionality upon consciousness is suggested to consist in. In §2, I discuss Searle's line of argument. Since Searle's argument is fairly complex, I will focus on trying to reconstruct it in a precise manner. In §3, I discuss McGinn's argument. Since it relies crucially on a certain phenomenological observation, I will mainly try to bring out this observation in a decently vivid way.

My conclusions will not be dramatic. My overall impression is that the thesis that intentionality depends upon consciousness merits a more serious consideration than it has been hitherto granted. More specifically, I will suggest that some versions of this thesis are compatible with a naturalistic approach to intentionality, and should therefore be unobjectionable to a naturalist.

2. SEARLE'S ARGUMENT FROM THE ASPECTUALITY OF INTENTIONALITY

In *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, Searle (1992, p. 132) writes:

I now want to make a very strong claim . . . The claim is this: Only a being that could have conscious intentional states could have intentional states at all, and every unconscious intentional state is at least potentially conscious. This thesis . . . has the consequence that a complete theory of intentionality requires an account of consciousness.

This passage all but explicitly rejects (1). To reject (1) is to hold:

- (5) The fact that a mental state M is intentional entails some (non-disjunctive, non-necessary) facts regarding consciousness.

(5) leaves open what the entailed facts regarding consciousness are. Different entailments of facts define different forms of dependence, and therefore, different dependence theses. The quoted passage contains, in fact, *two* dependence theses.

The first is the thesis that “only a being that could have conscious intentional states could have intentional states at all.”¹⁰ We may formulate this thesis as follows:

- (6) The fact that a mental state M of a subject *x* is intentional entails that *x* can have a mental state M*, such that M* is a conscious state.

On a liberal enough understanding of “facts,” (6) entails (5).¹¹

Searle’s second thesis is that “every unconscious intentional state is at least potentially conscious,” which we may formulate as follows:

- (7) The fact that a mental state M is intentional entails that M is potentially conscious.

But what is involved in a mental state being *potentially* conscious? Potential consciousness means, for Searle, that M is *in principle* accessible to consciousness, where being accessible to consciousness in principle means that it must be “the *sort of thing* that could be . . . conscious” (1992, p. 153; italics mine).¹² This elucidation leaves something to be desired, but it appears to imply that M’s being intentional entails that it is *possibly* conscious. The question is what modal strength should this “possibly” be construed to carry.¹³

Metaphysical possibility is too weak. Arguably, it is metaphysically possible for an ameba to be conscious. So given that what is metaphysically possible is necessarily metaphysically possible (at least in S₄ and S₅)¹⁴ and that necessary facts are entailed by all other facts, any random fact entails the metaphysical possibility of the ameba being conscious. Thus, the fact that a certain ameba is 7 microns long entails that it is metaphysically possible for this ameba to be conscious. But surely this does not define a genuine dependence of 7 micron length on consciousness.¹⁵

More to the point, M’s being metaphysically-possibly conscious appears to be a purely logical property (or perhaps a “metaphysical” property) of it,¹⁶ rather than a genuinely psychological property. But what Searle hopes to capture in saying that M must be poten-

tially conscious is a psychological property of M. My suggestion is that we construe potential consciousness in terms of possible consciousness consistent with the laws of psychology. To say that M is potentially conscious is to say that M's not being conscious is not a matter of the laws of psychology, but just happens to be the case. That is, M is potentially conscious iff there is a possible world W, such that the laws of psychology in W are the same as in the actual world, and M is conscious in W. If this condition holds, we may say that it is a psychological possibility that M be conscious. (7) then unpacks into:

- (8) The fact that M is intentional entails that M is psychologically-possibly conscious.

That is, the fact that M is intentional entails that it is psychologically possible for M to be conscious.¹⁷

Note now two things about the *logical* strength of (7) and (8). First, they entail (5), since M's being potentially conscious, or psychologically-possibly conscious, is a (non-disjunctive, non-necessary) fact regarding consciousness.¹⁸ But second, they also entail (6): if M's being intentional entails that M is potentially conscious, or psychologically-possibly conscious, then *a fortiori* it entails that *x* can have a conscious state – for then *x* can have M *consciously*. Therefore, any argument for (8) would *ipso facto* be an argument for (6). So of these two theses, (8) is the more fundamental. It is what Searle sometimes refers to as the *Connection Principle*.¹⁹

Let us turn, then, to Searle's argument for (8). The argument is stated most succinctly in the following passage (1992, p. 161):

Just ask yourself what fact about the world is supposed to correspond to your claims. When you make a claim about unconscious intentionality, there are no facts that bear on the case except neurophysiological facts . . . But intentional states, conscious or unconscious, have aspectual shapes, and there is no aspectual shape at the level of neurons. So the only fact about the neurophysiological structures that corresponds to the ascription of intrinsic aspectual shape is the fact that a system has the causal capacity to produce conscious states and processes where those specific aspectual shapes are manifest.

The argument depends on certain concepts and doctrines that should be clarified before it is reconstructed.

First, Searle holds that every intentional state has an *aspectual shape*, in that it is intentionally directed at an object only “under an aspect.” This is true of unconscious states as well: if *x* has the tacit belief that the evening star is beautiful, her (unconscious) belief is directed at Venus under the aspect of its being the evening star, and not under the aspect of its being Venus or the morning star. A mental state’s having aspectual shape is in some ways similar, then, to its (or its report’s) being *intensional*.²⁰

Second, Searle holds that when a mental state is unconscious, it consists purely of a neurophysiological state of the brain. That is, unconscious states are token-identical with brain states (and perhaps even type-identical – one wishes Searle were more explicit here).²¹

Searle’s argument is based on a straightforward claim, namely, that only conscious intentionality is intrinsically aspectual. What is the fact of the matter that makes *x*’s unconscious belief the belief that the evening star is beautiful, as opposed to the belief that Venus is beautiful? The only relevant fact here is that *if* the belief were conscious, it would be about the evening star, not Venus. Since the belief is nothing but a brute neurophysiological event, and (according to Searle) there is no aspectuality at the neurophysiological level, there is nothing else to make it a belief about Venus *qua* evening star and not *qua* Venus (or *qua* morning star). According to Searle, then, the aspectuality of this belief is accounted for by its counterfactual property of being directed-at-Venus-*qua*-evening-star-if-conscious. And it follows from the belief’s *having* this counterfactual property that it *could* be conscious. If it could not be conscious, it would not be a fact of the matter that if it *were* conscious it would be about the evening star.

Searle’s argument turns crucially, then, on a certain *asymmetry* between conscious and unconscious intentionality. Both are aspectual; every genuine intentionality necessarily is.²² But the aspectuality of unconscious intentionality is dependent on the aspectuality of conscious intentionality, whereas the aspectuality of conscious intentionality is intrinsic to it. This, in the following sense: an unconscious intentional state derives its specific aspectual shape from a trans-worldly identical conscious intentional state (occurring in a psychologically possible world) with just that aspectual shape; a *conscious* intentional state, by contrast, does not

derive its aspectual shape from anything – it has its aspectual shape in and of itself.

Searle's argument may be reconstructed as follows:

- (P1) Unconscious intentional states are *genuinely* intentional;
- (P2) Genuine intentionality requires aspectuality; therefore,
- (C1) Unconscious intentional states are aspectual (P1, P2); but,
- (P3) Unconscious intentional states are not *intrinsically* aspectual; therefore,
- (C2) The aspectuality of unconscious intentional states is derivative (C1, P3); and,
- (P4) The aspectuality of an unconscious intentional state M can be derived only from the fact that if M *were* conscious, it *would* be intrinsically aspectual; therefore,
- (C3) The aspectuality of M does derive from the fact that if M were conscious, it would be intrinsically aspectual (C2, P4); therefore,
- (C4) (It is a fact that) if M were conscious, it would be intrinsically aspectual (C3); and therefore,
- (C5) (It is a fact that) M could be conscious (C4).

The fact that M is intentional thus entails that M could be conscious – in accordance with (8).

