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Vili Lähteenmäki

Essays on Early Modern Conceptions of Consciousness: Descartes, Cudworth, and Locke

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ABSTRACT

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The present study investigates conceptions of consciousness in three early modern philosophers: René Descartes, Ralph Cudworth, and John Locke. It consists of four essays: two on Descartes and one each on Cudworth and Locke. They are preceded by an introductory essay.

The introduction explains the motivation for the thesis as a whole, sketches the relevant historical and philosophical context, outlines the main ideas of the individual essays, and discusses a methodological issue concerning an interpretative starting point specific to an inquiry of historical conceptions of consciousness. The first essay investigates the roles Descartes assigns to consciousness in various contexts and argues that he subscribes to three types: rudimentary consciousness, reflexive consciousness, and consciousness achieved by deliberate, attentive reflection. The second delineates a notion of animal experience that Descartes recognizes as being at issue as he develops his view of animals. It is argued that a tension between what Descartes would otherwise regard as a plausible feature of animal experience and the kind of modifications his concept of matter can allow becomes apparent in the animal-machine doctrine, and that Descartes is well motivated to sit on the fence as to granting or denying animals' phenomenal experiences. The third essay argues that Cudworth distinguishes between two types of consciousness based on whether the self-relation established in consciousness suffices for genuine moral agency. The fourth essay distinguishes between two types of reflection in Locke, on the one hand, and between the two types of reflection and consciousness, on the other. It is argued further that Locke subscribes to a degree conception of consciousness in allowing great variation in the ways ideas are experientially present to the mind.

Keywords: Descartes, Cudworth, Locke, consciousness, awareness, self-consciousness, self-awareness, subjectivity, philosophy of mind, history of philosophy, early modern philosophy, philosophical psychology.

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I Lähteenmäki, Vili. 2007. Orders of Consciousness and Forms of Reflexivity in Descartes. In S. Heinämaa, V. Lähteenmäki, and P. Remes (Eds.) Consciousness: From Perception to Reflection in the History of Philosophy, Dordrecht: Springer, 177-201.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The thesis consists of four essays on the concept of consciousness in early modern philosophy. It includes two essays on René Descartes and one essay each on Ralph Cudworth and John Locke. By exploring consciousness in the various contexts in which these philosophers make use of it and in its relation to such features as phenomenality, reflexivity and subjecthood, the essays aim at providing a more detailed and accurate view of the three philosophers' conceptions of consciousness than is thus far available – and it is to be hoped that through shedding light on their views of consciousness the thesis taken as a whole manages to advance our understanding of the early modern philosophy of mind more generally.

"The words 'conscious' and 'consciousness' are umbrella terms that cover a wide variety of mental phenomena. Both are used with a diversity of meanings, and the adjective 'conscious' is heterogeneous in its range…"[1] This is a concise expression as to the difficulties of providing a neat definition of consciousness. But it is not the case that there are no definitions of consciousness around. What we have is an abundance of detailed characterizations of different types of consciousness to correspond to the wide variety of mental phenomena that are taken to fall under 'conscious' and 'consciousness'.

The *problem* with consciousness can be expressed by means of two questions: what is consciousness and what makes consciousness possible? In our contemporary philosophy of mind the emphasis has been on the latter, and the material concerning the former has been produced mainly on the side. Simplifying a little, for the now-prevalent paradigm of naturalistic monism consciousness poses itself as a problem – as something that needs to be shown to belong to the same causal order with the rest of *natural* phenomena. In pursuit of this aim several types of consciousness have been distinguished and the distinctions have been drawn by specifying various features of

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1 Van Gulick, Robert, "Consciousness", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2009 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/consciousness/>.

consciousness that relate in different ways to the explanatory aims of naturalism according to the degree of compliance or resistance to naturalization.

There is a conspicuous disparity between our contemporary and early modern philosophers. First, the early moderns show much less interest in accounting for what makes consciousness come about.[2] Second, they provide us with only a few, broad characterizations of consciousness. This latter point is striking in that consciousness is nonetheless in an important place for a number of early modern authors. The authors studied in this work – Descartes, Cudworth, and Locke – all agree that insofar as something is to be counted as a mental phenomenon, it must be perceived by the mind: the mind has to be conscious of it. When this commitment to a quite central role for consciousness is taken together with the lack of specificity in describing *what* they take consciousness to be, it appears a tempting and worthwhile task to endeavour to analyse their conceptions of consciousness. It is thus on the former question, what is consciousness, that the present work concentrates.

This expository task is philosophical rather than merely historical in that Descartes, Cudworth, and Locke are treated as being ultimately concerned with the consistency of their uses of consciousness. Accordingly, in interpreting their views I am concerned with providing a consistent reconstruction that has due regard for the following five things: each author's own theoretical context and his aims within it, his explicit characterizations of consciousness, different contexts in which consciousness is applied, roles consciousness is appointed in these contexts, and features of consciousness that gain prominence in fulfilling those roles.

My task in this introduction is to set the stage for the interpretations proposed in the essays, which will involve discussing four issues that, each in its own way, is intended to motivate and elucidate the present work. I start in the first section by making a few remarks about how the composition of the thesis is intended to agree with the specific nature of early modern views of consciousness as the object of inquiry. In the second section, I sketch the historical and philosophical context in which our philosophers develop their views of consciousness. Properly situating them into the early modern context is not within the scope of this work, but it is helpful to indicate the broad background against which their quite detailed views of different types and levels of consciousness and reflexivity are considered. In the third section, I outline the main ideas of the essays through pointing out different contexts in which consciousness figures, different explanatory roles it has in these contexts, and the features by which different ways of being conscious are characterized. The fourth section touches upon a problem regarding determining the

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[2] This topic was, however, extensively discussed in the Clarke-Collins correspondence (Samuel Clarke, *The Works*, vol. III, London 1738), the background for which was Locke's allowance for the possibility of thinking matter. See Marleen Rozemond, "The Achilles Argument and the Nature of Matter in the Clarke Collins Correspondence" in *The Achilles of Rationalist Psychology*, (eds.) Thomas M. Lennon and Robert J. Stainton (Springer: Dordrecht, 2008): 159-175.

characteristics of consciousness. As I explain in the first section, our authors do not expressly set out to explain consciousness as a phenomenon. This means that it is not without some difficulty that the texts reveal features that are relevant in describing consciousness. Certain interpretive commitments have to be made and in order to prepare the reader it is appropriate to be explicit about such heuristic commitments that have underpinned the interpretive action.

1.1 A Few Remarks about the Topic and Composition of the Thesis

The reason for opting for Descartes, Cudworth, and Locke to be examined in the thesis is quite straightforward. The three thinkers all avail themselves of consciousness in characterizing thought. Briefly put, according to them, the subject of thought is always conscious of its occurring thought. I thus take my cue from an observation of what is shared by Descartes, Cudworth, and Locke on a fairly general level. At the same time, they represent interestingly different strands of thought in view of the 'rationalist', 'Platonist', and 'empiricist' labels traditionally assigned to them.[3]

It should be noted at the outset that the four chapters are self-contained research articles where the investigation proper is about the details of the three philosophers' respective conceptions of consciousness.[4] The independence of the four parts conforms to my aim to address the topic so that the intricacies that arise from the surveyed philosophers' specific concerns could be duly concentrated on. Accordingly, the accounts put forth in the essays rely on relatively detailed interpretation of passages crucial in each thinker's own framework. I will not engage in a general discussion of different interpretive approaches, but I contend that studying the three thinkers by means of separate essays in which attention is given to the immediate contexts where their conceptions of consciousness are developed is appropriate and beneficial given the nature of consciousness as an object of study.

