

Commentary on Lau

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Halloween 2009: HOT Strikes Back

David Chalmers

Or:

**The New York
Chainsaw Massacre**

Four Distinctions

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Access Consciousness | Phenomenal consciousness |
| • Attention | Visibility |
| • D' (Discrimination) | Perceptual Certainty |
| • First-Order Representation | Higher-Order Representation |

Access Consciousness

- Access consciousness = discrimination or attention?
- Many degrees of access:
 - accessed vs accessible
 - accessible to what?
 - accessible for what?

Phenomenal Consciousness

- Phenomenal consciousness = visibility or
- perceptual certainty?
 - Visibility = discrimination: objective threshold
 - Perceptual certainty = confidence: subjective threshold?
- Cf. unconscious perception literature: subjective threshold a better criterion for consciousness

What is Perceptual Certainty?

- Perceptual certainty: perceptual representation with high probability
- $p(\text{red object there}) > 0.95$: conscious
- $p(\text{red object there}) < 0.95$: unconscious

Perceptual Certainty and Consciousness

- But: perceptual representation can be certain without being conscious
- Unconscious representation [e.g. in dorsal stream] may have $p(\text{red object there}) > 0.95$

Perceptual Certainty and HOT

- Also: perceptual certainty dissociates from HOT
- Certainty without HOT: Unconscious representations, weather-forecasting systems, animals.
- HOT without perceptual certainty: I have a perceptual representation of red object there with $p = 0.6$

Certain HOTs?

- Alternative: HOT about perceptual certainty
- I'm perceptually representing with 0.96 confidence that there's a red object?
- Or: a certain HOT about perception
 - I'm 0.96 confident that I'm perceptually representing a red object.

Introspective Confidence

- Construed the last way, what matters isn't perceptual confidence but introspective confidence.
- Introspective confidence is the standard guide to phenomenal consciousness
- But doesn't entail HOT: just requires reliable introspective access to conscious states.

Models of Phenomenal Consciousness

- What distinguishes (phenomenally) conscious vs unconscious representation in the brain?
 - First-order vs higher-order?
 - Two streams?
 - Two substrates?
 - My view: Accessibility/availability

Access Consciousness

- What of the phenomenal vs access consciousness distinction?
 - The conceptual distinction remains
 - But phenomenology may correlate with a certain sort of access/accessibility?
 - Which sort?

Two Neural Correlates of Consciousness?

- Low-capacity system (prefrontal): access, attention
- High-capacity system (occipital): accessibility, availability to attention
- Which correlates with phenomenal consciousness?
- My view: the latter.