Recall, however, that (8) must claim not just that M is possibly conscious, but that it is psychologically-possibly conscious. That is, (C5) must state not only that there is a *metaphysically* possible world in which M is conscious, but that there is a *psychologically* possible world in which M is conscious. The modal strength of (C5) must therefore be “psychological.”

To yield a conclusion with psychological modal strength, the modal premises of Searle's argument must also be construed in terms of psychological possibility. This introduces a problem regarding the plausibility of premise (P4). Construed in terms of psychological possibility, (P4) states that an unconscious intentional state M can only derive its aspectuality from the fact that, in a psychologically possible world in which M is conscious, M is intrinsically aspectual. But is it true that this is the *only* source from which M could derive its aspectuality? It may be thought that another source is the fact that, in a *metaphysically* possible world in which M is conscious, M is intrinsically aspectual. Thus,

x's unconscious belief that the evening star is beautiful may derive its aspectual shape (its being about Venus *qua* evening star) from the fact that in some metaphysically possible, but psychologically impossible, world what *x* consciously thinks is that the evening star is beautiful, not that the morning star (or Venus) is beautiful.

In response, Searle must claim that M cannot derive its aspectuality from the fact that it is metaphysically possible for it to be conscious. Perhaps this claim can be made on the grounds that M's property of being metaphysically-possibly conscious is not a psychological property, but a mere logical (or "metaphysical") property. The idea would be that a mental state cannot exhibit a psychological property (such as having a certain derivative aspectual shape) in virtue of exhibiting a merely logical, hence non-psychological, property (such as intrinsically having a certain aspectual shape in a certain metaphysically possible world). This rejoinder would thus exclude merely metaphysical or logical possibilities as alternative sources from which M may derive its aspectual shape. What makes an unconscious belief that the evening star is beautiful about the evening star and not the morning star, is that in a possible world in which the laws of psychology are the same as in the actual world and the belief is conscious, the belief is about the evening star and not the morning star.

(P4) may thus be more defensible than may initially appear. (P1) and (P2) are likewise quite plausible. Something like (P2) has enjoyed a status close to that of a stipulation since Chisholm's work on intentionality.²³ In defense of (P1), Searle notes that our attributions of intentionality to unconscious states are meant literally, not metaphorically.²⁴ If they were meant metaphorically, they would "lose their explanatory power" (1992: 156). The sub-argument for (P1) is this, then: unconscious intentional states are explanatory; only genuinely intentional states are explanatory; therefore, unconscious intentional states are genuinely intentional.²⁵ It is hard to see where to poke a hole in this sub-argument, although later on I will discuss one way of doing so.

The most tendentious premise in Searle's reasoning is (P3), namely, that unconscious intentional states are not intrinsically aspectual. His defense of it can be found in the passage quoted above: "When you make a claim about unconscious intentionality,

there are no facts that bear on the case except neurophysiological facts . . . But . . . there is no aspectual shape at the level of neurons.” Thus, *x*’s unconscious belief that the evening star is beautiful consists in nothing but a certain neurophysiological configuration in *x*’s brain. But, according to Searle, there is nothing about the relevant neurons that could make them ground a representation of Venus *qua* evening star as opposed to a representation of Venus *qua* Venus. In general, no “*qua*” can emerge from mere neurons. Neurons are just neurons: they transfer electrical impulses and no more. They cannot make out the difference between Venus, the morning star, and the evening star.

This argument may not be accepted by someone who holds a naturalist theory of intentionality, according to which intentionality reduces to a certain natural relation between brain states and environmental states. Among the properties of neurons are some relational properties of great interest: neurons bear certain causal, informational,²⁶ and teleological relations to their environment. These relational properties can be, and certainly have been, taken to ground a natural form of aboutness. Just as traces in the snow carry information about the thief’s actions, so neurophysiological events in the brain carry information about events in the environment. To be sure, there is a large gap between mere information and genuine intentionality: it is precisely aspectuality, or intensionality (with an S), that is missing from the former. But the whole program of naturalist theories of intentionality is an attempt to account for aspectuality, or intensionality, in terms of the relational properties of neurons. What justification does Searle have for thinking that relational properties of this sort cannot account for aspectuality?

One line of justification may be found in Searle’s discussion of Quinean inscrutability of reference (1992, pp. 163–164). Suppose *x* unconsciously believes that there are rabbits in England. The causal, informational, and teleological relations between the neurons in *x*’s head and English rabbits are the same as the causal, informational, and teleological relations between these neurons and English undetached-rabbit-parts or English rabbit-life-stages.²⁷ So these sorts of relation will be insufficient to account for the specific aspectual shape of *x*’s belief: the fact that it is about Rabbits and not undetached-Rabbit-parts (nor rabbit-life-stages).²⁸

One important objection to (P3) is that although naturalists have thus far failed to account for such cases, they must eventually succeed. One way to appreciate the point is to note that Searle provides us with no account of how *conscious* intentional states acquire their aspectual shape. According to Searle, when *x* becomes aware of her belief, and consciously thinks that there are rabbits in England, her belief is endowed, in and of itself, with an aspectual shape that makes it a belief about rabbits and not about metaphysical freaks similar to, but different from, rabbits. But what is it about the *conscious* thought that endows it with this intrinsic aspectual shape? Searle has nothing to say about that. And this can be the basis for a dilemma argument against Searle. Either (i) what endows *x*'s conscious state with its aspectual shape is a subtle natural relation that holds between neurons in her brain and rabbits but does not hold between these neurons and the metaphysical freaks; or (ii) it is an unnatural – supernatural – property of *x*'s conscious state. If (i), then there is no reason why this subtle relation should not also differentiate *unconscious* beliefs about rabbits from unconscious beliefs about undetached-rabbit-parts.²⁹ If (ii), then naturalism about intentionality, and indeed naturalism *tout court*, are false. Searle's case for (8) thus depends on denying naturalism. A committed naturalist would therefore be inclined to reject (by *modus tollens*) Searle's argument for (8). Call this the *Objection from Naturalism*.

A similar but perhaps somewhat safer appeal to inscrutability may be the following.³⁰ It is possible to maintain that unconscious states are simply not aspectual, hence not genuinely intentional. Consider the unconscious states of lower animals. A fish in the ocean may detect a whale coming its way and flee in response. When the fish detects the whale it enters a neurophysiological state which carries certain information, and which brings about the fish's flight behavior. In a sense, the fish has an unconscious perception of the whale. But there need not be facts of the matter as to whether the fish's brain state carries the information that a whale is coming its way or the information that undetached-whale-parts are coming its way. The information the fish's brain state carries may well be *indeterminate* – indeterminate as between being about a whale, undetached-whale-parts, whale-life-stages, etc.

What the view presently under consideration rejects in Searle's argument is (P1), the claim that unconscious intentional states are *genuinely* intentional. Recall, however, that Searle has an *argument* for (P1): unconscious intentional states are *genuinely* intentional because they are explanatory, and only genuinely intentional states are explanatory. However, the assumption that only genuinely intentional states are explanatory may have less going for it than may initially appear. What explains the fish's flight behavior may well be the fact that the fish's brain state carries the *information* it does. If so, information-carrying states may be explanatory, even when they fail to constitute full-fledged intentional states. (As we noted earlier, information carriage by itself does not amount to intentionality; intentionality requires information carriage plus aspectuality.)