To see the point, consider the following. It is perfectly plausible to inquire into, for instance, the role of the will in cognition in early modern philosophy and to expect to be able to resort to various philosophers' explicit, more or less worked-out accounts of the will. But this is not the case with consciousness.

[3] There are of course other early modern philosophers whose views of consciousness merit being studied. A number of them are in one way or another taken into consideration in the essays.

[4] As indicated at the beginning, the thesis includes two essays on Descartes. One expounds Descartes' understanding of different orders of consciousness and types of reflexivity. The other is concerned with the conundrum of Descartes' position on the feeling capacities of animals. These essays complement one another: clarifying Descartes' understanding of different types of consciousness provides us with some useful conceptual tools for assessing his view of animal sensation, while on the other hand, delineating his view of animal sensation sheds light on his overall conception of consciousness.

Consciousness is not among the predominant topics of the era – which a glance at various textbooks on early modern philosophy will readily corroborate. There is a good reason for this. Consciousness does not lend itself to an analysis that takes it that the studied texts put forth a theory of it as a starting point. In other words, it is not the case that the authors of these texts have as their starting point that consciousness requires an explanation in its own right. When the surveyed philosophers appoint a theoretical function to consciousness, they aim at something other than an analysis of consciousness *per se*. This means that for each philosopher consciousness figures in *explanatory roles* rather than as an *explanandum*, let alone one of which it would have been a commonplace to expressly put forth a theory. Having various explanatory roles means that consciousness finds uses in different contexts. This, for its part, suggests that the philosophers subscribe to more than one notion or type of consciousness, or that in different contexts consciousness is characterized by different features. Given these background conditions for the present investigation, it seems to me that the described approach best ensures respecting them.

There are two further grounds for studying the surveyed philosophers separately. First, by composing the four parts of the thesis at once as research articles I have been able to take part in different scholarly discussions of conceptions of consciousness of Descartes, Cudworth, and Locke. Second, to the extent that something like an "early modern conception of consciousness" can plausibly be extracted, the prospect of proper understanding of the issue in its full complexity lies in a piecemeal approach of taking into account the particular contexts and the different aims of different philosophers. And it is the case that consciousness has been a relatively neglected subject in scholarly studies of the early modern philosophy of mind. The reason for this, I believe, is the already mentioned point that consciousness itself forms no separate and overarching topic in the early modern period.

This last remark prompts a further consideration. Namely, it is striking that in our contemporary philosophy of mind especially Descartes, and Locke to somewhat lesser degree, are frequently portrayed as central figures responsible for the current prominence of consciousness. This oddity has not been without reaction. For instance, Lilli Alanen discusses the "myth of the Cartesian myth", one tenet of which is that for Descartes consciousness is the paradigmatic mental phenomenon in a similar manner that it is for the contemporary philosophy of mind.[5] She lists the following as neglected but interesting and important features of the Cartesian notion of thought: "its connection with speech, its capacity for conceptualization, its intentional or representational nature, and its power of judging", and points out that consciousness should be understood as a *precondition* for such capacities and

[5] Lilli Alanen, *Descartes's Concept of Mind*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2003): 81, see also 45.

powers as "the capacity to distinguish the true from the false" and the "the power to assent or deny, pursue or avoid".[6]

The present work is in accordance with this view in that it neither argues nor presumes that consciousness exhausts the mental for Descartes or that it is the sole defining feature of the Cartesian conception of thought. As to the place and role of consciousness in Descartes, I set forth from a view that since consciousness is undoubtedly an integral part of the Cartesian conception of thought as well as linked with other characteristics of the Cartesian conception of thought (such as those Alanen enumerates), it is an interesting feature of it, as well as understudied in its own right. Indeed, one task of the essays on Descartes is to shed light on the relations between different types of consciousness and such mental capacities as judging and conceptualization.

Roughly the same point about the place of consciousness can be generalized to concern the thesis as a whole: while it is the case that consciousness is not an issue that early modern philosophers would have routinely discussed, it figures in the theories of the surveyed thinkers as an element in arguments and examples. I have taken these states of affairs as creating a need for a closer investigation and clarification of their understanding of consciousness.

It will become clear in the thesis that for none of our philosophers does consciousness signify unspecified awareness of occurrent mental goings-on, but that various types of reflexivity, different kinds of relations to self or the subject of thought, passivity and activity of thought, content of thought, and such features as obscurity, clarity, vivacity, or faintness of thought/perception/ideas are aspects that define their overall conceptions of consciousness. Investigating different contexts in which consciousness is a relevant notion and taking into account aspects of the aforementioned kind leads to several distinctions and qualifications.

1.2 Philosophical and Historical Context

In *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Stephen Menn writes: "We note the consummation and disappearance of the expectation of a new philosophy in the emergence of the mechanical philosophy."[7] Descartes in many ways shaped the early modern framework through mechanizing the lower, vegetative and sensitive, functions of the soul, while allotting cognitive

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6 Alanen 2003: 82. Alanen's emphasis on conceptualization, intentionality, and judging does not mean that she would dismiss consciousness as plainly inconsequential; see pp. 99-101.

7 Stephen Menn, "The Intellectual Setting" in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, (eds.) Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 33-86: 67.

power to the immaterial mind.[8] He thereby created a dualistic scheme with which the contemporary philosophy of mind is still in various ways occupied. While a rupture in terms of radical abandonment of Aristotelianism by Descartes[9] and the creation of a new paradigm without much help from the tradition has been duly questioned,[10] it is still the case that by subscribing to a concept of matter as extended – with size, shape, motion, and position – and by offering mechanistic explanations of what was before explained by resorting to sensitive and vegetative souls, Descartes reformed the principles according to which animal and human cognitive powers were to be dealt with.[11]

In the Cartesian framework, human mentality effectively eludes description in mechanical terms, whereas inanimate nature and animal action are subjected to mechanical explanation in their entirety. The incompatibility of mechanical and mental descriptions means that matter cannot bring about the phenomena that belong to the mind. The discussions of consciousness by the studied philosophers take place broadly within the framework of matter/mind dualism and mechanization. The associated early modern project of accounting for the relation between mind and world is sometimes understood as profoundly epistemological.[12] It is undoubtedly epistemological in the sense that it involves a quest for grounded knowledge of nature, but the project as a whole is centred on questions pertaining to the scope and powers of the mind, the cognitive faculties. Memory, imagination, understanding, will, and sense gain prominence first and foremost in metaphysical considerations.[13]

The functioning of these faculties is the functioning of the mind. The faculties are not autonomous and separate from one another, and there is no hierarchy of souls to correspond to the different faculties. For Descartes, acts of

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8 For a helpful survey, see Daniel Garber and Margaret Wilson, "Mind-Body Problems" in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, (eds.) Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 833-867.

