29.0 Preliminaries

There is a difference between the experience of X and the perceptual belief about X.

29.1 Awareness of facts and awareness of things

One can be aware of X (thing), or that P (fact)

This difference depends on a difference between a concept-free mental state, and a concept-charged mental state. Being aware of a thing is concept-free. Being aware of a fact is being concepts to bear on a thing.

I see Jack. Jack is a policeman, but I do not know that. So I am aware of a policeman, but I am not aware that he is a policeman.

Without this distinction, one will fail to understand how an experience can be conscious without anyone being conscious of it (which is something for which Lycan and Rosenthal cannot allow.)

‘Things’ covers objects and temporal events.

‘facts’ covers what we express by making statements about things.

We are aware of Clyde, and we are aware that Clyde is playing the piano.

29.2 Perceptual Consciousness

Dretske is only concerned w/ perceptual consciousness, not with introspection (although that may come up later)

This consciousness is basic: S sees (hears, etc.) x (or that P) implies that S is conscious of x (or that P).

Consciousness of facts entails a deployment of concepts. If S is aware that x is F, then S has the concept F and applies it in his awareness of x.

For example: A cat can be aware of toast burning, but a cat cannot be aware that the toast is burning (as it lacks the concept ‘toast’).

For example: the first time I see an armadillo, or a capibara, I lack the concept ARMADILLO or CAPIBARA, but I still see the armadillo or capibara. I see the armadillo or capibara, but I do not see that it is an armadillo or capibara.

S is conscious of x does not imply that S is conscious that x is F.

29.3 Why is this not obvious?

There is a difference between not implying and implying not.

Suppose that I walk into a bar, and see someone drinking a beer - if the law is being enforced, their drinking a beer entails that they are over 21. Suppose I see someone drinking a coke. If the law is being followed, it does not entail that they are over 21. What’s more, it does not entail that they are not over 21. It is simply silent.

Implication v. Implicature
Saying that you are aware of an F implies (in terms of conversational implication) that you are aware that x is F.

Concrete v. Abstract

When perceptual verbs are followed by abstract nouns, the awareness is an awareness of facts. If I am aware that there is a problem, it is not that there is some concrete object called ‘problem’ of which I am aware.

30.0 Examples:

I see a hen w/ 27 speckles, but I am not aware that the hen has 27 speckles.

Tom grows a moustache, but S does not notice it. S is not aware that Tom has a moustache in the active sense, but S was aware of the moustache in the thing sense.

If an animal has been taught to distinguish between two shapes, that animal may be aware of a difference, but no be aware that there is a difference (because it lacks the concept DIFFERENCE).

SPOT. (see the text)

Therefore, awareness of things (x) requires no awareness of facts.

31.0 Thesis

S is conscious of x or that P implies that S is conscious.

In other words, transitive creature consciousness implies intransitive creature consciousness.

But what about the converse – does S’s being conscious imply that S is conscious of x or that P? Dretske leaves this open

Further:

S is conscious of x or that P implies that S is in a conscious state of some sort.

In other words, transitive creature consciousness requires a state of the creature that is conscious.

S is conscious of x or that P is relational – it requires an S and an x or P.

To be conscious of Clyde, there must be an I, and a Clyde.

Clarification: Versus Armstrong.

The long distance truck driver according to Armstrong is not conscious in one sense. But according to Dretske, the long distance truck driver is conscious, as he is perceptually conscious of something, even if he is not conscious that he is conscious of that thing.

Consciousness of things requires a consciousness experience of that thing.

Consciousness of facts requires a conscious belief that this is a fact.

In the case of spot, everyone is thing aware of the difference, but not everyone is not fact-aware – i.e. not everyone is aware that there is a difference.
There can be conscious differences in a person’s experiences of the world of which the conscious person is not aware.

As a result, we have conscious states that differ, but we are not conscious of that difference.

if what makes a conscious state conscious is our consciousness of that state (i.e. Armstrong, Lycan, Rosenthal), any conscious difference must be one that we are conscious of.

But we are not conscious of this difference; therefore, what makes a state conscious cannot be consciousness of it.

This is a little premature, as SPOT only shows that fact-awareness is not required for consciousness. What about thing-awareness?

1st. The argument is a twist on Lycan’s: sensory experiences have some quale to them, but when we introspect experience, one does not come across quale of that experience, but rather the qualities that experiences present.

2nd. Inner sense does not improve the epistemic access to experience:

E(a) and E(b) differ. An awareness of the fact that they differ is irrelevant to whether or not they differ. Or in other words, that there is a conscious difference.

The inner sense theorist may say that S is thing-aware of E(spot) without being fact-aware of E(spot).

But then, it makes no difference to the subject if they are aware of E(spot).

And if consciousness makes no difference, then it gives no epistemic access.

And that contradicts the motivation for the inner sense view (as well as common-sense).

32.0 What, then, makes a state conscious?

If we do not have to be conscious of a mental state for the mental state to be conscious, consciousness of something cannot be what it is that makes a thing conscious.

So, what makes an internal state a conscious state?

It plays a certain characteristic role in the life of the possessor – it makes a creature intrinsitively conscious by making a creature transitively conscious of x or that P.

It is conscious because it is a sort of representation that makes one aware of the properties or objects it represents.