Another way to put the point is as follows. We can distinguish between intentional content and mere informational content, the latter lacking the aspectuality of the former. According to the view we are considering, the fish's brain state has no intentional content, only informational content. Its informational content accounts for its explanatory power, however: the fish flees because it detects that a whale, or a whale-life-stage, or undetached-whale-parts, is coming its way. Indeed, the attribution of *merely* informational states to the fish is itself explanatory. After all, the behavior of the fish does *not* exhibit sensitivity to the difference between a whale and undetached-whale-parts.³¹ So the same internal state must be posited to explain the occurrence of its response to either. There is no need to posit an intentional content, then, in order to bestow explanatory power on the fish's brain state. The fish has no intentional states – not unless it has conscious states, at any rate – but it has information-carrying states which are explanatory.³²

This point about the explanatory relevance of unconscious states sounds right when applied to fish, but what about the unconscious states of humans? Whatever the explanatory role of *x*'s unconscious belief that the whale is a mammal, Searle may contend that it is still about whales, not undetached-whale-parts. The belief's content is not indeterminate. And the reason for this seems to be precisely that if *x* became aware of this belief, and had the conscious thought that the whale is a mammal, the belief would be about whales and not undetached-whale-parts. If so, the problem with the fish's internal

state may be that it is not even *potentially* conscious, that is, that the laws of psychology are such that the brain states of fish are never conscious. The proponent of the hypothetical view we are considering may reject this line, however, claiming that even in the case of human unconscious beliefs, their content is indeterminate, hence not genuinely intentional.

I am not going to adjudicate this disagreement here. Observe only that the difference between Searle's view and the hypothetical view under consideration appears to come down to the question whether some unconscious states of creatures that are capable of having conscious states are aspectual or not (Searle says Yes, the hypothetical view says No.) Note, in any case, that the hypothetical view, while it presents a criticism of Searle's argument, does not undermine (5) – the dependence of intentionality on consciousness – but effectively solidifies it. Indeed, the dependence thesis implicit in the hypothetical view is even stronger than Searle's, for it claims flatly that a mental state is genuinely intentional only if it is conscious, since it deems that unconscious states are not genuinely intentional. The thesis is:

- (9) The fact that M is (genuinely) intentional entails that M is conscious.

This is probably the strongest dependence thesis one could advance.³³

The two views discussed in this section are different in the letter, but remarkably similar in spirit. Both stress the asymmetry between conscious and unconscious intentionality, an asymmetry they both trace back to aspectuality and the phenomenon of inscrutability. The difference is that Searle is willing to grant unconscious states *derivative* aspectuality – aspectuality they can inherit from corresponding conscious states – whereas the hypothetical view does not grant them *any* aspectuality.

However, both are equally vulnerable to the Objection from Naturalism. I have discussed this problem in the context of evaluating Searle's argument for (8), but the same dilemma applies to the hypothetical view.³⁴ Either (i) what gives *x*'s conscious thought its aspectual shape is a subtle natural relation that holds between it and whales but does not hold between it and the metaphysical freaks; or (ii) it is an unnatural – supernatural – property of it. If (i), then

there is no reason why this subtle relation should not differentiate unconscious beliefs about whales from unconscious beliefs about undetached-whale-parts as well. If (ii), then the view is committed to the rejection of naturalism.

Now, Searle may well be happy to reject naturalism.³⁵ But most of us are not. So the question remains whether a naturalist can consistently embrace something like (5). If the notion that intentionality is somehow dependent on consciousness presupposes an anti-naturalist approach to intentionality, it is to that extent of lesser interest. At the same time, the question of the dependence of intentionality on consciousness is closely intertwined with the question of the plausibility of naturalist accounts of intentionality. This is even more evident in Colin McGinn's work. We now turn to discuss McGinn's contribution.

3. MCGINN'S ARGUMENT FROM THE JANUS-FACED CHARACTER OF CONSCIOUS INTENTIONALITY

In "Consciousness and Content," McGinn (1988/1997, pp. 299–300)³⁶ hesitantly avows sympathy for the view that only the intentionality of consciousness is intrinsic to it. He writes:

One view, by no means absurd, is that all content is originally of conscious states. There is no (underivative) intentionality without consciousness . . . Our attributions of content to machines and cerebral processes is, on this view, dependent or metaphorical or instrumental; there would be no content in a world without consciousness. Accordingly, we labor under an illusion if we think we can complete the theory of content without even mentioning that contentful states are associated with consciousness. There is no ofness without likeness.

McGinn makes his claim with Grice's distinction between intrinsic (or original) and derivative intentionality in mind.³⁷ According to Grice, only mental states have intrinsic intentionality. The intentionality of language is merely derivative from that of mental states: linguistic expressions, inked or mouthed as they may be, are only intentional because we *interpret* them. They are not in and of themselves directed at something other than themselves. Thus, there is nothing about the concatenation of ink marks c^a^t that makes it about cats, other than the fact that we use it with the intentions we do.³⁸ In a world without thinking creatures, a wind-blown pattern in

the sand that reads “cat” does not mean cat in English any more than the pattern “blehp” in our world means cat in a language yet to be invented.

McGinn’s (hesitant) claim is that Grice’s distinction is a good one, but should be redrawn more restrictively. According to McGinn, only the intentionality of conscious states is intrinsic to them. The intentionality of unconscious mental states is on a par with that of linguistic expressions. In a world without consciousness, as he says, there would be no intentionality.

Perhaps the idea is that unconscious mental states derive their intentionality from our *interpretation* of their subjects’ behavior. Thus, if x says she is flying to the capital of Georgia, as she boards a flight destined for Atlanta, we are justified in interpreting her as believing (unconsciously) that Atlanta is the capital of Georgia. Such interpretation is instrumental in systematizing x ’s behavior in a way that explains x ’s past actions and facilitates prediction of her future actions. However, if the ascription of an intentional state to x in these circumstances did *not* have these explanatory and predictive benefits, we would *not* be justified in performing it. There are no other facts of the matter that compel us to ascribe an intentional state to x on such an occasion.³⁹ So unconscious states derive their intentionality from other intentional states (i.e., interpretive states). But this requires that somewhere down the line there be conscious intentional states. For suppose y ’s interpretation of x as believing that Atlanta is the capital of Georgia is unconscious. Then y ’s interpretive state is intentional (carrying the intentional content “ x believes that Atlanta is the capital of Georgia”) only if it derives *its* intentionality from a further interpretive state of this sort. This would continue *ad infinitum*, unless at some point a person’s unconscious state is *consciously* interpreted to be intentional. Only then can the whole chain of unconscious states acquire intentionality – by deriving it from the relevant act of conscious interpretation. In a zombie world, where no living organism is ever conscious, the organisms’ internal states are not intentional, because there are no conscious interpretations from which they may derive an intentionality.

With this view, McGinn can partially join Dennett in a surprising alliance.⁴⁰ Dennett has argued for years for what he calls “instru-

mentalism” about intentionality: ascription of intentional content to organisms is instrumental, which is why we do it, but there is nothing inherent in the organisms that mysteriously directs their internal states outwards.⁴¹ McGinn would agree that the intentionality of unconscious states is nothing more than a useful fiction, and moreover, that there is something mysterious about the notion of internal states that are in and of themselves directed outwards. But unlike Dennett, he embraces this latter notion, with its mysteriousness (1988/1997, p. 303; italics original):

There is an internality about the relation between an experience and its object that seems hard to replicate in terms of “external” causal or teleological relations. Presence *to* the subject of the object of his experience seems not exhaustively explicable in terms of such natural relations . . . Naturalist theories fail to do justice to the *uniqueness* of conscious intentionality. Nothing we know about the brain, including its relations to the world, seems capable of rendering unmysterious the capacity of conscious states to “encompass” external states of affairs.

That is, McGinn concludes that naturalist theories cannot account for conscious intentionality, and only conscious intentionality is intrinsic to the mental states that have it. He therefore defends a mysterianist approach to conscious intentionality (1988/1997, p. 302): “We should accept that there is a part or aspect of intentionality that our [naturalist] theories do not and probably cannot capture.”