9 On Descartes' understanding of the originality of his own system, see *Discourse* I, AT VI 9-10; CSM I 115; Letter 1638, AT II 346-347; CSMK 119. Here and hereafter references are to *Œuvres de Descartes*, 12 vols. Edited by Charles Adam & Paul Tannery. Paris: Vrin, 1964-1976 (indicated by AT). Translations are from *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985-1991. Vols. 1-2 edited and translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff & Dugald Murdoch (indicated by CSM I and CSM II), vol. 3 with Anthony Kenny (indicated by CSMK).

10 See, e.g., Menn 1998 and Marleen Rozemond, *Descartes's Dualism*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

11 See, e.g., Tad Schmaltz, "The Science of Mind" in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*, (ed.) Donald Rutherford, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006): 136-169.

12 Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

13 Since Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* a number of scholars have emphasized the point that the early moderns were not primarily concerned with epistemology, as Rorty maintains, but metaphysics. Especially for rationalists such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche, intellectual knowledge that could be "gained independently of the senses, provides the framework for constructing a new theory of nature"; it is the theory of faculties that "is an important key to theories of knowledge in the seventeenth century." Gary Hatfield, "The Cognitive Faculties" in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, (eds.) Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 953-1002: 953.

the cognitive faculties are different modes of thought of one soul or mind. This is also the case with the faculty of sense, which, in the scholastic tradition, was understood as essentially depending on bodily sense organs. Although body is still seen as partaking in sensory processes in important ways, Descartes maintains, "it is the soul which has sensory perceptions, and not the body."[14] The Cartesian view is that we are conscious of all occurring thought: "By the term 'thought', I understand everything which we are aware of as happening within us, in so far as we have awareness of it."[15] And it is by virtue of consciousness that the subject of thought recognizes different acts and states as the kind of mental acts and states they are, and as being her acts and states.

Let us now consider Cudworth and Locke's respective positions in relation to mechanical philosophy on the one hand, and cognitive faculties on the other. Cudworth largely shares the dualistic view with Descartes, but disagrees with him by arguing for the incapability of matter to bring about such phenomena as Descartes attributes to it. Cudworth emphasizes that matter is *essentially* pure passivity. Accordingly, he describes the incorporeal as activity, which he takes to include local motion. His notion of activity thus includes both thinking and the power of moving matter.

Cudworth argues for an incorporeal instrument that is responsible for the orderly motion of matter, which he calls "Plastic Nature."[16] It is present and operative in everything that is alive, i.e. can (minimally) move itself. It has been suggested that Cudworth attempts to reintroduce Aristotelian forms in the guise of Plastic Nature.[17] But this is a misinterpretation, for he insists on a great difference between mind and matter, and expressly dismisses hylomorphism by way of accusing Aristotle of failing to properly discern the limits of mind and matter.[18] Moreover, Cudworth does not discuss mechanical philosophy only to criticize it. He explicitly accepts mechanical explanations of natural phenomena, albeit with qualifications.

He dissents from the explanatory framework generally associated with mechanical explanation. For Cudworth, the higher layers of reality are explanatory of the lower, whereas mechanism is introduced as explanatory of higher-level phenomena so that higher phenomena are analysed in terms of lower-level phenomena. Cudworth is pulled by two forces: he wants to acknowledge the comprehensibility of mechanical explanations as contrasted to the Aristotelian 'occult' forms and qualities,[19] but he is not willing to concede that matter should be regarded as causally responsible for the phenomena that it appears to be.[20] Under the pulls of these forces he introduces Plastic Nature as that which is accountable for the ordained course of events in nature. We can

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14 AT VI, 109; CSM I, 164.
15 AT VIIIA, 8; CSM I, 195.
16 TIS, 150 and *passim*. Here and hereafter references to Ralph Cudworth, *True Intellectual System of The Universe* (London, 1678) are indicated by TIS.
17 David Cunning, "Systematic Divergences in Malebranche and Cudworth", *Journal of The History of Philosophy* 41 (3), (2003): 343-363: 346.
18 TIS, 55.
19 TIS, 48.
20 TIS, 163.

give comprehensible and useful mechanistic descriptions of natural events, while remaining committed that, in themselves, matter and mechanism harbour no power to bring about those events. In arriving at a better understanding of natural phenomena through mechanical explanations, we in fact learn how the plastic principle works: "*Laws* of *Nature* concerning *Motion*, are really nothing else, but a *Plastick Nature*, acting upon the Matter of the whole Corporeal Universe."[21] In Platonic fashion, Cudworth's explanatory approach is top-down. The nobler causes the inferior.

As to the cognitive faculties, Cudworth regards sense as inferior and, to an extent, subservient to intellect. Cudworth is concerned with the human capacity to comprehend the reasons behind one's actions.[22] In this context he also makes use of his notions of consciousness. Humans are in general conscious of their sensations and actions alike. But whether or not we are conscious of our own actions in an appropriate way determines whether we qualify as genuine moral agents entitled to praise and blame. Consciousness serves for Cudworth as a proper cause and explanation of human actions, moral and otherwise. Cudworth and Descartes differ in their views of the explanatory significance of mechanism, but we will see that within the realm of mental phenomena their ways of accounting for consciousness in terms of various reflexive relations are not very distant from one another.

Locke, for his part, claims to be unconcerned with mind/matter dualism and mechanical explanation: "I shall not at present meddle with the Physical Consideration of the Mind; or trouble myself to examine, wherein its Essence consists."[23] He focuses on (what might somewhat anachronistically be called) the psychological realm, arguing that whether the existence of human understanding depends on immaterial or material substance is beyond our knowledge and that human understanding can well be explored without taking a stand on the issue. His position is motivated by what he takes to be an irresolvable epistemic difficulty in determining what substance can support the capacity for thinking.[24] What sets Locke clearly apart from Descartes and Cudworth is that while he thinks that our knowledge does not reach to real essences, the other two subscribe to innate ideas by virtue of which we can attain knowledge of real essences.

Nevertheless, we can see that Locke operates against the background of mechanical philosophy. He maintains that we have the ideas of matter and thought, but by contemplation of them we cannot know whether matter can under favourable conditions support thought.[25] All ideas *qua* ideas are on the same level with one another, no *idea* can guide us to real essences of things. He also maintains that to the extent our knowledge reaches, we should not treat

21 TIS, 151.
22 TIS, 158.
23 *E*: 1.1.2, 43. Here and hereafter references to John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (ed.) Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) are indicated by *E* for *Essay* followed by book, chapter, and section number and page reference to this edition.
24 *E*: 4.3.6, 539-543.
25 *E*: 4.3.6, 540-541.

more objectionable that "GOD can, if he pleases, superadd to Matter a Faculty of Thinking, than that he should superadd to it another substance."[26] [27] Be the substance what it may, it is patent that we think. And for Locke, what the mind is "employed about" in thinking are ideas.[28] Ideas are attained either by virtue of external sensation or reflection, and our knowledge does not reach beyond the ideas we have.

