

Thought and consciousness

"language of thought hypothesis"

the thoughts which have that language as their medium are never brought to consciousness. we are never aware of thinking in any such language, but only in the natural languages we use to speak.

Searle argues that

there can in principle be no such thing as an entity which is both literally a **thought** and totally **unconscious**. According to the "**connection principle**," there is an inherent connection between something's being a thought and its being conscious.

CRTT is a form of this language of thought hypothesis.

There are **deep connections** between **consciousness, subjectivity, and intentionality**.

unconscious mental states, such as one's unconscious belief that water quenches thirst, have intentionality: in this case, the belief represents, is directed at, or is about the fact of water's being thirst-quenching.

But as with all intentional states, such unconscious states have "**aspectual shape**," in that they represent whatever it is they represent in some particular aspects rather than others.

Our common belief represents the fact that water is a thirst-quencher, and not necessarily as the fact that H₂O is a thirst-quencher. for the person who has the belief may know nothing about H₂O, and thus not know that **water = H₂O**.

aspectual shape is not something that can in principle be analyzed in exclusively **objective, third-person neurophysiological or behavioral terms**.

Searle concludes that it is only from the first-person point of view of the subjective experience of the person having the belief that the meaning of the person's words can be conclusively determined.

It is important to note that Searle's claim isn't merely that we can't know for certain from the external, objective point of view what the meaning of the words is, but rather that there would be no fact of the matter at all what those words mean if the only evidence that existed was the external, third-person evidence alone.

Here Searle appeals to a famous set of arguments given by a behaviorist philosopher **W. V. O. Quine** (1908-2000) for what Quine called the **indeterminacy of translation**.

There is nothing in the speaker's behavior alone that could possibly favor one system of translation over the other, Quine argues, provided that each system of translation was thorough enough to account for all of the speaker's behavior. translation is entirely a pragmatic affair, a matter of which translation we find more useful. Neither interpretation is objectively closer to the truth than the other.

The third-person, external evidence just isn't by itself enough to determine meaning - or, in particular, to determine aspectual shape. Searle insists that clearly there are more to the mind than behavior - there is also the subjective, first-person point of view of the conscious subject – and from this point of view a person does know something.

If objective, third-person facts are not enough to determine aspectual shape, then they are also not enough to determine the content of an intentional mental state like a belief that water quenches thirst.

If there is such an inherent connection there just couldn't be states which were literally mental and literally had intentionality, and yet were always in principle unconscious. That is, there couldn't be states of the sort the-"**language of thought**" hypothesis postulates: beliefs, desires, and so on, formulated in **Mentalese**.

In Searle's view, if we are never conscious of such thoughts, we never really have them at all.

defenders of the CRTT could reply by suggesting that there is no reason to accept Searle's suggestion that an appeal to the subjective, first-person perspective of consciousness is necessary to account for the determinate meaning of our thoughts and expressions, for **they just wouldn't have any determinate meaning in the first place.**

This would seem to be a further extreme and counter-intuitive way to avoid Searle's conclusion. it brings us to the issue of whether materialism can account for what seem to be the **obvious facts about meaning or intentionality.**