What is interesting is that McGinn’s conclusion is based on an *epistemological* dependence thesis. The reason we cannot fully understand intentionality is that (i) we cannot fully understand consciousness – as McGinn has argued in detail elsewhere (McGinn, 1989, 1999) – and (ii) it is impossible to understand intentionality without understanding consciousness. This latter thesis states a dependence between our *understanding* of intentionality and our *understanding* of consciousness. This thesis may be formulated as follows. Either M is conscious or it is not. If M is conscious, then understanding its intentionality entails understanding its consciousness. If M is not conscious, then it derives its intentionality from certain conscious states, and understanding M’s intentionality entails understanding the consciousness of those conscious states. To put it more economically:

- (10) Understanding the fact that M is an intentional state entails understanding the fact that M is a conscious state, in case M *is* a conscious state, or in case M is *not* a conscious state, understanding the fact that mental states $M_i - M_k$, from which M derives its intentionality, are conscious states.

This is an epistemological dependence thesis. It seems to come hand in hand, however, with a corresponding ontological dependence thesis. For if our understanding of intentionality is dependent upon our understanding of consciousness, this is because there is something about intentionality itself that is dependent upon something about consciousness itself. Let us see what.

Someone who rejects McGinn's epistemological dependence thesis may point out that even if consciousness and intrinsic intentionality are invariably compresent in our conscious intentional states, they are still conceptually distinct. We can abstract from the conscious profile of our states – their subjective character, phenomenal qualia, etc. – and focus on their intentional aspect. This is what McGinn (1988/1997, p. 299) calls the *insulation strategy*. The basic assumption behind the insulation strategy is that the conscious profile of a conscious intentional state does not alter its intentional aspect. If so, the intentionality of conscious states, considered in itself, is the same as the intentionality of non-conscious states. Therefore, if we can understand the intentionality of non-conscious states (and, of course, we can), we can also understand the intentionality of conscious states (since they are the same), whether or not we understand the consciousness of conscious states. So it *is* possible to understand intentionality without understanding consciousness.

What McGinn rejects in this reasoning is the very assumption that the consciousness of a conscious intentional state does not alter its intentional content, that is, the assumption that the intentionality of conscious and unconscious states is the same kind of intentionality.⁴² He writes (1988/1997, p. 300; italics mine):

I doubt that the self-same *kind* of content possessed by a conscious perceptual experience, say, could be possessed independently of consciousness; such content seems essentially conscious, shot through with subjectivity. *This is because of the janus-faced character of conscious content: it involves presence to the*

subject, and hence a subjective point of view. Remove the *inward-looking face* [of conscious content] and you remove something integral . . .

That is, conscious and unconscious intentionality are fundamentally different, because conscious content involves “presence to the subject,” a characteristic missing from unconscious content. This characteristic, recall, was the reason conscious content could not be naturalized – not in any of the ways proposed thus far, at any rate: “Presence *to* the subject of the object of his experience seems not exhaustively explicable in terms of such natural relations [i.e., “external” causal or teleological relations].”

The key concept in McGinn’s argument is thus the concept of “presence to the subject.” Conscious intentionality offers it but unconscious intentionality does not. What is this presence to the subject? Begin with a straightforward observation. My conscious experience of the laptop before me not only presents the laptop – it presents the laptop *to me*. The content of my perception has two components, then: its *directedness toward the laptop*, which is its “outward-looking face”; and its *manifestation to me*, which is its “inward-looking face.” This double-headed, or Janus-faced, character is unique to conscious content. Unconscious perception of the laptop (e.g., in subliminal vision) would represent the laptop, but it would not present it *to me*. So the consciousness of my conscious experience does alter its intentionality: it endows it with an inward-looking face, a manifestation of the content to the subject.

When *x* unconsciously believes that Atlanta is the capital of Georgia, there are traces in her brain that represent Atlanta. But they represent it in an impersonal way, the same way unnoticed traces in the snow represent the thief’s path even when nobody is *aware* of them. By contrast, when *x* brings her belief to consciousness, her internal state represents Atlanta *to her*. Now the representation is no longer a purely impersonal, objective matter. It is not only that she *hosts* a representation of Atlanta, she is *aware*, in a subtle way, of the representation of Atlanta.

McGinn’s notion of Janus-faced content should not be saddled with traditional doctrines about the infallibility of our knowledge of our own conscious experience. In general, to point out the existence of a psychological phenomenon is not to claim any epistemological privilege on its behalf. More specifically, to hold that when we have

a conscious experience of a tree, the experience has an inward-looking face whereby we are implicitly aware of it, is not to say that when we form an *explicit* introspective judgement about the experience, the judgement is necessarily correct. Indeed, there is nothing in Janus-faced content that implicates *any* form of explicit introspection. Rather, there is a dim, *implicit* inner awareness built into that content.

McGinn's argument from the Janus-faced character of conscious intentionality is based on a subtle phenomenological observation, and is therefore difficult to assess. The argument itself is quite straightforward, and may be reconstructed as follows:

- [P1] Only mental states whose intentionality has an inward-looking face are intrinsically intentional;
- [P2] Only conscious states have an intentionality with an inward-looking face; therefore,
- [C] Only conscious states are intrinsically intentional.

This argument is much simpler than Searle's, but unlike Searle's, it depends on a certain phenomenological observation – to the effect that conscious intentionality has an inward-looking face – and is to that extent more controversial. Some will find the observation illuminating, others will dismiss it as a theoretically laden myth or profess not to find anything of the sort in their phenomenology.

Personally, I can attest, for what that's worth, that McGinn's observation strikes *me* as phenomenologically accurate. Of greater significance, however, is the fact that it is not altogether unprecedented. Other philosophers' phenomenological analyses have revealed the inward-looking face of conscious intentionality, although different philosophers articulate the revelation in different ways.⁴³ Consider what Alvin Goldman (1970, p. 96; italics original) says in the following forgotten passage:

[Consider] the case of [consciously] thinking about *x* ... In the process of [consciously] thinking about *x* there is already an implicit awareness that one is thinking about *x*. There is no need for reflection here, for taking a step back from thinking about *x* in order to examine it ... When we are thinking about *x*, the mind is focused on *x*, not on our *thinking* of *x*. Nevertheless, the process of thinking about *x* carries with it a non-reflective self-awareness.

In fact, this sort of observation is fairly common in the phenomenological tradition.⁴⁴ According to Brentano (1874), when we have a

conscious experience, we are primarily concerned with an external object or state of affairs, but we also have, secondarily, an awareness of our experience (1874, pp. 127–128; italics original):⁴⁵

In the same mental phenomenon in which the sound is present to our minds we simultaneously apprehend the mental phenomenon itself . . . We can say that the sound is the *primary object* of the *act* of hearing, and that the act of hearing itself is the *secondary object*.

According to Husserl (1928), Brentano misleadingly suggests that the intentional directedness involved in the inward-looking face of conscious content is of the same general sort as the intentionality involved in its outward-looking face. For Husserl, the inner awareness of our conscious experiences is not analogous in any way with the detective's outer awareness of the traces in the snow.⁴⁶ He therefore introduces a distinction between object-awareness and act-awareness and claims they are wrapped up together in every conscious experience.⁴⁷ Clearly, this distinction between object-awareness and act-awareness parallels the distinction between inward- and outward-looking faces of content.⁴⁸

I am not going to embark on an extensive discussion, let alone evaluation, of this entire tradition. I only wish to point out its existence, if this can attenuate the sense of suspicion that understandably visits the modern philosopher upon considering Cartesian-sounding notions such as McGinn's Janus-faced content. The upshot is that, *if* conscious states have a Janus-faced content, whereas the content of unconscious states has only an outward-looking face, then conscious intentionality is fundamentally different from unconscious intentionality.

This thesis is particularly interesting against the background of the view that only conscious intentionality is intrinsic or original. As we saw, McGinn, like Searle, takes there to be an asymmetry between conscious and unconscious intentionality. But for him, the asymmetry is due not to the aspectuality of the former, but to its inward-looking face, the fact that it presents its object *to* the subject. If the source of the asymmetry between conscious and unconscious content is indeed the inward-looking face of the former, then it may be reasonably concluded that conscious states are intrinsically intentional *in virtue* of their inward-looking face. What makes an internal state *inherently* directed at something other than itself is precisely

the fact that it presents its content to the subject. This makes sense: the reason an internal state that impersonally carries information about Atlanta is not directed at Atlanta “in and of itself” – that is, not directed at Atlanta independently of third-person interpretation – is that it does not present Atlanta *to* anyone. It just happens to entertain certain systematic relations with Atlanta. Unless someone notices – becomes aware of – these systematic relations, no real intentionality has taken place. In a way, the reason a conscious thought about Atlanta is inherently directed at Atlanta is that it *cannot* go unnoticed – it already *comes with* a subject’s awareness of it, namely, the awareness constituted by the inward-looking face of conscious experience.