Cognitive faculties, or powers of the mind, perform mental operations on ideas.[29] Locke, like Descartes, is clear that 'faculties' do not "stand for some real Beings in the Soul."[30] There are no distinct agents in us, but different powers or capacities of one thinking subject. Along the lines of Descartes and Cudworth, for Locke consciousness is related to thinking so that "consciousness […] is inseparable from thinking [and] always accompanies thinking."[31] Thinking is operating on ideas, and ideas exist only insofar as they are experientially given to the subject of thought. By virtue of consciousness the subject knows different acts and states as the kind of mental acts and states they are, and as being its acts and states.

* * *

Through the issue of animal sensation we can consider the philosophical setting somewhat further. In light of Descartes' commitments discussed above, it seems clear that he must deny animal sensation in all such forms that cannot be exhaustively explained by reference to matter and mechanism, as he is clear that animals are devoid of soul(s).[32] This strongly suggests that Descartes must deny animal sensations as phenomenal experiences. In view of Descartes' role as a transitional figure between scholasticism and mechanical philosophy, it is warranted to hold him accountable for what happens to animal experience or feelings in the mechanization of animal life. What the scholastic conception (or conceptions) of animal experience is in precise terms is a substantial question in its own right, but it seems safe to make the following two observations with regard to how Descartes' view of animal sensation differs from the scholastic view(s).

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[26] *E*: 4.3.6, 541. There is extensive literature on Locke's relation to mechanism and how his remark on superaddition should be understood. For a view that Locke is not seriously committed to mechanism and is serious about the divine superaddition, see Mathew Stuart, "Locke on superaddition and Mechanism", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 6 (3) (1998): 351-379.

[27] "Wittgenstein is said to have asked his students why people used to think that the sun went around the earth. One replied: 'because it looks as if the sun goes around the earth.' To which Wittgenstein is said to have responded: 'and how would it look like if the earth went around the sun?'" (Tim Crane, *Elements of Mind* [Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001]: 67). This well captures Locke's attitude: no knowledge about what thought is like will guide us to what makes thought possible.

[28] *E*: 2.1.1, 104.

[29] See *E*: 2.9-11, 143-163 for various operations.

[30] *E*: 2.21.6, 237.

[31] *E*: 2.27.9, 335.

[32] See, e.g., AT IV, 576; CSMK, 304.

The principal difference concerns how animal sensation is to be explained, i.e., by resorting to mechanism instead of sensitive soul as the explanatory principle.

The second, less often noted, difference concerns the phenomena that the notion of animal sensation is taken to involve. It seems to be the case that in the scholastic view animals were understood to undergo sensations as experienced. Providing textual evidence for scholastic views of phenomenality of animal sensations would require a study of its own, but it is possible to support the presumption by other means. First, and quite simply, it is *plausible* to believe in the historical pervasiveness of the idea that, say, observable pain behaviour is associated with internal feelings. The burden of proof is on the one wishing to argue for the scholastics' ignorance of the existence of internal feelings.[33] Second, if the idea of an ensouled brute did not entail phenomenal feelings before Descartes' times, we cannot understand the reactions of some of his contemporaries to his view of animals simply as dissatisfaction with Descartes' replacing animal soul by mechanism as the explanatory principle, *tout court*. Let me explain this latter claim. We should take note of two strands of reactions to Descartes' insistence on the materiality of animals that prevail not only among current scholars, but among his contemporaries as well. One is about mechanism's success in explaining observable behaviour and the other is about depriving animals of feeling capacities.

Arnauld's reaction serves as an example of the first. He rephrases Descartes' view: all animals have is a body constructed in a particular manner so that through the disposition of its various organs "all the operations which we *observe* can be produced in it and by means of it."[34] He then voices a doubt:

> [A]t first sight it seems incredible that it can come about, without the assistance of any *soul*, that the light reflected from the body of a wolf onto the eyes of a sheep should move the minute fibres of the optic nerves, and that on reaching the brain this motion should spread the animal spirits throughout the nerves in the manner necessary to precipitate the sheep's flight.[35]

The question is about the explanation of animal movement, the observable behaviour. Arnauld is incredulous as to whether mechanism is sufficient as the sole explanatory principle of such complex event as a sheep's flight from a wolf. But it is events exactly of this sort that Descartes envisioned mechanism as explaining. Regarding this specific line of reaction the relevant phenomena are those pertaining to anatomy and mechanics which include such things as the

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33 Admittedly, in scholasticism the emphasis was not on phenomenality of sensory states, but on sensory states' function in sustaining the animal; and this function is manifested in the behaviour of the animal, rather than in what it is internally like for the animal to undergo sensations. But this does not have to mean an exclusion of the internal feeling. Robert Pasnau puts it: "When premodern philosophers try to explain the various forms of cognition (sensory and intellectual), they *take for granted* that they are trying to explain what we call consciousness." (Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature. A Philosophical Study of* Summa theologiae *Ia 75–89* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002]: 197; emphasis added).

34 *Fourth Set of Objections* AT VII, 205; CSM II, 144; emphasis added.

35 Ibid; emphasis added.

information transmitted from the perceptual object; reception of the perceptual stimuli; bodily processing of the stimuli in terms of recognition, estimation, etc. of the perceived object; and finally the ensuing action. For none of this, Descartes firmly maintains, are any souls needed. Proper appreciation of anatomy and mechanics will give us all that is required for a fully satisfying explanation of the observable behaviour of animals.

More's letter to Descartes exemplifies the second type of reaction. He takes animal materiality to be an "internecine and cutthroat idea that snatches away life and sensation from all animals."[36] As the conspicuous resentment at the attested materiality of animals indicates, More is concerned about the *consequences* of Descartes' doctrine as regards the moral status of animals rather than the explanatory sufficiency of mechanism as regards observable behaviour. The doctrine is described as internecine and cutthroat *because* animals are deprived the capacity to feel. If there were no concept of phenomenal feelings at play here, we could not make much sense of More's reaction.

It is hence warranted to say that, with respect to the preceding tradition, on top of revising the explanatory principle of animal sensation, Descartes is also led to reshape the *explanandum* by excluding from the notion of animal sensation an aspect that sensations are phenomenal experiences. As pointed out, he cannot allow animal sensations in any sense that cannot be exhausted by reference to mechanism, and arguably the phenomenal aspect of sensations does not lend itself to being mechanistically described. For the present work, this creates a helpful setting for inquiring into the ways in which Descartes' view of consciousness is related to the animal issue, as it seems that he is led to exclude an aspect that was previously believed to be included in animal sensation. In the secondary literature, it is a contested issue whether Descartes grants or denies animal experiences. Grounded on the presumption that Descartes is not simply ignorant of the idea that animal sensation might include a phenomenal aspect similar to human sensation, my starting point is that even if mechanizing animal life were tantamount to explaining away all cognitive states, inquiring into the notions of feeling and awareness that are *at stake* in Descartes' discussion of a mechanical explanation of animal life will be expository of his conception of consciousness.[37] I wish to note, however, that as there is certainly room for stipulation concerning the phenomena to include in animal consciousness, pursuing the Morean vein in the thesis should not be taken to suggest that themes pertinent to explaining the observable behaviour within a mechanistic scheme of things could not also be dealt with under the general rubric of 'animal consciousness'.

Animal sensation poses no similar conundrum for Cudworth and Locke, but by reflecting on their positions on the issue we can see how their views on animal experience align with their views about mechanical philosophy. As we

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[36] AT V, 243.

[37] See chapter III, *The Possibility of Animal Experience in Light of Descartes' Notions of Awareness.*

saw, Cudworth argues that nature is permeated with incorporeity. He can treat animals' cognitive capacities as dependent on their soul and maintain that they have phenomenal experiences.[38] Locke, as pointed out, insists that his theory of ideas is indifferent with respect to the substratum of thought and perception. For Locke, having sensations means having ideas, and he takes it to be reasonably clear that animals are capable of having ideas, and thus of phenomenal experiences.[39] Neither of them takes animals to be organisms whose functioning should be explained exclusively in mechanical terms. However, both maintain that while animal sensation is akin to human sensation, the former differs from the latter in being less perfect. Locke considers the difference as a matter of degree, but Cudworth takes the difference to be great enough to amount to a difference in types of consciousness. In this way, the question of animal sensation relates to their overall conceptions of consciousness.

1.3 Main Ideas of the Essays in Outline

Descartes describes consciousness as follows. Sensory perceptions of external and internal senses, imagining, doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, judging, willing, etc. are different modes of thinking.[40] This list includes simple sensations as well as rational operations of the mind. Common to all these various modes is that the subject that has them is conscious of them. Descartes says that "these all fall under the common concept of thought or perception or consciousness, and we call the substance in which they inhere a 'thinking thing' or a 'mind'."[41] Considering himself as a thinking thing, Descartes finds it certain "that there can be nothing within me of which I am not in some way aware."[42]

Cudworth tells us that consciousness is based on "that *Duplication*, that is included in the Nature of *synaisthesis, Con-sense* and *Consciousness*, which makes a Being to be Present with it self, Attentive to its own Actions, or Animadversive of them, to perceive it self to Do or Suffer, and to have a *Fruition* or *Enjoyment* of it self."[43] Moreover, he maintains that "Consciousness [is] Essential to Cogitation."[44]

According to Locke, "consciousness is the perception of what passes in a Man's own mind."[45] He too maintains that there is no thinking of which we are not conscious (though, for Locke, the mind does not necessarily always think as

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38 TIS, 158-159.
39 *E*: 2.9.11-13, 147-148.
40 See *Second Meditation* AT VII, 28; CSM II, 19; *Third Replies* AT VII, 176; CSM II, 124; *Sixth Meditation* AT VII, 76–77; CSM II, 53.
41 *Third Replies* AT VII, 176; CSM II, 124.
42 *First Replies* AT VII, 107; CSM II, 77.
43 TIS, 159.
44 TIS, 871.
45 *E*: 2.1.19, 115.

it does for Descartes): "Consciousness [...] is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it" and that "consciousness always accompanies thinking."[46] At the same time, he also plays up the point that "in every Act of Sensation, Reasoning, or Thinking, we are conscious to ourselves of our own being."[47]

These are our philosophers' principal characterizations of consciousness. They seldom go into details and thus allow for various readings. This means that an interpretation aimed at a detailed analysis of consciousness should take such characterizations as guidelines rather than attempts at a definition. They are indicative of how the surveyed philosophers *de facto* understand consciousness as well as of the contexts in which they utilize the notion, but none of them elaborate on the notion as such in more detail. It is sometimes pointed out that Descartes rarely uses the term *conscientia*, and when he does he mostly uses it as a moral notion. In Cudworth and Locke, the terminology of consciousness is much more uncomplicated than in Descartes. Instances of the term of course provide a helpful guide to concepts of consciousness, but it is important to bear in mind that our philosophers do not give express definitions of 'consciousness' or '*conscientia*' to be made use of in determining their understanding of the concept. It is therefore justified to start off from the explicit commitment the three authors share with one another, i.e., that we cannot have occurring thought of which we are not conscious in some manner, and try to see what the results of this commitment are. Their more extensive and detailed understanding of consciousness must be extracted from the contexts in which the notion is made use of. Together with the point that there are different contexts, we should note that consciousness also plays different explanatory roles in different contexts and that as a consequence different types of consciousness come into view. Let us now take a look at these contexts, roles, and types by briefly reviewing each chapter of the thesis.

In chapter 1 *Orders of Consciousness and Forms of Reflexivity in Descartes*, Descartes' principle that we are in some manner conscious of all occurring thought is taken as an incentive to examine his explanations of the diverse manifestations of human thought from infancy to adulthood and from dreaming to attentive wakefulness, the distinction between direct and reflexive thought, and the grounds for the superiority of the incorporeal over matter.

Through investigating the roles consciousness is assigned in such contexts, I argue that Descartes maintains a view of conscious mentality that runs from rudimentary consciousness through reflexive consciousness to consciousness achieved by deliberate, attentive reflection. Rudimentary consciousness means that the things experienced are phenomenally present to the mind. Paradigmatically, this is the case with infant thought. In reflexive consciousness perceptions and volitions are presented under some specific feature, e.g., as being new or remembered, or they include understanding of the object of the act. Reflexive consciousness requires maturity of the mind and is associated

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[46] *E*: 2.27.9, 335.
[47] *E*: 4.9.3, 619.

with all volitions and often with perceptions. The third type of consciousness is involved in self-knowledge and self-determination, as it is a result of attentive reflection whereby a person explicitly and deliberately considers her thoughts and/or herself. Descartes arrives at these types of consciousness through his relatively detailed views on what I call the 'intentional structure of consciousness' that underpins experience as it is given to the subject of thought.

In chapter 2 *The Possibility of Animal Experience in Light of Descartes' Notions of Awareness*, Descartes' view of animals is tackled in the Morean vein described in the previous section. I attempt to delineate one crucial notion of animal experience that Descartes recognizes as being at stake as he develops his view of animals: his notion of rudimentary consciousness provides him with resources to attribute phenomenal experience to animals. However, Descartes regarded his commitment to the complete difference in terms of resemblance of modifications of soul and matter as a compelling reason not to do so. I emphasize the importance of realizing that a tension between what Descartes would otherwise regard as a plausible notion of animal experience and the kind of modifications his concept of matter can allow becomes apparent in the animal-machine doctrine. Juxtaposing my reading with recent prominent interpretations, I conclude that Descartes sits on the fence as to granting or denying animal experience and that he is well motivated to do so.

In chapter 3 *Cudworth on Types of Consciousness*, Cudworth's distinction between passivity and activity is taken as a starting point. For Cudworth a being's presence to itself and its potency to form explicit self-relations are central features of consciousness. Discussion of self-relations is the most important context for Cudworth in view of his explicit objective of guaranteeing free action and accountability for one's deeds. In this context he is concerned with self-consciousness. A closer scrutiny reveals however that he makes use of a notion of elementary consciousness that does not provide a forceful enough self-relation that would suffice for genuine moral agency. I show that he is led to the notion of elementary consciousness – in which a phenomenal feature of thought stands out – on account of his discussion of the mental capacities of Plastic Nature, animals, dreaming, and non-attended action.