This is the *ontological* dependence of intentionality upon consciousness that explains the aforementioned *epistemological* dependence. Relations of information-carriage between states and events in the world become genuinely intentional only when someone is aware of them, and mental states and events are no exception. But *conscious* states and events that bear informational relationships to other states and events involve an *inner awareness* that makes them genuinely intentional independently of any *additional* awareness of them. For their consciousness ensures presence *to* the subject of the information they carry. Without consciousness, however, there would be no states and events in the world that were intentional independently of being interpreted through other intentional acts, so there would be no way to break out of the circle of states that are awaiting deriving an intentionality (as we saw earlier). That is, in a world without consciousness, there would not be intentionality to start passing around in the first place.

McGinn’s case for the dependence of intentionality on consciousness thus depends on the claim that conscious states are intrinsically intentional in virtue of having an inward-looking face, or presence to the subject, or as I rather call it, *inner awareness*. An objection to his case for the dependence thesis could therefore be that inner awareness is itself an intentional phenomenon. If inner awareness is an intentional phenomenon, then the fact that conscious states exhibit inner awareness could nowise suggest that intentionality depends on consciousness. Worse, it may conceivably be argued that

the inner awareness of conscious states is in itself an unconscious phenomenon.⁴⁹

Consider for instance David Rosenthal's theory of consciousness.⁵⁰ According to Rosenthal, the definitive property of conscious states is that they are states the subject is immediately aware of being in. His account of this "immediate awareness" is disconcerting to McGinn's project, however. According to Rosenthal, when a subject x is immediately aware of being in mental state M , this means that x harbors a separate mental state, M^* , such that M^* is intentionally directed at M . M^* constitutes an awareness of M . What makes M^* "immediate" is that x is unaware of the processes that mediate its formation. When M^* is formed, some cognitive processes do mediate its formation (for surely M^* does not spring into existence *ex nihilo*), but since these processes are sub-personal, and x is unaware of them, her awareness of M appears to her (i.e., from the subjective point of view) immediate.⁵¹ Moreover, according to Rosenthal M^* is normally an *unconscious* intentional state. If M^* was a conscious state, then x would be immediately aware of it, and this would require – by the account of immediate awareness just sketched – that x harbor a third mental state, M^{**} , intentionally directed at M^* , and the question would arise again whether M^{**} was conscious or unconscious. At the end of the hierarchy of states, there must be an unconscious state – on pain of infinite regress. In the normal case, M is conscious and M^* is unconscious. In more introspective episodes of x 's mental life, M^* may also be conscious, and the unconscious state is M^{**} . But in the normal case, M^* is an unconscious intentional state directed at M , and it constitutes x 's immediate awareness of M .

Suppose now that we plugged Rosenthal's account of immediate awareness into McGinn's argument from the Janus-faced character of conscious content. According to McGinn, a conscious state is intrinsically conscious in virtue of presenting its content to the subject. M is intrinsically intentional in virtue of presenting its content to x . Thus, when x consciously thinks that Atlanta is the capital of Georgia, Atlanta's being the capital of Georgia is present to x . But if Rosenthal is right (and if we assume that Rosenthal's "immediate awareness" is supposed to be more or less the same phenomenon as my "inner awareness" and McGinn's "presence to

the subject”), then to say that Atlanta’s being the capital of Georgia is present to x is to say that x harbors an unconscious intentional state directed at her thought that Atlanta is the capital of Georgia. But if this is right, then the very phenomenon of presence to the subject is just a matter of unconscious intentionality. Far from spelling a dependence of intentionality on consciousness, this would underscore the dependence of consciousness on intentionality.⁵²

In response to this challenge, McGinn must reject Rosenthal’s account of immediate awareness.⁵³ The critical literature on Rosenthal’s Higher-Order Thought theory of consciousness (and consequently of immediate awareness) offers a number of avenues for rejecting that account.⁵⁴ But McGinn may also simply insist that it is utterly implausible to construe presence-to-the-subject as an unconscious phenomenon, since it is an aspect of the content of *conscious*, and *only* conscious, mental states. Thus McGinn could point out that if presence-to-the-subject, or immediate (or inner) awareness, was an unconscious phenomenon, our knowledge of it (and acquaintance with it) would be, as with all other unconscious phenomena, *third-person* knowledge (and acquaintance). But the sort of presence to the subject McGinn has in mind is a phenomenon of which we have *first-person* knowledge (and acquaintance).⁵⁵

To see the force of this simple point, consider the way Rosenthal motivates his general account of consciousness. Why would one think that a mental state is conscious in virtue of the subject harboring an intentional state directed at it? Rosenthal’s answer is captured in the slogan ‘Conscious states are states we are conscious of’, which certainly sounds highly intuitive.⁵⁶ But the reason this slogan sounds intuitively so correct is that most of us hear the locution “conscious of” as implying a *conscious* intentional state: a person is conscious of a tree when she has a conscious intentional state directed at the tree. But Rosenthal uses “conscious of” in a misleading way, allowing that one be conscious of something through an *unconscious* intentional state. Thus, for Rosenthal, a person may be either consciously conscious of the tree or unconsciously conscious of the tree; being conscious of the tree implies neither consciousness nor its absence – it only implies that the subject has an intentional state directed at the tree. Given this, we must be careful not to be misled in the way we hear Rosenthal’s

slogan. Recall that according to Rosenthal, the intentional state directed at our conscious states is in fact – at least in the normal case – unconscious.⁵⁷ So in reality, his slogan should read: ‘conscious states are states we are unconsciously conscious of’. This more accurate representation of Rosenthal’s view is not nearly as intuitively attractive: to the extent that we have any intuitive understanding of what is meant by it, it just strikes us as odd (and probably false).

I conclude that McGinn can fend off the challenge presented by Rosenthal’s account of immediate awareness as an unconscious phenomenon simply by insisting that, as an aspect of a conscious state, it must be a conscious phenomenon. This line of response can be backed by the straightforward claim that our knowledge of such immediate awareness is first-person, not third-person, knowledge, that is to say, knowledge distinctive of conscious phenomena, not unconscious phenomena.

A more difficult challenge may be posed by Brentano’s account of inner awareness. According to Brentano, our immediate awareness of our conscious states is built into those very states, but it is nonetheless an intentional phenomenon. More specifically, a mental state is conscious in virtue of being intentionally directed at itself. Thus, when x consciously thinks that Atlanta is the capital of Georgia, x ’s thought is intentionally directed *both* at Atlanta’s being the capital of Georgia *and* at itself. This is different from Rosenthal’s account, in that the immediate awareness of our conscious states is conceived as integral to them, not as grounded in a separate and unconscious mental state.

At the same time, it is nonetheless a purely intentional phenomenon, and this in itself jeopardizes McGinn’s project. For if Brentano is right, then to say that x ’s thought about Atlanta exhibits inner awareness is to say something about its intentional structure, namely, that it is intentionally directed at itself. That is, Janus-faced content is just intentionally self-directed content. Again, the dependence of intentionality upon consciousness cannot be established by appeal to the Janus-faced character of conscious intentionality if this Janus-faced character can itself be reductively explained in intentional terms.