I argue that Cudworth understands the type of reflexivity that pertains to all consciousness as implicit in nature: 'duplication' is *included* in the nature of consciousness. But he draws a distinction between elementary consciousness and self-consciousness by means of content of consciousness. Content that amounts to knowing the reasons and ends of one's action makes a conscious state particularly a self-conscious state. An elementarily conscious subject does not lack totally the experience of subjecthood, but lacks an explicit awareness of being in control of her actions. The two types of consciousness serve an important function in distinguishing between genuine agents and more passive actors, on the one hand, and indicating the hierarchy between men, brutes, and the rest of the nature, on the other.

In chapter 4 *The Sphere of Experience in Locke: The Relations Between Reflection, Consciousness, and Ideas*, Locke's two central commitments underlie the investigation: i) ideas are produced in the mind only through either

(external) sensation or reflection and ii) ideas are the only immediate objects of experience. In comparison with Descartes and Cudworth, reflection is afforded a special status in Locke, since he is concerned with explaining the Understanding in empiricist terms. I argue that Locke subscribes to two notions of reflection: as an operation of the mind that functions as an origin of ideas and as an operation of the mind that has ideas as its objects. Since for Locke we cannot be conscious (of anything) except by having ideas in the mind, we cannot be conscious of the objects of the first type of reflection because it functions as a *source* of ideas, and is not *about* ideas. I argue further that consciousness is distinct from both types of reflection because it is not an act of the mind like reflecting, contemplating, compounding, abstracting, etc., are, but a specific form of knowledge: experiential knowledge by virtue of the presence of ideas in the mind.

Locke makes use of consciousness in two main contexts. In relation to personal identity (both *over* and *at* a time), he is primarily concerned with consciousness as establishing a relation to self, whereas in relation to ideas in general the relevant feature is the subject's consciousness by virtue of having ideas in the mind. It is finally argued that – somewhat different from Descartes and Cudworth who distinguish between types of consciousness – Locke subscribes to a degree conception of consciousness in terms of vivacity or obscurity and pervasiveness or swiftness of the ideas that we experience passing through the mind.

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Full grounds for these readings are offered in the essays. For now, these considerations should make us observe that expounding our philosophers' conceptions of consciousness requires taking note of what phenomena are in fact discussed under various topics and what explanatory roles consciousness receives.

The following is a summary of topics discussed in the essays in the addressing of which consciousness plays a role: reception of ideas, ideas as objects of perception, activity of Plastic Nature, our experiential relation to ourselves, dreaming, sickness, non-attended action, animal sensation, infant cognition, adult cognition, direct vs. reflexive thought, passive vs. active thought, habitual judgements, certainty, self-knowledge, self-determining, moral agency.

These topics appear quite varied, but they can be subsumed under one or more of the following three broader categories: different kinds of thinking, thinking of different kinds of beings or subjects, thinking in different kinds of states or conditions. The first category includes different modes of thought as well as distinctions between passive/active and direct/reflexive thought. The second category includes types of cognition described as 'human', 'animal', 'adult', or 'infant.' The third category includes such specific conditions that influence the mind or a person as a whole such as dreaming or sickness as well as acts like habitual judgements, which occur only when the mind or person is

in a specific type of state. Understood under these categories, the topics in which consciousness figures are not strikingly distant from one another.

Moreover, although the features by which consciousness is characterized are not exactly the same for our philosophers, in the main their conceptions can be articulated with the help of the following terms: *phenomenal* nature under which consciousness is understood, the *reflexive* characteristics of consciousness, and the manner and degree in which consciousness is understood to involve *self* or the *subject* of experience. Their conceptions turn out to be in line with one another in that they lend themselves to be described in these terms. However, bearing in mind both the polysemy of consciousness in current philosophy of mind and the lack of explicitness about it in early modern philosophy, this classification should be taken as a heuristic tool in describing their conceptions rather than as a prefixed and exhaustive list of features as though *constitutive* of consciousness. The particular ways in which the three features work in each thinker is presented and discussed in the essays, but it is appropriate to outline them here.

Self or subject of experience figures in each philosopher as an explicit subject and/or object of consciousness, or as something that is revealed as a by-product of acts of thought. In both cases, the relation to self/subject is established through consciousness.

Reflection and reflexivity are intimately linked to our philosophers' conceptions of consciousness. On the one hand, consciousness itself can be characterized as reflexive in the sense that besides being about something else, i.e., what one is conscious of, the thought or perception itself is included in the experience in the sense that a conscious state, as it were, reveals itself to itself. On the other hand, they all endorse one or more notions of reflection where it is understood as a way of relating to oneself (or one's self) or to one's thoughts either voluntarily or spontaneously. It turns out that they make use of a relatively complex set of reflexive relations.

While phenomenality is what a modern reader is likely to treat as an obvious condition for thought and sensation to count as conscious, we should be careful not to take this for granted for early modern philosophers as well. In the next section I will touch upon this issue in some detail. That said, phenomenality turns out to be one characteristic of conscious thought for our authors, in the sense that there is something it is like for the subject to undergo thoughts and perceptions. I do not argue that they subscribe to phenomenality as irreducible *qualia* or under any other highly specific description it has attained in our contemporary theories, nor do I mean that their views, for instance, of sensory perception could be exhausted by reference to phenomenality, but that they do *recognize* the circumstance that in conscious thought that what is thought about is phenomenally present to the thinker. Phenomenality can be thought of as a mark of consciousness, but just as consciousness does not explain the nature of mental phenomena as a whole, phenomenality does not explain consciousness in all its respects.

1.4 On Determining Characteristics of Consciousness

The question of the commensurability of historical and current concepts can be raised about any notion. Sometimes unravelling differences and similarities is what a study specifically aims at, but even in the most meticulous philosophical and historical studies many things have to be supposed as unproblematic, at least tentatively. Most of the time we face no insuperable obstacles in this respect, or, if we believed we did, we would hardly ever get underway with the actual interpretive work. I trust, however, that here it is worth pausing to reflect on the problem of how to determine relevant characteristics of consciousness when inquiring into historical conceptions of it. In view of the disparity as to the status of consciousness between the current and early modern thought described at the beginning, it appears genuinely an open question whether the early moderns entertained a notion commensurate with at least some of our current notions of consciousness. The question is of course not about the entitlement to use a particular term in disparate contexts, but to what extent as interpreters of early modern authors we are able to distance ourselves from what we now take 'consciousness' to refer to. Is it sensible and informative or rather misleading that the same term 'consciousness' is used in reference to early modern and current contexts?

If consciousness did not figure in the most central role in the present study – the more or less inevitable state of affairs that the interpreter of historical conceptions can hardly bracket off current determinations of consciousness – would not be a critical issue. But it does get more pressing when we aim at a detailed description of what consciousness is for the early modern authors: then the scarcity of direct textual evidence as to features by which they understand consciousness becomes conspicuous. From the point of view of an interpreter of early modern texts this brings to the fore the interplay between our contemporary uses and what is taken to emerge from the texts.[48] This issue I wish to discuss. Certainly I cannot solve the generic problem of interpretation, and it would also be over ambitious to attempt here to systematically knit together current and early modern notions of consciousness. But given the described circumstances it seems warranted at least to be explicit about how consciousness is approached here as an object of interpretation.

An interpretive approach that has come to be called historical reconstruction emphasizes that the options of thought available to a historical thinker are accessible to us by means of texts interpreted in the context of other contemporary or earlier texts.[49] In this way the history of philosophy can

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[48] For a discussion of conditions for the interpretive accuracy of texts and the specific status of subjectivity as one such condition, see Jari Kaukua and Vili Lähteenmäki, "Subjectivity as a Non-Textual Standard of Interpretation in the History of Philosophical Psychology", forthcoming in *History and Theory* (49 February) 2010.

[49] Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and understanding in the history of ideas", *History and Theory* (8) 1969: 3-53; reprinted in Tully, J. (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988): 29-67.

provide genuine insights of contemporary interest by showing alternative possibilities of thought that highlight our own limits. While I emphatically agree with the idea of faithfulness to the historical text and its context as a means of avoiding anachronism, it is worthwhile to consider the sufficiency of (con)textual evidence in arriving at a historically founded interpretation with regard to a topic like consciousness.

It seems fairly clear that textual evidence is not always sufficient to arrive at a reconstruction of a text's meaning. For in many cases it is obvious that we import something from without the (con)text, something we have to posit as theory-neutral in order for the past theories to have *any* meaning to us. Many of such non-textual standards are trivial: for instance, we have to understand the language the text is written in. Somewhat less trivial standards are those derived from consulting our own experience. For instance, when we are trying to understand Aristotle's arguments against the existence of vacuum, as a means to secure the general comprehensibility of the text we are bound to consult our own experience of what the normal behaviour of missile objects is like since he devotes no effort to explication of such behaviour, but simply assumes certain obvious facts as given to him and his audience alike. Similar circumstances, I suggest, pertain to our early modern authors' discussions of consciousness.

But how should we determine what we should accept as features that are akin to the behaviour of missile object as regards consciousness? We must remember that consciousness is itself *experience*, so that in the present case, instead of consulting our experience of the world of medium sized objects, we must consult our experience of experience, which is admittedly a trickier task. In doing so we should aim at distinguishing between what in the interpreter's own preconception of what consciousness is could be taken as a pre-theoretical common ground between the historical texts under study and us and what belongs to or derives from the more recent theories in which the experiential phenomena have come into specific conceptual focus. This distinction involves taking into account the following points. As to the latter category, descriptions of consciousness that have been introduced in order to respond to or clarify various problems in specific and confined theoretical settings can rightly be considered as historical and contingent in nature. Failure to properly recognize such notions in one's own conceptual framework can result in introducing alien concepts into the historical text under study. It is certainly warranted to pay attention to this danger, especially in interpreting historical texts that touch upon as elusive a phenomenon as consciousness. However, in view of the former category, one should be attentive to a possibility that historical authors may have relied on intuitions about features of experience similar to those of their modern interpreter, even though these features are not explicated in their texts.[50] This dilemmatic setting urges two sorts of caution: not to import our

50 A theoretically significant belief about the nature of experience can be relevant in theory formation in different ways. A clear case of historical recognition of a phenomenon is when it is described as belonging to *explananda* or *explanantia*. The relevance of some particular concept or phenomenon for the issue of what the text is

own concepts into the studied texts and not to overlook concepts that may be implicit in them.

Bearing this in mind, my candidate for common ground is the rough idea that 'there is something it is like' for a subject to be conscious. Although prominent in recent discussions, it is hardly engendered in them and could serve in the interpretive action as a heuristic supposition of what is shared by us and the authors of the historical texts. The what-is-it-likeness, or phenomenality, is in our contemporary discussions generally taken as the hallmark of consciousness. According to Thomas Nagel, "an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something it is like to *be* that organism – something it is like *for* the organism."[51] Obviously the early moderns do not share the explanatory motivation of 20th-century philosophy of mind which, broadly taken, is concerned with naturalising the mind both through reductionism and anti-reductionism, and which regards phenomenality first and foremost as a problem.[52] The further distinction we must accordingly make is one between phenomenality as a problem and as a phenomenon. As a phenomenon, it is not dependent on the naturalistic framework. It is clear enough that the studied early modern authors have ample interest in the nature of experience: in phenomena related to perceiving external objects, to rational acts of the mind, as well as to perceiving oneself as a subject of thoughts and perceptions. It is quite natural to think that in discussing these phenomena they take the phenomenal character as that which makes a given phenomenon to count as a perception at all. To put the point differently, if we as their interpreters did not take them to presuppose phenomenality, that it is something it is like to think and perceive, we would have to dismiss much of their discussion as simply incomprehensible to us.

If they resorted to phenomenality, why did they not explicate it as a feature of consciousness? One reason, I believe, is that phenomenality is a thoroughly familiar, constant, and *ipso facto*, as it were, transparent feature of occurring experience, a part of the complex whole of our train of experience. And since there is no similar theoretical reason for the early moderns to stand back from it and make it an explicit object of inquiry as there is for a modern naturalist, it would be simply superfluous to discuss it in any length. In the first work in English language dedicated solely to consciousness, *An Essay on Consciousness* (1728), Charles Mein surmises that consciousness may be "so obvious to the meanest Capacity at first sight, that it needs not to be particularly

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about can also be expressly denied in the text. But it may also be the case that the author makes use of a concept or phenomenon implicitly, so that it does not surface in the textual expression of the issue at hand.

51 Thomas Nagel, "What is like to be a bat?", *Philosophical Review* (1974): 435-450, reprinted in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 165-180: 166.

52 Phenomenality of consciousness is often described as *the* obstacle for naturalizing consciousness. In the naturalistic explanation a third-person perspective description is taken to refer to the *reality* of things and to replace the first-person perspective description of how things *appear*. The problem, very briefly put, is that the reality of the phenomenal feature of consciousness is appearing, wherefore the reality-appearance distinction on which naturalistic explaining is based disappears.

declared, or it does not admit of any sort of Explication" and that perhaps everyone can discover "as much of his *Consciousness*, immediately, [...] as he shall ever be able to do."[53] This statement suggests the potential superfluity of describing consciousness in general, and as regards particular features of consciousness that are obvious and thus need not to be particularly articulated, phenomenality is the strongest candidate.

In my attempt to unravel early modern notions of consciousness in this work, I have taken phenomenality, under the described qualifications, as a heuristic presumption for a common ground we share with the past thinkers. I have adopted it as a notion that serves as a backdrop against which ways of thought different from our own, but also accessible to us, stand out. It is also worth noting that without such gross similarity on a general level, and given the centrality of phenomenality for our contemporary conceptions of consciousness, it would also be quite misleading to use the term consciousness in reference to both contemporary and early modern contexts.

Based on these considerations, I have approached the texts with the interpretive guideline that the studied authors grant that being conscious means that there is something it is like to be conscious. But I want to emphasize that this does not entail further assumptions about the functions phenomenality might have in their theories. In its role as a heuristic guideline it must be kept distinct from any textually grounded reading of what a studied author's notion of consciousness consists of.