In response to this challenge, McGinn can again flatly reject the claim that the Janus-faced character of conscious intentionality is itself an intentional phenomenon. But here this line of response may be less promising than with respect to Rosenthal's challenge. It will always be open to McGinn to reject a view of Janus-faced content that does not comport well with his project; but unless there is a *reason* to reject that view, its rejection will remain *ad hoc* and unconvincing. Some philosophers reject the notion of self-directed intentionality on the ground that it is overly mysterious, but this reason is clearly unavailable to a mysterianist such as McGinn.

A better response on McGinn's part may proceed as follows. First, it is unclear whether the Brentanian account of inner awareness, or presence to the subject, is correct. But even if it is, the damage it inflicts on the thesis that intentionality is dependent upon consciousness is controllable, in that it merely forces us to restate the main point of the thesis. When we started out and asked whether intentionality might be dependent on consciousness, we did not have in mind such special intentionality as the self-directed sort. Rather, we were wondering whether ordinary, non-self-directed intentionality is dependent upon consciousness. We were wondering whether, when a person perceives a tree, her perception has the property of being intentionally directed at the tree in virtue of certain facts about consciousness. According to McGinn, it does: it has the property of being intentionally directed at the tree in virtue either of being conscious or of being interpreted by a state that is either conscious or begins a chain of interpretive states ending in a conscious state. If Brentano is right, McGinn would have to restate this last claim as follows: the perception has the property of being intentionally directed at the tree in virtue either of being intentionally directed at itself or of being interpreted by a state that is either intentionally directed at itself or begins a chain of interpretive states ending in an intentionally self-directed interpretive state. But even in this form, the claim is that ordinary, non-self-directed intentionality is dependent on consciousness. More specifically, it is dependent on the unusual, self-directed intentionality which is the mark of conscious content. Contrary to appearances, then, this concession is not that damaging to the heart of McGinn's case. A concession to Rosenthal's challenge, which does not appeal to unusual inten-

tionality, but on the contrary to the very basic intentionality featured by unconscious intentional states, would be much more damaging to McGinn. But as we saw, McGinn need not concede anything to Rosenthal's challenge.

Let me close by returning to the issue of naturalism. On the view we extracted from McGinn, conscious content has two components, an ordinary outward-looking face and an unusual inward-looking face. McGinn's concern does not pertain to the outward-looking face of conscious content. This component seems readily amenable to a naturalist treatment in terms of causal, informational, and/or teleological relations between internal states and world states. What McGinn takes to resist naturalization is the inward-looking face of conscious content: "Nothing we know about the brain, including its relations to the world, seems capable of rendering unmysterious the . . . presence *to* the subject of the object of his experience" (1988, p. 303). That we do not at present understand this presence-to-the-subject, or inner awareness, is fairly untendentious. But few philosophers are impressed by McGinn's arguments that our current intellectual predicament with respect to the phenomenon of consciousness is somehow incontrovertible and flows from certain constitutional limitations. After all, perhaps the right piece of knowledge is waiting round the corner. Perhaps we already have all the required pieces, but lack the right way of putting them together – a conceptual breakthrough, as they say. With the oddities of subatomic physics we have witnessed in the past century, can anyone reasonably exclude further unimagined discoveries?

These are straightforward, almost naïve, points to make at this stage. What I want to highlight is that McGinn's case for the dependence of intentionality upon consciousness is independent of his case for the inexplicability of consciousness, and is in itself perfectly compatible with naturalism. On McGinn's conception of conscious intentionality, what would be needed in order to *fully* naturalize intentionality is a naturalist account of the inward-looking face of conscious intentionality (i.e., inner awareness, or presence-to-the-subject). And while McGinn himself may doubt such naturalization be forthcoming, there is nothing in the conception itself to exclude it. The conception in question makes certain claims about the unique intentional structure of conscious content. It may be conjoined with

a mysterianist metaphysics of consciousness, but it may also not. There is nothing incoherent about the view that conscious intentionality is Janus-faced, but both its faces, outward- as well as inward-looking, will eventually be naturalized (even if the latter is more resistant than the former).

This is different from the situation we had with Searle. On Searle's view, the source of the asymmetry between conscious and unconscious intentionality is the intrinsic aspectuality of the former. But as we saw, if a naturalist account can be given to aspectuality, there would be no basis for denying unconscious content an aspectuality of its own. So the asymmetry *depends* on the rejection of naturalist accounts of aspectuality (hence of intrinsic intentionality). By contrast, unconscious intentionality is to be denied an inward-looking face *whether or not this inward-looking face can be naturalized*. Here the asymmetry does *not* depend on rejection of a naturalist account of the inward-looking face. Ironically, then, it is McGinn's case for the dependence of intentionality upon consciousness that allows us to see how this could be the case even if naturalism about intentionality is correct.

4. CONCLUSION: DOES INTENTIONALITY DEPEND UPON CONSCIOUSNESS?

The various arguments considered in this paper are by no means irrefutable. But they cast the thesis that intentionality is dependent upon consciousness in a much more favorable light than would be initially granted. They are good enough to merit serious consideration.

The two lines of argument we considered are to some extent similar to each other, and they suggest a certain general strategy for arguing for the dependence of intentionality upon consciousness. An argument for such dependence has two main steps. The first step is to establish an essential asymmetry between conscious and unconscious intentionality. The intentionality of conscious states must be claimed to exhibit some special property, which the intentionality of unconscious states does not. The second step is to establish that it is in virtue of this special property that conscious intentional states are inherently directed at something other than themselves;

without the property in question, nothing can be *in and of itself* about something else. These two steps pave the way for the notion that it is conscious states that bring intentionality into the world. Unconscious states derive their intentionality from conscious states, and absent conscious states there would be no intentionality for them to derive. This is a strong form of dependence: the existence of the very phenomenon of intentionality depends on the existence of consciousness.

The difference between the two lines of argument discussed in this paper is in the special property they attribute to conscious intentional states. For Searle, this is the property of being intrinsically aspectual. Searle holds that only conscious intentional states are inherently directed at their objects under one specific aspect rather than another. By contrast, McGinn is not interested in the aspectuality of conscious intentional states. For him, what sets these states apart is their property of exhibiting *inner awareness*, the fact that they present their object to their subject.

Critics may deny that conscious states have any of these properties, or that unconscious states do not, and such denial would not, *prima facie*, be all that implausible. But to my mind, nor is it *prima facie* implausible to insist that conscious states, and only conscious states, do have these (or similar) properties. The dependence of intentionality upon consciousness is an open question.

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NOTES

¹ These characterizations of intentionality and consciousness are obviously mere gestures. In this paper, I mean to discuss dependence relations between intentionality and consciousness *as these are commonly understood* in the philosophical literature on them. It is less important to me to bring out explicitly what their common understanding exactly is.

² In these and subsequent formulations, I speak of entailment relations among facts. This is somewhat problematic, since entailment relations hold, more accurately, among *propositions* or *statements*. It would have probably been better to speak of *necessitation* relations among facts. So please forgive me when I say that one fact entails another, and understand it to mean that the existence of the former necessitates the existence of the latter.

³ I qualify the two theses so as to refer to non-disjunctive and non-necessary facts, because otherwise they will be trivially true. Thus, the fact that M is intentional surely entails that either M is conscious or M is intentional, which might be conceived as a disjunctive fact regarding consciousness. It also entails that M is either conscious or not, which might be conceived as a necessary fact regarding consciousness. Entailment of such facts does not express, however, genuine dependence relations, and should therefore be ruled out. Note, furthermore, that there may be other kinds of strange “facts” regarding consciousness, whose entailment by facts regarding intentionality is not expressive of genuine dependence relations; those would have to be ruled out by introducing further qualifications. And similarly for strange “facts” regarding intentionality and their entailment by facts regarding consciousness. I thank an anonymous referee for this journal for pointing out to me the need to rule out entailments of this sort in order to capture genuine dependence relations.

⁴ By “facts regarding consciousness” (or intentionality), I mean facts regarding the existence of a conscious state (or an intentional state), i.e., such facts as that a mental state M is conscious (or intentional).

⁵ See Dretske, 1995; Tye, 1995, 2000. Other proponents of representationalism are Kirk (1994), Shoemaker (1994), Byrne (2001), and Kriegel (2002b). Different representationalists will construe differently the kind of content in question. For Tye, for instance, it is Poised Abstract Non-conceptual Intentional Content (“PANIC”). For Shoemaker, it is a sort of subject-relative content.

⁶ See Armstrong, 1968; Rosenthal, 1986, 1990, 2002. Other proponents of the this general approach to consciousness are Carruthers (1996, 2000), Lycan (1990, 1996, 2001), and probably Dennett (1991).

⁷ This seems to be, for instance, Harman’s view (see Harman 1990).

⁸ Searle’s argument has been given several overlapping presentations. I will focus on the one from Searle (1992, ch. 7). For that chapter’s predecessors, see Searle, 1990, 1991.

⁹ There are other writers who endorse the dependence of intentionality on consciousness – e.g., Horgan and Tienson (2002), Loar (2002), Galen Strawson (1994, ch. 7), Siewert (1998, ch. 7) – but I will not discuss their arguments here. In a forthcoming book, Graham, Horgan, and Tienson develop and defend a variety of dependence theses. That book will no doubt represent a seminal contribution to our understanding of the relation between intentionality and consciousness, and especially of possible dependence of the former upon the latter.

¹⁰ A similar view is propounded by Galen Strawson (1994, pp. 186–187), who writes: “Having allowed that nonexperiential states can be intentional states, one

may go on to consider whether entirely experienceless entities can be said to be in intentional states. I think not . . .”

¹¹ The understanding has to be liberal enough to count the mere *disposition*, or *capacity*, of a subject to have a certain mental state as a fact.

¹² That the accessibility must be principled, and that this amounts to M being the “sort of thing” that could be conscious, is implied by Searle here (1992, p. 153, italics original): “The idea [of certain linguists and psychologists] is that there are mental phenomena that just happen to be unconscious, but that somehow, in some way, they are *in principle* inaccessible to consciousness. They are not the sort of things that could be or could ever have been conscious. I think these recent [ideas] are mistaken.”

¹³ Searle himself says disappointingly little on the issue of modal strength. Fodor and Lepore (1994) discuss the issue more seriously, and they conclude (hesitantly) that what Searle has in mind is that “it is conceptually necessary that it is nomologically possible that any (de facto unconscious) intentional state should be conscious” (Fodor and Lepore, 1994, p. 839). Another way to formulate Searle’s thesis more rigorously may focus on the phrase “the sort of thing that . . .”. Perhaps by ‘*a* is the sort of thing that is F’, Searle means something equivalent to ‘*a* is a thing of kind K, and Ks are F’. If so, Searle’s thesis would be stated better as follows: The fact that M is intentional entails that M is a K, and Ks are possibly conscious. In the text, I will offer shortly my own suggestion for understanding Searle’s claim about potential consciousness, in terms of a mental state’s psychological possibility of being conscious.

¹⁴ In the S₄ and S₅ systems of modal logic, it is an axiom that “possibly *p*” entails “necessarily possibly *p*.” (This is not an axiom in S₃, in which “possibly” *p* may be contingently true.) This axiom is meant to apply to logical possibilities, but it may be plausibly claimed to hold of metaphysical possibilities.

¹⁵ The ameba discussion illustrates the problem at hand with respect to what is sometimes called *creature consciousness*, the property of being conscious as it applies to whole creatures or organisms, despite the fact that our interest here is in *state consciousness*, the property of being conscious as it applies to states of creatures or organisms. I allow myself this latitude because creature consciousness is most certainly analyzable in terms of state consciousness: a creature is (creature-)conscious iff it is capable of harboring mental states that are (state-)conscious.

¹⁶ Unfortunately, I will have to remain somewhat vague on what I mean by “metaphysical property.” If a logical property is a property something has in virtue of the laws of logic, then a metaphysical property is one that something has in virtue of the metaphysical nature of things. Thus, water has the *logical* property of being self-identical and the *metaphysical* property of being identical with H₂O. Obviously, it is a heady question what the difference, if any, is between these two properties. This is not something we are going to settle here. But clearly it is not necessary to settle such questions in pursuit of the topic of the present paper.

¹⁷ I am formulating (8) in the *de re* mode, but this should not make a difference to the discussion.

¹⁸ Again, this is assuming a liberal enough construal of facts. If the construal turns out to be *too* liberal, I would have to reformulate (1)–(8) in a different idiom (e.g., the idiom of propositions, rather than of facts).

¹⁹ More often, Searle uses the term “the connection principle” for the principle that all *mental* states are potentially conscious, not the principle that all *intentional* states are potentially conscious. This is a significant difference, especially given that Searle (1992, p. 130) takes some mental states – moods in particular – to lack intentionality.

²⁰ There are two crucial differences, however, between aspectuality and intensionality. First, intensionality is usually defined in terms of substitution *salva veritate*: *x*’s belief’s reference to the morning star cannot be substituted with a reference to Venus *salva veritate*. But Searle wants “aspectual shape” to apply to non-propositional content, where the concept of truth preservation has no application. For instance, when *x* perceives a table from one angle and not another, *x*’s perception of the table is directed at it “under the aspect” presented from the particular angle from which *x* is perceiving it and not others. Here there is no place for talk of truth-preserving substitution, although there may be place to talk of veridicality-preserving substitution. Second, intensionality is defined not only in terms of truth-preserving substitution but also in terms of existential generalization: *x*’s perception of a star does not entail the existence of a star which *x* perceives. But this aspect of intensionality is no part of Searle’s notion of aspectual shape. So aspectuality is both wider and narrower than intensionality. Moreover, intensionality is often reserved only to the linguistic reports of mental states, not the mental states themselves.

²¹ Searle does not put much stock in token-identity theories when applied to mental states in general, or to conscious states in particular. See Searle 1992: 40. But apparently he does uphold token-identity for the restricted class of unconscious mental states.

²² According to Searle, talk of intentionality without aspectuality is merely metaphorical. He distinguishes *original* from *as-if* intentionality. The former must be aspectual. I call the former kind genuine intentionality, in order to avoid the conflation of the present distinction, between genuine and metaphorical intentionality, with the original/derivative distinction, which will become important later on.

²³ More precisely, what has enjoyed this status since Chisholm’s work on intentionality (see especially Chisholm, 1957, ch. 11) is the claim that intentional states are those states that are intensional, or more accurately, those states that are reported by intensional sentences. As I noted in footnote 20, aspectuality is very similar to intensionality – so much so that a similar status should belong to (P2).

²⁴ He writes (1992, p. 156): “When I say of someone who is asleep that he believes that George Bush is president of the United States, or when I say of someone who is awake that he has an unconscious but repressed hatred of his father, I am speaking quite literally.”

²⁵ By “explanatory” I mean something like this: something is explanatory just in case citing its occurrence is useful in explaining certain phenomena. Unconscious states are usefully cited in the explanation of behavior, so they are explanatory.

²⁶ Following Dretske (1981), I understand informational relations in terms of nomic dependency: x carries information on y iff the occurrence of x is nomically dependent on y , that is, iff the laws of nature are such that y is a necessary condition for the occurrence of x .

²⁷ See Quine, 1960, ch. 2.

²⁸ A similar appeal to the inscrutability of reference is made by Horgan and Tienson (2002), according to whom only conscious intentional states are directed at objects in a “scrutable” way.

²⁹ Or if there is a reason, it is Searle’s burden to provide it.

³⁰ The view I am now going to discuss used to be seriously entertained by George Graham. He does not hold it anymore, but the view he described and motivated before me (in conversation) is coherent and plausible, so I am going to discuss it precisely the way Graham thought of it.

³¹ This is something Searle himself likes to emphasize, for instance here (1992, p. 158): “Behavioral evidence concerning the existence of mental states . . . , no matter how complex, always leaves the aspectual [intensional] character of intentional states underdetermined.”