Let me offer the following consideration as an illustration of how the interpretive starting point has guided the interpretations presented in the thesis. Gordon Baker and Katherine Morris have argued that an idea of phenomenality (they favour the expression 'what's it like') is totally excluded from Descartes' conceptual apparatus.[54] Presumably, in the background of their position is the view that it is highly controversial to rely on our intuitions regarding subjectivity in historical work; and given the unattractiveness of anachronism, awareness of this fact may have encouraged the downright denial of the existence of the phenomenon in thinkers that do not explicitly discuss it. I address Baker and Morris' argument in detail in the second essay, *The Possibility of Animal Experience in Light of Descartes' Notions of Awareness*.[55] Let me briefly epitomize that discussion here for the limited purpose of illustrating the interpretive guideline at work.

According to Baker and Morris, the Cartesian notion of thought is inseparable from the human capacity to judge and refrain from making judgements and it inevitably involves freedom of the rational soul to reflect on its moral actions and character. They maintain that Descartes neither explicitly

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53 Charles Mein, *Two Dissertations Concerning Sense and the Imagination with An Essay on Consciousness* (London: 1728): 141-142.

54 Gordon Baker and Katherine Morris, *Descartes' Dualism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) and "Steven Nadler's review of *Descartes' Dualism* and a reply by Gordon Baker and Katherine Morris", *Philosophical Books*, 38, 3: 157-169; see especially 165.

55 See section 3 in particular.

recognizes nor implicitly supposes forms of consciousness without those characteristics and that Descartes' conception of consciousness in its entirety does not include a phenomenal feature. As Baker and Morris maintain that phenomenality is a notion completely alien to Descartes, they cannot be expected to provide any textual evidence on Descartes' (positive) denial of it. They support their claim by emphasizing the importance of other features, such as rationality, freedom, reflection, and moral agency, in Descartes' conception of consciousness. In my view, relying on what I have explicated above, we should not infer from the importance of the listed features that Descartes did not recognize a sense of consciousness that does not involve reflection or have direct implications for moral agency, nor should we infer that in full-fledged consciousness a phenomenal feature is effectively excluded.

The described interpretive approach encourages an investigation of whether it is the case that no positive indication of phenomenality can be found in Descartes. His discussion of infant thought turns out to be relevant. This type of thought, Descartes explains, involves neither voluntary reflection nor immanent reflexivity, but he still maintains: "the mind begins to think as soon as it is implanted in the body of an infant, and […] it is immediately aware of its thoughts."[56] Were we not justified in reading this statement as relying on an idea of phenomenality, we would have scant means of making any sense of it. On these grounds, I claim, infant thought is best understood as affording an experience where things perceived are phenomenally present to the thinking subject.

Locke, and Cudworth too, I argue in the essays, recognize and rely on the phenomenal feature of consciousness. Cudworth's case is comparable to that of Descartes, as he also considers types of experience that lack higher-order features such as being in control of one's thoughts and actions or being aware of the reasons of one's actions. Moreover, Cudworth also points to phenomenality as he alleges that the materialist conception of thought runs into explanatory difficulties "with the *Phancy, Apparition,* or *Seeming* of *Cogitation*, that is The *Consciousness* of it."[57] I take this as recognition of the phenomenal feature of thought, as well as a case of associating the term consciousness with this feature. As with Locke, his application of 'perception' in the specific sense that it is a feature that seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. have in common exemplifies phenomenal feature of consciousness, since what they have in common is that they are all perceptions in the sense of being appearances for the subject.

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In this introduction I have attempted to prepare the reader to what is argued in the four essays. I have explained the motivational background for the thesis, situated our philosophers in the broad historical and philosophical context in which they develop their views of consciousness, outlined the more specific

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56 *Fourth Replies*, AT VII, 246; CSM II, 171.
57 TIS, 846.

contexts of consciousness and the different explanatory roles consciousness has in these contexts as well as different types of consciousness that come into view, and lastly I have attempted to provide the reader with background knowledge about the interpretive guideline endorsed in unravelling the conceptions of consciousness of the studied authors. The merits and faults of the individual essays are now left to the reader to assess.

YHTEENVETO

Tutkimukseni käsittelee René Descartesin, Ralph Cudworthin ja John Locken teorioita tietoisuudesta. Työssä on viisi osaa, joista ensimmäinen on tutkimuksen lähtökohtia ja tutkimusta kokonaisuutena tarkasteleva johdanto. Toisessa osassa tarkastelen Descartesin ajattelua tietoisesta kokemuksesta. Perinteisistä tulkinnoista poiketen esitän, että Descartes erottaa kolme tietoisuustyyppiä: elementaarinen tietoisuus, refleksiivinen tietoisuus ja tietoisuus, joka edellyttää tahdonalaista reflektiota. Kolmannessa osassa esitän tulkinnan Descartesin käsityksestä eläinten kokemuskyvystä. Keskeisin väitteeni on, että elementaarista tietoisuutta määrittää fenomenaalisuus, joka on samaan aikaan sekä tärkeä että ongelmallinen Descartesin teorialle eläinten kognitiosta. Argumentoin, että Descartes itse tunnistaa jännitteen kuvatun kokemuksen käsitteen ja hänen aineen modifikaatioita koskevien sitoumustensa välillä. Lisäksi esitän, että tämä muodostaa hänen keskeisen motiivinsa pidättäytyä ottamasta artikuloitua kantaa eläinten kokemustodellisuuden luonteesta. Neljännessä osassa tarkastelen erilaisia aineksia Cudworthin metafysiikasta ja moraalisen toimijuuden teoriasta. Tarkasteluni osoittaa, että Cudworth sitoutuu tietoisuuden ja itsetietoisuuden väliseen erotteluun, joka perustuu subjektin itsesuhteen laatuun: vaikka ei-itsetietoinen kokemus ei ole kokemusta vailla omistajaa, moraalinen toimijuus edellyttää leimallisesti itsetietoista kokemusta, kokemusta itsestä toiminnan lähteenä. Viidennessä osassa tarkastelen Locken teoriaa tietoisuudesta yleisesti hänen empirisminsä ja erityisesti siihen läheisesti liittyvän reflektioteorian näkökulmasta. Ajoittain Locke vaikuttaa esittävän, että reflektio edellyttää tahdonalaista tarkkaavaisuuden kohdistamista. Tarkkaavaisuuden kohdistamisen mahdollisuus puolestaan edellyttää objektia, joka on kokemuksessa läsnä. Locken oman teorian nojalla vain idea voi olla tällainen objekti. Tämä on kuitenkin ristiriidassa sen kanssa, että Locken mukaan aistimukset ja reflektio ovat ainoita ideoiden lähteitä. Siksi ideat eivät voi edeltää niitä. Argumentoin, että Locke operoi kahdella reflektion käsitteellä: reflektio ideoiden lähteenä ja reflektio ideoilla operoivana. Näin ulkoiset aistimukset ja reflektio säilyvät ainoina ideoita muodostavina mielen akteina. Tämä erottelu auttaa meitä ymmärtämään tietoisuuden tiedon lajina sen sijaan, että pitäisimme sitä reflektion tapaan mentaalisena aktina. Argumentoin lisäksi, että Locke pitää tietoisuutta asteittaisena, mikä sallii erilaisia tapoja, jolla kokemustodellisuutemme muodostavat ideat ovat mielelle läsnä.