³² It may be objected to this framework that behavior consequent upon a human having a conscious thought about the presence of a whale – a thought whose content is determinate, according to the view we are considering – does not exhibit any more sensitivity to the difference between whales and undetached-whale-parts than unconscious ones. This is indeed a challenge for this view. In its defense, I can only offer the rejoinder George Graham once suggested to me. The idea is to claim that while unconscious content is necessarily posited on explanatory grounds solely, conscious content can be ascribed on other grounds, namely, the fact that it is *immediately given* to the subject. Unconscious states are posited only on explanatory grounds, so if the explanation of response to whales is the same as the explanation of response to undetached-whale-parts, the information carried by the internal state causing this response must be indeterminate between the two. But conscious states are not posited on explanatory grounds solely. They are also posited on the basis of one’s immediate awareness of them. This notion will be better clarified in the next section, when we discuss a similar observation, due to McGinn.

³³ The argument for (9) is straightforward: If M is intentional, then M is aspectual; if M is unconscious, then M is not aspectual (by the phenomenon of inscrutability); therefore, if M is unconscious, then M is not intentional; and therefore, if M is intentional, then M is conscious.

³⁴ This is to be expected, since that view, like Searle’s, offers us no account of what makes a conscious thought that the whale is a mammal a thought about the whale and not about nearby metaphysical freaks.

³⁵ Searle calls his view of on the mind-body problem “biological naturalism” (1992, p. 1), but he also explicitly rejects the entire project of naturalizing content

(see Searle, 1992, pp. 49–52), and therefore the whole naturalist approach to intentionality.

³⁶ The page numbers will refer to the reprint of McGinn's article in Block et al. (1997).

³⁷ See Grice, 1957, 1969. Other proponents of the distinction are Searle (1983, ch. 1), Cummins (1979), Schiffer (1982), and Dretske (1988 ch. 3). Opponents are Ziff (1967) and Millikan (1984, ch. 3).

³⁸ Grice's analysis of the specific intentions involved in the derivation of intentionality from thought to language is quite complex. The speaker must utter "*p*" with (i) the intention that her audience form the belief that *p*, (ii) the intention that her audience recognize that she has the intention that they form the belief that *p*, and (iii) the intention that the audience form the belief that *p* partly on the basis of recognizing that she has the intention that they form the belief that *p*.

³⁹ Likewise, the intentionality of repressed envy derives from the usefulness of ascribing it to the enviously behaving person. That is to say, this and other points I illustrate in the text with examples of tacit intentional states apply also to repressed sub-conscious states and whatever other sorts of unconscious states there may be.

⁴⁰ McGinn does not explicitly commit to this view, and it is not all that clear that he is implicitly committed to it. But I am trying to flesh out a line of thought that starts with McGinn's views and leads to the thesis we are interested in, i.e., that intentionality is dependent on consciousness.

⁴¹ See mainly Dennett, 1987.

⁴² McGinn sees the main reasoning in favor of this assumption as based in what he calls the "medium conception" of consciousness: The consciousness of conscious states is merely a medium of representation. If we accept that the representational content of a representation is independent of the medium of representation, it would follow that the consciousness of conscious states is independent of their representational content; that is, that the consciousness of a conscious state does not make a difference to the representational content of that state. This means that the representational content of conscious states is the same as it would be if they were non-conscious states. But McGinn rejects the medium conception.

⁴³ Thus, it may very well be that Graham's notion of the "immediate givenness" of conscious content – mentioned in note 32 above – is another articulation of the same idea.

⁴⁴ The classics here are Brentano (1874), Husserl (1928), and Sartre (1937, 1943). But the issue has been also taken up by Brough (1972), Gurwitsch (1985), Smith (1986), Frank (1995), Zahavi (1999), and many others. Similar observations can be found, however, also among psychologists (e.g., Natsoulas, 1996), and recently, among analytic philosophers as well – see, for instance, Levine's discussion of the self-presenting character of conscious experience (2001, ch. 3), or Kriegel's (2002a, 2003) discussion of the permanent implicit self-awareness involved in it.

⁴⁵ The view is first introduced in Section 7 of chapter II (“Inner Consciousness”) in Book 2, which is entitled “A Presentation and the Presentation of that Presentation are Given in One and the Same Act.” Consider also: “[Every conscious act] includes within it a consciousness of itself. Therefore, every [conscious] act, no matter how simple, has a double object, a primary and a secondary object. The simplest act, for example the act of hearing, has as its primary object the sound, and for its secondary object, itself, the mental phenomenon in which the sound is heard” (Brentano, 1874, pp. 153–154). I defend Brentano’s view in Kriegel (2003).

⁴⁶ For a fuller discussion of the differences between Brentano and Husserl on this matter, see Zahavi, 1998.

⁴⁷ This is not a distinction between outer senses and the inner sense, but between awareness of whatever object one is primarily consumed with and a subtle, background awareness of that awareness. Thus, when one explicitly introspects one’s experience of a tree, one has an object-awareness of one’s experience and an act-awareness of one’s introspecting of one’s experience in that very act.

⁴⁸ It is an independently interesting question what is the *right* way, or *best* way, to articulate the observation – a question we shall not take up here.

⁴⁹ This could play out in several ways. In Rosenthal’s approach, which I discuss in the text, inner awareness is construed as an aspect of a conscious state bestowed on it by a separate unconscious state. In Gennaro’s (1996) approach, it is an unconscious part of the conscious state.

⁵⁰ Rosenthal, 1986, 1990, 2004.

⁵¹ Rosenthal often describes this by saying that M^* is non-inferential, in the sense that no conscious inference on the subject’s part is involved in the formation of M^* . In earlier writings (e.g., Rosenthal, 1986), Rosenthal required that M^* be non-inferential and non-observational. More recently, he has dropped the requirement that M^* be non-observational (see, e.g., Rosenthal, 1993). The fact that M^* constitutes *immediate* awareness of M is captured fully in the fact that M^* is non-inferential.

⁵² And indeed in §1 we mentioned Rosenthal’s Higher-Order Monitoring Theory of consciousness as an example of rejecting (2).

⁵³ McGinn may also deny that immediate awareness is the same phenomenon as presence-to-the-subject. He may then hold that whether or not conscious states involve immediate awareness, they also, and independently, involve presence-to-the-subject, and the latter is irreducible to unconscious intentionality. I am not going to pursue this line of retort here, because my impression is that, with such subtle phenomenological observations as McGinn’s claim that conscious content is Janus-faced, the articulation of the phenomenon targeted cannot proceed independently of its theorization. The theory of the phenomenon and the mere description of the phenomenon are necessarily intertwined in our attempt to conceptualize, or articulate to ourselves, the nature of the phenomenon. So rejecting the challenge presented by Rosenthal’s *theory* of immediate awareness by claiming that the latter is the phenomenon McGinn is trying to describe may

be a “lazy” way of dismissing the description-cum-theory package offered by Rosenthal.

⁵⁴ For arguments against Rosenthal’s theory, see Aquila, 1990; Natsoulas, 1993; Gennaro, 1996; Byrne, 1997; Carruthers, 2000. For arguments against all theories appealing to higher-order monitoring, and consequently against Rosenthal’s particular version, see Rey, 1988; Dretske, 1993; Goldman, 1993; Block, 1995; Thomasson, 2000; Moran, 2001; Lurz, 2001; Kriegel, 2002a, 2003. McGinn would be free to pick any specific line of attack he may wish to employ.

⁵⁵ Of all the critical discussions of Rosenthal’s account I listed in the previous note, Goldman’s (1993) and mine (Kriegel, 2003) take this particular line of criticism.

⁵⁶ This slogan is backed by a specific account of the difference between intransitive consciousness (“being conscious”) and transitive consciousness (“being conscious of something”). The details are unimportant to the present discussion.

⁵⁷ Or the account will result in infinite regress.

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Department of Philosophy
Brown University
Box 1918
Providence RI 02912
USA
E-mail: theuriah@yahoo.com

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